

Skit Script: "Dominic Dives into Debt"
(For the *Economis* Lesson "Avoiding Credit Blunders")

Props:

- table
- envelopes
- fake TV
- (optional) two radios or stereos and two CD's – one with movie clips and the other with any music
- something green to represent an electronic device – an actual electronic device or a piece of paper
- phone

Characters:

- Dominic
- TV Advertisement Voice
- Howard the Neighbor
- Best Buy Clerk
- Credit Card Company Receptionist

(Scene 1: Dominic Diveindebt is sitting on the couch watching the television and changing channels with a remote-control.)

Dominic: Let's see what's on...

Voice of TV Advertisement: *(backstage)* Do you want to be entertained every waking hour of the day? Do you feel like you don't have enough functions on your electronic devices? Do you want to have a gadget that will make you the most fly kid on the block? Well it looks like you need the new iRule!! The iRule allows you to listen to music while you watch a DVD, check the internet, and talk on the phone with up to 12 people, ALL AT THE SAME TIME!!

Dominic: I need this.

TV Advertisement: Go to your nearest Best Buy and get an iRule for only \$499.99. Once you have it, you won't be able to live without it!!

Dominic: That's so true. But I don't have five hundred dollars. What am I going to do? *(Dominic ponders for a moment, then folds his hands and gets on his knees facing the audience.)* Dear God, please let me find five hundred dollars so that I can buy an iRule. I promise that I'll watch clean movies, listen to appropriate music, and look up bible verses online. Amen. *(Dominic gets up and looks around in hopes that he will find the money. After looking for a little bit, he sits back down, moping.)* I'm never going to find five hundred dollars. *(Just then, the Doorbell rings and Dominic answers it.)* Hey Howard.

Howard the Neighbor: Hi Dominic. Your mail ended up in my box again. *(He hands him a few envelopes).*

Dominic: Sorry about that. Thanks for bringing it to me.

Howard the Neighbor: No problem. *(Howard leaves.)*

Dominic: Let's see. A letter from my girlfriend, a college acceptance letter, a credit card offer...wait a minute...A CREDIT CARD OFFER!! *(Dominic rips open the letter and reads it.)* One hundred dollar sign-up bonus!! Five hundred dollar credit line!! That's perfect! *(Reads more.)* I'm already approved – no applications or anything. And the card is already in here - I just call them and they'll activate it. Wow, this is perfect. Once I have this, I won't be able to live without it. Where's my phone...*(Dominic looks around for his phone, finds it, dials a number, and puts it up to his ear.)* Hi this is Dominic Diveindebt. Yes, I would like you to activate my card. Thank you!! *(Hangs up the phone and starts running off the stage.)* I'm going to Best Buy!!

(End Scene One.)

Scene Two: At Best Buy

(The scene opens with a store clerk standing center stage, looking around for customers to help.)

Dominic: *(Running into the scene)* I NEED AN iRULE!!!

Clerk: Why yes you do. What color would you like?

Dominic: Whatever color is most in style.

Clerk: Well, we're out of the five most popular colors, but we do have plenty in Pea Soup.

Dominic: That's too bad. I once dropped my phone in a pot of pasta. Do they still work?

Clerk: No, they're not sitting in pea soup; their color is "Pea Soup."

Dominic: Oh...well, that's fine, as long as it's an iRule.

Clerk: Great. Now, some of the accessories you'll need are the wall charger, computer charger, and car charger. And you'll need the cables to connect the iRule to each. If you exercise, you'll probably want to get the jogging armband, walking legband, bike attachment, and swimming armband. And of course if you get the swimming armband, you'll need the waterproof case...which comes separately. And finally, you'll need both the indoor and outdoor headphones. This comes to a total of \$784.33, plus tax.

Dominic: Well, I don't know if I have enough money for all...

Clerk: Believe me, once you have them, you won't be able to live without them.

Dominic: Well, I suppose I don't have to pay it all back at once. I'll take it all. Well, except the swimming armband...and the waterproof case. *(Dominic takes out his card and hands it to the clerk. The clerk swipes it and hands it back to Dominic. Dominic takes the bag of the iRule and accessories, and runs off excited. End scene two.)*

Scene Three: The Bill

(When the scene opens, someone shows a sign that says "three months later." Dominic is playing with his iRule – watching a movie on it, listening to music, and talking to friends. Backstage, a movie clip and a song are playing at the same time.)

Dominic: *(Presses button on the iRule.)* Hey Jamal, yeah, I love my iRule. I can do everything that I want, anywhere I want...*(presses button again)*...Oh, hey Kaya, yeah, the iRule is great. Now that I have it, I just can't live without it...*(presses button again)*...Oh hey Howard... you got my mail again?...you're at my door?...you've been ringing the doorbell for ten minutes! Oh sorry, I'll be right there *(Dominic presses a button and all the sounds turn off. Dominic runs to the door and to meet Howard, who hands him his mail.)* Thanks Howard.

Howard: No problem. *(He leaves.)*

Dominic: *(going through the mail)* Let's see, letter from my cousin, letter from my grandma, credit card bill...oh, I better open this one. *(Dominic opens the letter and begins reading).* WHAT!! My bill is more than one thousand dollars – how did that happen!?!? What's their number? *(Dominic sits down and searches on the bill for a number. He types it into his iRule and waits for a receptionist to pick up.)*

Receptionist: *(backstage)* Hi, this is Foolish Consumer Card Services, how may I help you?

Dominic: I just got my bill and it's way more than it should be.

Receptionist: Is that right. What's your name?

Dominic: Dominic Diveindebt.

Receptionist: Okay...I'm looking at your account right now and it looks like you have a \$725 purchase that has built \$50 worth of interest over the past two months because you missed a payment and the other was only the minimum payment on your balance. Plus, a

\$50 purchase fee and a \$75 over-the-limit fee. Oh yeah, and two monthly user's fees of \$50 each.

Dominic: Wait a minute, so I have to pay a fee every time I purchase something?

Receptionist: Yes, didn't you read that in the paperwork, Eagle-Eye?

Dominic: Well, I didn't exactly read all the paperwork...but what about the over-the-limit fee – what is that?

Receptionist: (*Condescendingly*) Hmm...over-the-limit fee...let's see...when you spend more than your limit, you are charged a fee. Your limit is \$500, and you made a purchase of \$725.

Dominic: It would have been nice to have known this when I called to sign up. What about the payments? I understand the bill that I didn't pay, but how can I be charged interest if I'm making the minimum payments?

Receptionist: Well chief, it looks like you should have thought about how you would pay for your toys before you bought them. Of course it's better to at least pay the minimum, but you still gain interest unless you pay back your ENTIRE balance right away.

Dominic: What about my sign-up bonus?

Receptionist: That's just for senior citizens.

Dominic: (*Desperate*) Okay. Well, is there any way you can give me a pardon of any of these charges?

Receptionist: Sorry Big Spender, debt doesn't work like that. Once you have it, you can't live without it...well, until you pay it off.

Dominic: Okay, I get it. Could you hold on for a second? (*Presses button on iRule. He talks to himself.*). What am I going to do now? Not only do I have to pay back a huge credit card bill, but I also have terrible credit. (*Pauses, and thinks for a moment.*) I know what I'll do – I'll cancel this card and sign up for a bunch of other cards to start establishing credit again. (*Presses button on iRule*). Hi, I'd like to cancel my account.

Receptionist: Are you sure you want to do that?

Dominic: Absolutely.

Receptionist: Okay, it's cancelled.

Dominic: Thank you.

(Dominic presses button on iRule and exits the stage. The scene ends.)

Scene Four: The Bills

(Someone comes onstage with a sign that says "Three Months Later," and leaves. Dominic strolls onstage with a light, confident step. A stack of envelopes sit on a table in the center of the room.)

Dominic: It's bill paying day! Let's see what we have. (*Dominic opens a letter, writes a check, and puts it inside the envelope*). I'm so glad I cancelled that credit card and got all these new ones. I must be establishing some good credit now. (*Doorbell Rings and Dominic gets up to answer it. It's Howard.*)

Howard: Here's your mail.

Dominic: Thanks Howard. (*Howard leaves. Dominic looks at the envelope on top.*) Oh no!! I forgot about this card!! Ahhhhhh!!! I just can't live without this debt!! (*Dominic kneels down to pray*). Dear God, I'm sorry I assumed that it was okay to spend all that money on an iRule. Please help me get out of debt. Amen. (*Doorbell rings again and Dominic answers it. It's Howard.*)

Howard: (*Casually*) Hey, I just heard you screaming desperately about your credit cards. I work with money for a living, so I might be able to help you out if you need it.

Dominic: Yes please!

Howard: What's the problem?

Dominic: Well, I got a credit card because I wanted to buy an iRule, and I never read the fine print when I signed up. After I got the first bill I realized there were all these fees

associated with it. I couldn't pay off the card, so I cancelled it. Then, to start building credit again, I signed up for a bunch of other credit cards, but I just realized that I totally forgot about one of them. I'm trapped – what am I going to do?

Howard: First of all, I think you already learned your lesson about reading the fine print and making wise decisions with your purchases – not purchasing over the limit, keeping your balances low, etc. But it would be helpful to know a couple things about debt –

Dominic: I know, once you have it, you can't live without...

Howard: Well, sometimes. But more specifically, closing an overdue account does not get rid of your debt. You're going to eventually need to pay the bills from that account. Also, it shortens your credit history, which hurts your credit. The other thing is that having many accounts doesn't help your credit. You're better off having one or two accounts that you manage well.

Dominic: Thanks for the advice Howard. I wish I would have known that before I got in all this debt. What should I do now?

Howard: I'll tell you what, I have some extra money right now, so I'll pay off that credit card you cancelled. I would suggest you cancel some of those other accounts and just keep one or two accounts open.

Dominic: Howard, you don't have to do that...

Howard: Don't worry about it. That's what neighbors do.

Dominic: Wow. Neighbors – once you have them, you can't live without them. *(Dominic and Howard laugh and the scene ends.)*

The End.