

Makers

Written By

Ryan Somma

Ryan Somma
PO Box 96
Occoquan, VA 22125
(252) 207-5768
ideonex@gmail.com



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INT. MAKERSPACE - DAY

NEF leans over a mass of wires and blinking lights, counting parts at the counter. Across from her, GRACE bounces impatiently on her heels.

NEF

(Half-mumbling)

38... 39... 40... 41... 42

jumper wires.

(Scribbles this down)

I keep telling you
Grace, you could save a lot
of money by stripping wires
instead of burning through
all my jumpers.

(Begins counting crimps)

Eight... nine... ten...

11--

GRACE

(Alarmed)

Wait! What happened
to one through seven?

Nef

(Points to the trash can)

You threw one
through seven in the trash
can over there.

GRACE

I have to pay for
those?

NEF

I had to pay for
them.

GRACE

But... but...

NEF

(Scribbling)

28 crimps.

(Looks up)

You know. If you

would learn soldering, you
could save a lot of money on
crimps too.

GRACE

(Rolls eyes)

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

How much is it?

NEF

(Calculating)

Jumpers... crimps...

hot-glue... LEDs... plus one
arduino and power source--

GRACE

It's pronounced

'are-djew-ween-o.'

NEF

Pardon me, one

'are-djew-ween-o'--30 bucks.

GRACE

(Eyebrows shoot up)

30?!? Can't you

give me a discount?

NEF

(Defensive)

I rounded down.

Technically you owe me
\$32.25.

GRACE

(Pulls out a card, stares at it
and sighs)

Okay... I guess it's
ramen noodles for dinner
again tonight.

NEF

(Sighs and rubs the bridge of
her nose)

Just give me \$25
and we'll call it even.

GRACE

That's very kind of you. Then I could buy some peanuts to put in the noodles for protein... of course, I won't have any vegetables for nutrition.

NEF

(Sternly)

I'll give you the creativity discount. Okay? \$20. This...

(Waves at the mass of wires and blinking lights)

...thing is pretty cool.

GRACE

(Puts card away, pulls out a \$20)

This is a portal from a 1973 Bally Time Zone Pinball machine. I've programmed it to randomly light these colored LEDs in the center. Essentially making it a 1d6.

Nef stares at her.

GRACE

(Perturbed.)

A 1D6? You know... six-sided-dice? Don't you know anything about the gaming side of this shop?

NEF

That's Zack's forte.

(Puts the \$20 in the register)

Whatever it is, it's cool. And now you are essentially getting it at cost.

GRACE

(Sincerely)

Thank you Nef.

Grace begins to exit.

NEF

(Grinning)

You're welcome

kiddo.

(Calling out after her.)

I better not see
you with chinese food later!

PAT

(Shuffling MTG cards from his
table)

And THAT'S why the
IRS made you demote this shop
from 'business' to 'hobby.'

NEF

(Defensively)

It wasn't
'demoted,' it was
reategorized.

Pause. Nef sighs.

NEF & PAT

(Look at each other)

It was demoted.

ZACK comes in, carrying a kicking and squirming SAGAN under one
arm. Zack holds the door open for ADA, who comes inside quietly.

SAGAN

(Tantruming)

But I want it!

ZACK

(Calmly)

No.

SAGAN

But I need it!

NAME

No you don't.

SAGAN
 (Pleading)
 I doooooo! I need
 it!

ZACK
 You don't need it.
 (To Nef)
 Hi Sweetie.

NEF
 (Quizzically)
 Hi..? I'm afraid to
 ask...

ZACK
 One of the kids at
 school showed him a video of
 her new quad-copter.

NEF
 Oh no...

Zack puts Sagan on his feet. Sagan looks at him resentfully. Zack starts to take off his backpack. Sagan bolts for the door, but Nef and Zack slap hands like professional wrestlers tagging in and out. Nef leaps over the counter and blocks his escape.

NEF
 (Crouching, arms spread
 defensively.)
 Oh no you don't!

SAGAN
 (Looking to Nef)
 But I need it!

NEF
 Daddy said no.

SAGAN
 (Trying to get around her.)
 Then I'm gonna go
 live with a family that lets
 me have quad-copters!

NEF

(Pointing to the debris left by
Grace on the empty work
tables.)

I'll give you a
quarter if you clean up that
workbench.

SAGAN

Uh... um... huh?

(Suddenly distracted.)

Two quarters!

NEF

Okay. That'll get
you two-quarters closer for
your lightsaber fund.

SAGAN

(Looking determined.)

It's a quad-copter
fund!

Sagan runs off. Zack watches, impressed. He is sitting down,
taking off his boots and undoing his bow tie.

ZACK

(Sighing, exhausted.)

Thank you for
running interference.

NEF

(Bends down to give him a peck
on the lips.)

Parenting is a tag-
team sport.

They high-five. At the nearby table, Ada is talking with Pat.

PAT

(Leans over her with an evil
grin. Pokes her in the belly.)

Hmmmm... Still not
ripe for eating yet. Mwa-ha-
ha!

ADA

(Giggles.)

NEF

(Muttering.)

He never gets tired
of that joke.

ZACK

(Shrugs.)

Neither does she.

ADA

(Looking over his cards.)

Whatcha doing?

PAT

(Energized to be talking about
his hobby.)

Ah! I am
constructing a deck around
Birds of Paradise. Since the
birds provide one mana of any
color, I use their ability to
pump them up with
enchancements of various
colors--

ADA

(Politely nodding her head.)

Huh-huh.

ZACK

(Over his shoulder.)

He takes a little
bird and makes it a big bird
monster.

PAT

(Mocking to Zack.)

Silence naive!

(To Ada, in a hushed tone.)

I take these little
birds and pump them up into
big mean scary birds!

(Announcing aloud.)

I'm dubbing this
deck, "Mana-Chickens of

DOOM!"

NEF

(To Zack)

Still think it was
a good idea to let the gamers
into my maker shop?

ZACK

(Shrugging)

He does make things
interesting, no?

(Sits up.)

Oh! I just
remembered.

(Pulls out his laptop.)

I need your help.

(Shows Nef the screen.)

Remember that app I
wrote to run in the system
tray and stream results from
the lab thermometers and
scales into the computer?

NEF

(Nodding.)

Yeah. The one I
helped you setup the TCP
listening for.

ZACK

(Grinning.)

Yeah! Well, now one
of the middle managers is
upset that the staff have to
click a button on the app to
copy that data and then paste
it into the web browser. They
want just a button on the web
form that does it all.

NEF

(Grinning.)

Of course! Standard
Kaizen. The Japanese art of
improving efficiency through
the reduction of movements.

(MORE)

NEF (CONT'D)

Six mouse-clicks
multiplied against 400
thermometer readings a day
reduced to one button-click
saves you 2,000 clicks.
Kaizen!

ZACK

(Sarcastically.)

Glad to see you approve of
this laziness initiative

NEF

Laziness is a virtue if
executed properly.

ZACK

(Tabbing between screens.)

So it looks like I
might be able to do it with a
java applet, but only if I
make some security exceptions
to allow the applet to access
the clipboard.

NEF

(Suddenly frowning.)

That's a pretty big
exception. That would give
java programs access to
anything the client copies to
the clipboard... even
passwords.

ZACK

(Nodding.)

Right... but these
are lab computers on an
internal network. No one is
going shopping on them or
anything like that.

NEF

(Cross arms over her chest,

thinking.)
Hmmm... How about...
Mayyyybeeee...

ZACK
(Hopeful.)
You have something. I can tell.

NEF
(Nodding suddenly.)
Got it.

ZACK
(Sitting up.)
Yes?

NEF
(Holding up her hands to
illustrate.)
We'll get some mice
from the pet shop and train
them to execute the copy-and-
paste commands for the lab
workers.

ZACK
(Slumping.)
Oh... That would be
easier than what I'm trying.

NEF
(Wiggling fingers to pantomime
mice scurrying back and forth.)
Eeep. Eeep. Eeep.
Control-C. Eeep. Eeep. ALT-
Tab. Eeep. Eeep. Eeep.
Control-V... Hmmm... We'll have
to make sure the mice are
compatible with an ISO-
standard keyboard.

ZACK
(Smiling weakly.)
What's the ISO
standard for trained rodents?

NEF

Wait!

(Pointing to the system tray.)

Why not just make
your app a webserver? SHABAM!

ZACK

(Leaning into screen.)

You can do that?

NEF

(Nodding.)

Sure! Have the app
run a little website with the
data and then have the web
form hit localhost to get the
data.

ZACK

(Frowning.)

Hmmm... I don't know.

NEF

Oh?

ZACK

(Still frowning.)

That sounds way too
easy. Let me mourn my rube-
goldberg java hack for a bit
before trying your easy
button solution.

NEF

(Laughing.)

You got it.

PAT

(Shuffling cards.)

A better solution
is to hit it with a brick.

NEF

(To Pat.)

Thank you Pat. That
is your standard solution to
all things computer-related.

ZACK
(Looking up, alarmed.)
Programmer alert.

NEF
(Suddenly irritated.)
It's the asshole.

DON enters the shop. He has a bit of a swagger and an energy drink in one hand. He nods to Nef and Zack, and takes a sip before speaking.

DON
Sup Zack. Sup Nef.
What'cho up to?

ZACK
(Shrugs.)
Oh... Not much. Just
wrapping up for the day.

DON
(Looking down on Zack
condescendingly.)
Really?
(Checks his phone.)
It's not even 5:30.
I'm just getting started. Got
a sweet gig with that
government contracting shop
that just opened up offices
in town.

ZACK
Wow. That's really
great.

DON
Gonna be a lot of
hours. I could probably throw
some work your way if you're
interested.

ZACK
(Shaking head, holding up hands.)
Oh no. I don't have
the resources.

DON
(Confused.)
Resources?

NEF
He's referring to
time.

DON
Oh. You probably
waste time on sleep and
stuff.

NEF
(Sarcastically.)
And being a dad.

DON
(Shrugs dismissively.)
I think this
money's too good to pass up,
but that's just my opinion.
We all gotta set our
priorities.

ZACK
(Fixed smile. Gestures to the
kids.)
And we have ours.

NEF
(Irritated.)
Our kids are only
going to be this young once.
No amount of money is worth
trading this time with them
now.

DON
(Shrugs dismissively and turns
to Zack.)
Oh hey. I got a
tech question for you.

PAT
I can fix it! Just

hit it with a brick!

Everyone looks to PAT.

PAT

What?

(Muttering as he shuffles cards.)

That's what I wish
I'd done back when I worked
on the stupid Y2K bug.

ADA

What's the why two
kay bug?

PAT

(Leaning to address Ada.)

It was when
computers were so stupid many
of them almost broke because
they didn't know what year it
was.

NEF

Pat made enough
money off the Y2K bug to
retire.

DON

(Shrugs dismissively.)
Meh. So anyways...

Don turns his back on Nef, cutting her out of the conversation.
Behind Don, Nef starts making faces at the back of his head.

ZACK

(Seeing Nef and trying to keep
a straight face with Don.)

Yes. Your question.
What's that?

DON

So the client's got
this old legacy system--

NEF

(Quietly.)

Redundancy alert!

DON
--for human
resources. It's all PHP and
MySQL and stuff.

ZACK
(Nodding.)
An AMP solution.

DON
Yeah. Really
antiquated and stuff. And
they want it to expose a web
service with employee ids and
names to integrate with some
learning management system--

ZACK
An LMS... I follow.

DON
And I'm just like...
I dunno... It's all old code
and it's hard to follow. So
I'm thinking I'll probably
just rewrite the whole thing
in Ruby or Python or
something. You know,
modernize it.

Nef's eyes go wide.

ZACK
(Confused and alarmed.)
Oh... Um... Wait.
You're going to rewrite a
comprehensive human resources
web application...

DON
(Nonchalant.)
Yeah.

Nef makes a "dude" face, imitating Don.

ZACK

(Trying to make Don see the error in his thinking politely.)

From scratch...

DON

Uh huh.

ZACK

Instead of just...
writing a simple web service
to expose the data...

DON

(Clueless.)

Right.

Nef gets serious.

ZACK

(Holding up a finger.)

You know... one file...
a database call... outputting
some data...

DON

Right on.

NEF

(Stepping into the conversation.)

Don... I think what
Zack is trying to say is... a
human resources application
is a really big system with
lots of really complex
functions... and the fact that
it's really old means that it
probably has a lot of
customizations in it...
probably years' and years'
worth of code in there.

DON

(Nodding.)

Right on.

NEF

(Leaning in to see if he gets it.)

Do you understand what we're trying to say?

DON

(Still nodding.)

Oh yeah. I get it.

I better get to work.

(Takes a chug off his energy drink.)

It's gonna be a long weekend if I'm gonna get this rewrite done by Friday.

Don leaves with a wave. Nef and Zack look to one another.

NEF

(Shaking her fists in frustration.)

Ohhh... Can you believe him?

ZACK

(Shaking head.)

I know.

NEF

(Speaking in a "dude" voice.)

"I'm gonna chug some energy stars and pound out a human resources application this weekend."

ZACK

Instead of just writing one-file's worth of PHP.

NEF

(Pacing away.)

He's totally going to screw this up.

ZACK

He is.

NEF

(Pacing toward ZACK.)

If only I could be
there to fix this when he
drops the ball.

ZACK

It's unfortunate.

NEF

(Rushes over to her desktop.)

I wonder if the
contractor has anything on
their website.

ZACK

(Sitting up.)

Wait, what?

NEF

(Typing. Tabbing through
screens.)

You know... someone
we can reach out to there.

ZACK

(Coming over. Worried.)

Reach out to why?

NEF

(Looks at him.)

To warn him about

Don.

ZACK

(Shaking head.)

Yehhh... I'm not
comfortable with this.

NEF

(Frowning.)

Why not? Is this
like that salary thing?

ZACK

What salary thing?

NEF

That guy-thing
where you think it's wrong to
talk about how much you make
with your coworkers.

ZACK

It's not a guy-
thing. It's practical.
Prevents people from getting
hurt feelings and whatnot.
With this thing with Don... I'm
just not sure it's the most
ethical thing to try and
steal his contract.

NEF

I'm not trying to
steal his contract. I'm
simply offering my services
to the client in the event
that Don drops the ball on
this. That's not unethical,
that's fair competition.

ZACK

I get that... but Don
is kind of our friend. He
trusts us enough to talk
about his contracts. Would
this be betraying that trust?

NEF

And I get that... but
what about the ethics of
letting an incompetent
contractor deliver a shoddy
product to their client?

They both frown in silent thought for a moment. Her computer
chimes and a call request pops up.

NEF

(Looking to it.)

Ah... It's Hanuma!

Let's see what he thinks.

(Clicks accept. Hanuma's photo
appears on the screen.)

Hi Hanuma.

HANUMA

(Voice only.)

I can't see you!

Enable video!

ZACK

(Smiling.)

That depends.

HANUMA

On what?

NEF

Are you dressed?

HANUMA

Oh come on! That
was one time and I didn't
even know the video was
enabled!

Nef laughs and clicks to open the video. Hanuma appears on the screen. He sits in a dark room, illuminated by his computer monitor, and cradles a baby in the crook of one arm.

NEF

(Fawning.)

Awww... Is that
Sirisha?

HANUMA

(Holds the baby up to the
monitor.)

Yes! This is the
little bundle of joy... my
little crying, pooping,
keeping me up all night
bundle of joy.

ZACK

(Leaning over Nef's shoulder to see.)

What time is it over there?

HANUMA

(Smiling.)

It's 3 A.M. I figure since I'm up, I might as well get some hours in. Nefertiti, do you have the requirements for that geomap visualization?

NEF

(Holds up her hands.)

I got the documentation from the SME this morning, but first I have a question for you.

HANUMA

Yes?

NEF

How much do you make?

HANUMA

(Eyebrows go up.)

Oh! Um... Well...

ZACK

Don't answer that Hanuma!

(To Nef.)

The kid's in India. The whole reason Gary outsources to him is to pay him less.

NEF

(Sighs.)

Okay. Okay.

(MORE)

NEF (CONT'D)

(To Hanuma.)

Second question: do you think it's unethical of me to offer my services to a potential client who's about to waste money on an incompetent contractor?

HANUMA

I see nothing wrong with that. That's just good business.

ZACK

What if the incompetent contractor is a friend and the only reason you know about it is because they asked for help on it?

HANUMA

Oh... Well, that seems a little rude.

NEF

What if the incompetent contractor only asked for help to give him an opening for bragging about getting the contract and showing off his bleeding-edge tech knowledge?

HANUMA

So you're not talking about Pat.

PAT

(Offscreen.)

Hit it with a brick!

HANUMA

Is this that asshole you were telling me about?

NEF

Yes!

HANUMA

That's a tough one.
It could make things
extremely awkward for you if
he found out about it.

ZACK

Which is why I vote
we stay out of it. This is an
ethical quagmire.

NEF

I get it. Don just
gets me so heated with his
brogrammer nonsense. He's
still our neighbor, and we
don't need the drama in our
lives.

HANUMA

I am very drama-
adverse too.

NEF

Thanks Hanuma. I'll
email you the requirements
document shortly.

HANUMA

Can I bill an hour
for this chat?

NEF

Technically we have
to chat for 15 minutes to
bill for it.

HANUMA

(Mildly disappointed.)
Okay.

NEF

(Squinting at the call window.)

But I think 3 A.M.
calls should be billable no
matter how long they are.

HANUMA

(Bounces in chair.)

Yay!

Sirisha starts crying. Hanuma's eyes go wide.

HANUMA

(Whispering.)

I mean... yayyyyyy...

Nef ends the call, turns to Sagan, who is just running up to them.

SAGAN

(Holding out hand expectantly.)

Quarters please!

ZACK

(Pulling out quarters to hand
him.)

Quarters for the
quadcopter! Four quarters
make a dollar. Four rotors
make a Quadcopter. Four
babies make quadruplets. Four
legs make a quadruped.

NEF

Drawn and quartered
makes--oh, nevermind!

SAGAN

When can we go get
my quadcopter?

ZACK

(Stooping down, eye-to-eye.)

When you have
enough quarters saved up... but
also when you have enough
fine motor skills.

SAGAN
(Frowning.)
What fun motor
sails?

ZACK
You need to
practice more video games to
get your hand-eye
coordination up so you can
remote control the
quadcopter.

SAGAN
Oh! Like how you
need to practice because you
suck at Halo!

ZACK
I what?

SAGAN
You know! You're
always dying at Halo and all
those people call you noob.

ZACK
They do?

SAGAN
(Taking ZACK's hand, pulling him
along)
It's okay Daddy. We
can practice together! Come
on!

ZACK
(Looks to Nef.)
Is everything okay
with us.

NEF
(Nodding and smiling.)
Yep. I'm over it
and we already have enough
drama in our lives. Let's go

play with our kids.

Grace enters, a bag filled with chinese takeout swinging from one arm. She sees Nef and freezes.

NEF

(Perturbed.)

Didn't I tell you
no Chinese? Don't you know
that stuff is just deep fried
sugar?

GRACE

What are you still
doing here? Shouldn't you be
playing with your kids? What
kind of a mother are you?

Grace makes a hasty exit. Nef rolls her eyes.

LATER, it's early morning. The sun is shining through the front windows of the shop. Nef is sitting at her desk, talking with Hanuma. Ada sits on her lap, typing at a keyboard.

NEF

Okay Hanuma. Thanks
for the demo. I think
everything looks good to go
to QA for review.

HANUMA

Excellent. I will
get the code up on the test
environment.

NEF

Good night. Hope
Sirisha lets you sleep
tonight.

HANUMA

(Looks to sounds of baby crying
in the background.)

We shall see. Good
morning to you! Have a great
day!

Nef hangs up the call. Zack enters from back of the shop, pulling Sagan along.

SAGAN

(Struggling.)

But I want to wear
my 3D Printing Nerd shirt!

ZACK

You wore that shirt
all weekend! It's filthy!

SAGAN

But I don't want to
wear the robot shirt! It
sucks!

ZACK

The robot shirt was
your favorite shirt last
week!

SAGAN

(Pouting.)

Robot shirt sucks!

NEF

(Not looking up from her
computer.)

I'll give you a
quarter if you wear the robot
shirt.

SAGAN

(Rushes up to the counter.)

Two quarters!

NEF

(Reaches over and shakes Sagan's
hand.)

Sold.

ZACK

Wait. Isn't there a
principle of this thing or
something we should be
sticking to?

NEF

Do you want principles or do you want your son out the door in time to catch the bus?

ZACK

Got it. Principles can suck it.

(Confused.)

Are you letting Ada play with your keyboard?

ADA

(Slapping keys.)

I'm dot-com-ing!

NEF

(Holds up a loose wire.)

Decoy keyboard.

Real one is behind the monitor.

ZACK

Ohhhh... clever. I remember that time she got your computer speaking German.

NEF

Ugh. Took me an hour to figure out how to set it back.

ZACK

Well, I think you've achieved parenting level 12 now.

NEF

Stole the idea from your parenting hack. Remember the decoy Playstation controller?

SAGAN

I'm a big boy now.
I can tell when the
controller isn't plugged in.

ZACK

(Wistfully.)

I remember those
days... back when I could
immerse myself in amazing
virtual worlds for hours on
end... shooting aliens... solving
puzzles... exploring epic
landsca--

SAGAN

It's time for
school!

ZACK

(Shakes head as if waking from a
dream.)

Right! Let's go.
Come on Ada.

Ada gives Nef a big hug and a kiss before climbing down from her
chair. Sagan comes over to Nef.

SAGAN

(Arms outstretched.)

Hug!

Sagan and Nef hug.

SAGAN

Kiss!

They take turns kissing on the cheek.

SAGAN

Cthulhu kisses!

Sagan and Nef each put their hands in front of their mouths,
wiggling their fingers like tentacles. They each make slurping
noises as their fingers touch.

NEF

Have a great day

sweetie!

Zack comes around to give Nef a kiss.

NEF

(Looking up at him with obvious
love.)

You have a great
day too.

They kiss again.

ZACK

I love you
sweetheart. You have a
productive day.

NEF

I will try.

Don comes stumbling into the shop. His eyes are swollen and he looks around blearily. His shirt is halfway untucked. Zack looks at him, concerned. Don squints at him uncomprehendingly. Zack looks to Nef.

NEF

(Sighs.)

I got it.

Zack waves and leaves through the front door with Ada and Sagan.

NEF

(Leaning over the counter to try
and make eye-contact.)

Hi Don? Rough
weekend?

DON

(Grunts affirmative.)

NEF

(Gesturing to the snacks behind
her.)

You... uh... want some
coffee?

DON

(Makes a face of disgust and holds up hands. Mutters in a raspy voice.)

Noooooo...

NEF

How'd the rewrite go? Did you get the HR system migrated to RWBY or Python or NodeJS or whatever it was?

DON

(Clears throat.)

I... uh... I got the... ummm... I got that one screen done... that one where you enter the name... and the... um... password...

NEF

(Incredulous.)

You got the login screen done.

DON

Yeahhh... and I made some progress on a dashboard... I just... I had to get the business model set up... and the um... the uh... there was other stuff too.

NEF

Yeah... with an HR system there's probably lots of stuff. There's probably even stuff you haven't found yet. Normally for a complete application migration, I would need a team of people. I would have someone going line-by-line through the code and documenting all the business rules programmers have been adding into it over the years. Then there's the Quality Assurance. You need

someone testing and retesting everything. This is a Human Resource application.

(MORE)

NEF (CONT'D)

A lot depends on it. Paychecks, benefits, people's livelihoods. You can't just bang something like that out in a weekend.

Don just stares into space, blinking.

NEF

Do you need a hug?

Don nods. She comes around and gives him a hug.

DON

I don't think I'm gonna make my deadline.

NEF

You're just exposing some data with a service. I don't know PHP, but I'm sure we can figure it out. Go get your laptop and let's knock out some code.

LATER The front of the store is now in the afternoon shade. Nef is working at her computer. Zack comes in towing Sagan and Ada. He pauses to look at Don, who is snoring on one of the couches.

ZACK

(Looks to Nef.)

Oh dear. That doesn't look good.

NEF

(Getting up, starts hugging each of them.)

It's all good. He's just catching up on some much needed rest.

ZACK

His rewrite not go
the way he'd hoped?

NEF

No, but we got his
client what they needed... even
if it was a few hours past
the deadline. And maybe Don
got some experience in the
process.

ZACK

We've all made our
bone-headed mistakes. He's
young. Wisdom comes with age.

PAT

Ha! I sit here as a
living contradiction to that
assertion! Phooey on your
wisdom! Phooey I say!

SAGAN

Yay Pat! Phooey on
wisdom!

ADA

Phooey!

Zack and Nef look to one another. Touch hands tag-team style.

ZACK

Time for some
active parenting.

PAT

You know I can't
let this whole adulting thing
go easy for you.

NEF

Let's run them
around outside.

(To Pat.)

Hold down the fort
for us Pat.

PAT

Well that is
certainly not wise.