

*I'll Hear It When I See It*  
A short play  
By Ira Gamerman

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**CHARACTERS: 2M**

TAD- M, 50's

A guy with a broken radio  
and an old-school attitude.

MEL- M, 24-30

An idealistic appliance  
shop attendant.

**SETTING:**

An appliance shop. September 27th 1960.

An appliance shop. September 27th 1960.

TAD

Did ya hear me?

MEL

Yes sir.

TAD

Then get me a new radio!

MEL

Can't do that.

TAD

You can't do it?

MEL

No sir.

TAD

I'm sorry. Am I seeing this wrong? I thought the sign out front said "Appliance shop".

MEL

It does.

TAD

Well, lemme repeat myself: I got a BROKEN radio. And I wanna buy a NEW one.

MEL

I'm sorry, but I can't let ya do that.

TAD

You're not listening to me-

MEL

No. I hear ya loud and clear.

TAD

But you STILL won't do it?

MEL

No sir.

TAD

Well, I've never heard such blatant disrespect in all my life.

MEL

But have you *seen* it?

Excuse me? TAD

Have you SEEN it, sir? MEL

Look Mac, if I wanted somebody to play mind-games with, I'd hire a shrink. TAD

I'm not playin- MEL

Save it. I'm takin' my business elsewhere. TAD

I don't think you wanna do that. MEL

Why not? TAD

Because you're gonna be missin' out on THE FUTURE. MEL

The future? TAD

Yes sir. MEL

And where pray-tell is the future? TAD

Right there in that box. MEL

That box is the future? TAD

Yes sir. MEL

Alright. Have a good day, buddy. TAD

You watch the debates last night? MEL

No. I *listened* to the debates. TAD

MEL  
Oh you LISTENED?

TAD  
Yeah, I *LISTENED*. Then my radio cut out. What of it?

MEL  
Who would you say won?

TAD  
Nixon.

MEL  
NIXON? Really?

TAD  
Ya heard me.

MEL  
Ya seen the paper's this mornin'?

TAD  
No.

MEL  
Oughta take a look.

TAD  
Why's that?

MEL  
Cuz a lotta people might beg to differ with your assessment.

TAD  
Really?

MEL  
Uhuh. Lotta people.

TAD  
You know what I beg to differ with?

MEL  
What's that?

TAD  
You refusin' to sell me a new radio.

MEL  
I never refused-

TAD  
I heard ya- clear as day- say you *refuse*-

MEL  
I didn't say "refuse".

TAD  
Ya sure as hell did.

MEL  
I said I *couldn't*.

TAD  
Ya couldn't?

MEL  
Implying that my hands are tied.

TAD  
So, you're *refusing*!

MEL  
I'm saying there are larger powers at work here, that are making me morally unable to sell you a new radio.

TAD  
Well, I don't see a difference.

MEL  
Of course you don't. You know why?

TAD  
Enlighten me.

MEL  
Because the spoken-word is FALLIBLE.

TAD  
Fallible?

MEL  
Uhuh.

TAD  
I don't even know what that means.

MEL  
Case in point!

TAD  
WHAT IN THE HELL DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH YOU SELLIN' ME A NEW RADIO!?!

MEL  
I'll tell ya.

Thank you! TAD

After a quick survey. MEL

Jesus Chri- TAD

Now, would you trust somebody who couldn't look ya in the eye? MEL

Buddy- TAD

Just answer the question. MEL

No. TAD

What if they kept sweatin' while they were talkin'? MEL

No. TAD

You wouldn't trust 'em? MEL

No! TAD

Why? MEL

I don't know. Cuz they're unsure of themselves. TAD

And if they're not sure of THEMSELVES how can YOU be sure of 'em? MEL

Right. TAD

Well, you missed Nixon sweatin' all last night. MEL

What are you talkin' about? TAD

MEL

Nixon was sweatin' up a storm durin' that debate. He couldn't look at the camera. Hell, he coulda been readin' off cue cards for all I know.

TAD

Well, on the radio he SOUNDED-

MEL

That's right! He SOUNDED- But ya know how he looked?

TAD

How?

MEL

Old.

And sickly.

Like he was clingin' to the old established ways.

Like he was afraid of change.

Just like you clingin' to some busted old radio.

TAD

I didn't realize-

MEL

Well, now ya do. So how 'bout ya forget about that old thing and embrace the-

TAD

Now wait just a minute here. The radio's never lied to me before. Sure, it's OLD, but bein' old mean's it's got experience.

MEL

I'm not-

TAD

And that box of yours costs nearly five times what I'd pay for a new radio, am I right?

MEL

That's right.

TAD

Well what? You tryin' to make a quick buck off me?

MEL

No sir.

TAD

I'm stickin' with my radio, son. Now, you can either sell me a new one or can lose yourself a customer.

MEL

That's not right.

TAD

I'm right where it counts. Age and experience trumps.

MEL

You didn't see what I saw last night.

TAD

Well then, tell me: How am I supposed to believe ya?

MEL

Cuz, I'm lookin' ya in the eye.

I'm not sickly.

I'm not sweatin'.

I'm tellin' ya.

Last night I saw John Kennedy on that box.

And he spoke with grace.

He looked this country in the eye without a bead of sweat on his brow.

And he looked young and confident.

And he talked about the future.

A REAL future.

Where things are gonna get better for work-a-day guys like you and me.

And brother, I SAW IT.

It gave me hope.

Nixon? He just said a lotta stuff.

A lotta old stuff.

The party line.

But Kennedy?

He took a NEW look at this country.

Now, do you wanna go backwards with a guy who can't look us in the eye?

Or do you wanna take a chance and see some real change?

TAD

I wanna see.

MEL

Then what the hell do you want with a radio?

Beat.

TAD

You drive a hard bargain, kid. Guess you oughta gimme that box, then.

MEL

You sure?

Long as it's worth the cost.

TAD

I know it is, sir.

MEL

How ya so sure?

TAD

You'll see.

MEL

END PLAY.