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Cast of Characters

DAVE

JOCKO

ELEANOR

BRIANNA

CAL

SORGE

MAN #1

MAN #2

VOICES

CAPTAIN 11

by Joseph Goodrich

Scene 1

(Darkness.)

VOICE #1. Shhhhhhhhhhhh... Don't make a move without calling Parker Transfer.

(Music; sound of tap-dancing.)

VOICE #2. The big Red Carpet Market is rolling out the sales. We're slashing prices so you can save big on all linoleum, patio tile and area rugs—plus the biggest selection of indoor/outdoor carpeting in the Midwest.

VOICE #3. The Big Red Carpet Market at the Western Mall. Highway Ten.

(Music.)

VOICE #4. Day time...Night time...Any time. Tomorrow's styles for today's women—Hope's Fashion Farm.

VOICE #5. C'est chic!

(Sound of rocket lift-off. Space music. Lights slowly up on DAVE, posed against a background of stars.)

VOICE #6. It's time for...Captain 11, Man of the future. One man in each century is given the power to control Time. He must be wise; he must be brave. You have the power, and we of the Outer Galaxies designate to you the wisdom of Solomon and the strength of Atlas! You...are CAPTAIN 11.

(Music crescendos.)

DAVE. Hi, crew. Captain 11 reporting. Happy President's Day. Let's fire up the time converter and jump into a cartoon. Then it's Science Time and this week's try at the Treasure Chest. And, of course, birthday greetings to all the Birthday Kids. Moon Boy, activate the Time Converter!

(Time converter sound.)

Cartoon sounds.

DAVE *lights a cigarette.*

He crosses to a small podium bearing the legend 'Science Time.'

A glass of water rests on the podium.

He takes a package of Alka-Seltzer from his space belt, drops it into the glass.

He picks up a piece of paper from the podium and studies it as he drinks the Alka-Seltzer.

Lights up on MAN #1 u.l. and MAN #2 u.r.)

MAN #1. What's that, Dave?

MAN #2. Is that today's science experiment, Dave?

MAN #1. Not feeling well, Dave?

MAN #2. Dave, are you a little under the weather?

MAN #1. Dave, maybe you should go home.

MAN #2. Go home, Dave.

MAN #1 / MAN #2. Because—

MAN #1. There'll be no birthdays today, Dave.

MAN #2. No one gets a shot at the Treasure Chest either, Dave.

MAN #1. Dave, you're in trouble.

MAN #2. Big trouble, Dave.

MAN #1. Dave, you're fired.

(MAN #2 crosses to DAVE.)

MAN #2. Put it out, Dave.

(He reaches for DAVE's cigarette. DAVE jerks his head away.)

MAN #1. Put it out, Dave.

(DAVE lets the cigarette fall from his lips to the floor.)

MAN #1. Put it out, Dave.

(DAVE drools a string of spit over the cigarette.)

MAN #2. Put it out nicely, Dave.

(DAVE grinds the cigarette out with the toe of his space boot.)

MAN #1. Thanks, Dave. *(Pause.)* Strip him.

(MAN #2 removes DAVE's medals.)

MAN #2. The Galacticon Cluster. The Jamboree Badge. The A.A.S.F.A.S.F. Membership flag. The Greater Sioux Falls Chamber of Commerce 'Good Neighbor With a Helping Hand' Medallion. The Kiwanis Pin.

DAVE. Not the Kiwanis pin.

MAN #1. Sorry, Dave—the Kiwanis pin, too. And the tassels.

(MAN #2 removes the tassels from DAVE's shoulders.)

MAN #1. And the hat.

(MAN #2 removes DAVE's hat, and returns u.r.)

MAN #1. Captain 11 is dead, Dave.

MAN #2. Long live Captain 11.

MAN #1. Dave, you are no longer today's man of tomorrow.

MAN #2. So long, Dave.

MAN #1. Dave, it was good working with you.

(They exit.)

DAVE. Bradley Aaron Downall. Heather Elaine McElhatton. Nancy Beth Flom. Michael James Collins. Russell John Purdy. Eight years old forever...Captain 11, signing off.

(He tears up the sheet of paper, watches the pieces fall.)

Scene 2

(JOCKO, with bullhorn.)

JOCKO. YELLOWS AND BROWNS STIMULATE APPETITE.

REDS EXCITE.

BLUES AND WHITES SOOTHE.

WHAT ABOUT GREENS, YOU ASK?

GREENS...ARE NEUTRAL.

COLORS AFFECT THE WAY WE PERCEIVE THE WORLD.

ANIMALS CAN'T SEE COLORS.

THIS IS ONE OF THE WAYS GOD HAS RAISED US ABOVE THEM.

DEL TACO IS SWITCHING TO BLUE TO SHOW THEY'RE MORE SERIOUS.

ROSE PETALS.

CHICKEN BLOOD.

AMBERGRIS.

THESE ARE GOD'S GIFTS TO MAN.

DON'T MISUSE THEM.

DON'T BE A STACY KEACH.

(DAVE—with footlocker—enters.)

HI, DAVE.

STACY KEACH IS MARRIED TO A BLACK WOMAN AND HAS HORDES OF BLACK IN-LAWS.

WHEN CONFRONTED WITH THE FACT THAT HE IS STACY KEACH, HE WILL DENY IT. HE WILL SAY HE IS 'LES JOHNSON.' DO NOT BELIEVE HIM.

STACY KEACH LIVES IN ARKANSAS AND BREEDS WOLF HYBRIDS.

DO NOT GO HOME WITH HIM. HE WILL MAKE YOU LIE ON THE FLOOR WITH HIS SISTER-IN-LAW AND A SMALL BLACK BOY BETWEEN YOUR LEGS.

STACY KEACH... KRIS KRISTOFFERSON... ORSON WELLES... AND JOHNNY CARSON FORM AN UNHOLY TRINITY THAT SEEKS YOUR DOWNFALL AND THE DESTRUCTION OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION.

FIGHT STACY KEACH.

FIGHT STACY KEACH TODAY.

DAVE. How's it going, Jocko?

JOCKO. O.F.T.B.

DAVE. How's the teeth?

JOCKO. I still got 'em... Some of 'em.

DAVE. Seen Cal?

JOCKO. Maybe.

DAVE. In three. *(Pause.)* Mettler's. *(Pause.)* The Anchor. *(Pause.)* Fowl Play.

(JOCKO holds the bullhorn to his lips.)

JOCKO. NO, DAVE.

(DAVE takes out his wallet, crosses to JOCKO, offers him some crumpled bills.)

DAVE. Where is he?

JOCKO. At the dredge.

DAVE. East or West?

JOCKO. East.

(JOCKO reaches for the bills. DAVE moves out of reach.)

DAVE. See you around, Jocko.

JOCKO. You owe me three bucks.

DAVE. I'm operating from the bottom myself, pal.

(He flips the wallet to JOCKO.)

Fight the good fight.

JOCKO. You owe me, Dave. Come on, man.

DAVE. Me no got.

(He exits. JOCKO holds his bullhorn to his lips.)

JOCKO. YOU COME BACK HERE, DAVE, AND PAY ME WHAT YOU OWE ME. I WANT MY MONEY, DAVE. GIVE ME MY MONEY. GIVE ME MY MONEY. GIVE ME MY MONEY. GIVE ME MY MONEY. GIVE ME MY GODDAMN MONEY! *(Pause.)* IF I DON'T HAVE MY MONEY, DAVE, MOMMY WILL KILL ME. SHE'LL KILL ME, DAVE! I DON'T THINK YOU WANNA LIVE WITH THAT!

(He lowers the bullhorn.)

Mommy will kill me.

Scene 3

(BRIANNA, looking through the want ads. Telephone rings, off. BRIANNA rises quickly.)

CAL. *(Off:)* Got it.

(BRIANNA sits down. CAL enters, deck of cards in hand.)

CAL. Weisberg Greene. *(Pause.)* Weisberg Greene. *(Pause.)* Weisberg Greene. Sounds like a buncha matzoh humpers. *(Pause.)* I told them you weren't interested. *(Pause.)* I told 'em they should hire me. I have a very pleasant phone manner. *(Pause.)* I'm pretty, too.

(BRIANNA starts to rise.)

Sit down. *(Pause.)* Sit down.

(BRIANNA sits.)

Don't work. Stay at home. Stay home with me and shuffle my cards.

(He flicks the deck into her face. He exits. BRIANNA gathers up the cards.)

Scene 4

(DAVE and ELEANOR. ELEANOR is a fat man in a wrinkled sun dress.)

ELEANOR. Bedroom, living room, den. *(Pause.)* It's small but it's clean. No tuberculosis, no nothing. Very clean, very quiet. No cholos. No druggies. No noisemakers. *(Pause.)* And it's practically furnished.

(DAVE looks around.)

I see you're wearing sneakers. Good. Alex needs it quiet. No buffaloes. *(Pause.)* The power's on, you just need light bulbs. *(Pause.)* Alex is very sick, very unhappy, you know, very moody. *(Pause.)* Catholic. *(Pause.)* He's at the Black Bear right now otherwise I'd introduce you. *(Pause.)* All that's new, just like the carpet. *(Pause.)* Well?

DAVE. I'll take it.

ELEANOR. You have the wherewithal?

DAVE. Yes.

(He hands ELEANOR an envelope.)

It's all there.

(ELEANOR counts the money in the envelope.)

ELEANOR. You're short. *(Pause.)* First month, last month, security and keys. *(Pause.)* You're fifty short.

DAVE. But you said when we—

ELEANOR. I'm sorry.

(She holds the envelope out to him.)

Get a nice motel until you've got the rest. Then come back and see me. *(Pause.)* Take your money.

(DAVE takes the envelope. He picks up his footlocker, heads for the door.)

I like you, Dave. I really do. And because I like you. I'm going to tell you something. *(Pause.)* It's not about money. What's fifty bucks, really? It's not about that. It's not like I said one thing on the phone and now I'm saying another. *(Pause.)* This is what it is. I want you to beg me. I want you to beg me to stay. *(Pause.)* I don't know why. I just do. *(Pause.)* Beg me.

(DAVE sets his footlocker down, takes the envelope out, and holds it near his lighter flame.)

You won't do it, and I'll tell you why. *(Pause.)* It's not in your character. You may be stupid, but you ain't dumb.

(DAVE moves the envelope nearer to the flame.)

Wake up, Dave. I know that's all you've got left in the world. *(Pause.)* And you don't have that many friends. *(Pause.)* You've made your point.

(DAVE moves the envelope away from the flame, puts envelope and lighter away.)

Now beg me.

(Pause. DAVE falls to his knees.)

DAVE. Please, Eleanor. Please. Oh, please. Eleanor. Please. Please. Please, please, please, please. please. *(Pause.)*

ELEANOR. No.

Scene 5

(BRIANNA reads a letter to CAL.)

BRIANNA. “Shirley wants me to tell you about the baby-sitter on Sherburne. It happened a few weeks ago about twelve blocks from here. There was a birthday party going on and a large, fat aunt passed out and sat on her six-month-old niece or nephew, I’m not sure which. When we first heard about it, we thought ‘blacks,’ but no, they were white. It hasn’t gotten much publicity. Neither TV or papers have said if she will be charged or termed an accident. Don’t ask me why” —

CAL. Did she send any money?

BRIANNA. — “Don’t ask me why she was lying in a chair. It would have been much safer on the floor. Vance found the story quite appalling. We are having a nice spell of weather. The sun is shining, the temp. is up to forty degrees. We’re getting some snow, but Vance says” —

(CAL sets fire to the letter.)

CAL. I never liked your mother.

BRIANNA: ...That wasn’t very nice, Cal.

CAL. You know what? I’m not a nice guy.

(DAVE enters, footlocker under his arm.)

DAVE. Knock knock knock.

BRIANNA. Oh my God. Oh my god.

DAVE. Heya, beautiful.

(BRIANNA crosses to DAVE and hugs him.)

CAL. He was talking to me.

BRIANNA. God, it’s good to see you.

DAVE. Good to see you.

BRIANNA. How long has it been? It must be about—

CAL. Brianna, why don't you go and do something useful? Take the clothes off the line or something. Dave didn't come here to see you—did ya, Dave?

BRIANNA. We'll talk later.

(She exits.)

CAL. You'll talk all right. You'll be talking to a motherfucking gynecologist about getting my boot out of your cunt. *(Pause.)* She's not very smart, but she sure can suck. *(Pause.)* Hey, Captain.

DAVE. Cal.

CAL. You wanna talk to me, Captain? Go ahead and talk.

(CAL lights a cigarette.)

DAVE. You got a spare, uh...

CAL. Sorry.

(CAL blows smoke rings.)

DAVE. So—what you been up to?

CAL. Same old same old. You know.

DAVE. Here and there?

CAL. Up and down.

DAVE. All around. *(Pause.)* Anything going?

CAL. Yeah, well, you know...Always a little something. Yeah.

DAVE. Anything special?

CAL. A little S and R.

DAVE. Workin' solo?

CAL. Jocko some, but he's not worth much. Too noticeable. Too easily distracted. Now, you—you were good and anonymous.

DAVE. Anything I could get in on?

CAL. Well, I don't know, Captain. Times're tough.

DAVE. Tell me about it.

CAL. I thought you were raking in the bucks in tee-vee land.

DAVE. I quit. *(Pause.)* Artistic differences.

CAL. Like I say, Captain, times're tough all over...

DAVE. Tough how?

CAL. Distribution problems. Cash flow. I don't know as if I need an extra man just now. Besides, there's plenty of opportunities for a smart boy like you. College boy, right?

DAVE. Community college, yeah.

CAL. Well, then. You gotta have something up your sleeve.

DAVE. Well, yeah. Maybe, yeah. I been talking with Arnie a little—

CAL. Arnie Sputnik?

DAVE. Something wrong with Arnie?

CAL. Nothing at all. What's he up to now?

DAVE. Sewing machines. Zimbabwe. Arnie says he's got sole rights to the country. He's lined up an African partner. Fifty a year if it goes.

CAL. But who pays for the ticket? *(Pause.)*

DAVE. I do.

CAL. He's smart. I'll give him that.

DAVE. He says it's all set up.

CAL. I said he's smart. *(Pause.)* Don't fuck with Sputnik. And don't go to Zimbabwe, Captain. They'll cut your lips off.

DAVE. Exactly. That's why I was hoping—thinking—that maybe...you know, if...if you were...you know. *(Pause.)*

CAL. I'm not happy with you, Captain.

DAVE. I was also kind of hoping that was over with.

CAL. My sentiments run deep, Captain. *(Pause.)* Look—I'll call you. Give me your number.

DAVE. Actually, is it okay if I call you? All I got is a phone in the hall. Not very private. *(Pause.)*

CAL. I wanna help you. Captain. But I can't reach a man who doesn't wanna be reached.

DAVE. It's just that—

CAL. Get the fuck outta my house.

DAVE. Cal, just—

CAL. Go. Go on. Go. Scram. Iss-pay off-ay.

(DAVE starts to leave, stops.)

DAVE. You remember Crow Man?

CAL. The Black Bomber? Sure.

DAVE. Remember how he was always hitting us up for cigarettes?

CAL. Jive-ass bastard.

DAVE. But you remember, right? How he was always bumming smokes? Right?...Did I tell you this? *(Pause.)* I asked him once why. Know what he said? Said, "'Cause at least you got a pack of cigarettes." *(Pause.)* I been examining my prospects lately, you know, adding up the plus and the minus, and the conclusion I've reached is...I got no cigarettes, Cal. I got no cigarettes.

(CAL takes his pack out, tosses a cigarette to DAVE.)

CAL. "L.S./M.F.T."

(Lights fade.)

Scene 6

(Lights up on JOCKO, with bullhorn. He wears a white short-sleeved shirt with a name tag, a narrow tie, black trousers and shoes: The 'Mormon evangelist' look.)

JOCKO. IN 1963 MY MOTHER APPEARED ON THE POPULAR TELEVISION GAME SHOW "PRESS YOUR LUCK." I AUDITIONED FOR THE CHILDREN'S VERSION OF THE SHOW AND WAS ACCEPTED. LIKE FELIX THE CAT, I WAS VERY CUTE AND SMART AND CHARMING. TWO WEEKS LATER I MADE MY NETWORK TELEVISION DEBUT ALONG WITH SEVERAL OF MY PEERS.

A NATION'S EYES WERE FIXED UPON US.

BEFORE THE GAME STARTED, THE HOST ASKED US WHAT WE WANTED TO BE WHEN WE GREW UP. ONE CHILD WANTED TO BE A DOCTOR.

ANOTHER CHILD WANTED TO BE A FIREMAN.

ANOTHER WANTED TO BE A HOUSEWIFE.

THE HOST APPROACHED ME AND ASKED ME WHAT I WANTED TO BE WHEN I GREW UP.

I COULDN'T THINK OF A THING TO SAY.

NOT A FUCKING THING.

IT WAS AS IF I'D BEEN STRUCK DUMB.

FINALLY I JUST SAID THE FIRST THING THAT CAME INTO MY HEAD. 'MR. SO-AND-SO,' I SAID—HIS NAME ESCAPES ME AT THIS REMOVE IN TIME—'MR. SO-AND-SO...I WANNA BE A BUM.'

EIGHT YEARS OLD, AND I'D DECIDED ON MY LIFE'S COURSE.

IT'S TAKEN ME AWHILE, BUT EACH AND EVERY DAY I GET CLOSER AND CLOSER TO REALIZING MY CHILDHOOD AMBITION.

I UNDERSTAND NOW THAT THE HOST OF “PRESS YOUR LUCK” WAS NONE OTHER THAN STACY KEACH—IN CUNNING DISGUISE.

(Lights fade.)

Scene 7

(Lights up on CAL and DAVE, also dressed as Mormon evangelists. CAL has a thick black book; DAVE has a bicycle.)

DAVE. You know what I wished for? *(Pause.)* Right then? *(Pause.)* At that moment? *(Pause.)* I wished I could pick that bitch up, get her hot, and kick her outta the car. Leave her there on the side of the road. “Hey, bitch, go fuck yourself in Iowa.” *(Pause.)* I stood in line for six hours. *(Pause.)* Bitch.

CAL. Sometimes I wish I was a lesbian, too. Just for a day. *(Pause.)* Duck back, Captain.

(They move out of the light, then return.)

Yeah, I wish I could be a lesbian. Just once. I’ll bet it’s like fucking the mayor. *(Pause.)*

DAVE. Nastassja Kinski.

CAL. Where?

DAVE. Anywhere, man. I don’t care.

CAL. That’s a woman.

DAVE. At least you got one.

CAL. Yeah, but most of the time she’s not someone I want on my arm, you know? I’m real ambivalent. *(Pause.)* Duck back, Captain.

(They move out of the light, then return.)

You get what ya settle for, right?

DAVE. I guess. *(Pause.)* I think it’s more a—

(CAL holds up his hand. They listen.)

CAL. It's Jocko. *(Pause.)* Jocko? *(Pause.)* Come on out, Jocko. I know your boots.

(JOCKO enters.)

What the fuck are you doing here?

(He slaps JOCKO across the mouth.)

Leaving your post.

JOCKO. Fuck, Cal...

CAL. Jocko's got bad teeth... What the fuck you want? Speak up, Jocko, or forever hold your penis.

JOCKO. I saw...I saw...Him. I saw him. His car.

DAVE. Who?

JOCKO. Him.

CAL. Sorge? You saw Sorge? When?

JOCKO. A minute ago. Soon as I saw him. I came here.

CAL. Fuck.

(Pause.)

DAVE. What's he doing 'round here?

CAL. Shut up, I gotta think... Jesus, this complicates things... Jocko, get back in position. Me and Dave'll stay here. Business as usual.

DAVE. That safe?

CAL. You got a better idea?...Get outta here, Jocko, before I slap your mouth again.

(JOCKO exits.)

What a fuckin' burden.

DAVE. He looked like he was gonna shit his pants.

CAL. You shoulda known him before Wendy burned his beard off. He useta be a handsome man.

(Pause.)

DAVE. What do you think he wants?

CAL. Sorge?...Money. My money. But he can chase apes in hell. He's got no cause with me. It's not his property. *(Pause.)* Duck back, Captain.

(They move out of the light.)

Scene 8

(BRIANNA sits on a footlocker. Offstage, DAVE sings in the shower. The shower stops. DAVE—in bath towel, wet hair slicked back—enters. He carries a Ziploc bag with shaving gear.)

DAVE. You're sitting on my stuff. *(Pause.)* Could you get up? *(Pause.)* Please.

(BRIANNA stands.)

Could you leave the room? *(Pause.)* Could you at least turn around?

(BRIANNA turns away. DAVE takes the key from around his neck and unlocks the footlocker. He takes out a T-shirt, socks, and underwear. He checks them for cleanliness. He sniffs the socks, then rummages around for another pair. There isn't another pair. He closes and locks the footlocker. He puts the key around his neck.)

I'm getting dressed now.

(BRIANNA doesn't move. DAVE gathers his clothes. He starts to exit, stops. He crosses back to the footlocker, checks the lock. BRIANNA watches him.)

A man's stuff, ya know?

(He exits.)

(Off:) "Sunshine on my shoulder makes me happy,/Sunshine on my shoulder makes me cry

(He re-enters, dressed except for his socks and shoes. He crosses to the footlocker, unlocks it, takes out a can of spray deodorant. He puts his socks on. Then he lifts one foot into the air, sprays it with deodorant. He lifts the other foot into the air and sprays it with deodorant.)

Then he puts on his shoes. He puts the can of deodorant back into the footlocker, and locks the lock.)

BRIANNA. What've you got worth stealing?

DAVE. For your information, quite a lot.

BRIANNA. Show me.

(DAVE crosses to the door, locks it.)

DAVE. This is only 'cause I'm a guest...

(He crosses to the footlocker, unlocks it.)

You don't say a word about this.

(BRIANNA crosses her heart, locks her lips, throws away the key.)

I'm serious.

(He takes out four or five paperback books wrapped in cellophane and sets them along the top of the footlocker. He holds one up.)

This one's mint. Got this for a nickel at some rummage sale. Two fags were breaking up and one was selling the other's stuff. I paid a nickel for this. Know what it's worth? *(Pause.)* Five hundred bucks. Five hundred, easy.

BRIANNA. That?

DAVE. Easy.

(He holds up another.)

All-dew-uss Huxley. Seventy-five. Maybe eighty.

(He holds up another.)

BRIANNA. Can I look?

DAVE. If you're careful.

(BRIANNA taxes the book from him.)

BRIANNA. "The sin palaces of old New Orleans had never seen a lovelier woman than Aura Lee, the dusky octaroon." ...What's this one worth?

DAVE. What do ya think?

BRIANNA. ...Fifty?

DAVE. Try two hundred and fifty.

(She hands him the book.)

I got others, too. If I'm ever really down on my luck, I can sell these. These are my insurance.

(He carefully puts the books away, locks the footlocker.)

BRIANNA. You read 'em?

DAVE. Yeah. Some of 'em.

BRIANNA. Cal reads a lot. He even wrote a book once. It was three thousand pages long.

(Pause. She rolls her head backward and forward, and from right to left.)

DAVE. Something the matter?

BRIANNA. I've been on the phone all day. I've got high heel of the neck.

(She continues rolling her head from right to left, and forward and backward.)

Rub it for me, Dave?

(She crosses to the footlocker, sits down. DAVE removes his jacket, hangs it up neatly, crosses to her and starts working on her neck.)

DAVE. Stop me if I hurt anything.

BRIANNA. Oh, you'll know. *(Pause.)* Oh, that feels good. I got two bricks up there. *(Pause.)* What do you do for fun, Dave?

DAVE. We weren't put here to have a good time.

BRIANNA. Cal and I are going water-skiing next weekend.

DAVE. You like water-skiing?

BRIANNA. I can stay up for fifteen seconds now.

DAVE. You're an expert, huh?

BRIANNA. It's harder than it looks. Like, no one told me that when you first go down, when you hit the water, you're supposed to tighten up, you know? Otherwise you get douched. I got douched. I was sick for a week. All the algae.

DAVE. You ought to try the desert.

BRIANNA. The desert's nice?

DAVE. Very nice.

BRIANNA. Then I'd like it, 'cause I'm very nice.

DAVE. You seem very nice.

BRIANNA. I can be very mean, too.

DAVE. I don't wanna see that.

BRIANNA. Then I'll be nice.

(Pause.)

DAVE. Lay down. *(Pause.)* I'm gonna do your back.

(BRIANNA lies on the floor. DAVE works on her back.)

BRIANNA. ...You're not from around here, are you?

DAVE. I was born in Europe.

BRIANNA. You're built like one.

(Pause.)

DAVE. You from here?

BRIANNA. Not originally.

DAVE. What brought you out here?

BRIANNA. I told you that.

DAVE. No, you didn't.

BRIANNA. My father died.

DAVE. Sorry.

BRIANNA. Yes—he died, and one way or another I wound up out here. *(Pause.)* I never really cared for him all that much, really. But I loved him. *(Pause.)* He didn't go without a fight, though. Boy, it just puckered him up.

DAVE. Some people love this world too much. *(Pause.)* Sit back up.

(She sits up. DAVE works on her forehead and temples.)

BRIANNA. Cal's gonna move us to a new place soon.

DAVE. This place is okay.

BRIANNA. Eagle Rock's nicer.

DAVE. Some parts, yeah.

BRIANNA. But this is what we can afford. Right now. *(Pause.)* I keep telling myself it's temporary.

DAVE. Lie down again.

(She starts to lie down.)

On your back.

(She does. DAVE places one hand on her forehead...the other near her knees...and rests his head on her stomach. Long pause.)

BRIANNA. Dave...He said once, if I was to die he'd cut off my head and carry it around with him. *(Pause.)* That's love. *(Pause.)* Dave.

(DAVE removes his hands. BRIANNA rises, straightens herself.)

BRIANNA. Thanks for showing me your books.

DAVE. Thanks for telling me about your father.

(Pause.)

(DAVE puts his jacket on.)

BRIANNA. Where you going?

DAVE. Job interview.

BRIANNA. At seven-thirty in the evening?

DAVE. It's an interview for a night job.

(Pause.)

BRIANNA. Well, then. *(Pause.)* Good night.

(She starts for the door. DAVE follows her.)

DAVE. Night, Brianna.

BRIANNA. My name's Kim.

(She exits. Lights fade.)

Scene 9

(Lights up on CAL and JOCKO. JOCKO writes in a large, grease-stained notebook.)

CAL. Saving the world again, huh, Jocko?

JOCKO. You son-of-a-bitch. I hope your right hand falls off.

(He continues writing. DAVE enters.)

CAL. Anything?

DAVE. No sign.

CAL. Fuck me, Dougal. *(Pause.)* Hey, Jocko, tell us what's wrong with the world. Dave here doesn't know.

JOCKO. Leave me alone.

DAVE. I'll tell you what's wrong. It's real simple. Too much power in too few hands.

CAL. How would you know?

DAVE. I mean, lookit. One phone company. One cable system. Capitalism.

CAL. No no no. No no no. That's Communism—"You haff vun choice, undt yew vill like it." Capitalism is "Fuck you, Burger King!"—you go down the street—"Gimme a Big Mac." Choices. *(Pause.)* Jocko. Make a food run.

JOCKO. I'm studying.

CAL. Jocko, I'm gonna rip your throat out and stuff it up a dead monkey's ass.

DAVE. *(To CAL:)* You'll never be a good alcoholic if you eat.

JOCKO. You son-of-a-bitch. I hope your right hand falls off.

CAL. Go to that place you like. I'll give you the money. Maybe your waitress will be there. Maybe she'll take your order.

JOCKO. Shut up, Cal.

DAVE. What's this, Jocko?

CAL. Jocko's sweet on someone. Jocko's got a new girl.

DAVE. Yeah? What's she like?

CAL. Not bad. Short.

DAVE. How short?

CAL. 'Bout sucking height.

JOCKO. You son-of-a-bitch. I hope your right hand falls off.

DAVE. What's her name, Jocko? She got one?

CAL. "Fido."

JOCKO. Her name's Lisa, okay? Shut up.

CAL. He read her name tag.

JOCKO. I did not. I mean, I've talked to her. She knows who I am.

DAVE. Is she pretty?

JOCKO. Oh yeah.

DAVE. You like her? *(Pause.)* You can tell us.

CAL. You like her or what?

DAVE. Just a little bit, maybe?

(Pause.)

JOCKO. Yeah. Yeah, I do. I do like her.

CAL. Jocko's in love.

JOCKO. I am not.

CAL. Jocko's in luhhhh-uuuuuuuvvv!

JOCKO. No! No! I'm not. I...admire her.

DAVE. Jocko the gentleman.

CAL. Now wait a minute. What does that mean, you "admire" her?

JOCKO. I respect her.

CAL. You like her, but you don't wanna do her, is that it? What's the matter, Jocko? You some kinda freak?

JOCKO. I—I just... I like her.

CAL. That's my point.

DAVE. You talk to her.

JOCKO. Yeah.

DAVE. And she responds? She's interested?

JOCKO. She listens.

DAVE. Then ask her out. Next time you're "talking."

CAL. He's right, Jocko.

DAVE. That's the next step.

JOCKO. I couldn't. *(Pause.)* I can't. *(Pause.)* I just...can't.

CAL. He's such a chickenshit. When I first knew him, he was a lot braver. Jocko used to hang out around the Braille Institute. Didn't you, Jocko?

JOCKO. You son-of-a-bitch. I hope your right hand falls off.

DAVE. A real woman's better than a nice piece of velvet, Jocko. Or a watermelon with a hole in it. Or some dumb farm animal. You gotta try a woman someday.

CAL. He's right, pal.

(Pause.)

JOCKO. If I coulda pulled Dad outta Mom, I would've. I wish I coulda caught 'em in bed and bashed their brains out. They didn't do me no favors, ya know?

(He writes frantically in his notebook.)

...Is it August?

DAVE. Yeah. Bastille Day.

JOCKO. My parents were married, you son-of-a-bitch! In the eyes of God, they were married!

(Pause.)

CAL. Let's go eat.

(CAL and DAVE start to exit.)

Hold the fort, Jocko.

DAVE. You want anything?

JOCKO. I'm 43. 43 years old.

CAL. You sentimental cocksucker.

(CAL and DAVE exit.)

JOCKO. Son-of-a-bitch. I hope your right hand falls off!

(He raises his bullhorn.)

EVEN IN THIS DAY AND AGE, CAMEL CARAVANS ARE THE PRINCIPAL MODE OF HAULING FREIGHT IN A VAST AREA OF THE WORLD.

IN FACT, WHEN THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT WANTS TO DEPORT YOU, THEY PUT YOU ON A CAMEL CARAVAN BOUND FOR MOSCOW OR INDIA, IN WHICH CASE YOU'LL TRAVEL THROUGH THE FAMED KHYBER PASS.

THESE CAMEL CARAVANS ARE NO FUN. THEY DO NOT FOOL AROUND.

YOU TRAVEL OVER A HUNDRED MILES A DAY AND THERE ARE NO STOPS.

IN GENERAL, CAMELS HAVE A MEAN DISPOSITION. I HAVE SEEN MAD CAMELS IN TUNISIA CHARGE THEIR HANDLERS. THEY SPIT AND KICK AND BITE. A CAMEL IS A TEMPERAMENTAL CREATURE.

CAMELS ARE ALSO VERY STUPID.

WHEN YOU ARE TRAVELING WITH A CAMEL CARAVAN, YOU WALK A LOT. THE CAMELS ARE USED PRIMARILY TO CARRY TRADE GOODS, SUCH AS SPICES AND SILKS. UNLESS, OF COURSE, YOU ARE BEING DEPORTED. THEN YOU HAVE A CAMEL RESERVED ESPECIALLY FOR YOU, COURTESY OF THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT.

IN THE EARLY SIXTIES, A BUNCH OF AMERICAN FEMALE COLLEGE STUDENTS WENT TO AFGHANISTAN FOR THE SUMMER AND STARTED A TRAVELING BORDELLO. THIS WAS WHEN THE LAST SHAH WAS RULING AFGHANISTAN—BEFORE SOVIET INVOLVEMENT.

THE AFGHANISTAN GOVERNMENT FINALLY HAD TO DEPORT THESE FEMALE STUDENTS. IT WAS A LONG CAMEL CARAVAN RIDE, BELIEVE YOU ME. IT WAS NO PICNIC. ILLNESS AND INJURY DOGGED THEIR HEELS.

PREVIOUSLY UNRELEASED DOCUMENTS NOW PROVE THAT THE RING LEADER OF THAT TRAVELING BORDELLO WAS NONE OTHER THAN STACY KEACH.

(Lights fade.)

Scene 10

(Lights up on DAVE and BRIANNA. Night. Party noise in distance.)

BRIANNA. I don't see it, I'm sorry.

DAVE. Follow my hand... Those are the arms, right? Those are the legs. And holding up the pants—

BRIANNA. Orion's Belt.

DAVE. You got it.

(Pause.)

BRIANNA. You know a lot about stars.

DAVE. I should. I was Captain 11 for three years.

(Pause. Cat noises off.)

Something's getting fucked tonight.

(Pause.)

BRIANNA. I'm taking acid for my birthday.

DAVE. You told me that.

BRIANNA. Did I tell you why?

DAVE. Yeah.

(Cat noises off.)

BRIANNA. I used to think, once, that something would happen. But it never does. It just goes on. *(Pause.)* If I could strip it all away, I would. Just strip it all away.

(She touches her neck.)

I'll always have this ugly scar, for instance. They thought I had leukemia, so they did a biopsy. Right here.

(DAVE crosses to her, looks at the scar.)

DAVE. Wow.

BRIANNA. I didn't have leukemia. It was cat scratch fever.

DAVE. Ted Nugent.

(Pause. CAL enters on all fours, and yowls like a cat.)

BRIANNA. I hate that noise.

DAVE. Full dumpster. That's why they're out.

(CAL yowls.)

BRIANNA. Let's go in.

DAVE. One more.

BRIANNA. One more.

DAVE. Follow my arm... Okay—now, to the left of Orion, and up a little...The Pleiades. Otherwise known as the Seven Sisters. They're spinning. Always spinning... See 'em?

BRIANNA. I think so. *(Pause.)* Yes. *(Pause.)* I'm going in now.

(She exits. CAL yowls. DAVE exits. CAL exits. Gun shots and whooping are heard. Lights and party noise fade.)

Scene 11

(Lights up. CAL and DAVE enter in cassocks and take their positions. Pause.)

CAL. “L.S./M.F.T.”?

DAVE. Call it.

CAL. Heads.

(DAVE flips a coin, checks it. He tosses the coin to CAL, who pockets it.)

CAL. “Loose.”

(Pause.)

DAVE. Loose sluts make fine tricks.

CAL. Loose sluts mean friendly tarts.

DAVE. Loose sluts, mama—fun time.

CAL. Loose sluts manipulate fatigued travelers.

(Pause.)

(DAVE tosses a Lucky to CAL. CAL lights up.)

CAL. “Let.”

(Pause.)

DAVE. Let sado-masochists fuck tied.

CAL. Let sado-masochists flog twerps.

DAVE. Let sado-masochists finesse tension.

CAL. Let sado-masochists fondle toupees.

(Pause. DAVE tosses a Lucky to CAL.)

DAVE. Goddamn show-off.

(Pause.)

CAL. “Lacking.”

(Pause.)

DAVE. Lacking salvation, my fears tripled.

CAL. Lacking sewers, many filled trousers.

DAVE. Lacking style? Meet Francois today.

(Pause.)

CAL. Motherfucker.

(CAL tosses a Lucky to DAVE. DAVE lights up.)

DAVE. Wanna free-style?

CAL. No one beats me free-style.

DAVE. If you can't handle it...

CAL. No one—beats me—free-style. *(Pause.)* Call it.

DAVE. Heads.

(CAL flips a coin, checks it. He tosses the coin to DAVE.)

DAVE. Land sighted, Marco fixed tea.

CAL. Lord, said Marilyn, fuck them.

DAVE. Lepers' seeping members feel ticklish.

CAL. Lusty senators' machinations fooled thousands.

DAVE. Luther saved mankind from temptation.

CAL. Lincoln sought man's freedom totally.

DAVE. Laughing santas merrily filled tires.

CAL. Lassie, save me, filibustered Timmy.

DAVE. Loony stars make film threats.

CAL. Lipizzaners sss...

(Pause.)

DAVE. You choked, man—you choked.

CAL. Choke on this.

DAVE. Admit it. You choked.

CAL. I had it. The word was there. It just stuck on my tongue.

(CAL gives DAVE a pack of Luckies.)

You better smoke those fast.

DAVE. I'll smoke 'em, all right.

(Pause.)

CAL. Where is that fucker? Man, when he shows up, I'm gonna slap him silly. Undependable son-of-a-bitch.

DAVE. Maybe his right hand fell off.

CAL. Fuck you and him both.

DAVE. He can't help it.

CAL. I know he can't.

(Pause.)

DAVE. He's probably at the Faust. He's into that shit.

CAL. That poor bastard. *(Pause.)* Lipizzaners...

(Lights fade.)

Scene 12

(“My Mind’s Eye” by The Small Faces plays.

Lights up on BRIANNA.

She slowly puts a cigarette in her mouth.

She takes out a pack of matches.

She lights a match.

She watches it burn.

She lights another match.

She watches it burn.

She lights another match, watches it burn.

Lights fade.

Lights up.)

Scene 13

(SORGE, wrapped in a huge black coat. JOCKO’s amplified voice offstage.)

JOCKO. SEEKING A CAREER AS A FLIGHT ATTENDANT?
PREPARE FOR BRAINWASHING.

AFTER APPLYING FOR A JOB WITH AN AIRLINE, BE SURE TO PRACTICE YOUR SOCIAL SKILLS AND MANNERS. THE AIRLINE WILL SEND REPRESENTATIVES TO SECRETLY INVESTIGATE YOU BEFORE YOU GET A REPLY IN THE MAIL. AFTER BEING ACCEPTED INTO TRAINING SCHOOL, YOU WILL BE UNDER CONSTANT SUPERVISION.

24 HOURS A DAY, SEVEN DAYS A WEEK, MORNING TILL NIGHT AND ALL TIMES IN BETWEEN. YOU ARE REQUIRED TO SIGN A WAIVER SAYING YOU WILL NOT SUE THE AIRLINE FOR MENTAL CRUELTY IN TRAINING. IF YOU REFUSE TO SIGN THE WAIVER, YOU DON’T GET THE JOB.

THE AIRLINE'S INVESTIGATION MAY INVOLVE FRIENDS AND MEMBERS OF YOUR FAMILY. IT IS MENTALLY EXTREME AND INTENSE AND HAS BEEN COMPARED TO BRAINWASHING TECHNIQUES DEVELOPED AND REFINED BY THE CAMBODIAN SECRET POLICE. THE AIRLINE WILL USE ALL METHODS NECESSARY—EVEN SEXUAL COERCION—TO GAIN YOUR LOYALTY.

IF YOU DO AS THEY DEMAND, YOU ARE REWARDED WITH A ONE-BEDROOM CONDOMINIUM, PAID FOR BY THE AIRLINE, IN THE CITY OF YOUR CHOICE.

GREAT, HUH?

BUT—

(SORGE's coat begins to move.)

IF YOU DO NOT CONFORM, THEY WILL CONTINUE THEIR BRAINWASHING PROGRAM AND TRY TO CONVINCING YOU THAT YOU WOULDN'T HAVE MADE A GOOD EMPLOYEE AFTER ALL.

THEY WILL ATTACK YOUR PRINCIPLES AND ATTEMPT TO DESTROY YOUR SYSTEM OF VALUES.

SURVEILLANCE WILL CONTINUE INDEFINITELY. WHILE UNDER SURVEILLANCE, THE AIRLINE WILL SEND A LOYAL EMPLOYEE TO MAKE FRIENDS WITH YOU. YOU WILL RECOGNIZE THESE PEOPLE BY THE QUESTIONS THEY ASK AND THE DIFFERENT TYPE OF SITUATIONS THEY FIND YOU IN. GET THIS PERSON'S NAME AND MAILING ADDRESS.

GET THIS PERSON'S NAME AND MAILING ADDRESS.

(MAN #1 and MAN #2 emerge from the depths of SORGE's coat. They exit.)

THIS IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT IN LIGHT OF THE LEGAL BATTLES TO COME. ALL FACTS MUST BE ON PAPER.

LET THE AIRLINE KNOW THAT YOU KNOW WHAT THEY'RE DOING BY DESCRIBING THE DIFFERENT SITUATIONS THEY PUT YOU IN. YOU MUST NOT STOP UNTIL—

EVENING, FELLAS. GOD'S BLESSINGS TO YOU.

YOU MUST NOT STOP UNTIL THE AIRLINE WANTS TO SETTLE OUT OF COURT WITH YOU. THEY WILL OFFER YOU AN AUTOMOBILE TO SETTLE THINGS. IF YOU REFUSE, THEY WILL OFFER YOU A HOUSE.

—OUCH, CUT THAT OUT, GUYS.—

YOU WON'T GET BOTH, SO GO FOR THE HOUSE.

YOUR NEGOTIATOR WILL BE A MAN NAMED "LES JOHNSON," WHICH WE ALL KNOW IS REALLY A PSEUDONYM FOR—

—HEY. HEY NOW. DON'T—

(JOCKO's voice, unamplified:)

Hey! Hey! Give that back! Give that—

(The sound of JOCKO gasping with pain. MAN #1 and MAN #2 lead JOCKO in. JOCKO, whimpering, holds his hand to his mouth. SORGE opens his coat. JOCKO, MAN #1, and MAN #2 disappear into the folds of the coat. Lights fade.)

Scene 14

(In the dark, DAVE enters, holding out a birthday cake with candles burning.)

DAVE. Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday to you...

BRIANNA. You know, Dave, for a big purple goose with protons streaming out of your beak—you're okay.

(She laughs.)

DAVE. "Okay Dave." That's me.

BRIANNA. Those protons worry me, though. Close your beak, Dave.

(DAVE moves his hands past his mouth.)

DAVE. How's that?

BRIANNA. No. Stop it, Dave. Please.

(She crosses to him, moves her hands about his mouth. DAVE takes her by the wrists and kisses her. They part slowly.)

BRIANNA. Oh, Dave...

DAVE. What?

BRIANNA. Ohhhh, what you got inside... Sheet lightning in a rubber glove... A zipper running down the inside of your chest... The Mormon Tabernacle choir with a crippling disease... An envelope sealed inside an envelope sealed inside an envelope... Waiting to be opened.

(DAVE tries to kiss her again.)

BRIANNA. No, Dave. Don't. Please. I'm too old for you. I'm seventeen million years old... Please, Cal.

DAVE. Dave. I'm Dave.

BRIANNA. Dave. That's right. Of course you are. I'm sorry.

DAVE. It's okay.

BRIANNA. Do I disgust you, Dave? All these ants running out of my hands?

DAVE. You're a beautiful woman.

BRIANNA. ...You really think so?

DAVE. I've always thought you were.

BRIANNA. I wish I could see—I wish I could be in your mind. I can't see inside Cal at all. I don't know. Do you know, Dave?

DAVE. Sorry.

BRIANNA. You're a clever boy, Dave.

DAVE. Me?

BRIANNA. Sure you are. Hiding the fact you got nothing to hide. Hiding the fact that you aren't hiding anything. Am I right?

DAVE. I don't know.

BRIANNA. I saw the envelope inside you. Dave. The envelope in the envelope in the envelope. What's inside there? Huh?...Cat got your beak?

(Pause.)

DAVE. Well, I don't know, but...but...I realized a long time ago that what I was looking for I wasn't going to find in people. So I turned my sights elsewhere.

(Pause.)

BRIANNA. You sure are a smart purple goose.

(Pause.)

DAVE. Blow out the candles, we'll have some cake.

BRIANNA. Okay.

(She crosses to the cake. BRIANNA blows out the candles. They relight. She blows them out again. CAL enters. The candles relight. DAVE crosses to CAL while BRIANNA continues blowing out the candles and watching them relight.)

DAVE. Any luck?

CAL. No.

DAVE. Who'd you check with?

CAL. His mom.

DAVE. Who else?

CAL. Carmine. Mario. Maurice. Big John. Everyone.

DAVE. Nicky?

CAL. And Vilnius. No luck.

DAVE. You're shittin' me.

CAL. No one's seen the fucker.

DAVE. So what do we do?

CAL. I don't know.

DAVE. You think something's happened to him?

CAL. Duh.

DAVE. You know what I mean.

CAL. What the fuck is she up to?

(DAVE looks at BRIANNA. She's smearing cake on her face and along and under her arms.)

CAL. Brianna—what the fuck are you doing?

BRIANNA. ...I'm taking a shower. A cake shower.

(CAL exits. DAVE crosses to BRIANNA. He wets a thumb and forefinger and puts out the candles.)

Scene 15

(Lights up on MAN #1—wearing earphones plugged into a small tape recorder—typing. He stops typing. He rewinds the tape, listens. He rewinds the tape some more. He resumes typing. MAN #2 enters.)

MAN #2. Sebastian. *(Pause.)* Hey, Sebastian. *(Pause.)* Hey!

(MAN #1 looks up, stops tape recorder, removes earphones.)

MAN #1. Yeah?

MAN #2. How goes the Magnum O?

MAN #1. So-so. *(Pause.)* Slow. *(Pause.)* You know. *(Pause.)* Another thousand years and I'll have it done.

MAN #2. Where are you now?

MAN #1. Here. Right in front of you.

MAN #2. I mean in the text.

MAN #1. Approaching the end of part one.

(Pause.)

MAN #2. It unnerves me—may I say that? It makes me feel—I don't know—distinctly—

MAN #1. Sssssh.

MAN #2. —volitionless. Lacking in—

MAN #1. Sssssh.

MAN #2. —volition.

(Pause.)

MAN #1. Go on. Get us in trouble. Go right ahead. He doesn't hear typing, he knows something's up. Something's wrong. Some cog in the mill's not grinding.

MAN #2. He's asleep.

(Pause.)

MAN #1. No.

MAN #2. Yes. *(Pause.)* Yes. *(Pause.)* Or he's gone out. But the room is quiet.

(MAN #1 slowly removes his earphones, rises, exits. MAN #2 takes Man #1's place, looks at sheet in typewriter. MAN #1 enters.)

MAN #1. You're right.

MAN #2. I told you.

MAN #1. So what do you make of it?

MAN #2. You tell me.

MAN #1. I think he's onto something.

MAN #2. "...And so we reach the heart of the matter. The attention to detail, the fastidious, almost neurotic attention to—if not obsession with—the smallest of minutiae; the unshakeable belief in and utter distrust of one's own powers; the fascination and disgust with the mere fact of one's survival"—

MAN #1. Please.

MAN #2. —"when so many others, known and unknown, have died in camps, in prisons, in hospitals and clinics for the insane, while I alone have carried on along the patch"—

MAN #1. "Path."

MAN #2. What?

MAN #1. "Path." P-a-t-h. "Path," not "patch."

MAN #2. You've typed "patch" here.

MAN #1. Oh fuck. *(Pause.)* Oh fuck. *(Pause.)* Oh fuck. *(Pause.)*

MAN #2. "...while I alone have carried on along the path, consumed with self-loathing and pride, unscathed. Unscathed and untouched." *(Pause.)* Come on. It's not that bad.

MAN #1. I'll have to redo the whole thing. Get up. I have to work.

MAN #2. Have dinner first.

MAN #1. You think I can eat at a time like this?

MAN #2. It'll do you good.

(MAN #2 rises and heads for the exit as MAN #1 sits down and rolls a clean sheet of paper into the typewriter.)

MAN #1. What's for dinner?

MAN #2. Shit.

MAN #1. Again?

(MAN #2 is gone. MAN #1 begins retyping the page. MAN #2 wheels in a serving tray. He tucks a napkin into his collar. Holds one up for MAN #1.)

MAN #2. Here.

MAN #1. I can't.

MAN #2. You shouldn't work on an empty stomach.

MAN #1. Stanislaus!—

(After a moment's hesitation, he rises, crosses to MAN #2, and tucks the napkin into his collar. MAN #2 lifts the lid of the dish and serves MAN #1 a plate of shit. Then he prepares a plate of shit for himself. MAN #1 tastes.)

MAN #2. Well?

MAN #1. S'great... Listen to this.

(He crosses to the tape recorder, removes the earphones, adjusts the volume and pushes "Play.")

SORGE'S VOICE. "...The point is that the assumption or duplication presumed to follow from the possession of the afflictions of others could never, no matter how assiduously emulated, be achieved completely... Rather, the accumulation of these singular tics and tricks only served to point up the fact that I was unavoidably, incontestably, disturbingly—myself..."

MAN #1. This is some good shit.

MAN #2. Thank you.

SORGE'S VOICE. "The shell constructed, no matter how charming, housed a body and mind that sadly were mine and mine alone. That I should travel all that distance only, upon arrival, to find myself waiting there! Someone with whom I have yet to achieve more than a nodding acquaintance..."

MAN #2. Would you like some more shit?

MAN #1. Please.

SORGE'S VOICE. "The whole sickening chain!...the hairy, tufted chins of old women—old goat-women bleating and shrieking as they stroll or wheel themselves down the septic halls, miserable, leaking tears and urine or sunk in shrouded silence, past the rooms of exhausted old men moaning in their sleep or staring at the ceiling..."

MAN #1. How's your mother, by the way?

MAN #2. My what?

SORGE'S VOICE. "...We kill them with our wishes for health and a quick return to a life they will never see again. Not ever. Not for as long as they continue to live..."

(The tape has, it appears, run out. They clear the dishes away.)

MAN #2. "I am the sovereign of the transitory."

MAN #1. "The Chief of Staff, not without reason, was exasperated by my handwriting, and threw me out."

(They laugh.)

SORGE'S VOICE. "...But he who laughs last has not postponed that final moment. Better to smother the old and slaughter the pregnant. Better yet to have never been born. Best yet never to have been...End of tape 6,753. When you've finished your dinner, Sebastian, report to my chambers."

(MAN #1 and MAN #2 look at each other. Lights fade.)

Scene 16

(Lights up on CAL and DAVE and BRIANNA. CAL and DAVE share a bottle of Elmer's glue. BRIANNA holds a piece of notebook paper.)

BRIANNA. You have to promise not to laugh. Promise?

CAL. Sure. What the fuck.

BRIANNA. Dave?

DAVE. What?

BRIANNA. You won't, either?

DAVE. I won't what?

BRIANNA. You won't laugh.

DAVE. Okay.

BRIANNA. Promise?

DAVE. Cross my heart.

BRIANNA. Okay, then. *(Pause.)* "Untitled: A Love Poem For C."

CAL. That's me.

BRIANNA. "Untitled: A Love Poem For C." *(Pause.)* You can't laugh now, okay? *(Pause.)* "I love your incredible mouth / And the incredible things you say. / I love your feet, your neck, / Your glorious shoulderblades"

(DAVE nudges CAL.)

DAVE. Hot stuff.

CAL. Shut up, I'm listening.

(Pause.)

BRIANNA. “Your glorious shoulderblades. / Your head, your magnificent head. / Your hands with the fingers. / Your knees and your ears. / Your earlobes, too.” *(Pause.)* “I love looking at you. / I love the taste of you”—

(DAVE nudges CAL.)

DAVE. Whooooo-hooooo! Whooooo-hooooo!

(CAL swings on him. They scuffle.)

BRIANNA. Stop it! Stop it, you guy... Come on, guys!... Stop it! Stop it!

(CAL and DAVE settle down.)

I'm beginning to think you don't want to hear my poem.

CAL. Apologize to the lady.

DAVE. I'm sorry.

(Pause.)

BRIANNA. “I love being with you. / I love making love to you / It's all I want to do / Until I die. / I love you.” *(Pause.)* That's it. *(Pause.)* Well?

(CAL and DAVE burst into uproarious laughter.)

You promised...

CAL. It was supposed to be funny, right?

BRIANNA. You don't like it?

CAL. I think it sucks. Doesn't even rhyme.

DAVE. Part of it did. I think.

BRIANNA. The class liked it.

(Pause.)

CAL. You read that in front of people?

BRIANNA. Well... Yes. That's what the class is for.

(CAL moves in very close to her.)

Cal?

CAL. You listen up. What goes on between us, you and me—that's private. That's not to be shared. Understand? *(Pause.)* Do you understand?

BRIANNA. I understand.

CAL. I hope to Christ you do. 'Cause if you pull any more stunts like that, I'm coming to your class and I'm gonna tell them some private things. Some secrets. You know what I'm gonna tell 'em? *(Pause.)* I'm gonna tell 'em that you're a hole. You're a hole for when I get lonely. I'm gonna tell 'em I don't even like you very much... No—I take that back. I like you as a hole. My little fuck-hole. Otherwise, I'll say, you can just go away. You can take your poem and get outta here. Come back when I need a hole. That's what I'll tell 'em. *(Pause.)* And then I'm gonna do this.

(He takes her poem, holds it between his teeth while he drops his pants. Then he wipes his ass with Brianna's poem, and tosses it aside. Pause.)

BRIANNA. ...He gets lonely, Dave. You heard him. He gets lonely.

(She exits.)

CAL. The fuck I do. I just tell her that when I need her to sit on my dick.

DAVE. Maybe you oughta—go talk to her, or something.

CAL. Fuck that. Pass me that glue.

(DAVE gives the Elmer's glue to CAL, who takes a big swig. Lights fade.)

Scene 17

(Lights up on SORGE and JOCKO. JOCKO—dressed as a priest—is tied to a chair.)

SORGE. And so we reach the heart of the matter. The attention to detail, the fastidious, almost neurotic attention to—if not obsession with—the smallest of minutiae; the unshakeable belief in and utter distrust of one's own powers; the fascination and disgust with the mere fact of one's own survival when so many others, known and unknown, have died in camps, in prisons, in hospitals and clinics for the old and insane, while I alone have carried on along the path, consumed with self-loathing and pride, unscathed. Unscathed and untouched. For years I assumed—and not without some basis, mind you, some justification—that I might become famous not on my own slender merits, but for possessing the afflictions of others. Rituals of faucet-tapping, the silent and repeated addition and subtraction of whole numbers, the inability to sit in a seat still warm from another's body heat; the impossibility of shaking hands without gloves, or of opening a door without an intervening layer of fabric; the holding of one's breath to avoid the scent and infection of a passing stranger; the incessant blowing on the hands and upper lip at the beginning of any task; the need to close one's eyes for the night upon a charmed or sacred object or image; the muttering under one's breath of one's own name after hearing or speaking the name of another; all these, yes, and others, leaving out at this time any mention of the spitting, the swallowing, the chewing, or the elaborate preparations attendant upon bed and bath—the proper placement of one's shoes, let us say, or the order in which one's limbs are washed—which is, naturally, right arm followed by left arm, left arm followed by chest, chest followed by back, back followed by right leg, right leg followed by left leg: none of this need be mentioned now, when the point is that the assumption or duplication presumed to follow from the possession of these afflictions could never, no matter how assiduously studied and emulated, be achieved completely. I coughed as one coughed; limped as another limped; I stood for hours at the mirror, seeking the childhood visions of the working-class savant; I ate sandwich after sandwich of blackened toast and peanut butter, the so-called "Black-and-Tan"; I vowed to die at thirty, by sheer strength of will if necessary; I asked

that others refer to me only by the names of those I sedulously aped—oh, the hours I've spent as "Arthur," "Albert," "Davey," "Bill"—but to no avail. Not that a trace of mind, as it were, or a particular gesture didn't linger. I think especially of Jim's long, Elizabethan fingers stroking ideas out of the air into palpability; of John's glad-handing "Fine, fine!" when one had the intelligence to agree with his own dangerous assessment of a situation, and the equally-dangerous plan of action arising from that assessment. I cannot and will not deny that. Oh, no. No, I say, no. Rather, the accumulation of these singular tics and tricks only served to point up the fact that I was unavoidably, incontestably, disturbingly...myself. The shell constructed, no matter how charming, housed a body and mind that sadly was mine and mine alone. That I should travel all that distance only, upon arrival, to find myself waiting there! Someone with whom I have yet to achieve more than a nodding acquaintance. This still troubles and torments me. Perhaps others are more comfortable with the phrases, "He always wears a yellow tie on Sunday"; "I heard that laugh, and I thought that was you." Or most dreaded of all: "I knew you were going to say that." Oh, the horrifying boredom of another's misery! As if sorrow were, somehow, transferable! In easing another's sorrow even momentarily, have we not, actually, made it worse? The cheer we think we spread with our innumerable and nauseating postcards, birthday cards, get-well cards, Christmas cards; invitations to parties and to celebrations, to homecomings and to leave-takings, to baptisms, christenings and funerals! One may as well write on such cards, "Congratulations on the death of your hopes." The walls of our rest homes and convalescent-care facilities are lined with such cards—a hideous roster, a gauntlet, of chimneys leaking crayon smoke, curlicue cats and bullet-headed dogs, empty circles of snowmen and children, mothers and fathers, aunts and uncles, nieces and nephews, grandfathers and grandmothers: the whole sickening chain, endless repeated, taped to the walls above the twisted mouths and shrunken veins and the hairy, tufted chins of old women—old goat-women, bleating and shrieking as they roll or stroll or wheel themselves down the septic halls, miserable, leaking tears and urine or sunk in shrouded silence, past the rooms of exhausted old men moaning in their sleep or staring at the ceiling. Such cheer is no better than pinching shut the tube leading into the

arm or mouth or anus of such an old man or woman. We kill them with our wishes for health and a quick return to a life they will never see again. Not ever. Not for as long as they continue to live. Better to smother the old and slaughter the pregnant. Better yet to have never been born. Best yet never to have been. *(Pause.)* But perhaps I digress.

(He strikes a small triangle. MAN #1 and MAN #2 enter with serving cart.)

Sebastian, what is the bill of fare this evening?

MAN #1. A delightful beginning is made with the unassuming yet delightful soup de jour.

SORGE. Is it hot?

MAN #1. Very hot.

SORGE. What follows the soup?

MAN #1. Corn on the cob and barbecued ribs.

SORGE. Excellent choices.

MAN #1. Thank you.

SORGE. I trust the dessert will live up to the exacting standards you've established with the entree.

MAN #1. Such is my hope.

SORGE. Ah, hope. The essential thing, eh, Sebastian?

MAN #1. Yes.

SORGE. Well, I hope you've prepared something special for dessert.

MAN #1. Ice cream. Chocolate Nut Crunch Heaven.

SORGE. Is it cold?

MAN #1. Straight from the freezer.

SORGE. Stanislaw, what have we in the line of beverages?

MAN #2. Beverages include a lovely lapsang souchong tea, steeped to perfection, served with honey or milk.

SORGE. Yes, but is it hot?

MAN #2. Boiling.

SORGE. Anything else?

MAN #2. Ice water, colder than a mountain stream.

SORGE. Merveilleux.

(He strikes the triangle.)

Dinner is served.

(MAN #1 and MAN #2 wheel the cart to JOCKO. MAN #1 holds a large spoon of soup to JOCKO's lips. JOCKO won't open his mouth.)

Not hungry, Jocko? A big boy like you?

(JOCKO begins to whimper.)

Oh, I know—Jocko's got a sweet tooth. He wants dessert first.

(MAN #1 empties the soup spoon, scoops up a big gob of ice cream, holds it to JOCKO's mouth.)

Toot-toot! Here comes the Sweet Train! *(Pause.)* Stanislaw, open the tunnel for the Sweet Train.

(MAN #2 pries open JOCKO's mouth. MAN #1 places the ice cream into JOCKO's mouth. JOCKO writhes in agony.)

Oh, all right—one more.

(MAN #1 places another gob of ice cream into JOCKO's mouth. JOCKO thrashes about.)

And now it's time for soup.

(MAN #1 pours soup into JOCKO's mouth. JOCKO thrashes.)

Did I hear you right, Jocko? You're thirsty?

(MAN #2 pours ice water into JOCKO's mouth. JOCKO thrashes.)

I think he wanted tea instead of water, don't you, boys?

(MAN #2 pours tea into JOCKO's mouth. JOCKO thrashes.)

No, I think I was right the first time.

(MAN #1 pours ice water into JOCKO's mouth. JOCKO thrashes.)

Eight glasses a day—don't forget.

(MAN #1 pours ice water into JOCKO's mouth. JOCKO screams.)

Jocko dear, are you screaming for ice cream? You must be. We all scream for ice cream.

(MAN #1 places a big gob of ice cream into JOCKO's mouth. JOCKO screams and thrashes about. MAN #1 and MAN #2 jump about with abandon, hooting and hollering.)

It's true—we all scream for ice cream. Give the people what they want.

(MAN #1 places another gob of ice cream into JOCKO's mouth. JOCKO screams and gags on the ice cream.)

Jockito, is there anything you'd like to say before we continue?

JOCKO. Please...please...my teeth...please.

SORGE. Something's stuck between your teeth, you say? I'm sorry to hear that. Let me help you.

(He crosses to the cart and picks up a large knitting needle.)

JOCKO. No—oh, please, no...please, please don't...

(MAN #2 holds JOCKO's jaws while SORGE delicately probes JOCKO's mouth with the knitting needle.)

Here? Is it here?

(JOCKO moans.)

Or is it here?

(JOCKO writhes against the chair.)

Or here?

(JOCKO screams and rocks furiously.)

It must be here.

(JOCKO screams and passes out.)

Wake him up.

(MAN #2 slaps JOCKO. He slaps him again. JOCKO's eyes flutter open.)

Wake up, Jocko, it's not bed-time yet. Try not to pass out now. It's very rude. And so time-consuming. At this rate, dinner will take hours.

(Lights fade.)

Scene 18

(Lights up on DAVE, sprawled out on the floor. CAL—with a plastic bag of videos—enters. He crosses to DAVE, kicks him.)

CAL. Hey. Wake up.

(DAVE sits up.)

DAVE. You back already?

CAL. Sure.

DAVE. What'd you get?

CAL. Where's Bri?

DAVE. In the kitchen.

CAL. She still angry?

DAVE. She's not talking to me.

CAL. Well, I'm not you, am I?

DAVE. What'd you get?

(CAL empties the videos out of the bag.)

CAL. Let's see...

(He holds up a tape.)

“Pluggers.”

(He holds up another.)

“Fuck me, White Boy.”

(He holds up another.)

“Swallow, Faggot.” What do you think?

DAVE. You think she’s gonna like these?

CAL. Of course she will. Chicks love this homo shit. Turns ’em on. Women lawyers watch this stuff... I’ll fix up the VCR.

(He starts off with the tapes.)

BRIANNA. *(Off:)* Cal... Cal! Dave!

CAL. She’s talking now.

DAVE. Go see what she wants.

(He exits. CAL and BRIANNA lead JOCKO in. He is naked except for his priest’s collar. And is bruised and bloodied.)

DAVE. What the fuck happened to him?

BRIANNA. I don’t know. I heard this noise in the backyard, and—

CAL. Both of you shut the fuck up and help me here.

(DAVE joins them and they sit JOCKO down.)

Jocko...Jocko...Jocko! What happened to you? Where you been?

JOCKO. ...Wheel.

CAL. Wheel? Wheel...what, Jocko?

JOCKO. We’ll meet again, don’t know where, don’t know when...

DAVE. He’s lost it.

CAL. Can it. Wheel, Jocko?

JOCKO. We’ll get this help to you...

CAL. What help?

JOCKO. We’ll...get this help to you by return...mail...

DAVE. What's that supposed to mean?

CAL. Jocko—who did this to you?

JOCKO. All...all...all of you...all of you who have not yet received your copy of COMEBACK, the thrilling and wonderful story of professional baseball player Dave Drubecki...We would like to send you one right away. We believe you'll be...encouraged as you share in the victorious...

CAL. Jocko—

JOCKO. Victorious and tragic experiences of Dave Drubecki and see just how faithful God is to his children.

CAL. Get him a robe or something, will ya?

(BRIANNA exits.)

JOCKO. Cal...

CAL. Yeah, Jocko?

JOCKO. It's yours for the asking if you'd simply address a letter of request today to Billy Graham, Box 779, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 55540...

CAL. Hang tight, Jocko.

(He steps away. DAVE crosses to him.)

DAVE. I bet Loco fucked him up.

CAL. Not Loco's style.

DAVE. Sunshine?

CAL. Billy wouldn't do that.

DAVE. Dollar Max?

CAL. Out of town.

DAVE. Where?

CAL. He's hangin' ten with Big Ben.

DAVE. Tony Shoes?

CAL. No, man. Tony Shoes's on the 'yard.

DAVE. Who, then?

CAL. Who's in town?

(BRIANNA enters with a robe, which she drapes over JOCKO.)

DAVE. You thinking what I'm thinking?

CAL. I'll tell you this—if he's asking, we're dancing.

(DAVE crosses to JOCKO.)

DAVE. Was it Sorge, Jocko?

CAL. He do this to ya, pal?

(JOCKO covers his face with the robe.)

It was, wasn't it?

DAVE. Jocko?

(JOCKO begins to cry.)

Don't you worry, bub. We'll fix him. We'll take care of him for ya.

JOCKO. Dave—he put... He put a little girl in my underwear, Dave. He put a little girl with big teeth in my underwear. That's why I had to throw it away. I didn't want a little girl in my underwear, Dave. I'm in big trouble now. Mommy will kill me if she finds out.

DAVE. Don't you worry, Jocko.

JOCKO. You won't tell her, will you, Dave? You won't tell her I've got a little girl in my underwear?

DAVE. I won't tell her.

(He crosses to CAL.)

He's a fuckin' mess.

CAL. I'm thinking tonight. How about it?

DAVE. Sooner the better.

CAL. Bri, take care of Jocko here. Me and Dave gotta go away for a while... I'll get the stuff.

DAVE. I'll get the car.

(CAL exits. DAVE looks at JOCKO and BRIANNA, then exits. BRIANNA kneels beside JOCKO.)

BRIANNA. You all right, Jocko? Can I get you anything?

JOCKO. I'm fine, thank you.

BRIANNA. Just tell me if you want anything.

JOCKO. I will, thank you. *(Pause.)* Mrs. Webb? Do you think this can technically be declared a recession?

BRIANNA. I don't know, Jocko.

JOCKO. Senator Dole? My question is, if you're going to stay in the V.A. system, you can't get back into the workforce. *(Pause.)* What do you mean, I've got it turned around? You've got it turned around!

BRIANNA. Jocko, shuusssh.

JOCKO. No, sir. I beg to differ. You're the one who's got it turned around. Not me. You. *(Pause.)* You.

(Lights fade.)

Scene 19

(Late night freight-yard noise. Lights up on CAL and DAVE, each with a black case. Lights up on SORGE, who also carries a black case, and is flanked by MAN #1 and MAN #2. The sound of a freight train thundering past nearby. As the train sounds fade, a bell tolls four times.)

CAL. "Jack Roland"?

SORGE. "Jack Roland."

DAVE. "Jack Roland" it is.

(CAL, DAVE, and SORGE open their cases. Each removes a marionette of himself. They enact the story sung by MAN #1 and MAN #2.)

MAN #1. It was Jack Roland and his two brothers
Went out to play at sport
And there's their sister Ellen Roland
Amidst and amongst them all

She tossed the ball so very high
She caught it with her knee
She's kicked it high over high church yard
Where no one it could see

MAN #2. And she's hitched her skirts around her waist
And after the ball she ran
They waited long, her three brothers
But she never came home again

MAN #1. So up the hill and down the hill
The weeping brothers sped
They told their mother of Ellen Roland
How she had vanished

And it's—

DAVE. Oh, my love.

MAN #1. And cries their mother
And ever alas cries she—

DAVE. She is gone with the King of the Hill, no more my house
she'll see.

MAN #2. So up and rose the first brother
And he was a proud young man
He swore an oath, a solemn oath
That Ellen he'd seek and find

And he's run down to his father's stable
He's saddled the bonnie gray
And as the sun looked over the hill
They watched him ride away

MAN #1. Then up and rose the second brother
And a proud young man was he
He swore an oath, a solemn oath
That Ellen he'd find and free

And he's run down to his father's stable
He's saddled the bonnie brown
And as the sun stood up in the sky
They watched him ride away

MAN #1 and MAN#2. And they stayed long and very long
The gloves all in their hands
And sad were hearts all over town
For they never came back again, again
No, they never came back again.

MAN #1. Then up and rose young Jack the fool
The youngest of the three
He's saddled and bridled his mother's horse
As he wept most bitterly

MAN #2. She spoke to him, his mother's horse
As they rode on their way
She said

CAL. Never you fear, you Jack Roland, but you listen to what I say.
Remember the song the spider sings when she comes to court the
fly, and never a drop must you eat or drink as we go along the
road. And all that help us on the way, you must leave them lying
dead.

MAN #1. And never a drop did they eat or drink
As along the way they rode
And all that helped them on their way
Jack Roland left them dead

MAN #2. The horse Jack Roland sat upon
She was black as the dark midnight
And her eyes shown far as the evening star
That puts the sun to flight

MAN #1. Then Roland to the dark tower came
And he stood there without

And three times there the horse spun round
And she cried—

CAL. Open door, and open door and let me ride.

MAN #1. And ere three times that she had spoke
The door swung open wide

MAN #2. And he espied a lovely path
Alive with silver grey
All hung with mist and heavy dew
Shining clear as any day

MAN #1. No ceiling could this young man spy
No windows were there to be seen
But around his head it shone blood red
As the sun that sets at eve

And he rode on and further on
And his tears came rolling fast
For he thought he saw his sister Ellen
Wandering like any ghost

And she cried—

DAVE. Woe be to you, young Jack Roland, for your life's not worth
a pin. If I could give you a thousand lives, you should not spare one
of them. Pity on you, young Jack Roland, why stayed you not at
home? When the King of the Hill you find, then help you will find
none.

MAN #2. With that in comes the King himself
All glorious to behold
For he rides in with a raging storm
And a club all in his hand

And he cries—

SORGE. Rise, rise, young Jack Roland, rise, rise and run. For when
I smell Jack Roland's blood, Jack Roland's day is done. Get up. get
up, young Jack Roland, if you would fight with me. And then we'll
see how a frightened man lets his courage flee.

MAN #2. First he appears as a raging bear

And then a writhing snake

MAN #1. And then an angry herd of bulls
That roared all in Jack's face
Then he became a burning bush
With a flame that leapt so high

MAN #2. And he sang the song the spider sings
When she comes to court the fly

MAN #1. But up and rose Jack Roland's horse
So loud I heard her cry—

CAL. Stand fast, stand fast and fear you not. No harm will come to thee.

MAN #1. And there she stood on the high hilltop
Stars blazing in her mane
And she has turned to a mighty flood
And poured down on the flame

MAN #2. But the King has changed to a little fish
To float all in the sea
And he fall as fast into the flood
As the dead branch of a tree

MAN #1. But she has changed to ropes and lines
And hunted the ocean floor

MAN #2. But the King has become a fishing boat
And hauled all lines aboard

MAN #1. So she has changed all in the sky
To a gale that howled and roared
She filled his sails, she beat his sides
And drove the boat ashore

MAN #2. So the King's become the deep dark night
And dropped to the valley floor

MAN #1. So she rose up as the summer's morn
And she drove him on before
And she cried—

CAL. Rise, rise, young Jack Roland, and the sun will rise with thee.
And as the dew falls from the leaves, you'll see what you shall see.

MAN #2. And as the dew fell from the leaves
And the daylight grew all 'round
He saw his sister and two brothers
Mother-naked on the ground

And he's taken them each in his arms
He's kissed them cheek and chin
And he's wrapped them up in a cloak of gold
And they went riding home

MAN #1. Then up and spoke the King himself
As he vanished in the sun—

SORGE. Oh, I should have taken your horse

MAN #1. He cried—

SORGE. And struck him blind and lame. *(Pause.)* And in fact, I think I will.

(He crosses to CAL and DAVE. He tears a leg off CAL's puppet. He gouges the eyes out of DAVE's puppet. Lights fade on MAN #1 and MAN #2, on CAL and DAVE.)

Scene 20

SORGE. Months pass. Each of us returns, more or less, to our individual duties and responsibilities; resigned again, more or less, to our individual fates. Hardly a thought is given to what we've seen. I continue working on my "Handbook of Vulgar Aesthetics." My progress is slow, tiring—like climbing sheer granite, or mastering one's desires. Rarely, if ever, do I leave my rooms. I consider the past to be simply that: past; dead and gone; nothing but an aberrant fantasy to which I fell prey in a moment of weakness. One calm, quiet evening, about dusk, raising my eyes from the page and glancing out a window, I catch sight of a lovely young woman. A bright red purse on a long strap swings from her shoulder as she walks. I watch her till she rounds a corner and passes out of sight. I remain at the window. Vague longings are re-awakened. One has the sense of time passing. One senses the presence of events that led to the present tense... This awful moment in which one finds oneself alive... Where is she going? you ask yourself. Who is she meeting? Why isn't she coming to me?... The moment passes. You turn back to your room. You move from window to chair to bed. From bed to door to chair. From chair to window to bed. You say to yourself, "He is restless. He watches himself in his room. He cannot sit down. He cannot lie down. He waits at the door. He listens at the window. He stands by the chair. He has done this for years. He is restless. He waits." But the lovely young woman with the bright red purse does not pass by again.

(Lights fade on SORGE.)

Scene 21

(Lights up. BRIANNA enters. She wears sunglasses, a new dress, her hair is dyed, and a red purse on a long strap swings from her shoulder. ELEANOR—the fat man in a wrinkled sun dress, now with a large sun hat—with garden hose. BRIANNA checks a small piece of paper.)

BRIANNA. 'Scuse me.

(ELEANOR turns to BRIANNA.)

Is this 1203 McMillan?

ELEANOR. Sure is, honey.

BRIANNA. Does a... Is there a David Dereck living here?

(Pause.)

ELEANOR. See that sign? “No solicitors or salesmen.” No whores, either. *(Pause.)* No solicitors, salesmen or whores allowed in the building... So move it down the street, missy.

BRIANNA. I’m looking for someone.

(She takes a photo from her purse.)

This is who I’m looking for.

(She holds the picture out to ELEANOR.)

Have you seen him?

ELEANOR: ...Hold this.

(ELEANOR hands the garden hose to BRIANNA, examines the photo.)

I’ve been looking for some time now.

ELEANOR: ...Sorry.

(She takes the garden hose from BRIANNA, starts gathering it up.)

BRIANNA. I was informed that he lived here.

ELEANOR. You was informed wrong.

(She starts away with the garden hose.)

Good day, Madam.

BRIANNA. It’s strange then, isn’t it—how if he doesn’t live here, someone at this address is cashing his checks for him?

(Pause.)

ELEANOR. If you’re from the State, honey, you can tell ’em they’re beating a dead horse. Everything’s legal.

BRIANNA. I’m not from the State.

ELEANOR. And you can tell the clinic we don't need any more doctors or psychiatrists, thank you very much.

BRIANNA. I'm not from the clinic.

ELEANOR. Then who the hell are you, honey?

BRIANNA. I'm a friend.

ELEANOR. Well, take off those sunglasses, friend, and let me get a look at you.

(BRIANNA removes her sunglasses. ELEANOR crosses to her, studies her.)

ELEANOR. You're Shannon.

BRIANNA. ...Brianna.

ELEANOR. He told me about you.

BRIANNA. So he's here?

(Pause.)

ELEANOR. He's here, all right, but he ain't goin' nowhere.

BRIANNA. I only want to see him.

ELEANOR. Sure, but does he want to see you? *(Pause.)* Second floor. All the way back on your left. Number 16.

(BRIANNA starts for the entrance.)

Shawna?

(BRIANNA turns.)

I took him in when no one else would touch him. I helped him when no one else would give him the sweat off their balls. *(Pause.)* He begged me. *(Pause.)* He's mine now. And no one's going to take him away.

(BRIANNA exits. Lights fade.)

Scene 22

(Lights up on DAVE and BRIANNA. DAVE wears dark glasses and a ratty paisley bathrobe, and has a large book in his lap. A cane hangs from the back of his chair. He opens the book and slowly moves his fingers across its pages.)

DAVE. Mr. Jones parked his car and entered the building.
He drank some coffee and ate a doughnut.
He read a note from his boss.
His boss had scheduled a meeting at ten o'clock.
The telephone rang.
Mr. Jones picked up the phone and said: "Hello." *(Pause.)*
Mr. Jones picked up the phone and said: "Hello..."
He talked to the person and then hung up.
Then he returned to work.
Another employee walked by his desk.
Mr. Jones looked up and smiled.
Mr. Jones liked his work.
He thinks about his ten o'clock meeting.
Later, he thought about the meeting.
The boss had a problem.
Mr. Jones wondered about the problem.
Finally, he decided on the answer.
He knew the answer to the problem.

(DAVE closes the book.)

BRIANNA. That's great, Dave. You're doing super.

(She crosses to him, pats him on the shoulder.)

Keep up the good work. I'll be right back. I left the other book in the car.

(She exits.)

After a moment, CAL enters.

His left leg is missing below the knee and he walks with a rubber-tipped crutch.

He slowly and quietly makes his way to BRIANNA's chair.

He sniffs the seat cushion, then sits.

He watches DAVE.

DAVE fishes a cigarette out of the pocket of his robe.

He checks his pockets for matches, finds none.

He searches for the matches on the table.

CAL moves them out of reach.

DAVE tries again.

CAL moves them out of reach.

DAVE rises and tentatively walks across to the room to a small table.

CAL follows.

DAVE searches the table for the matches.

CAL drops the matches into the path of DAVE's hand.

DAVE lights his cigarette.

He crosses to his chair, sits.

CAL crosses to the door, and "enters" as BRIANNA.)

DAVE. Find it?

(CAL crosses to DAVE. He strokes the back of DAVE's head.)

What's with you?

(CAL tousles DAVE's hair.)

Yeah, yeah, I like you, too.

(CAL massages DAVE's shoulders. He unbuttons DAVE's shirt. He licks DAVE's ear.)

Jesus, Bri... You feel that good, let's go into the bedroom.

(He takes his cane from the back of the chair, rises. He crosses the room, stops.)

Kiss me.

(CAL crosses to DAVE—who slashes him across the face with his cane. CAL collapses in a heap on the floor. BRIANNA enters with a book in hand as CAL struggles to stand up.)

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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