

NO BALANCE TO BUDGET

Sketch with Lyric

By Tom Attea

Bedroom of a modest home.
Two moving men are lifting
a large mattress out of its
frame. TONY is watching,
upset. His wife, MARY,
looks on.

TONY

Not the mattress, too!

FIRST MOVER

Sorry, Mister. We don't make the rules.

TONY

But you took everything else -- the couch, the chairs, the
kitchen set!

SECOND MOVER

You don't make your payments, this is what happens.

TONY

What am I supposed to make my payments with?

FIRST MOVER

I'm sorry. We're just doin' our job. Gotta make a living, too.

MARY

Don't worry, Tony. We can sleep on the floor.

TONY

The floor? You and the kids? I can't let that happen. Come on,
fellas. A man's home is his castle. And, without a mattress,
how much fun can a man have in the castle with his queen?

FIRST MOVER

I know the whole story. Last week I had to repossess my own
mattress.

(holds back)

And life hasn't been the same since.

(to other mover)
Come on. Let's go.

(The MOVERS EXIT carry off the mattress)

TONY

I'm gonna kill myself. I can't even afford a mattress for us.

MARY

I think it's time we sat down and made up a budget. Then maybe we can start to do better -- and make the furniture payments again.

TONY

That's it. We'll make up a budget. You're a genius, Mary.

(takes pen from pocket; takes up sheet
of paper)

At least, I still have my Bic pen. Now, let's see.

(looks for a place to sit; indicates floor)

Do you mind? I promise we'll have that furniture back in no time.

MARY

I don't mind at all, Tony.

(THEY sit on the floor)

TONY

Now, we'll find out what the problem is. Let's see, I make four-twenty-five an hour. Some day I'll make more. I promise you.

MARY

You will, sweetheart -- when the minimum wage goes up.

TONY

That's not very nice, Mary.

MARY

I'm sorry, Tony. I know someday you're going to make a million dollars. But, if we're going to do a budget, we can only count on a sure thing.

TONY

You're right. Okay. Let's see. Four-twenty-five an hour. Now, it costs four dollars a day for me to drive across the

George Washinton Bridge. There goes an hour's pay right there!

MARY

Don't forget the twenty-five cents. We have to be exact.

TONY

Okay. After I pay the toll, we've got twenty-five cents in the plus column. Gas back and forth to Manhattan costs about two dollars each way. That's another twenty-five cents in the plus column. What else?

MARY

What about lunch?

TONY

Another four dollars. Another twenty-five cents. Now, let's see. So far, I worked three hours and have seventy-five cents to show for it. Now, I'm beginnin' to see what the problem is. We can't balance our budget.

MARY

Why not, Tony?

TONY

I'll tell you why. We ain't got a balance to budget.

MARY

Come on, Tony, don't give up. That's only three hours. You still have five more hours of work to account for.

TONY

Don't try to make me feel good, Mary. What is that -- five times four-twenty-five, twenty-some dollars, with a wife and two kids? And that's before taxes. There's goes at least one more hour. Now, I'm down to four. Why didn't I see this before? I need to find a way to make more money!

MARY

Maybe I should look for a job.

TONY

And who's gonna pay for the baby sitter? Not me. She makes four an hour. She works eight hours. Now, I come out four hours in the hole.

MARY

I hate to admit it, Tony, but I guess you're right.

(sings)

We'd just don't have a balance to budget.

THEY stand and sing.

TONY

I'm an average sort of guy.
My paycheck's not hard to heft.
There's not a lot we buy,
But there's not a whole lot left.

MARY

I'm an average kind of wife.
Once my family's fed and dressed,
I never could ask life,
How should I spend all the rest?

BOTH

How you gonna balance your budget
When you ain't got a balance to budget?

MARY

Do you notice when you go
Out to shop, each time you pluck
Food off the shelf you know
You just spent another buck?

TONY

And what if someday I make
About thirty-five a year,
The average family take,
Will it all still disappear?

MARY

We're in an awful pickle,
Because nothin' costs a nickel.
Just to buy the basics takes
Everything that Tony makes.

TONY

Someday I'll make a million,
I might even earn a billion.

But right now down at the bank
I can only draw a blank.

BOTH

How you gonna balance your budget
When you ain't got a balance to budget?

TONY

I wish I put some aside,
A few dollars every week,
But I know to provide
Just our daily bread's a squeak.

MARY

I just do the best I can.
And I love my man a lot.
But it's sure hard to plan
When your love is all you've got.

BOTH

How you gonna balance your budget
When you ain't got a balance to budget?
Yeah, how you gonna balance your budget
When you ain't got a blessed thing to budget?

MARY

I'll tell you what, Tony, if you take the bus, you won't have to
pay the toll or buy gas. And I'll make you lunch. That's the
three hours right there.

TONY

Twelve-seventy-five saved. Big deal.

MARY

At least, it's a start, Tony -- until your ship comes in. And we
gotta start somewhere.

TONY

You're right, sweetheart. Somewhere's gotta be better than
nowhere. Here's to the future -- and the greatest wife a guy
ever had!

(THEY embrace)

BLACKOUT