

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF GOD
as told to Mel Schneider
(full-length dark comedy)

SYNOPSIS

God comes to earth to convince people to stop praying because he can't stand the incessant droning of the prayers. He enlists the help of Mel Schneider a hack writer to create a performance piece designed to get his message out to the "viewing public." God collides with Lulu Walker, a young woman whose brother is dying of cancer and whose only hope is prayer.

CAST

2 Males (40s-50s)
1 Female (20s)
1 Female (30s-40s)
1 Male (20s-50s)

SETS

An Office
A Stage
A Living Room
A Park
A Hotel Room

PRODUCTIONS/READINGS

4/98 Staged Reading - Jewish Community Center
Springboard Reading Series NYC
10/98 Staged Reading - Dramatists Guild NYC
9/99 Staged Reading - Jose Quintero Theatre NYC
5/03 World Premiere Production - Ontological Theatre NYC
10/03 Staged Reading - Malloy College

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DIALOGUE SAMPLE

MEL

(Yelling off-stage) BERTHA, WHERE IS THE OSGOOD CONTRACT? I CAN'T FIND THE OSGOOD CONTRACT. (To himself) She must be in the bathroom again. I wonder if science can breed bladderless secretarial help. (Focuses on one document that HE finds) Jury duty? I'm supposed to be on jury duty? What happens if I don't show up? Can I go to jail? Oh God, why does everything happen to me?

(GOD enters)

GOD

I hear that question a lot.

MEL

Who are you? And how did you get past Bertha?

GOD

I have a story to tell. You're a writer, producer. The rest will be history.

MEL

Yeah well everyone has a story. I'm afraid we aren't accepting new clients. Excuse me.

(HE continues to sift through papers)

GOD

I don't think you understand. I have the story.

MEL

And I have the headache. (Motioning to the door) You found your way in. Please find your way out.

(GOD approaches the desk, pulls a paper from the middle of the stack and hands it to MEL)

GOD

I think you're looking for this.

MEL

(Looking at it) The Osgood contract. How did you know? Say, how did you do that?

GOD

(Shrugs) I have a gift.

MEL

How would you like a secretarial job? I could pay you nine dollars an hour.

GOD

No thanks.

MEL

Okay, nine-fifty, but that's as high as I can go. No secretary is worth more than nine-fifty.

GOD

I've never really been much for clerical duties.

MEL

(Looking GOD over and extending hand) I'm Mel Schneider. And you are?

(GOD turns away and paces, without shaking the hand which MEL withdraws)

GOD

I'm your newest client.

MEL

Maybe you didn't hear me. We're not accepting new clients.

GOD

So you'll make an exception.

MEL

Why would we make an exception for you? Who the hell are you?

GOD

I'm the Almighty.

MEL

The almighty what?

GOD

The Almighty God.

MEL

Yeah, and I'm Mel Gibson.

GOD

I gave you a sign. I found the Osgood contract for you.

MEL

You call that a sign? That's not a sign.

GOD

What's a good sign then?

MEL

(Coming out from behind the desk) Thunder and lightning is a good sign. Making someone fall to their knees before you is a good sign.

(THUNDER AND LIGHTNING. MEL falls to his knees)

HOLY SHIT! LET ME UP!

(THUNDER AND LIGHTNING stops. MEL stands slowly, staring at GOD, as terror gives way to curiosity, which gives way to thought)

MEL (Continued)

You know what else would be a good sign? A million dollars - no ten million dollars in small bills, right here on the floor.

GOD

Enough with the signs. Now you know who I am. I need your help.

MEL

You need my help? I've asked you for help for years. Didn't anyone ever tell you that one hand washes the other?

GOD

(Ominous) Didn't anyone ever tell you that I'm a vengeful God?

MEL

(Nervous) What exactly is it that you want to accomplish?

GOD

I have a very important message to deliver. I thought that by doing a one-God show I'd be able to get that message out to the viewing public.

MEL

(Laughs) Excuse me for laughing but the whole idea of God needing to put on a one-God show to get the word out to people is a bit absurd.

GOD

Oh really? Then how do you propose I do it?

MEL

The way you've always done it.

GOD

Which is?

MEL

I don't know. You go to a mountaintop and call someone up to see you.

GOD

You mean like that Moses fellow?

MEL

Exactly.

GOD

Let me tell you something. Religions were started by your ancestors because they were ignorant, superstitious people who happened to surmise correctly that they had been placed on this earth by some sort of supreme being. Their only intentions were to have the gods smile down on them and grant good health and happiness - and maybe larger genitalia.

(HE waits for a laugh which is not forthcoming)

GOD (Continued)

In the beginning, the whole concept of religion caused me no trouble at all. People prayed to golden calves or volcanic mountaintops which was fine with me. Do what you want, just leave me alone. But then this guy came along who became the bane of my existence. He kept spouting off that

there was only one God. Oh he was right, but whose business is it anyway? I tried everything to shut him up. I even made him stutter but nothing helped. He just kept yapping
(Continued)

GOD (Continued)

away to anyone who would listen and these superstitious people repeated his stories as if they were the gospel. And you know how stories and rumors change as they go from mouth to mouth. So he went up to this mountaintop and came down with the three commandments.

MEL

Three?

GOD

At first he claimed that there were only three. And then some nervous guy with a beautiful wife added the adultery thing and we were off to the races. It was like the founding fathers constructing the Bill of Rights. One group even wanted to add a commandment "Thou shalt not snore," but fortunately back then no one took the wives seriously.

(Again HE waits in vain for a laugh)

GOD (Continued)

The fact is that I've never commanded anything. A command is an order, and I don't order. If I had any commandment at all it would be do your own thing. Believe me if I didn't want you to kill or steal I would have cut off your hands. If I didn't want you to bear false witness against your neighbors I would have cut off your tongues. And if I didn't want you to commit adultery I would have - well you get the picture.

(Again HE waits in vain for a laugh)

GOD (Continued)

Don't you people have a sense of humor?

MEL

These jokes are from the year of the flood. You remember the flood.

GOD

Can't say that I do. Look I've never even been to Mt.

Sinai. And I've never communicated with you people before. If you have a better way for me to reach everyone, I'm listening. But if not, I need you to help me.

MEL

But why me? I'm just a hack.

GOD

I have my reasons. Now are you going to do it or not?

MEL

(Scheming) Can you get me off the hook for jury duty?

GOD

Always a quid pro quo with you people. Alright, you'll never have to worry about jury duty again!

MEL

(Thinking, then extending hand) Deal!

GOD

(Ignoring extended hand) Then you'd better get to work. The show opens tomorrow.

MEL

Tomorrow? That's impossible.

GOD

Why?

MEL

I can't write that fast.

GOD

I'll slow up time as much as necessary.

MEL

But what about a theatre, and a stage manager, and ticket sales?

GOD

Done, done and done.

MEL

(Getting excited) You've thought of everything, haven't you?

GOD

(Proudly) Every little detail. I even keep refilling Bertha's bladder so she doesn't interrupt us.

MEL

Alright then. Let's get to work. By the way, we're fifty-fifty partners, right?

GOD

You've got to be kidding.

MEL

Forty-sixty? Twenty-eighty at least?

GOD

You'll be getting an hourly rate.

MEL

An hourly rate? How much an hour?

GOD

Nine dollars an hour.

MEL

Nine dollars an hour?

GOD

Okay nine-fifty. But that's as high as I can go. No secretary is worth more than nine-fifty.

(MEL frowns)

Now I suggest you get started. I'm going to do some sightseeing.

MEL

(Returning to his seat) Wait a minute. You can't leave. You have to tell me your story. I don't know what your message is.

GOD

Just start typing. It'll come to you. (HE exits)

MEL

What are you talking - Whoa! (HE involuntarily swings around to the keyboard and starts typing furiously) It was a dark and stormy big bang.

(BLACKOUT)