

THE GREAT AUTO BATH BUNGLE.

Laurel and Hardy Meet Abbott and Costello

at the Car Wash

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LOGLINE: When two legendary comedic duos, the bumbling Laurel and Hardy and the fast-talking Abbott and Costello, converge at a bustling car wash, the only thing getting cleaned is their reputation as masters of mayhem.

STORY LENGTH: Extra Long (1500-2000 words) **GENRE:** Comedy **NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE:** Observer **STORY FORMAT:** Screenplay

CHARACTERS:

- **STAN LAUREL:** (50s) Thin, boyish, perpetually bewildered, prone to unwitting destruction.
 - **OLIVER HARDY:** (50s) Portly, pompous, easily flustered, the self-appointed leader.
 - **BUD ABBOTT:** (50s) Sharp, quick-witted, the exasperated straight man.
 - **LOU COSTELLO:** (50s) Chubby, childlike, easily confused, prone to panic and literal interpretation.
 - **MS. PRITCHARD:** (60s) Stern, no-nonsense Car Wash Manager.
 - **CHAD:** (20s) Lifeless Car Wash Attendant.
 - **VARIOUS CUSTOMERS:** Unsuspecting victims of the chaos.
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EXT. "SHINE & SPARKLE" AUTO SPA - DAY

SOUND of rushing water, whirring brushes, upbeat and slightly cheesy muzak

The car wash is a vibrant, chrome-gleaming oasis. Bubbles drift in the sunny air. A conveyor belt snakes into a tunnel of spraying water and spinning brushes. Customers wait patiently in their cars.

A battered, ancient FORD MODEL T putts slowly towards the entrance. It coughs like a dying walrus. This is the **HARDY** car.

Behind the wheel, **OLIVER HARDY** (Ollie) strains forward, peering through smudged spectacles. His tie is already slightly askew. Beside him, **STAN LAUREL** (Stan) looks out the window, mesmerized by a particularly robust bubble.

Ollie gestures impatiently to a young, bored ATTENDANT, CHAD, who holds up a hand.

OLLIE

> (To Stan) > Now, pay attention, Stanley. This contraption is quite the marvel. Automatic, you see. No fuss, no muss.

Stan nods, then reaches out to try and catch a bubble. It pops. He looks genuinely disappointed.

Chad gestures them forward. Ollie attempts to guide the Model T onto the conveyor belt. It lurches, then veers wildly, nearly taking out a decorative topiary shaped like a giant sponge.

OLLIE

> (Through gritted teeth) > Stanley, you're not helping! Get your foot off the brake!

STAN

> I wasn't on the brake, Ollie. I was just... (He indicates the gas pedal) ...massaging the accelerator. It looked lonely.

The Model T finally clunks onto the belt, albeit at a jaunty angle. Ollie sighs, adjusting his tie.

Just then, a sleek, if slightly dusty, 1940s BUICK sedan pulls up behind them. This is the **ABBOTT** car.

BUD ABBOTT (Bud) is driving, a crisp fedora perched on his head. Beside him is **LOU COSTELLO** (Lou), already fidgeting.

LOU

> Hey, Abboooott! What are we doin' here? We got a perfectly good hose at home!

BUD

> Lou, we're getting the car washed. It's been three months. It looks like a badger rolled in soot.

LOU

> A badger? I thought it was a squirrel! Is that why there's nuts in the engine?

Bud pinches the bridge of his nose. He notices the peculiar angle of Ollie's Model T ahead of them.

BUD

> (Muttering) > Oh, this is going to be a long day.

Ollie and Stan's car jerks forward into the washing tunnel. The brushes immediately begin their assault. Stan, seeing the rotating brushes, reaches out, thinking they're giant feather dusters.

STAN

> Oh, look, Ollie! They're tickling the car!

A thick, soapy brush SLAMS against Stan's outstretched hand. He yelps, retracting it quickly.

OLLIE

> (Eyes wide) > Stanley! Don't touch that! You'll get us sued!

Suddenly, a powerful jet of water blasts the side of the Model T. A window that was already slightly ajar is forced open, and water sprays directly into Stan's face. He sputters, coughing up soap.

STAN

> (Spluttering) > It's... it's a waterfall, Ollie! A very bubbly waterfall!

Ollie, meanwhile, is trying to roll up the window, but the mechanism is stuck. He gets a direct hit to his face, his tie instantly soaked and plastered to his cheek.

OLLIE

> (Wiping his face) > Oh, for the love of... Stanley, this is another fine mess you've gotten us into!

Their car slowly disappears into the sudsy abyss.

Bud and Lou pull up to Chad.

LOU

> Hey, mister! Is that where they put the cars to sleep?

CHAD

> It's a car wash. Conveyor belt's right there. Five minute cycle.

BUD

> (To Lou) > See? Quick and easy.

LOU

> Five minutes? That's too fast! What if it's not clean? Do they have a slow cycle? Like for a cat nap?

BUD

> No, Lou, they don't have a cat nap cycle. Just get the car on the belt.

Lou leans over to inspect the conveyor belt. He points.

LOU

> What's that big rubber band for? Is that where the car exercises?

Bud sighs, rubbing his temples.

BUD

> Just... aim for the middle.

Lou attempts to slowly nudge the Buick onto the conveyor. He overshoots, and the car lurches off to the side, directly into a stack of neatly folded, freshly laundered car mats. The mats scatter everywhere.

CHAD

> Hey! Watch it, buddy!

LOU

> (Eyes wide) > Buddy? I'm Lou! Who's Buddy? Is he gonna clean up these carpets?

Bud quickly puts the car in reverse, then tries again, this time overcorrecting and nearly backing into a shiny, new convertible waiting behind them. The convertible's driver honks angrily.

BUD

> (To Lou) > Just put it in gear, Lou! Any gear! Just not reverse again!

Finally, with a jolt, the Buick finds its mark on the conveyor. It begins its slow journey into the tunnel.

INT. CAR WASH TUNNEL - MOMENTS LATER

The Model T emerges from the main wash, dripping wet, but somehow looking dirtier than before. A hubcap is missing. Ollie's tie is completely ruined. Stan's hair is plastered to his forehead.

OLLIE

> (Surveying the car) > Well, this is just grand, Stanley. My motorcar has been in a sudsy brawl, and it looks like it lost.

STAN

> But it smelled nice for a moment, Ollie. Like... soap.

The car moves into the RINSE phase, then the DRYING bay, where enormous blowers kick on. Stan braces himself, then slowly starts to float slightly in his seat, his hat blowing off.

STAN

> Oh, look, Ollie! I'm flying! Well, just a little.

Ollie grabs Stan's arm, pulling him down.

OLLIE

> Don't be a nincompoop, Stanley! You'll rip the roof off!

Their car exits the tunnel into the VACUUM AREA. Ollie gingerly edges the Model T into a parking bay. Stan spots a vacuum hose.

STAN

> Oh, splendid! Now the car can breathe!

Stan grabs the giant vacuum hose, which is surprisingly powerful. He accidentally points it at Ollie. Ollie's soaked tie flaps wildly, then the end of the hose SUCKS IT IN with a loud POP.

OLLIE

> (Muffled) > Mmmmmph! Stanley! My tie!

Stan struggles with the hose, trying to release the tie. He tugs. The hose, now stuck, pulls free from its stand and starts flailing wildly like a monstrous snake.

Just then, the Abbott car emerges from the tunnel, surprisingly clean. Bud, a small smile on his face, is feeling smug. Lou, however, eyes the giant blowers with suspicion.

LOU

> Hey, Abboooooott! Are they gonna use those big hair dryers on me? My hair's already perfect!

BUD

> No, Lou, they're for the car.

LOU

> But what if the car gets windburn? Does it get chapped lips?

As they pull up, Lou spots the flailing vacuum hose, now held precariously by Stan, who is spinning around, trying to control it. The hose WHIPS and WHACKS, hitting various cars, including a dent in the side of Bud's newly cleaned Buick.

BUD

> (Eyes widening) > Hey! What in the blazes?!

Ollie, still trying to free his tie, lunges at Stan. They both wrestle with the hose. The hose's nozzle, freed from Stan's grip, flies through the air and SMASHES a side mirror off Bud's car.

Bud stares, aghast, at his now-damaged vehicle.

BUD

> My mirror! You broke my mirror!

LOU

> (Pointing at Stan and Ollie) > They broke it, Abboooooott! The little fella and the big fella with the funny necktie!

Stan, finally getting the hose under control, looks innocently at Bud.

STAN

> Oh dear. Was that important?

Ollie, finally freeing his tie (which is now in shreds), glares at Bud.

OLLIE

> (Pompously) > See here, sir! My associate was merely attempting to, uh, provide extra aeration! It was an accident!

BUD

> An accident?! It looks like a badger attacked my car! And it was just washed!

LOU

> I told ya, it's a badger!

OLLIE

> (To Bud, sternly) > Now, now, there's no need for such histrionics! We're merely trying to make our way through this establishment.

BUD

> Make your way through?! You're making a mess of everything! First your car nearly takes out the whole front lot, then you destroy my mirror!

STAN

> (To Ollie, whispering) > He seems cross, Ollie. Should I offer him my handkerchief? It's clean on one side.

Ollie shushes Stan.

OLLIE

> (To Bud) > Perhaps if you had been more attentive to your own vehicle, it wouldn't have been in the way of a perfectly natural vacuum hose rebound!

BUD

> It was parked! Where it was supposed to be! You were flailing around like a salmon on roller skates!

LOU

> A salmon? I thought it was a badger!

A small crowd of CUSTOMERS has begun to gather, watching the spectacle.

OLLIE

> (To Bud, puffing out his chest) > And who are you, sir, to lecture us on proper car wash etiquette? I daresay we've been patronizing such establishments since before you were a glint in your father's eye!

BUD

> And I daresay you've been breaking things since before I was born!

LOU

> He's got a point, Abboooott! His car looks like it's been through a war!

Stan nods agreement. Ollie glares at Stan.

OLLIE

> Stanley!

STAN

> Well, it does, Ollie. It has a dent where the badger hit it.

Ollie's face goes red. He turns back to Bud.

OLLIE

> See here! My vehicle is a classic! A testament to ingenuity! Yours merely looks... wet.

BUD

> It's *supposed* to be wet! It's a car wash!

LOU

> (To Bud, conspiratorially) > Maybe they don't know how to wash a car, Abboooott. Maybe they just came for the bubbles.

STAN

> (Eyes lighting up) > Oh, the bubbles were lovely!

Ollie claps a hand over Stan's mouth.

OLLIE

> Quiet, Stanley!

BUD

> Look, just pay for the mirror, and we can all go our separate ways.

OLLIE

> Pay? Preposterous! You were clearly negligent!

LOU

> Negligent? Is that like being naked?

Bud throws his hands up in exasperation.

BUD

> Never mind! I'll just fix it myself! Lou, let's get out of here.

Lou looks at the Model T.

LOU

> Hey, Abboooott, what kind of car is that? It looks like a bathtub on wheels!

STAN

> (Proudly) > It's a Model T!

LOU

> A Model T? What's a Model T?

BUD

> It's a type of car, Lou. An old one.

LOU

> How old? Is it older than me?

BUD

> Yes, Lou, it's older than you.

LOU

> So it should be in a museum, not a car wash! Maybe that's why it's so dirty! It's got museum dirt!

Ollie fumes.

OLLIE

> (To Stan) > Stanley, perhaps we should give these gentlemen a demonstration of proper car cleaning. They appear to be... uninitiated.

Stan brightens.

STAN

> Oh, yes! I'm very good with a sponge! I found one earlier!

Stan produces an enormous, industrial-sized sponge, soaking wet, from behind his back. It's so big it looks like a yellow pillow. He must have picked it up from a cleaning cart.

BUD

> Where did you get that?!

STAN

> From the water cooler! It was quite thirsty.

Ollie takes the sponge from Stan.

OLLIE

> Now, observe, gentlemen. The art of the gentle scrub.

With a flourish, Ollie takes the giant sponge and attempts to gently wipe the side of their Model T. He misjudges the weight and the sponginess. The sponge SLAPS against the car, then sticks. Ollie tries to pull it off. It resists.

Ollie pulls harder. The sponge rips, sending a torrent of water and suds straight onto his face.

OLLIE

> (Muffled by suds) > Mmmph!

Stan laughs, a high-pitched "hoo-hoo."

STAN

> It's raining, Ollie!

Bud shakes his head, turning to his car.

BUD

> We're getting out of here, Lou. This is ridiculous.

LOU

> Should I drive, Abboooott? Or should I just push? It's quicker if I push!

Lou, still confused, grabs a nearby bucket filled with soapy water and a small brush. He looks at Bud's car.

LOU

> Hey, Abboooott! While they're messin' around, I'll just give our car a little touch-up!

Before Bud can protest, Lou enthusiastically DUMPS the entire bucket of soapy water over the hood of Bud's now-clean Buick.

BUD

> (Roaring) > LOU! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

LOU

> I'm cleaning it, Abboooott! Just like they are! See? Now it's all bubbly again!

Lou starts scrubbing furiously with the small brush. The brush, however, is meant for tyre wells, and its bristles are stiff. It leaves clear SCRATCH MARKS across the paint.

BUD

> (Eyes wide with horror) > You're scratching it! You're scratching the paint!

LOU

> Oh, is that what that noise is? I thought it was the badger again!

Ollie, finally wiping the suds from his face, sees Lou's destructive scrubbing.

OLLIE

> (Indignant) > See here, you! That's no way to treat an automobile! You'll ruin the finish!

LOU

> (Confused) > The finish? What finish? I'm just getting started!

Lou, seeing a spray nozzle on a nearby stand, grabs it. He points it at the car.

LOU

> Maybe it needs more water! Like a thirsty plant!

He squeezes the trigger. A powerful jet of high-pressure water OBLITERATES the driver's side headlight of Bud's Buick. Glass shatters.

BUD

> (A pained groan) > My headlight!

LOU

> (To Bud, innocently) > Is it supposed to do that, Abboooott? Maybe it's a magic light! It broke into little pieces!

Stan, meanwhile, sees the broken headlight. He wants to help. He spots a roll of brightly coloured, super-sticky DUCT TAPE on a nearby utility cart.

STAN

> Oh, I know what to do, Ollie! We can patch it up!

Stan enthusiastically grabs the roll of tape and rushes over to Bud's car. He starts haphazardly taping over the broken headlight, then over the scratch marks, then over the entire front grille, creating a colourful, chaotic patchwork.

BUD

> No! What are you doing?! Get that tape off my car!

STAN

> But it's very sticky! It'll hold everything together!

Ollie, enraged by the escalating chaos, attempts to yank the tape roll from Stan. Stan resists. They effectively start to TAPE themselves to the car, and to each other, in a sticky struggle.

OLLIE

> Stanley! Let go of that infernal adhesive!

STAN

> But it's helping the car! See, it doesn't look so sad now!

Lou, seeing the two men stuck to the car, laughs his distinctive "hee-hee-hee."

LOU

> They're stuck, Abboooott! Like flies on flypaper! Can we take them home?

Bud, now completely unhinged by the situation, tries to pull Stan and Ollie off his car. This just makes the duct tape even more tangled.

BUD

> Get off! Get off my car! Both of you!

Lou, still holding the high-pressure hose, thinks Bud is wrestling with them. He wants to help Bud. He points the hose at the struggling pile of men and car.

LOU

> I'll get 'em, Abboooott! A good rinse will get them off!

He blasts the hose. The full force of the water hits Stan, Ollie, and Bud, who are now tangled in duct tape, causing them to flail wildly. Bubbles and foam erupt everywhere. The Buick, jostled by the struggle and the water, begins to roll precariously on its parking brake.

The Buick, still attached to the duct-taped trio, slowly rolls towards the entrance of the car wash tunnel again.

BUD

> (Soaked, furious) > No! Not the tunnel again!

OLLIE

> (Sputtering, covered in tape) > Stanley! We're being re-washed!

STAN

> (Joyful) > Oh, goodie! More bubbles!

Lou, thinking he's helping, pushes the car from behind, sending it, with the three men still stuck to it, back onto the conveyor belt just as it's about to start another cycle.

The Model T, having been ignored for minutes, begins to roll forward on its own, its ancient brakes failing. It drifts directly in front of the conveyor belt, blocking the entrance.

The Buick, with the three men plastered to its front, is forced to SWERVE off the conveyor and CRASH into the Model T.

A symphony of CRUMPLED METAL, SHATTERING GLASS, and the sound of LOUD HOO-HOS and "I'M A BAAAD BOY!" and "ANOTHER FINE MESS!" erupts.

When the dust settles, the scene is chaotic.

The Model T is a flat contraption of twisted metal, looking like it's been through a compactor. The Buick is not much better, covered in duct tape, its headlight gone, its side scraped raw.

Stan and Ollie are disentangled, but covered in foam and bits of duct tape, looking utterly bewildered but unharmed. Ollie's tie is completely shredded. Stan still manages a small, hopeful smile.

Bud is soaked, his fedora askew, his suit plastered to him. He looks like he's about to explode. Lou stands by the Model T, holding the high-pressure hose, completely oblivious.

LOU

> (To the mangled Model T) > Hey, Abbott! I think this car needs a bath! It's all squished!

Suddenly, a formidable woman in a crisp uniform, **MS. PRITCHARD**, the Car Wash Manager, storms out of the office. She surveys the scene of utter devastation: two ruined cars, a soaking wet and furious Bud, a dishevelled Ollie, a cheerful Stan, and a clueless Lou. Chad stands behind her, eyes wide.

MS. PRITCHARD

> (Voice of pure granite) > What... in the name of all that is shiny and clean... happened here?!

Bud is the first to speak, pointing a trembling finger at Stan and Ollie.

BUD

> THEM! They destroyed my car! And then they broke their own car trying to break mine again!

Ollie steps forward, puffing out his wet chest, pointing at Bud and Lou.

OLLIE

> Nonsense, Madam! These two ruffians, with their careless washing techniques and their utter disregard for vehicular integrity, caused this whole debacle!

LOU

> (To Ms. Pritchard) > He squished the Model T, ma'am! It was an accident! I was trying to help!

STAN

> (Nodding) > He squished it very well. Like a bug on a windscreen.

Ollie glares at Stan.

OLLIE

> Stanley!

Ms. Pritchard stares at the four men, then at the two mangled cars. She looks like she's counting to ten, slowly.

MS. PRITCHARD

> (Calmly, but with a terrifying undertone) > Gentlemen. My car wash was an oasis of tranquility. Now it looks like a junkyard exploded.

BUD

> (Exasperated) > Ma'am, they brought a museum piece and then tried to vacuum my tie off!

OLLIE

> (To Bud, indignantly) > It was merely caught! And who brings a vehicle this pristine to a common wash anyway?!

LOU

> I think they're both right, Abboooott. We're all wrong! I'm a baaaad boy!

Lou starts to cry. Stan, seeing Lou upset, pats him awkwardly on the arm.

STAN

> There, there. It's only a car. We have another one. I think.

Ollie's eyes bulge. Bud just pinches the bridge of his nose, knowing this is a battle he can't win.

Ms. Pritchard takes a deep breath. She points to the mangled Model T, then the duct-taped Buick.

MS. PRITCHARD

> You four. You're paying for all of this. Everything. And then you're never, EVER coming back.