

"Profundity Phil"
an original comedy sketch by
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FADE IN:

INT. STEEL MILL - PHIL'S BACKSTORY

Through circular welding glasses, PHIL LAYMAN HAMMERS DOWN onto a piece of hot, bright-orange steel.

A man approaches him, and they exchange a few words. The man's head drops, and Phil rests a dirty steelworking glove onto his shoulder.

MASCULINE CHOIR (V.O.)
*FIFTY YEARS OF FORGING STEEL,
HE NOW FORGES WORDS THAT HEAL.
HE IS, PROFUNDITY PHIL.*

STEAM, filling the air as bright-orange metal hits a bucket of cold water with a HISS.

Phil, carefully honing his steel against a belt sharpener.

Suddenly, he's on a QVC-like stage, hawking his handiwork.

MASCULINE CHOIR (CONT'D)
*AT THE FOREFRONT OF BLADEMAKING,
HE WAS ONCE THE LATE-NITE KNIFE KING.
HE IS, PROFUNDITY PHIL.*

An older corporate-officer-type before a barren landscape nods slowly and intently.

Phil rocks in a chair in what appears to be a covered patio.

Pull back to reveal it's a trailer-home porch complete with bug-zapper and air-drying laundry.

MASCULINE CHOIR (CONT'D)
*NOW WELL KNOWN FAR AND WIDE,
A PROPHET OF WISDOM IN A DOUBLE-WIDE.
HE IS, PROFUNDITY PHIL!*

EXT. BARREN LANDSCAPE - AFTERNOON

A hot, lonely openness studded with random desert shrubbery.

The sun BEATS DOWN on the scorched earth, vapors rising to blur the horizon.

EXT. PHIL'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Phil rocks in his chair, deep in thought and overalls.

Now long in the tooth, he's wiry with overly tanned arms, perennial tan-circles around his eyes, and a scar across his brow that split an eyebrow in two.

Something in the air rips him from his hillbilly meditation:

A butterfly, fluttering toward him.

He extends one of his frying-pan-sized hands, and Zippity doo-dah: it lands in his palm.

A brief smile, then Phil SNAPS his hand shut, KILLING it instantly.

PHIL

(wiping the recently
deceased on his pant
leg)

Doin' you a favor. Ain't no flowers
around here. Just hungry birds and
rogue Komodo.

A sun-parched, worn MAN COLLAPSES at Phil's feet.

Phil continues wiping, unalarmed.

MAN

(panting)

Are you... Are you the man they call
'Profundity Phil?'

PHIL

I am. You must be Eric.

ERIC

(gathering himself)

How'd you... How'd you know?

PHIL

You been shoutin' at yourself for
the past half-mile or so.

ERIC

Oh. That. It's pretty hot...

Phil FLINGS a bottle of water wrapped in toilet paper at the man, who catches it only because it hits him in the hand.

ERIC (CONT'D)

What's this?

PHIL

You're dehydrated. Water's for your
input. TP's for your out.

ERIC

(LONG swig)

Thanks. Thanks so much.

(MORE)

ERIC (CONT'D)

(then)

I was sent to seek your counsel.

PHIL

My what?

ERIC

Your counsel. Your advice.

PHIL

Why didn't you just say 'advice'
then?

ERIC

I.. I just...

PHIL

Go on.

ERIC

I've been stuck at the same job for
five years, and my wife wants me to
ask for a promotion. I've been to
all these career coaches, but I still
can't get how to leverage tenure
into getting more pay. Can you help?

PHIL

You think you deserve a raise?

ERIC

(scoffs)

Well, yeah! Five years is a long
time! We want to start a family, so
bigger house, a car... Day care...

PHIL

(rubbing chin)

Uh-huh. You know, any hobo can polish
anvils for five years, but if that's
all he does, ain't nobody gonna pay
him the extra two bucks an hour to
run the casting machine come year
six, know what I'm sayin'?

ERIC

I... No.

PHIL

It's all about value! How have you
increased your value to your company?

ERIC

Well, I spearheaded a project that saved the company a million dollars.

PHIL

Whoo! A million dollars? That's a lot! Just tell your boss about that.

ERIC

I would, but so many people were involved. My role was... unclear.

PHIL

(leaning in)

You know, when all my blades - ALL my blades - got rejected by the Samurai Sword Society of Southeast Asia, I coulda sat around, mopin'. But I didn't. I got my three a.m. slot on the Home Shopping Channel for four-and-a-half months.

ERIC

What does THAT have to do with anything?

PHIL

Sounds to me like you're just mopin' around, making excuses. Instead of giving your teammates credit, you're using them as a shield for your fears of confrontation.

ERIC

(revelatory)

You know, you're right! It IS fear! How do I conquer that?

PHIL

(leaning in)

Eric, the only way to conquer fear is to confront it. Then gut it.

(reaching under chair)

And I've got just the blade to do it...

ERIC

Jesus, Phil! I'm not gutting anyone!

PHIL

It's a BOOKLET, you moron!

(tosses to Eric)

About the art of confrontation.

Your boss DEPENDS on your fear so he can dictate your pay for eternity!

ERIC
You're exactly right!
(then)
I'm sorry about the whole 'thinking-
you-wanted-me-to-gut-someone' thing...

PHIL
Well, that's always on the table.

ERIC
What?

PHIL
Nothing. Now get on home and rent
your balls for Monday.

ERIC
Thanks, Phil!

PHIL
Don't mention it.

The man exits and Phil returns to his rockin'.

MASCULINE CHOIR
HE IS, PROFUNDITY PHIL!

FADE OUT.