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*To Attorney Robert Alexander, Sr.:
This play is a song for my father.*

-Robert Alexander, Jr.

Cast of Characters

JACK BOOKER, African-American writer, 39 years old. He sports a big red dot in the middle of his forehead. His insanity is akin to a religious experience to those who allow him to stumble through life to his own drum beat...the ultimate *down beat*, in this jam session in hell. The best drummer never heard.

BRENDA BOOKER, Jack's wife, also 39 years old and African-American. Brenda is 20 years pregnant with Jack's dreams. Doubles as CAR SALESMAN.

GLORIA, the European-American seductress/cleanup woman. Gloria, a woman of many guises, slips in and out of the melody like a slithering saxophone setting traps for Jack.

FATHER, African-American, master of the traps. Father is the guiding light of Jack's insanity. Doubles as LARRY.

A versatile DRUMMER with a trap drum kit and congas is essential to any production. Having a SAX PLAYER would be a nice touch, but it is not as essential as a drummer.

Setting

The set design should combine elements of realism and surrealism. JACK's workplace (a desk and a typewriter) should be center stage. The kitchen is stage left, the countertops will be used as drums and a playing space where BRENDA plays her pots and pans. Stage right is a living room closet full of JACK's rejected manuscripts. A pitching mound is down right of JACK's workspace. And upstage right is an elevated pulpit overlooking JACK's workspace, where Jack's FATHER preaches and passes judgment.

The stage is now set for a jam session in hell...*bring on the noise!!!*

Author's Notes

Will He Bop, Will He Drop is an abstract play written in the code language of the drum and is all about drumming and Nommo, the power of the drum. This play is meant to be loud and over the edge, and directed like a “Magic Mushroom” trip. The tempo should be played at a fever pitch. The actors should blow through the play at a relentless pace. Dialogue is meant to be played like an abstract jazz composition, with many verbal overlaps.

WILL HE BOP, WILL HE DROP?

by Robert Alexander

(At rise, JACK is down on all fours, crawling around the living room. A lone saxophone wails in the background as JACK parts the curtains and peers out the window. After a few beats he crawls toward the cocktail table, which has a huge unopened wrapped package resting on it. JACK remains on all fours, as his wife, BRENDA enters. She is 20 years pregnant and wears a maternity nightgown and a robe.)

BRENDA. It was the 240th month of my pregnancy, the 20th year. It was at the end of another long succession of Jack's rejected scripts, when I came home and found the house a wreck. Furniture was turned over...pictures were hanging upside down. Jack was once again jamming. He was always jamming, skit skat, bip bam blam, Jam; jamming. However this was serious. Extremely serious. He'd never slammed a jam-wham slam like this before. He was gone...wacked, out of his fucking mind—ever since that package came in the mail. *(Beat.)* Jack...Jack...Jack...Jack...Jack!... What are you doing, Jack?

JACK. I'm laying low. What does it look like?

BRENDA. Jack, get off the floor and come to bed.

JACK. *(Points to the window.)* Shhhh. It's still out there.

BRENDA. What are you talking about?

JACK. *(Paranoid:)* Shhhh. They're still out there.

BRENDA. *(Goes toward the window.)* Who's still out there?

JACK. Don't go near the window. They can see you.

BRENDA. Who can see me?

JACK. The people who are paid to watch...the people who left this package...

BRENDA. *(Going toward the window:)* No one is out there, Jack.

JACK. *(Pulls BRENDA to the floor.)* Get down, Brenda. Malcolm talking...Malcolm talking. Don't go near that window!

BRENDA. Are you hearing Malcolm's voice again?

JACK. I hear three...I...C...U...read between the dots...read between the rings.

BRENDA. Do you want me to call your father?

JACK. No! Don't touch that phone...it's tapped. Besides, he already knows how to reach me. Now stay down on the floor.

BRENDA. Jack...I've been carrying your baby for twenty years. I'm tired of laying low. I'm tired of crawling on the floor. Can't we sleep in the bed just one night, like two normal human beings?!

JACK. No, Brenda. We cannot sleep. Sleep is the enemy of the people. Oppression never sleeps, and we can never sleep.

BRENDA. I'm going to bed. I don't care whatchu do.

(She tries to stand, but JACK pulls her back to the floor.)

JACK. Keep yo' butt down, and stay down!

BRENDA. *(Cries:)* Please Jack...let me go to bed.

JACK. Shut up, damn it.

BRENDA. *H-e-l-p!!! Help!*

JACK. I said, shut up!

BRENDA. I hope someone hears me! *H-e-l-p!!*

JACK. I thought you were on my side, Brenda.

BRENDA. I know you want me to lose this baby, but I'm not losing this baby, Jack. I'm having this baby. I've carried this baby too long to think about losing it now.

(JACK starts crawling toward the window on his hands and knees.)

JACK. The negroes are coming...the negroes are coming...little knots on your knees, from being on your knees so long...

BRENDA. Damn it, Jack...I wish you'd take your medication.

JACK. The negroes are coming...the negroes are coming. First, the knee goes, and then, the knee grows. And how does a knee grow?

(Drum rim shot.)

BRENDA. Are you going to be able to meet your parents at the airport tomorrow?

JACK. The loudest squeak gets the grease...the loudest squeak gets the grease. Squeak—squeak—squeak—squeak!

BRENDA. Oh God. *(Cries.)* What am I going to do now? I don't have any friends...

JACK. Squeak—squeak—squeak! The Book of Malcolm...the Book of Malcolm—

(As JACK peers out the window again, BRENDA starts crawling quietly toward the phone.)

Look at that UPS truck still sitting there. The package was delivered 12 hours ago, with no return address...no name of sender. Why is that truck still sitting there?

(BRENDA picks up the phone and starts dialing.)

Brenda—go check the mail. I'm expecting a letter from Willie Bobo—and he's gonna sock it to the biscuit...one time!

(Drum shot.)

And make yo' biscuit pop biscuits snap two times...

(Drum.)

You hear me, Brenda? *(Turns and sees BRENDA on the phone.)* Damn it, Brenda...hang up that fucking phone!

BRENDA. No. I'm calling your father.

(Military drum. JACK picks up a copy of The Autobiography of Malcolm X and throws it at BRENDA.)

JACK. *(Screams:)* He already knows how to reach me. He's the one who programmed me...to be a Black Panther. Read between the rings! *(Mock salute.)* Yes sir! Read between killing whitey! *(Salutes.)* Yes sir!

BRENDA. (*Puts down the phone crying.*) Is it your father's voice you're hearing?

(Jack's FATHER enters, immaculately dressed in an expensive suit, and stands behind the pulpit on the elevated platform.)

JACK and FATHER. (*In unison:*) The black man must educate himself to the evil ways of the white man. I will not accept failure from any of my sons...

BRENDA. It is your father's voice?

FATHER. You must learn five new words a day!

BRENDA. (*Overlap:*) Jack...please!

JACK. (*Salutes, fighting back tears:*) Yes, Father.

FATHER. (*Screams:*) Say yes sir to me!!

JACK. (*Salutes:*) Sir, yes sir!

FATHER. You must learn the white man's language. Learn to use his words—and learn to kill him with his own words!

JACK. (*Salutes:*) Sir, yes sir! I will learn the white man's words, and I will kill him with his words—Sir!

(Drum stops.)

FATHER. Sir. Take his language and destroy him with it. Learn five new words a day or you won't see any allowance...no outside activity until you recite them, spell them out loud and know their meaning. Is that clear my son?

JACK. Yes, Father—I mean—Yes sir!

(FATHER sits down on the throne behind the pulpit and goes into a freeze.)

BRENDA. (*Picks up the phone.*) Please, Jack...let me call your father. (*Rubs her stomach gently.*)

JACK. Put that phone down!

(JACK crosses and grabs BRENDA.)

Why do you wanna call him? He will be here tomorrow. You wanna make a call, use the phone booth down the street. Now, I must go to Western Union. The money is in.

BRENDA. What money?

JACK. Funding for the “Bible”... “*The Black Man’s Bible!*”

BRENDA. Is this the *Book of Jack*?

JACK. This is the *Book of Rob!* Rob thee father to rob thee son. (*Pats BRENDA’s stomach.*) Little Rob robs everyone.

BRENDA. The *Book of Rob*?

JACK. That’s right. Now go check the mail.

BRENDA. Check the mail? It’s 4:30 in the morning, Jack.

JACK. Didn’t you see the morning paper?

(No response.)

You would’ve known to check the mail if you had seen the paper. Now go check the mail. (*Mimes playing the drums as he goes off.*) There should be a letter from *Willie Bobo* baby. Willie Bobo...Bo! Bo! bop bip blip flim flam bam blam slam the honky’s face to the floor. SSSspray paint his face with a hard brick waffle grilled by the “SS” and dripping in syrup baby. Fuck him through the front door and throw him out the back. Fuck him through the front door and throw him out the back. His crimes have no name, no shame, but we know who to blame. So drop kick his fat ass into the *ocean...babyee...Valdez Ocean.* See him grinning in *black face* in his sea of sin...

BRENDA. (*Overlap, talking gently to her stomach.*) Please come to bed, Jack.

JACK. *Bip bip bip*, wipe his face across the plate of syrup... *Wipe his face hard across a plate of glass.* Wipe it hard, but don’t break the glass! *The glass is as fragile as eggshells, babyee.*

(Funk rap.)

BRENDA. Jack—I’m calling the police. (*Goes into a freeze.*)

JACK. Fuck the police! Fuck, fuck, fuck the police!

ALL CAST EXCEPT BRENDA. Fuck the police! Fuck, fuck, fuck the police! Fuck the police! Fuck, fuck, fuck the police!

JACK. Undercover cop already sitting in with the rhythm section babyeee! Bip bop boom bum bum bum!

BRENDA. (*Cries:*) Then I'm calling your father.

JACK. Why you wanna do that? Cause he already been told by Lottie and Dottie who dotted dot dot his dotted dot dot dit dat do dumb cause the slurpee girls will slurp you up like you was nothing but a big gulp cup of *slurpee*, and you know this ain't no *Seven-Eleven*, and it ain't no *Mosque Number Seven*! They'll spit you out like a gumdrop babyeee bop boom, spit spat spit spat. Spit! Spit! Spit, spit spit right in yo' face...you stank ho slut...*now git a straw and slurp it up.* (*Does a belly flop on the floor and starts crawling around.*)

BRENDA. Fuck you, Jack! (*She punches her stomach and JACK grabs his crotch.*) I'm not one of your slurpee girls. I'm not gonna stay here and take your shit.

JACK. (*Crawling like an inchworm:*) Squeak, squeak, squeak...

BRENDA. I'm packing my shit right now. I'm going back east to raise this baby. I'll be damned if I'll stay around a fool like you for another day. (*BRENDA punches her stomach like a drum roll. JACK reacts, feeling every punch.*)

JACK. (*Overlap:*) Squeak, squeak, squeak... (*Suddenly stops.*) Hey! Did you feel that?! What was that? An earthquake or a truck? (*Goes to the window and looks out.*) Damn...that motherfucking truck is still sitting out there! Why won't it move? Why won't they leave me alone? What have I done? What laws have I broken? I ain't nothing but a writer...a motherfucking black writer. Why do they want to fuck with me? Parking in front of my house...sending me this stupid package?

BRENDA. Open the damn package, Jack!

JACK. No!

BRENDA. Open it! It's probably a gift for the baby!

(*Drum stop.*)

JACK. *(Staring out the window:)* Why are they scared of me?... Forcing me to lay low...forcing me to live on my belly like a fucking inchworm. *(Does another belly flop to the floor. He crawls like an inchworm as John Coltrane's "Inchworm" plays.)*

(BRENDA picks up the phone again and dials, while JACK remains fixed in his trance.)

BRENDA. Please...somebody hurry up and answer the phone.

JACK. Stoop 'n' scoop—stoop 'n' scoopitstupidssimplescoopit-simple...

(The phone rings on FATHER's pulpit. FATHER rises to answer the phone.)

FATHER. Hello.

JACK. *(On the floor, underlap:)* Stupidssimplestupidssimplestupid-simplestupidssimplescoopitstupidssimple...

BRENDA. Mr. Booker. I'm sorry if I woke you.

FATHER. Don't apologize Brenda... I never sleep. Sleep is the black man's enemy. Now what can I do for you?

BRENDA. It's Jack... He won't take his medication.

JACK. *(Underlap:)* Stupid simple...stupid simple...

BRENDA. *(Overlap:)* I'm afraid he's gonna hurt himself. I'm afraid for myself and our baby. He seems to think there's a truck parked in front of our house—spying on us. I don't know what to do anymore. I've had twenty years of this...20 years of his chronic unemployment...his hearing voices... I can't keep any friends...

FATHER. Can you get him to the phone?

JACK. *(Underlap:)* Stupid simple...scoop it simple...

BRENDA. *(Overlap:)* I'll try.

JACK. Stupid simple...scoop it simple...stupidssimplescoop...

BRENDA. *(Takes the phone and puts it to JACK's ear.)* Jack— It's your father, Jack. He wants to talk to you.

(JACK lets his tongue hang out and he starts panting hard like a dog as BRENDA continues holding the phone to his ear.)

FATHER. Jack...

(JACK licks the floor like a thirsty dog, while BRENDA continues holding the phone to his ear.)

FATHER. What's wrong son? *(Pause.)* Your mother thinks you're smoking crack...again!

(JACK raises his leg like a dog ready to piss on BRENDA, but she kicks him in his side and drops the phone.)

BRENDA. I'm sick of your shit, Jack. Hold your own damn phone. See if you can hold up your pants and the phone at the same time. Asshole!

(BRENDA tries to leave, but the baby kicks—drum beats—before she can take two steps, and she must sit down.)

FATHER. Jack...say something, son.

JACK. Everyday you drilled me. Everyday you grilled me.

FATHER. You said you wanted to be a writer... I was supplying you with ammunition... Words!

JACK. Five words a day! It was you who power drilled this red dot to my forehead with your relentless indoctrination.

FATHER. Why won't you take your medication, son?

(Pause.)

JACK. Do you still think of Malcolm, Father?

FATHER. Why don't you follow the doctor's orders?

JACK. *(Louder, firmer voice:)* Do you ever think about Malcolm?

FATHER. Of course I think about Malcolm. Not a day goes by without thinking of him.

JACK. Did you love Malcolm...Father?

FATHER. I never loved a man more than I loved Malcolm X. Now why won't you take your meds?

JACK. Malcolm talking...Malcolm talking. Gotta hang up. See ya. *(Slams down the phone.)* Eenie meanie miney mo—Catch a—Nig—

BRENDA. *(Overlap:)* Don't say it, Jack.

JACK. Psych! *(JACK does a belly flop to the floor.)* Stupid... simple...stupid...simple. Rob thee father to rob thee son...but I'm the one caught in the middle.

BRENDA. You don't have to be caught, Jack. I'll let you go. Now stop being an asshole and come to bed.

JACK. No baby...I'm going to work.

BRENDA. But you don't have a job!

(Military drum beat. JACK springs up and starts marching like a soldier as his FATHER simultaneously springs to life and starts pounding on the pulpit with his fist like a Pentecostal preacher.)

JACK. *(Underlap:)* I'm doin' my job.

FATHER. In the *Book of Rob...* Jack never had a job! I said, "In the Book of Rob...children...Jack never had a job." Can I get an Amen this morning? In the *Book of Rob...* Jack never had...

ALL CAST. A job!

(JACK marches toward the typewriter sitting in his workspace. A big plastic bottle of Aunt Jemima pancake syrup awaits him next to the typewriter. JACK picks up the bottle of syrup and pours it all over his typewriter keys.)

JACK. *(Overlapping FATHER:)* I'm doing my job... I'm doing my job...

(JACK starts licking the syrup off the typewriter keys.)

BRENDA. Oh no! He's having oral sex with his typewriter again! Do you know how much I paid for that damn typewriter?

JACK. You gonna remember this night with Willie Bobo for rest of your life.

BRENDA. *(Overlap:)* You're not Willie Bobo.

JACK. (*Pouring more syrup:*) 'Cause I'm gonna sock it to yo' biscuit real good one time!

(*JACK pounds his typewriter one time, while FATHER simultaneously slaps the pulpit one time.*)

FATHER. Hit me!

(*Drum one beat and baby kicks one time inside BRENDA.*)

JACK. Two times!

(*Drum two beats, baby kicks two times. JACK slaps the typewriter, FATHER slaps the pulpit, two times.*)

BRENDA. (*Overlap:*) Come away from the typewriter, Jack!

JACK. (*Underlap:*) Shucks...I'll sock it to yo' biscuit three times.

(*Drum three beats. Baby kicks three times inside BRENDA.*)

Drum starts playing Afro-Cuban rhythm. JACK slaps the typewriter, FATHER slaps the pulpit three times, simultaneously. As drums rise in the background, JACK slaps the typewriter keys like conga drums, and FATHER waves his arms back and forth over his head in the air. Sanctified.)

JACK. I'm Willie Bobo, babyee... I write so sweet—they should call me Sugar Ray! I put the sweetness in yo' sweetener. So let's see how sweet 'n' low you'll go. First I'll cover yo' body with syrup, babyee. Then, I'm gonna tear through you like an enema. I'm gonna lap you up yo' front door and shit you out the back!

FATHER. (*Happy:*) Amen!

JACK. I'm gonna tickle yo' toes with cocoa butter...cover yo' luscious thighs with my special oil, girlfriend.

BRENDA. (*Talks to her stomach:*) Come away from the typewriter, Jack.

JACK. Willie Bobo gonna make yo' *Bisquick snap, biscuits pop pop pop like they was Jiffy Pop and I was the butter on yo' popcorn. Ever butter yo' popcorn wid peanut butter? It's just a peanut-butter meltdown...babyeee!*

FATHER. When you're a black writer...

(FATHER picks up a tambourine and begins to rattle it gently. BRENDA runs to the phone again and begins dialing, as JACK puts white-out on his lips and on both cheeks.)

JACK. They always try to white you out...they always try to white you out...they always try to white you out...

FATHER. (*Overlap:*) I said, when you're a black writer...you gotta write with some rhythm. The way black folks talk with that sweet shit-talking rhythm. You gotta write...the way Iverson crossover dribbles and dishes the ball...you gotta write the way we make love...with some rhythm, ya gotta snap, crackle and pop pop pop till ya drop drop drop!

(*Drum stops.*

Ring. The phone on the pulpit rings and FATHER picks it up.)

FATHER. Hello.

JACK. When you're black, black, black...they always try to white you out...they always try to white you out...

BRENDA. (*Crying into the phone:*) I'm sorry Jack hung up on you... Jack thinks he's Willie Bobo again, except he's painting himself all over in white-out.

FATHER. Willie Bobo would never do that. Let me speak to that boy.

BRENDA. (*Crying:*) And he's poured syrup all over his brand new typewriter...the one I gave him...

FATHER. (*Overlap:*) Put him on...put him on.

BRENDA. Jack—

JACK. The name is Willie Bobo, Baby! And I'm here to give you new meaning to the phrase, "Give the drummer some." Shit, I'm here to give new meaning to everything!

BRENDA. (*Overlap:*) The phone, Jack. It's your father.

JACK. (*Underlap:*) I'm here to plug in every plug that's ever been unplugged...drip drop, flip flop. And I'm gonna unbug... (*Picks up*

fly-swatter and squashes an imaginary fly.) ...every bug that's ever been bugged. Testing 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, I C U...Do you see me?

(BRENDA puts the phone to JACK's ear, but this time she places his hand on the receiver. BRENDA exits.)

JACK. *(Into the phone:)* Will he bark?

FATHER. *(Rapid fire overlap:)* Will he bite?

JACK. Will he bark?

FATHER. Will he bite?

JACK. Will he bone?

FATHER. Bone Willie!

JACK. Will he bow? Will he beg?

FATHER. Yes, Jack—

JACK. I'm glad you called, Father...

FATHER. No. Your wife called me.

JACK. Who's your favorite son, Father?

FATHER. I have no favorite. I treated you all the same.

JACK. Then who's your biggest disappointment? The one who works at the...*State Department*...or the one who works for the CIA? Marcus Garvey must be spinning circles in his grave. Come on Father...tell me...which one of your sons disappoints you the most?

FATHER. You disappoint me when you don't take your medication.

JACK. I took my medication...I'm lit...I'm buzzed, I'm Willie Bobo Willy woolly bobo didley ridley...now come on babyee and give this drummer some of the headlines 'fore I rip out yo' front door and jump out yo' back window bip bop boom, go on wid yo' bad self!

FATHER. Jack...this is your father. You are not Willie Bobo. You were a promising writer at one time...

JACK. Promising? What did I ever promise you?

FATHER. What happened, son?

JACK. You know what happened? It was you who whipped my mind into shape with your relentless drill. Our home was like a boot camp. Our living room was like a gallery in a Black Museum. You were always adding pictures. Pictures of the soldiers waging the war against the devil. We had pictures of Marcus and Malcolm 'n' Martin 'n' Medgar. There was *Elijah next to young Huey...Booker T. next to W.E.B.* You even had the nerve to put Eldridge Cleaver next to Roy Wilkins. *(Beat.)* It was you who sentenced me to this typewriter. You were the drill sergeant who whipped my mind into shape. And you made me practice and you made me practice.

FATHER. And when you finish practicing, I want you to read *The Fire Next Time*. I want a full book report on it by next week.

JACK. It was you who sentenced me to a miserable life of writing stuff nobody wants to publish and no one wants to produce. You made me this way—with this fucking red dot in the middle of my forehead. Are you happy with your work? Are you happy with yourself, Pops Jr.? Over and out!

(JACK slams down the phone as BRENDA re-enters with a “packed for the hospital” suitcase.)

BRENDA. Why do you continue to do this to your father?

JACK. *(Notices the suitcase:)* And where do you think you're going?

BRENDA. How do you know this suitcase is packed for me?

(A rumble of the drums, and JACK jumps.)

JACK. Did you feel that? Was that an earthquake or a truck?

(More drums.)

And what was that? Brenda...get down...get down.

(JACK pulls BRENDA to the floor.)

BRENDA. *(Crying:)* Please, Jack...I can't take anymore. You've got everyone in your orbit, jumping like little monkeys. Living with you is like trying to wash dishes in the dark. You can't tell a knife from a spoon until you cut yourself. I'm cut! I'm bleeding, Jack...but you can't see it.

JACK. I'm only playing what I lived—babyeee! Now hit the deck! Hit the deck! Hit the deck!

BRENDA. Is Malcolm talking?

JACK. You got it. Heavy feet approaching. Heavy feet, heavy feet.

(The telephone rings again. JACK hands BRENDA one of the books.)

JACK. Are you reading, Brenda? When freedom rings, I want you reading between the rings.

(The phone rings again. JACK starts crawling toward the phone like an inchworm.)

JACK. Stupid... simple... stoop it... simple... hoop it simple... stoop it... simple.

(The phone rings again, but stops in mid-ring.)

BRENDA. Jack...can we talk normal for a second?

JACK. Take off yo' luggage babyee, and relax, 'cause I'm gonna git yo' hips out the pawnshop fo' sho'—fo' sho'...'cause I got *plenty cable and I'm able...*to reach deep inside of you. Know what I mean jelly bean?

BRENDA. Please, Jack...let's talk about the future.

JACK. Let's talk about the past.

BRENDA. What are you gonna do when I'm gone?

JACK. I'm gonna have a party. What do you think? Shit, you ain't going nowhere.

BRENDA. I'm tired of seeing your butt double parked in front of me.

JACK. Then leave...everybody else has left.

BRENDA. And who's fault is that? I watched you, I watched you...one by one, run off each and every patron who ever stood in your corner. Like that ex-football player...you know the one Jack...the one who used to play for the Raiders. You know...the one

with the Mercedes Benz dealership. You know...what was his name? Ron?

JACK. A voice...something just told me...

BRENDA. (*Overlap:*) You just had to have a Mercedes Benz.

JACK. I wanted a black 300 Coupe with black tinted windows...

BRENDA. So you and that simple-minded Larry—

JACK. I phoned Larry. I told him my agent just sold one of my screenplays to Oliver Stone...

BRENDA. And you were going to get at new car...

JACK. I was gonna drive a new *Black Panther* down to my meeting in L.A. So naturally Larry wanted to slide with me as I copped my new Benz...my *new Black Panther*. Man, I really loved the lines on that car.

BRENDA. ...so, you picked up Larry.

JACK. And we went over to Ron's dealership on Broadway. Man, I was looking sharp that day...leather and silked down like Miles Davis on a major league budget. My nose was packed with flake. Ron took one look at me and started introducing me around—highlighting my early career, like I was still "*big time*." So I told Ron just like I told Larry...I said, "I just sold a screenplay to Oliver Stone to the bone to the bone, and I am here to buy a Benz—to buy a Benz to the bone, babyeee!" So Ron, swallowing my story like a slurpee, put us in the hands of a young green unsuspecting pup...his newest white-bread salesman. So I get behind the wheel and started driving all over town, unconcerned about burning up gas. Then I asked the young chump trying to close the deal, if Larry could drive.

(Drums build tension.)

Of course the chump said yes...so I got in the back while Larry drove.

(JACK trades places with FATHER, playing LARRY.)

JACK. It was then that I took out the revolver I had been carrying around all day. (*Puts his finger to BRENDA's temple like his hand is an*

imaginary gun.) I put the gun right up to his temple. I started screaming, "When the sun in the sky becomes egg on your face, 'cause the *human race has been replaced* by guinea pigs and all the lab rats, then I hope your soul is ready for the fire!"

LARRY. Put that damn gun away, fool!

JACK. The negroes are coming...the negroes are coming. Stupid simple...stupid simple...the negroes are coming.

LARRY. What are you doing man?

JACK. What does it look like I'm doing?

LARRY. (*Overlap:*) Losing your motherfucking mind. Let that boy go! You ain't making sense!

JACK. (*Overlap:*) I'm making perfect sense!

LARRY. (*Overlap:*) You got that red dot on your forehead and that white shit on your lips!

JACK. It's war paint, Larry! *The man...the white blue-eyed devil* has been whiting out my words. The time has come to put an end to it. Time to collect overdue reparations. But...instead of forty acres and a mule...I want forty acres and a *Benz!*

BRENDA. (*Playing the salesman:*) Yes! It's yours. Please don't hurt me!

JACK. How old are you boy?

BRENDA. (*Crying:*) Twenty-two...

JACK. 22? Hmmp! Do you know how many splibs die on the streets of Oakland before they turn twenty-two?

BRENDA. Nooooooooooooo!

JACK. (*Overlap:*) Do you know? Do you know? Do you know who Malcolm X is white boy?

BRENDA. He be the one on the stamp?

JACK. Does the name Marcus Garvey ring a bell in yo' empty vacuum?

BRENDA. *(Crying:)* No suh...

JACK. Hey white boy... Do you know who wrote *Death of a Salesman*? Huh? I can't hear you? Do you know? Do you know? Do you know?

BRENDA. *(Crying:)* Was it... I think... Arthur Miller wrote...

JACK. *(Overlap:)* Wrong! I wrote *Death of a Salesman*! Tonight we're doing my version of your death!

BRENDA. *(Crying:)* Please don't kill me. I really am truly sorry for what happened to Dr. King.

JACK. Shut up! *(Mimes hitting BRENDA with the gun.)* Drive into the hills, Larry!

LARRY. So, you lied to me about your screenplay deal?

(Beat.)

JACK. Tell me Larry, have you ever had a morning when you woke up...you sit straight up in yo' bed...

BRENDA. *(Underlap:)* Stupid simple...stupid simple...

JACK. *(Overlap:)* ...with a little voice...a little irritating voice in yo' head...

BRENDA. *(Underlap:)* Stupid simple...stupid simple...

JACK. A voice so damn irritating that it makes you wanna run outside and jump in your car and run over the first white person that you see. Have you ever woke up feeling that way?

BRENDA. *(Crying:)* Look...you can have the car—

JACK. I don't want it anymore. I need a tank for all the white people I plan to run over!

LARRY. What's the matter, Jack? *Did Brenda leave you—again?*

JACK. Brenda's Jack 'N' the Box has been unlocked—I'm Willie Bobo baby. And you gonna remember this night with Willie Bobo for the rest of yo' life.

BRENDA. Please...

LARRY. Jack, this thang has gone too far already. You know I've seen enough trouble in my time. The last thang I need is mo' —

JACK. Shut up, Larry! *(To BRENDA:)* Get out the car, you stupid motherfucker!

(JACK yanks BRENDA from her seat. He puts her gently on the floor, but he keeps his imaginary handgun to her temple.)

JACK. Get your stupid simple ass down on the ground. Say, I'm a stupid simple salesman...*say it!!*

BRENDA. I'm a stupid simple salesman.

JACK. Say I'm the worst...

BRENDA. *(Overlap:)* I'm the worst in the universe, I rehearse and rehearse, but I never sell a car—I never sell anything.

JACK. Hey...I like that...I like that, you really are a stupid simple ignorant unenlightened tunnel, funnel head of doom. Now, I want you to crawl around on the ground like a dog in heat...crawl and bark to a Mississippi beat...crawl like you neck is weighed down by heavy feet.

(BRENDA starts crawling like an inchworm, one inch at a time.)

BRENDA. *(Slow:)* Stoop-it...simple...stupid...simple...

JACK. Do you know Willie Bobo... Do you know? Take off your clothes white-bread.

BRENDA. Please...let me keep my clothes!

JACK. Shut the fuck up and take off your clothes.

LARRY. What are you gonna do, Jack?

JACK. I'm gonna fuck him up and leave him here for the birds. Whatchu think?

LARRY. Jack—you've got too much going for yourself to—

JACK. What have I got?

LARRY. You've got a lovely wife with a baby on the way.

JACK. She's been pregnant since I've known her—she ain't never gonna have that baby.

BRENDA. *(Slow:)* Stoopid...simple...stoopid...simple...

(Drum.)

JACK. *(Overlap:)* But you're gittin' it...you are definitely gittin' it now!! You understand how slow the buck toils. But do you really know the man, who bangs the drum slow?

(Drum roll, then slow bang.)

The character of LARRY becomes FATHER again and rises, going to the pulpit with a fever racking his soul.)

BRENDA. I'll never forget getting that call from the *Oakland Police* at my parents' house on Long Island.

JACK. *(Overlap:)* You shouldn't have left me.

BRENDA. *(Crying, overlap:)* They said they were holding you at *Highland Hospital*, for stealing a car...kidnapping and assault.

(Phone rings.)

JACK. That white boy is lucky to still be alive.

BRENDA. *(Overlap:)* You were lucky—damn lucky that Ron loved you like a son—

(Phone rings.)

JACK. Fuck Ron! He ain't do me no favors!

(Phone rings.)

BRENDA. You got off too easy. Ninety days in *Belmont Hills* was too good for you.

(Phone rings.)

JACK. Fuck you!

(Phone rings.)

Drum stops.)

BRENDA. And you were lucky poor Larry didn't kill you.

JACK. *Fuck you and Larry!*

(The phone stops ringing, just as BRENDA reaches it. JACK does a belly flop—back to the floor.)

FATHER. Hit the deck! Hit the deck!

JACK. Time to lay low...time to play slow... stupid... simple... stoop it... simple... The Ballot or the Bullet...*mascot* or *saved*, words on my forehead long ago engraved.

FATHER. Do you have your new words, son? Let's hear them.

JACK. My words for today are, "*Kill Whitey!*"

FATHER. Are you mocking me, son?

JACK. No, Father. I wasn't mocking you.

FATHER. You were mocking me...

JACK. No, Father. I love you.

FATHER. I didn't ask for your love. Now spit out the five new words you learned today.

JACK. *Squeak! Squeak! Squeak! Squeak!*

FATHER. Goddamn it Jack—put some oil on that squeak!

JACK. *Squeak! Squeak! Squeak! Squeak!*

BRENDA. Damn it, Jack...*shut up!!*

(She punches her stomach. JACK reacts.)

JACK. Thank you, Brenda...I needed that.

(BRENDA throws the plastic bottle of syrup at JACK, and JACK springs to his feet to run after her. But suddenly JACK comes to a complete halt as if his right foot (more specifically, his right toe) is nailed to the floor, as he becomes "The Nigger Caught By His Toe." He tries to move, but he can't. BRENDA, seeing that he is stuck, picks up the phone and begins dialing a friend.)

JACK. God damn it...Brenda. I'm the *nigger caught by his toe*. Eenie meanie miney mo...catch a nigger by his toe.

FATHER. If he hollers—*let him go!* Eenie meanie miney moo...

JACK. You said if I hollered you let me go! (*JACK spins in a circle, trying to get his foot loose.*) Awawawawawarararararara! I'm hollering! I'm hollering!

FATHER and JACK. Let me go, let me go...

JACK. Let my people go!!! (*Beat. He struggles with his foot.*)

BRENDA. (*To audience:*) Was it the drugs? Or was Jack just crazy? The refrigerator door was wide open and an empty bottle of Ocean Spray was tipped toward the opening leaving a trail of cranberry juice with Jack's footprints leading to the basement where Jack was hiding under his typewriter, buck naked in his birthday suit. He wouldn't budge an inch from his desk. It took four Oaktown policemen to pry him away to a group of whitecoats to see if they could help him. To see if Jack could be brought back. (*Beat.*) Was it the drugs? Or was Jack just crazy? Jack had stepped out of his mind before, but never like this. If it was the drugs, I wanted and needed—some too, cause he wasn't leaving me behind, Jack, Jack, Jack... Jack... Jack... Jack... Is anybody home... Jack. Can you hear me, Jack? (*Exits.*)

(*Beat.*)

JACK. Wait! Brenda! Don't leave me this way!

(*Doorbell.*)

GLORIA. (*Offstage:*) Hello... Is anybody home?

JACK. Whatchu doing here Amy?

(*GLORIA enters to sexy drums with a vacuum cleaner.*)

GLORIA. (*Gushes:*) My name is *Glow*—ria.

JACK. Becky?

GLORIA. (*Annoyed:*) It's *Glowria*.

JACK. Do I know you?

GLORIA. Everyone knows me.

(*Sound cue: "Gloria in Excelsis Deo" by Georg Friedrich Handel.*)

GLORIA. Gloria's in the house! I'm the cleanup woman at your service.

JACK. (*Scared:*) Whatchu doing here?

GLORIA. I heard your drums.

JACK. Who sent ya?

GLORIA. I said I heard your drums. I knew you needed me. God, this place is a mess. What's the matter with your foot, Ejack?

JACK. I can't seem to git my toe unstuck.

(GLORIA *plugs in the vacuum cleaner.*)

GLORIA. Good. I love a stationary target. (*Turns on vacuum cleaner and yells.*) I'm yo' script secretary from hell...giving new meaning to raising the stakes and flipping the script on ya. I'm a needy greedy va—cum cleaner, and I'm gonna clean yo' empty vacuum.

JACK. (*Screams:*) Oh *noooooooooooooooooo!!!!!!!* (*Screams until he frees his foot, then runs over and unplugs the vacuum cleaner.*)

GLORIA. What you do that for honey?

JACK. Get out!

GLORIA. I just wanted to shampoo your rug. And blow you off with my super duper deluxe blow dryer. (*Blows JACK a kiss.*)

JACK. Monica?

GLORIA. (*Mad:*) The name is *Glow—ria*. Got it? (*Like a car alarm:*) *Gllloo—Glllooo—Glllloooooo—ria!*

JACK. Get out! Take yo' equipment and leave!

GLORIA. (*Sexy:*) Ain't you the drummer seeking all the headlines? (*Takes out coke.*) I'm here to give you the *headlines...*and some hip lines too.

(GLORIA *wiggles her hips and offers JACK the coke. He refuses.*)

JACK. Get out.

GLORIA. I know you're no stranger to my magic powder. You used to snort a line to write a line. (*Circles him.*) You were the most

expensive writer in town... with the most expensive habits... grabbing up all the *headlines*. (*Taunts him with the coke.*)

JACK. Please leave.

GLORIA. Are you still doing plays Jack? Ejack...rejack. How come you stopped writing plays...Jack?

JACK. I'm just laying low.

GLORIA. But you're blessed...with too much talent to stop.

JACK. Blessed? Or cursed?

GLORIA. Oh Jack—

JACK. Just 'cause I'm laying low—don't mean I've stopped.

GLORIA. The grapevine has it...you and Brenda have split up.

JACK. What's it to ya?

GLORIA. (*Taunts him with coke.*) I just wanna help you ease yo' pain. So...where's Brenda?

JACK. She's in Boston...having a baby.

GLORIA. My God. My word... She still ain't had that baby yet?

JACK. Say...who really sent you over here? The FBI? The CIA? Or did CBS slip you my address?

GLORIA. I told you I heard your drums, Applejack. You and I...you and I are connected, baby. We're on the same circuit.

JACK. This ain't no *Circuit City*, babyeee! Now git out!

GLORIA. I'm just worried about you Jack. The grapevine has it...you haven't been yourself lately. I mean...what's that *red dot* on your forehead? And what's that white stuff on your lips?

JACK. War paint, baby. You wanna kiss?

GLORIA. Are you working on anything, Jack?

JACK. (*Puts more white-out on his face.*) I was working on becoming a white man—till you barged in.

GLORIA. Golly, gee, gosh... Why would you want to paint yourself white?

JACK. Apartheid in Birdland...apartheid in *word land* is kicking my motherfucking ass...and I need to go undercover.

GLORIA. *(Like a horn:)* As a honk honk honky?

JACK. *(Painting his face white:)* Yup, yup yup...from now on I'm gonna be a cracker ass cracker, 'cause being a nigger is just too fucking hard. You ever read the job description? And the pay...the pay is so motherfucking low unless your name is Kobe Bryant or Tiger Woods. And Tiger...he don't even know he a nigger. So his pain and my pain just ain't the same. But one day, one day soon somebody is gonna arrest Tiger for golfing while black. Then he'll know...he'll know what it's like to be a nigger. Then he'll feel my pain. Then he'll know what it's like to be arrested again and again for writing while black.

BRENDA. *(To herself:)* And another one, and another one and another one bites the dust— *(Picks up the biggest pots in the kitchen, playing louder, with more intensity and fire.)*

JACK. It's not like I dried up after my last public play. It's not like I haven't been writing.

(Opens up the living room closet, and a mountain of rejected scripts fall out. JACK starts pounding the floor with the scripts like he's Willie Bobo.)

It's just that...I've been writing all the wrong shit—working on *The Black Man's Bible*. Like *The Book of Huey*... *That was a no go!*

(Throws The Book of Huey down on the ground.)

GLORIA. Stop it, Jack!

BRENDA. Go Jack, Go!

JACK. *The Book of Marcus*...another no go!

(Drums grow more intense as JACK throws down The Book of Marcus.)

GLORIA. It's okay, Jack—

JACK. No...it's not okay. (*Seething, he throws out manuscript after manuscript.*) *The Book of Eldridge Cleaver... The Book of John Coltrane. The Book of Dophy... Sly Stone... (Cries.) ...The Church of Sly Stone.* Have you ever gone to my worst no go?

BRENDA. Go Jack, go...go...go...go go...go go go!!!

(*JACK throws down another manuscript.*)

JACK. *The Book of George Jackson...another dog day afternoon. The Church of Sam Cooke...change gonna come? Another waste of time... Oh, look! Here's the Church of James Brown... Moving, grooving, fleeing the scene of the crime like a sex machine! Hit me! Good God! That might've been my worst no go! Or maybe the Book of Bob Marley was my worst no go! (Sings:) Rastaman vibration...no good! No go!*

GLORIA. I know rejection must be painful.

JACK. You have no idea...you haven't got a clue... *Now get out! Get out of the House of Malcolm—Get out of the house of my Lord, Get out of the house of my Lord, you stupid simple slurp me up!*

GLORIA. You know you want it. Don't pretend you don't want it Jack.

JACK. I thought you were Brenda's friend.

GLORIA. Brenda don't have to know about it. Come on Jack...the cat's away. Now the mouse can grab some of the headlines. (*Offers the coke in a sexy manner.*)

(*JACK runs over to the kitchen and grabs a bottle of Ocean Spray cranberry juice out of the fridge.*)

BRENDA. (*Overlapping:*) Go Jack u Jack u Jack u jack! Go! Go! Go! Jack! Go go go 'til you gone!

(*JACK pours the juice over his head.*)

JACK. With the blood of Malcolm—I hope to wash away my sins... Malcolm died so that I may write—in the *Book of Rob.*

GLORIA. Impressive.

JACK. Get out!

GLORIA. *(Points to the package:)* What's this?

JACK. What does it look like?

GLORIA. Who's it from?

JACK. Don't you know?

GLORIA. Why don't you open it?

JACK. Why don't you leave? And take yo' va-cum cleaner with you.

GLORIA. *(Gives JACK her card.)* I'm waxing hoods at Kaiser Permenente now. Drop in and see me, if you're ever in the neighborhood.

(Drums stop. GLORIA grabs the vacuum cleaner and leaves. She leaves the door open, pissing JACK off. JACK runs to the door.)

JACK. *(Yells:)* Hey you stupid-simple—

(JACK stops to admire GLORIA walking away, as BRENDA slows down on the pots.)

BRENDA. You wanna knock boots with that day-glow gal...don't cha? I can tell.

JACK. Damn! That truck is still sitting there.

BRENDA. Malcolm talking—

JACK. Bird squawking—

(JACK slams the door closed with all of his might, then immediately hits the floor.)

JACK. Hit the floor! Hit the floor! Hit the floor!

(BRENDA co-signs JACK's dialogue, hitting her pots against the floor.)

BRENDA. You wanna knock boots with some new shoes, just 'cause yo' old shoes have lost their shape? I'm nothing but some old shoes on yo' feet...when you wanna skip rope to a new heartbeat.

(GLORIA re-enters as a sexpot. JACK stands up. Time has passed.)

JACK. Damn! Good golly Miss Molly! You sho' is one fine *African Queen*, Miss Hipburn. I hope you ain't here to burn me 'cause I sho' would love to skip rope with you.

(JACK and GLORIA turn face to face beaming as they mime skipping rope to the beat of BRENDA's pots.)

JACK. I sho' love—skipping rope with you... I sho' love making time with you... I sho' love making rhymes with you...but but damn *glow*...yo' skin is so bright...so loom me nescent—looking at you is like looking at the sun...with yo' bright lights, yo' high beam headlights. Shit! I need my sunglasses just to look at yo' bright smile and yo' pale face. (Puts on his sunglasses.) 'Fraid I'll go blind...just to look at you. 'Fraid I'll burn out my eyes...just to look at you. I need my shades...

ALL CAST. (Puts on sunglasses:) Just to look at you!

JACK. I'm just so crazy...'bout yo' loom me nescent skin. Sooo smooth silky creamy like alabaster. Are you the *white cloud* I need to make it? I'm tired of dem dark clouds in my life. (Looks at BRENDA.)

BRENDA. And another one—and another one—and another one bites the dust!

JACK. *Glow!* I want yo' bright lights to shine on me *Glow!* Can you do that *Glow?* Can you shine on me?

GLORIA. That's what I'm here for. I give everybody one shining moment.

JACK. Just one shining moment? But I need mo' than that. I need you to shine your headlights on me all the time.

GLORIA. All the time?

JACK. Twenty-four seven. Fifteen minutes ain't gonna do me. I need more than that.

GLORIA. I'll see what I can do.

JACK. *Glow!*

GLORIA. Yes Jack.

JACK. Do you love me?

GLORIA. Yes, Jack.

JACK. Do you really, really love me, or do you just love my doggy style.

(JACK pants like a dog.)

GLORIA. Yes Jack. I really, really love you.

JACK. You love me and only me?

GLORIA. I love you and only you.

JACK. You only gonna shine yo' bright headlights on me and nobody else?

GLORIA. Only on you.

JACK. The me nobody knows.

GLORIA. Everybody gonna know you when I get through.

JACK. You promise?

GLORIA. I promise. That's what I'm here for...to bring you all the fame you think you need.

JACK. And mo' money? *Some Benjamins?!!!* 'Cause a brotha gotta git paid!

GLORIA. That too! Anything you need...just ask for it babyeee. Now let's skip rope—'cause I ain't here to hang you up.

JACK. Awww, sooky, sooky now.

(They continue to skip rope to the beat of BRENDA's pots for several beats until JACK starts slowing down, thinking. The drummer changes the beat on his cowbell and yells, "Time!" where indicated in the script.)

JACK. But...but...but ain't you de one dat got Emmett Till in trouble?

DRUMMER. Time!

GLORIA. Don't think about that. That's another story babyee. That was then and this is now.

DRUMMER. Time!

JACK. But ain't you the one dey say to be on the look out for?

GLORIA. Who be saying that? Whoever be saying that, don't have their story straight. You had to been there—and you ain't been there and done that yet. And ain't no need to go there yet. Now let's git back to jumping rope.

DRUMMER. Time!

JACK. Ain't you the one *Glow*?

GLORIA. I be the one who be giving new meaning to jumping rope.

DRUMMER. Time!

JACK. Ain't you dat *dayglow* gal dat be waxing niggahs?

GLORIA. I be de one giving new meaning to waxing niggahs.

DRUMMER. Time!

JACK. Then we can't do this. I can't play myself out like this. Besides this here...me and you...this goes against everything my father ever taught me.

DRUMMER. Time!

GLORIA. (*Stops.*) Dr. King died for this thing right here.

DRUMMER. Time!

JACK. He did?

GLORIA. He...yo' ancestors sacrificed everythang so that you could one day be free to let me into your life.

DRUMMER. Time!

GLORIA. Now open up yo' heart Jack and let me walk in.

DRUMMER. Time!

GLORIA. I can tell you're afraid. Don't be afraid, Jack.

JACK. What would my mother think if she could see us now?

GLORIA. I think it would bring a smile to her face.

JACK. Then you don't know my momma!

DRUMMER. Time!

GLORIA. Look...Martin Luther King had a dream that one day you would die and go to watermelon heaven. In watermelon heaven you can drown in all the white pussy yo' soul desires fo' free fo' free fo' free. Now you can git with this...or you can git with that? (*Looks at BRENDA.*) Now—do you want me to oil yo' knob for you?

JACK. Oh fo' sho' babyee...fo' sho'!

BRENDA. (*Banging pots:*) I'm a pair of old shoes stretched out of shape!

DRUMMER. Time!

BRENDA. I'm a car sitting on blocks wid out a battery.

DRUMMER. Time!

BRENDA. Living with Jack has broken me down 'til I'm nothing but a broken down kneeling kneegrow...

DRUMMER. Time!

BRENDA. And my knee is starting to grow...rooted to the floor. (*Beat.*) You love knocking boots with dat new *dayglow gal!*

JACK. (*Skipping rope:*) Aw baby. It's nothing. It's just some pussy.

BRENDA. Just some pussy!

JACK. Can't a brotha git a little trim on the side?

BRENDA. Just some pussy!

JACK. Yeah. I swear! It don't mean a thing!

FATHER and DRUMMER. If it ain't got dat swing—

BRENDA. (*Banging harder:*) Just some pussy! Just some pussy!

GLORIA. (*Stops:*) Fuck you—you broke-dick dog!

BRENDA. Oh...I guess I'm just some old pussy to you.

(BRENDA *tries to move, but can't.*)

GLORIA. And I guess I'm just some new pussy to you!

JACK. Aw baby...relax! Take off yo' luggage and set a spell. Pussy is not what this brotha's about. To me—it's all about a woman's mind. Her mind, her heart, her spirit and her soul train Coltrane—insane in the membrane. Pussy...the glory hole...the glow re a hole is just a a a maternal thang...a a a a a a a material thing that's immaterial to me...an external thing...and I plan to fuck you internally...eternally...for eternity...like *deja vu*...all over again. Back and forth, up and down. I'll have you coming and going...going and coming...like Lionel Ritchie...*all night long!!*

BRENDA. Like a maggot sucking your insides dry.

JACK. *All night long!!! (Beat.)* Besides...I'm not looking for charity.

GLORIA. And I'm not a charity worker.

JACK. So you're billing me for this?

GLORIA. Don't think about the bill right now, babyee.

JACK. You know...I'm kinda confused. I can't tell who's seducing who?

(*Pause.*)

GLORIA. (*To audience:*) I was ten minutes early when I showed up at Jack's place.

JACK. I was on her like black on *Miles Davis*, soon as she hit the door.

GLORIA. I looked around—his place was a pigsty. He had invited me over for lunch—and he hadn't cooked a thing.

JACK. You are lunch...babyee—I'm here to give new meaning to doing lunch, baby. So take off yo' luggage, so I can rub you down in Philadelphia cream cheese, and lick those places that have never been licked. I'll whip your butter 'til it's good and creamy. Now come on wid yo' bad self and give the drummer some. Hit me two times!

(GLORIA *hits JACK twice.*)

Three times, wid yo' bad self!

(GLORIA hits JACK three more times. BRENDA matches her with the pots, beat for beat.)

BRENDA. *(Singing:)* Gloria...G-L-O-R-I-A...

GLORIA. Oh Jack...you really do give new meaning—to “give the drummer some!”

JACK. Babyee...I give new meaning to “we shall overcome!” I’m just an improvisational jazzy *Jack of words*... A skit scat word musician...

BRENDA. *(Banging pots:)* A wordy wordy nerdy nerdy who plays too many notes.

JACK. I’m just playing what I lived—but *I live on the edge of a ledge looking down. I’m a bird, in a straight jacket...no wonder you hate the way I play!!*

GLORIA. Oh no Jack. Go Jack I love it—I like it—I’ll live it with you. Let me stay in yo’ orbit ’til I learn to play just like you. So go Jack, go Jack. Harder! Harder!

BRENDA. Another screw has been unscrewed.

JACK. Another screw is just getting her due. I’m giving new meaning to the turning of the screw and new meaning to the taming of the shrew.

GLORIA. You mean the blaming of the shrew?

JACK. No...the naming of the shrew—

BRENDA. If the shrew fits—

JACK. Fuck her within an inch of her life.

(JACK and GLORIA’s passions build over the edge as the music rises in the background. JACK is having the time of his life, kissing GLORIA, when FATHER reenters, going to the pulpit, looking on this scene in disgust.)

JACK. Father...I learned a new word today.

BRENDA. G-L-O-R-I-A!!

FATHER. What is it? Spell it for me?

JACK. *(Spits out his notes in between humps, bumps, grinds and kisses.)*
GLORIA!! G-L-O-R-I-A!! *(He and GLORIA hump faster, as BRENDA bangs the pots like a raving lunatic.)*

FATHER. Gloria. Is it an adjective or a noun?

JACK. It's a verb, Father...an action word and she spells *action* to me, Father.

(BRENDA bangs the pots like a raving lunatic, as JACK and GLORIA simulate an even faster humping, making love on every piece of furniture on the set in one big orgasmic drum roll.)

BRENDA. *(Underlap:)* Gloria!

JACK. *We fuck in the shadows of the night and we do it in the light of day.*

GLORIA. *(Overlap:)* Fo' me, babyee...fo' me!

BRENDA. *(Underlap:)* G...L...O...R...I...A...

JACK. *(Underlap:)* *We do it on the side of the file cabinet, and we do it on top of the kitchen counter.*

FATHER. Get that *dayglow* kneegrow out of your house!!!

JACK and GLORIA. We've got the same heartbeat, Father. Sometimes we share the same breath we're so connected...joined together at the hip.

FATHER. *Get the mouse out of your house. Get that R.I.A. witch out of Malcolm's temple! Get out!!!*

(BRENDA bangs the pots even louder.)

JACK. No, Father. She's staying. I love her.

FATHER. Brenda is your wife. This is your wife's house! What is that woman doing in your wife's house?!

JACK. She's helping to keep my chops sharp! She's giving me some rhythm and some really hip lines.

(GLORIA starts humping and kissing faster, harder, peeling off her blouse. She is in her bra and panties.)

GLORIA. Don't stop! Go Jack! Harder! Yes! Yes!

FATHER. I talked to Brenda yesterday.

JACK. So what did she say? Does she like it in Boston?

BRENDA. *(To herself:)* Stupid...simple...stupid...simple...

FATHER. She seemed fine...just a little worried about you.

GLORIA. What's wrong, Jack?

(Slow afro voodoo drum—JACK and GLORIA sit down on JACK's swivel chair on wheels. GLORIA sits on top of JACK with her back to him, so that they both face out to the audience, as BRENDA starts playing drums with her brushes, running her voodoo down.)

JACK. Nothing's wrong. Nothing's ever wrong when I'm with you.

GLORIA. I'm glad we finally found each other. Most men are scared off when they find out I'm a shrink.

JACK. Women seem to like it when they find out I'm sick. Everybody wants to be my nurse and be my mother.

GLORIA. Do you like your mother, Jack?

JACK. *(Looks at her incredulously.)* What has my mother got to do with this?

ALL CAST. *(Whispers:)* Everything!

JACK. Now shut yo' mouth and stroke when you're fucking Willie... 'Cause you gonna remember riding my jock fo' the rest of yo' life. I'm the brown sugar on yo' Rice Krispies in the mornin'...and the chocolate milk on yo' cereal...

GLORIA. *(Overlap:)* Oh, Jack! You give new meaning to every snap, crackle and pop, pop, pop 'til you drop, 'till you drop...

JACK. *(Overlap:)* I'll betcha never had yo' Rice Krispies in chocolate milk before.

BRENDA. *(Underlap:)* Gloria!!

GLORIA. *(Overlap:)* Fuck me! Fuck me!

JACK. I'm the cream in your coffee and the gravy that covers your mashed potatoes and sticks to yo' ribs.

GLORIA. Fo' Sho'! Fo' Sho'!

BRENDA. (*Underlap:*) G...L...O...R...I...A!

JACK. I give new meaning to the morning after!

GLORIA. Yes, Father! Yes! Oh Jack... (*Singing:*) I've never been loved like this before.

JACK. You ain't being loved now. You're being fucked! Now shut up and *bop!*

GLORIA. *Bang!*

JACK. *Bop!*

GLORIA. *Bang!*

(They build and come simultaneously.)

JACK. Oh! Aw!

GLORIA. (*Overlap:*) Oh Jack! Re Jack! Yo' hair is so thick I could get lost in it.

JACK. G...L...O...riaaaaaaaaa!

(Drum stops. FATHER dials JACK from his pulpit. Phone rings.)

GLORIA. (*Panting:*) Oh Jack—I've never had it so good.

(The phone rings again.)

(Catching her breath.) Don't answer it...just lay next to me.

(Reality. The phone rings again. BRENDA bangs the pots more furiously because her drums are being ignored.)

GLORIA. (*Reflectively:*) Down on the farm...I thought you and Brenda would stay together forever. What went wrong with your marriage?

(Phone rings again.)

JACK. *(Reaches for a cigarette.)* I don't know. It wasn't just one thing...it was a lot of things that went wrong. First of all, I've been waiting twenty years for her to drop that baby.

(FATHER slams down the phone exasperated, and goes into a freeze.)

BRENDA. And I've been waiting twenty years for you to be a man.

(BRENDA punches her stomach. Drum roll. JACK reacts to the punches.)

JACK. I can't blame Brenda for leaving. We were like two tree stumps, with our knees growing large through the floor...two stupid 'n' simple niggers...caught by our toes and caught by our knees... Brenda was lucky she escaped.

GLORIA. Are you trying to scare me off, Jack?

JACK. No. Not at all.

(BRENDA opens one of the kitchen cabinets and finds a megaphone, as FATHER comes out of his freeze at the pulpit.)

BRENDA. *(Into the megaphone:)* This is Malcolm talking... This is Malcolm talking.

JACK. *(Sits up.)* Malcolm talking...

BRENDA. *Warning, warning! The fat lady sings!*

FATHER. *(Preaching:)* Would you know the bell of freedom if you heard it ring? Would you understand a Jack if you heard him sing? Would you recognize Shakespeare dressed in another man's clothes...standing in another man's church...preaching from another man's pulpit? No! You would call him a fool! You would ignore his drums, even as he tells you, *the window of vulnerability has been opened too wide...*time for you and your loved ones to hide.

JACK. *(Feeling the red dot on his forehead:)* Hide the children! Hide the children!

GLORIA. Jack...we don't have any children.

(We hear an ominous bass drone and the sound of heavy marching feet with a def drum roll.)

FATHER. (*Preaching:*) Birds fly south for winter in the middle of June as heavy feet march down our streets. Dogs start barking, as tanks outnumber the cars. Mothers, call your children. Missiles roam down our streets. Babies crying. Leaves fall from trees for no reason. Do you know where your children are playing? Do you know the man with the mark on his head and the mark on his soul? Do you listen to the funky drummer? Do you know what his drums are saying? Do you know, do you know, do you know?

BRENDA. Yes, Father! Yes!

(*FATHER picks up the phone and dials again. The phone rings. JACK becomes “stupid simple” and starts licking GLORIA’s foot.*)

JACK. Stupid...simple...stupid...simple...

(*Phone rings.*)

FATHER. Do you hear the heavy feet marching down our streets? Do you hear the trumpets blare? Do you hear the horn’s call? Do you recognize the flag being raised? Do you know the colors flapping in the wind? Jack! Jack!

JACK. (*Stops licking GLORIA’s foot.*) Yes, Father.

FATHER. Have you been practicing your drums, son? Are you keeping your chops sharp?

(*Phone rings.*)

JACK. Why should I keep my chops sharp, when no one is ever gonna hear me play?

FATHER. (*Slamming down the phone.*) How many times must I explain it? You are one of Malcolm’s many drummers... But no, you want to showboat all the time...you wanna take all the solos and grab up all the headlines. You need to learn how to use your brushes. You’ve got to lay back...lay under the bass line...’cause the loudest squeak always gets the grease. So play it loose like a goose with a noose ’round yo’ neck...fly like a bird, grounded with broken wings inside of *Birdland*.

(*Drums stop.*)

JACK. (*Crying, puts more white-out on his face.*) But apartheid in *Birdland...apartheid in word land* is driving me over the edge. I'm the best motherfucking drummer in the world, but I'll never get credit, recognized or paid...and I wants to get paid and I wants to get laid. But you want to white out every word I write. *Jim Crow* is grounded and trapped inside of *Birdland...and Charlie Parker is banging at the door with his ax...trying to chop his way inside of the club named after him.* (*Cries.*) Bird, can't even get inside of *Birdland*. The cover charge has slipped through every hole laying in his pocket knock-it, or disappeared with every *whirlee girl*, riding on his focket rocket. Why program me, Father...when you know I'm gonna *unlock it?!!!*

BRENDA. No, Jack! You can't unlock it!! You must unlock it!

FATHER. Son, you better lighten up on the white-out. You're supposed to hit it and quit it...hit it and quit it. And how come you never use yo' brushes? Have you forgotten everything I've taught you about playing the traps?

JACK. Please...let me stop, Father. I'll never play the drums like you.

GLORIA. Who taught you how to play the traps?

BRENDA. Who taught you how to set 'em?

JACK. (*Drumming:*) My father did. My father was the baddest cat to ever stroke his brushes across the traps.

FATHER. (*Comes down from the pulpit with his brushes.*) Tapping the traps is like making love to a woman. Sometimes you feel a fire raging in yo' empty pit. Your hands move with a life all their own...they're somebody else's hands...they're not even connected to your arms. Your drum roll builds like fire and brimstone in your head, but yo' touch is light as a feather with yo' brushes in yo' hands. You caress and bend and shape each sound, as you roar like a lion trapped inside of a whisper.

(*Congas build for "Afro Blue."*)

JACK. (*Sings:*) Dream of a land / My soul is from
I hear a hand / Stroke on a drum
Shades of delight / Cocoa hue
Rich as the night / Afro Blue

Mother and Father / Field of cotton
Majestic and tragic / And all but forgotten
Shades of delight / Cocoa hue
Rich as the night / Afro Blue
(*Bridge:*) Two young lovers are face to face

FATHER. With undulating grace

ALL. They gently sway then slip away
To some secluded place
Shades of delight / Cocoa hue
Rich as the night / Afro Blue

JACK. Sad little boy and beautiful girl
In a field of poppies / They dance and twirl

ALL. Shades of delight / Cocoa hue
Rich as the night / Afro Blue

JACK. I look in your eyes / In my search for peace
I die 'tween you thighs / With a delicate ease

ALL. Shades of delight / Cocoa hue
Rich as the night / Afro Blue

(Drum break.)

JACK. And my slumbering fantasy assumes reality
(*Bridge:*) Until it seems it's not a dream
The two are you and me
Shades of delight / Cocoa hue
Rich as the night / Afro Blue

ALL. Whispering trees / Echo our cries
Passionate pleas / But no one replies
Shades of delight / Cocoa hue
Rich as the night / Afro Blue
Shades of delight / Cocoa hue
Rich as the night / Afro Blue

JACK. Shades of delight / Cocoa hue
Rich as the night / Afro Blue

(Afro Blue drums continue under JACK's speech.)

JACK. Sometimes my father played soft and slow...like a quiet storm brewing—building into a raging storm. Sometimes he played his drums like a raving lunatic...

FATHER. (*Underlap:*) Stupidsimplestupidsimplestupidsimple...

JACK. (*Overlap:*) —standing on the wrong soapbox!

BRENDA. (*Underlap:*) Yes, Father! Father! Yes!

JACK. With white-out all over his lips.

FATHER. (*Putting white-out on his lips:*) Gotta use them brushes son. I white out my lips to white out my words...so my words can slip by unnoticed...undetected...I am an *invisible man*.

JACK. It was you Father...who gave me the *Invisible Man* to read.

FATHER. (*Whispers as he whites his lips:*) And read *Native Son*, and *The Spook Who Sat by the Door*, and read...read *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. And boy, do me one favor when you grow up.

JACK. What's that?

(*Congas stop.*)

FATHER. Marry you an African librarian...getchu a real woman son.

GLORIA. Please go on, Jack. Tell me more about your father.

(*JACK and his FATHER start drumming side by side again, as BRENDA does a crazy orbit around the kitchen counter with her brushes.*)

JACK. Sometimes my father let down his mask, and I swore I could see a hint of resignation in his glassy weary eyes. For my father never rested.

BRENDA. He never rested.

JACK. And he made me want to play the drums just like him with...

ALL. *With every other line dated and signed by all the fellas sitting in.*

BRENDA. Hey don't forget us girls... I ain't been carrying this load twenty years fo' nothing!!!

FATHER. (*Whispers:*) Hey! Too loud! Too loud! Everybody, break it on down. We're in a very dark place. A den of drums...

JACK. A Church of drums—

BRENDA. A manger...

GLORIA. A cave...

JACK. I hated being dragged around by him, from church to church and rally to rally. But every church meeting was about the day freedom would ring.

FATHER. Let me break it down to you this way...when freedom rings...I want you to read between the rings. Use dem brushes and white out dem lips and yo' words will pass by undecoded. Everybody...lay low with yo' ear to the ground. There's a mouse in the house and it's name ain't *Mickey!*

(GLORIA rubs JACK's forehead, staring at the red dot.)

GLORIA. What a strange birthmark.

(No response.)

Where are you now, Jack?

JACK. (*Nodding out:*) I'm in my room shooting smack for the first time.

FATHER. (*Alarmed:*) Son...you're making plenty of tracks...too many tracks and not much music. You're wasting your gifts, son.

JACK. Fuck you! (*Beat.*) Fuck my father! I wanted to be like Bird.

GLORIA. Why Bird?

JACK. With Bird...with Bird the word was play what you want and play what you know...and play what you lived. And always play whatever you feel *stone to the bone in yo' jelly bone biscuit.* (*Starts to nod out.*)

BRENDA. (*Nodding:*) Skin yo' knees fo' me kneegrow and slide me some skin.

JACK. (*Nodding:*) Like crazyo daddyo. Post Pop...Post Bop...Birth of Cool...or *Birth of the Fool?*

BRENDA. Must be the fool... 'cause you know nothing about being cool, Jack.

GLORIA. Ejack...Rejack...where are you now, Jack?

JACK. *(Stands like he's caught by his toe.)* I was down in Hollywood...working on my new script, *Birth of the Fool*. But I kept pitching that other script. That *screwball script*. The one no one could hit and no one did. *Honey! Honey! Honey!*

GLORIA. *Honey...I shrunk the nigger!!*

JACK. *(Cries.) Honey...I shrunk my dick and I painted myself all over in white out. (Cries.)* And they still find me threatening...and they still can't hit my fastball and you know they can't touch my loose screwball. I'm blowing my stuff right over their heads!!!

GLORIA. Lower yo' volume and work on controlling yo' pitches, Jack!

JACK. Are you my pitching coach?

(BRENDA picks up her pots and pans and begins banging the floor, again.)

GLORIA. Why do you keep writing scripts no one wants, Jack?

JACK. How do I know?

GLORIA. And why do you fall to pieces each time you take the mound?

JACK. I hate standing in front of people talking, I think of Malcolm standing there on his pulpit...in everyone's line of fire.

BRENDA. *(Whispers:)* When freedom rings...it's always followed by gunshots. *(Starts drumming like a mad woman again.)*

(JACK stands back up on the pitching mound, and starts moving around, squirming like he has to go to the bathroom real bad.)

JACK. *(Toe still stuck as he squirms.)* I was vague on the details...I couldn't get through to my father...he had shut down all communications. He wouldn't answer my drums or study my smoke signals. So here I was...standing on the mound again, like a *nigger caught by his toe!!!*

GLORIA. Please Jack...lower your volume.

JACK. They weren't even looking at me. The three execs...were just sitting there...stuffing their faces...doing lunch ignoring me. Eating right in front of me, offering me nothing...not even a seat. All I needed was one idea, to make them look up from their lunch. I just wanted to get out of there. I kept thinking about Brenda; and how bad I had to pee. And then I heard Brenda's voice.

BRENDA. (*Whispers:*) Piss on them, Jack. Piss on their heads, 'cause they sho' are pissing on you.

JACK. They sho' were pissing me off.

BRENDA. Dey *dissing* you, Jack... They are *dissing* you!

(*JACK stands on top of his worktable, kicking paper all over the place. He points a gun at the imaginary executives.*)

JACK. Hey you stupid motherfuckers! Put yo' food down and look at me when I'm pitching.

GLORIA. What did you do then, Jack?

JACK. I took out my hose and I peed on their heads. And peeing never felt so good. I went all over Hollywood peeing on studio heads...pissing on the people who pissed me off. Pretty soon the word on *Vine* was...*don't do lunch with Jack Booker, 'cause he's gonna dance on your table top, and pee on your head.*

BRENDA. And he'll eat up all of yo' crackers.

JACK. (*Reflective:*) I started pickin' up Brenda's code.

BRENDA. (*Overlap:*) Calling from the ward! Calling from the ward!

JACK. I knew there was trouble in Boston.

BRENDA. (*Overlap:*) I felt like an elephant running away from the circus...*pissed off* to irritation by a tick up my ass.

JACK. Yeah...Brenda was coming in loud and clear. I took off my clothes and I ran outside. I couldn't keep up with her ranting. Her playing was too loud...too outside the melody.

BRENDA. (*Drumming:*) I was running down the freeway like a pickup truck with four-wheel drive. There were boxes and boxes of

crackers in front of me, and I remembered each and every cracker. Look at all these crackers and no peanut butter. What's up wid that? And I took my hands off of the wheel and I drove straight into the light.

JACK. (*Overlap:*) The rain started pouring in the sunshine.

BRENDA. And the boxes and boxes of crackers started parting like the *red sea*, as my car jumped up on the sidewalk. I could hear people screaming, as my car floated down the sidewalk like a big boat.

JACK. A flock of Birds flew overhead as a rainbow stretched across the sky. A parade of cars started honking in the streets.

BRENDA. My eyes were blinded by an intense light, and I kept driving my car into the light.

JACK. (*Overlap:*) Into a tree.

BRENDA. You see the tree, but do you see the light?

JACK. I was losing Brenda's signal...but then I started picking up my father's code.

JACK and FATHER. *Trouble in Boston! Trouble in Boston!*

JACK. And I knew something was wrong with Brenda. So I started digging a hole in my neighbor's backyard. Stupid simple... stupidsimple...

BRENDA. I stared straight into the light. Lose the baby...lose the baby...lose the baby...

JACK. I kept digging...and digging, not knowing what I was digging for. I kept on digging until they came and took me away.

BRENDA. For hours and hours I laid on my back, strapped to a table at my waist with a bright light, glaring in my face. Lose the baby...lose the baby... I couldn't move my hands—I couldn't move my arms—

JACK. (*Overlap:*) They put straps around my wrists and ankles so I couldn't play the drums...so I couldn't answer the drums I was hearing.

BRENDA. (*On her back:*) Lose the baby...lose the baby...

JACK. A vision of Brenda came to me. I saw Brenda laying on her back...waiting for me in vain. Waiting for me, all those years, waiting while I worked without pay, worked without rest on the *Black Man's Bible*.

(He lunges toward the closet of scripts again, and tosses down a few more manuscripts.)

The Church of Jimi Hendrix...another no go... The Book of Richard Pryor...another soul on fire!

GLORIA. Stop it, Jack! Stop it. You must control these outbursts!

JACK. (*Kneels down next to BRENDA.*) Push...Brenda...push! Operation *push* in effect, babyeee! Push!

GLORIA. (*Stands.*) Lose the baby, bitch! Lose it!

FATHER. (*Re-enters.*) What is that *dayglow R.I.A. kneegrow* still doing in yo' temple son? She ain't the kind of midwife you need. (*He starts shuffling like Step 'n' Fetchit.*)

JACK. What are you doing here? I hated my father. He was an embarrassment sometimes. He was a lawyer for the *Nation of Islam*, up until the split...then after Malcolm's murder, my father...the turncoat Uncle Tom went to work for the devil. Then he worked for the NAACP...and the FBI...and the CIA and MCI and NBC and IBM and BMW. I forget how many letters in the alphabet he worked for.

FATHER. But I was always working for you, son...I was working so that you could be a *man of letters* just like me.

GLORIA. (*Seeing the FATHER for the first time:*) What are you doing here?

FATHER. Oh...I'm a *roofus doofus* at yo' service, mam.

(JACK sighs an exasperated embarrassed sigh, as BRENDA continues to experience intense labor pains.)

FATHER. I'm homeless Mam...please let me work fo' a meal. Please let me weed out yo' garden just to smell yo' roses.

JACK. Get out of here.

GLORIA. No Jack—let—him...

FATHER. (*Overlap, lapping at GLORIA's foot like a dog:*) I'll wash your car for a quarter—a quarter...and I'll raise all yo' kids by 11 o'clock, just for a cup of coffee with cream and sugar. (*Whispering to JACK:*) What's she doing here?

JACK. My father the sellout...gives new meaning to polishing yo' shoes.

GLORIA. (*To FATHER:*) Is it true the negro man would do anything for a white woman—

FATHER. (*Licking GLORIA's foot:*) Oh yes mam...yes mam...it's true...it's true. White women make me stupid simple...stoop it n sip it.

JACK. I hate seeing you stoop this low, Father.

FATHER. I hate seeing this woman in yo' house, but I'm the *bush doctor* to run this mouse out of yo' house... 'cause I'm stupid simple. Stupid simple on my knees doin' my stupid simple knee grow job... I'm tapping every trap they set for you... I'm rattlin' my tambourine of glory in a church of loud noises, whistles and squeaks.

BRENDA. Squeak...squeak...squeak...

FATHER. The negroes are comin'...the negroes are coming...down on our hands and knees.

JACK. (*To GLORIA:*) Time to train you for a knee grow job. I want you wearing kneepads like Monica Lewinsky.

BRENDA. (*Labor pains:*) Piss on her, Jack. Shrink her down to size...shrink her down to the size of a toe.

JACK. I've been shrunk myself, reduced from a negro to a toe-gro.

(FATHER pushes JACK aside and works his mojo on GLORIA. He places his hand on GLORIA's forehead like a spiritual healer, blessed with a healing touch, immediately rendering her helpless.)

FATHER. Reduced to the size of chitlin'... Oh Miss Gloria on high...please let me butter yo' thighs fo' you. 'Cause I don't want to

hurt ya, but you walked in the front door, and I 'tend to run you out the back.

(FATHER sends GLORIA spinning around and around in a dizzying circle, by simply tapping her forehead and the top of her head like a drum.)

GLORIA. *(Under a spell:)* Come on Roofus Doofus wid yo' bad self. And let freedom ring for me one time!

BRENDA. Is yo' free dumb my free doom?

FATHER. Dis gonna be de bet nut of yo' life.

GLORIA. Fo' sho' fo' sho, fo' sho'... *(Spins in a circle.)*

BRENDA. Jack...Jack...I think my water just broke...

JACK. Push Brenda... Push Brenda...

FATHER. No son... You're too loud... Use them brushes...use them brushes.

(The phone rings.)

FATHER. *(Whispers:)* Push... *(Uses his brushes:)* You got *Bird in you and you got Trane...*

JACK. Operation Push in effect babyees.

FATHER. You've got the anger of every black man ever locked in prison inside of you.

JACK. You've got every bug in the rug inside of you...

(The subliminal vacuum cleaner begins hissing at a low volume.)

FATHER. *(Drumming with brushes:)* Skit scat scott scat skit blip blip blip boom dapa boom de pow scrr scat skit skid...

JACK. *(Overlap:)* Yes Father! Use them brushes...play them drums wid de palm of yo' hands. Go on wid yo' bad self! Slap it to her biscuit in syrup 639 times fo' me, fo' me, fo' me...

FATHER. *(To GLORIA:)* I'm gonna open up doors to rooms in yo' house that you never knew existed.

(He pulls GLORIA back to him by the gravitational power of his hand.)

GLORIA. Oh fo' sho', fo' sho', fo' sho' you right and you know that!

BRENDA. *(On her back:)* And there were rooms inside of rooms. And Father kept opening doors to more rooms in his house.

JACK. And he led me down to the basement...to the furnace room behind his workshop...

BRENDA. *(Overlap:)* And he made me scream...

JACK. *(Underlap:)* Father! Father!

GLORIA. *(Falls to her knees under a spell:)* And I opened the closet door and the bear spranged out. And I screamed, "Father! Father! There's a bear after me!" And my father came into the room with his shotgun cocked and I screamed, "*Shoot the bear, Father! Shoot the bear!*"

(FATHER rises and mimes raising a shotgun aimed at JACK.)

BRENDA. No Father! No Father! Don't shoot the bear!

FATHER. I looked at the bear, as he looked back at me. I saw a tear flow from its eye...and I saw the light inside of the tear, and I looked at the bear's foot...caught in the trap. And I bent down, and set the bear free.

(FATHER mimes setting JACK free.)

JACK. *(As he's set free:)* Thank you, Father, Thank you!

FATHER. *(Slaps JACK.)* Don't thank me. Now get this mouse out of your house. *(Jams with brushes.)*

JACK. *(Holding his face, he returns to the typewriter and works.)* I'm Willie Bobo, babyeeee! The greatest motherfucking drummer in the Universe! You can rehearse and rehearse...you can program a thousand drum machines and you still can't touch the sounds I'm laying down.

(FATHER engages JACK in a "jam session," a heated battle of wit and words. A war of talking drums.)

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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