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To my parents.

Cast of Characters

(3 men/2 women)

LEMKIN, 50s; eyeglasses, balding, pale; a Polish-American lawyer.

PROXMIRE / JACK / ANTOINE / HASAN, a Western white man, 40s, 50s, plays multiple roles.

MOTHER / CAITLIN / TATJANA, a white woman, 30s, 40s, plays multiple roles.

JP / MILITIAMAN / VICTOR / PALMER, a black man, 30s, 40s, plays multiple roles.

NAUSICAA / AGATHE / ROSE / GUARD, a black woman, 30s, 40s, plays multiple roles (she is also the voice of the FEMALE AIDE).

Place

A dilapidated house.

Note

Rose's baby is portrayed by a piece of fabric from Rose's skirt.

The play is performed without an intermission.

Press Representation.....Sam Rudy,
Media Relations
PhotographerCarol Rosegg

Author's Note

Since the early 1990s I have written four plays about the aftermath of the Khmer Rouge genocide in Cambodia. In 2001 while researching my play about Pol Pot, *Silence of God*, I was fortunate to meet David Scheffer, the U.S. Ambassador for War Crimes during the Clinton Administration, and was struck by the tenacity of his cause. From this encounter I learned more about the U.S.'s involvement in genocides around the world. In 2003, with the luxury of time afforded by a James Thurber Playwriting Residency in Columbus, Ohio, I was able to carry on research and read in depth about the genocides that took place after the Cambodian genocide, in Rwanda and Bosnia. As a Juror for the MES International Theater Festival in Sarajevo in 2004 I did further research. Due to my own sense that I was becoming a "pest" in terms of my obsession with the question of genocide and responsibility, I found Raphael Lemkin to be a historical soul mate on my journey: a journey in which knocking on closed doors had become a daily occurrence. Lemkin spoke like no one else to my theatrical imagination, so that rather than write about him biographically, his afterlife developed into the metaphor of a house, his house: which is our house. Special thanks to Samantha Power, Elizabeth Neuffer, Beverly Allen, Alison Des Forges, Philip Gourevitch, among many authors whose books I have read. And to Jerry Fowler for his generosity, James Fussell for his insights, and to Jean Randich.

LEMKIN'S HOUSE

by Catherine Filloux

ACT I

(LEMKIN, 58, eyeglasses, balding, in a rumpled circa-50s gray suit, holds a battered briefcase as he stands at a door.)

LEMKIN. Hello. Is the Senator here? I'd like to speak to him.

(We hear the voice of a FEMALE AIDE.)

AIDE'S VOICE. I'm sorry, he's in a meeting right now.

LEMKIN. Could I wait?

AIDE'S VOICE. Look, you don't have an appointment.

LEMKIN. *(Ironic.)* Right, tell him, it's that pest "Raphael Lemkin."

AIDE'S VOICE. He's booked solid—he has other priorities, Lemkin.

LEMKIN. We need to reopen hearings. Can you give him these papers?

AIDE'S VOICE. He already has them. The Senator has all of your materials, Mr. Lemkin. Every single sheet of paper.

AIDE'S VOICE. I'm closing the door...

(LEMKIN tries to hand her a manila envelope.)

LEMKIN. First they burn books then they burn bodies! Read the evidence.

AIDE'S VOICE. *(Trying to close door.)* Mr. Lemkin, move your foot away...

LEMKIN. Did fifty of my family members die in vain? I have to leave them some epitaph.

(LEMKIN tries to stuff the envelope through the closing door.)

AIDE'S VOICE. Remove the envelope. You're ripping your own materials.

(LEMKIN clutches his chest, starting to have a heart attack.)

LEMKIN. Oh my god...I can't breathe. A glass of water, please.

(LEMKIN collapses. Lights shift, revealing LEMKIN inside a dilapidated house. The windows are covered. LEMKIN wakes and opens another door inside the house. Behind it is a wall of bricks.)

LEMKIN. They think I'm so "annoying" they buried me alive?

(He sees a newspaper on a chair and picks it up, reading.)

LEMKIN. "Philip Noel-Baker nominated for Nobel Peace Prize." Damn. *(Reading.)* "Raphael Lemkin: heart attack"? *(Looking at newspaper's date.)* August 29th 1959? Tomorrow's *Times*? *(Reading.)* "Death in action was his final argument. Senators used to feel a certain concern when they saw the slightly stooped figure of Raphael Lemkin stalking the halls of Congress." Oh my god, it's my obit. *(Reading on.)* "They will no longer have to think up explanations for a failure to pass the genocide law for which Mr. Lemkin worked so patiently." I'm wormwood. Well, if they think I'm going to stop now, they've got something else coming. There's no reason why you can't continue lobbying congress when you're dead!

(He goes to a desk with a typewriter, sits and begins to type a letter.)

LEMKIN. Senator. Let me reiterate, as my parents were being gassed to death, or slaughtered in the woods outside their home, I invented a word. *(Typing carefully.)* "Genos," from the Greek, meaning race; tribe. *(Typing tenderly.)* "Cide." Latin: to Kill. Race-murder. "Geno-cide." The word stops you in mid-sentence, doesn't it? Senator, it went straight into Webster's in 44—in 48 my genocide treaty was approved. It's more than a decade later and the U.S. has still not ratified my law. Only man has law. Law must be built. I demand an immediate response. I am—Lemkin.

(He puts the letter in a mail slot on the wall. A door opens and a MAN, 70s, in a suit, enters, raising a champagne glass.)

MAN (PROXMIRE). "Fellow colleagues, Lemkin died twenty-nine years ago. He was a great man." I just told the Senate that.

LEMKIN. Twenty-nine years? Time flies when you're lost in paperwork!

(PROXMIRE gives LEMKIN a piece of paper.)

PROXMIRE. Raphael Lemkin, I would like to present you with your law.

(We see and hear flashbulbs as they pose for a photo opportunity.)

LEMKIN. You got my letter?!

PROXMIRE. The U.S. finally ratified it today—November 4th, 1988—the 98th country to do so, I might add.

LEMKIN. (Dusting off his glasses.) Ashes. (Reading.) “The Genocide Convention Implementation Act.” Oh, my god! It passed! It passed!

PROXMIRE. (Pouring champagne.) Have some champagne. It's from Poland.

(LEMKIN looks at the champagne label.)

LEMKIN. “*Nigdy wiecej*”. [Pronounced: *Nihg-DAY VIEN-say*.] “Never Again”. What absolutely amazing champagne!

PROXMIRE. I had an aide scour the wine shops for it.

LEMKIN. We did it! Today is the most beautiful day of my life. Genocide is now an international crime.

(LEMKIN clinks glasses with PROXMIRE.)

LEMKIN. It's going to be a better world!

(LEMKIN shakes PROXMIRE's hand.)

LEMKIN. What did you say your name was?

PROXMIRE. William Proxmire. Senator from Wisconsin. (Giving him a hug.) Congratulations. People hug it's the eighties. Men too.

LEMKIN. Really? Hugging...William from Wisconsin, the American people are finally on our side!

PROXMIRE. Not necessarily. (Showing him a newspaper.) I wasn't invited to the signing. Too “annoying.”

LEMKIN. Ah, yes, Washington's classic “he's too annoying” response—tell me about it. (Giving him a big fatherly hug.) We're soul

mates. Guess that's the way you get things done, huh, become too annoying?

PROXMIRE. I made three thousand speeches on the Senate floor. I'm an old man.

LEMKIN. And I'm dead. *(They laugh together.)* Even as a boy in Poland, I was obsessed with the slaughtered races—it was in my bones. Thank you, Proxmire. It paid off! An epitaph for my mother's grave.

PROXMIRE. Frame it.

LEMKIN. *(Reading from newspaper.)* "With this law we finally close the circle today." Who said that? *(Reading.)* "Ronald Reagan"? The B actor? President?

PROXMIRE. Yeah. 'Fraid so. *(Looking at house.)* So you moved Upstate! Time to retire, do some crossword puzzles!

LEMKIN. Always hated 'em. *(Drinking champagne.)* Please have some more champagne.

PROXMIRE. There were extenuating circumstances surrounding the passage of your law.

LEMKIN. *(Enjoying champagne.)* Delicious.

PROXMIRE. *(Looking around.)* Sure this is the optimum place to retire? It's going to need a lot of work.

(They hear a thump and crumbling.)

LEMKIN. What in heaven is that?

(Some building sediment falls from the rafters.)

LEMKIN. *(Looking up.)* That's quite a leak.

PROXMIRE. *(Firmly.)* Now promise me you won't do anything with the house till you get some rest.

LEMKIN. Well, the house does have some nice Victorian touches. I may putter around.

PROXMIRE. One chore a day. *(Picking up newspaper.)* The *Times* has a great crossword. *(Reading from puzzle.)* One down, six letters— Restore what is torn or broken.

(LEMKIN takes the Times and sits at the desk.)

LEMKIN. Yes, I need a more comfortable chair. I'm not in an office anymore. It's time to relax!

(LEMKIN starts doing the crossword puzzle.)

PROXMIRE. Would you mind if I got some rest before I head back?

LEMKIN. Where?

PROXMIRE. *(Starting to go.)* I'll just take a look around upstairs. Don't let me disturb you.

(He exits. LEMKIN looks at the champagne bottle, doubtfully.)

LEMKIN. Poland? *(Relaxing with newspaper.)* Crossword puzzle... Ahhh, last time I kicked back? France, 48. A small casino. The one time I danced the tango.

(He mimes the tango with his arms, happily. He starts doing the crossword puzzle, relaxing.)

LEMKIN. Infant, four letters: "baby." Little goat, three letters: "kid." *(Trying a new clue.)* Where Orwell's animals live:...

(A WOMAN steps out from the large fireplace, carrying dough on a wooden board, moving to somewhere else in the house.)

WOMAN (MOTHER). Just passing through, Raphael. I'm sorry to disturb you.

LEMKIN. Mother, it's not possible. *(Showing her.)* My law! My law! Look, it passed!

(She looks at the law.)

MOTHER. What's this? A letter? A marriage proposal to a young lady?

LEMKIN. No, it's my genocide law.

MOTHER. *(Stopping; thinking.)* Please don't remind me. I can remember myself. Ah yes, I was on my way to get...some flour! *(Starting to go.)* I'll be out of your hair in no time.

(She takes him in for the first time.)

MOTHER. Raphael, my dear son. *(Stroking his bald head.)* What happened?

LEMKIN. *(Pouring her champagne.)* Yes, there were three things I wanted to avoid in my life: wearing eyeglasses, losing my hair, and becoming a refugee. All three have happened in implacable succession. Have some champagne, it's from Poland.

MOTHER. *(Starting to go.)* There isn't any champagne in Poland.

LEMKIN. From the sunnier part.

MOTHER. Shhhshhh. You didn't see me, all right?

(She opens the door with the wall of bricks behind it.)

LEMKIN. What are you doing?

MOTHER. Baking the bread. *(Looking around.)* You're not going to stay cooped up in this dark hole, I home. I mean house, I *hope*. Hope, home, a hole.

LEMKIN. What are you talking about?

MOTHER. Your life.

LEMKIN. The U.S. ratified my law!

MOTHER. If you wouldn't interrupt me I was on my way to... *(She starts to go.)*

LEMKIN. *(Helpfully.)* Get some flour?

(She begins to knead and braid dough on the wooden board, making challah.)

MOTHER. Flowers don't go so good with bread, son, cheese does. And strawberry jam, tea, pickled herring, sprinkled with salt. Hold the *chleb* to your heart. You must always slice down. If you break bread, you are vowed to wed. This house smells. *[Pronunciation of Chleb: Khleb. It means "Bread."]*

LEMKIN. (*Showing her the law.*) This is a great victory!

MOTHER. The life of the *heart*, my boy, that's the victory!

LEMKIN. (*Showing her.*) Ronald Reagan.

MOTHER. My son who invented a word.

LEMKIN. Like Eastman inventing "Kodak." How did you get in here?

MOTHER. I came down the chimney. When I think it all started with the Armenians!

LEMKIN. Don't forget the *Albigensians*.

MOTHER. Oh think of how your father and I felt having a little boy who places the slaughtered races in alphabetical order! The Albigensians, the Alva, the Armenians, the Assyrians...And that's just one letter. Worrisome. What's the smell?

LEMKIN. Mother, I'm going into retirement today!

MOTHER. In the dark with the dripping and the thumping? Now what would Father say?

LEMKIN. Father?

MOTHER. We got separated. I have to find him. And your brother in the forest.

LEMKIN. Samuel died.

MOTHER. And you left.

LEMKIN. I came home for you.

(The MOTHER gets down on her knees as the fireplace starts to glow.)

MOTHER. Yes, you were on your knees. "To Sweden, please!"

LEMKIN. Not that again.

MOTHER. "He'll kill us all." "Read the words of *Mein Kampf*." That's what you said.

LEMKIN. I'm giving up books and laws today, especially *Mein Kampf*. I'm retired, mom. Let's celebrate!

(She touches his head, as if anointing him.)

MOTHER. *(In Yiddish.) Voos iz áynin iz buhlépt. [Note: The rhythm or curve of the entire phrase has accents on "áynin", and "buhlépt", similar to the phrase "What's mine, is yours."]*

LEMKIN. *Voos iz áynin iz buhlépt.*

MOTHER. Now what was I looking for? *(Starting to go.)* To try to remember. It's a mind-exercise for those who grow old.

LEMKIN. *(To himself.)* To try to forget. A mind exercise for those who grow up.

MOTHER. I was looking for...Yeast? For jam? *(Turning to look at him.)* I was looking for you.

LEMKIN. Me?

MOTHER. I wanted to tell you—don't remind me—that the stars in the sky are blue.

LEMKIN. Blue?

MOTHER. The smell of the air is fresher from a rooftop. *(Looking around.)* Where are the windows?

LEMKIN. They're all covered.

MOTHER. I wanted to tell you that when you fly into the air—the ashes—well, Raphael, it's *awful*. *(Looking at the piece of paper.)* The Law. Let's celebrate! Pour me some champagne.

(He pours her champagne, showing her the label.)

LEMKIN. *"Nigdy wiecej."* *(Toasting.)* Na zdrowie.

MOTHER. *L'chaim.* *(Holding out arms.)* Come here, how proud a mother can be on her son's wedding day.

LEMKIN. It's not my wedding day.

MOTHER. Don't tell me, your graduation?

LEMKIN. My retirement.

MOTHER. The Nobel Peace Prize! They finally decided to give it to you. Congratulations!

LEMKIN. I fell in love, mother—she was intelligent, beautiful. We danced the tango, she told me she was from Chilé...

MOTHER. Ah, a dark-eyed beauty, Raffy?!

LEMKIN. I told her about the extermination of the Aztecs and Incas, this was not seductive.

MOTHER. Oh, no, it wasn't. What's wrong with you? With your nerves, shouldn't you have been thinking of ways to calm down?

(We hear rain on the roof.)

MOTHER. Showers?

LEMKIN. Yes, it's starting to rain.

MOTHER. Like the day you left us. Don't mind me, just point me in the right direction.

(She exits back into the fireplace, as the glow fades.)

(He takes a look around the house.)

LEMKIN. High ceilings...A crack along the wall. Uh, the fireplace is a mess—the last owners really did a number on it!

(He tries to fill his glass with water at a faucet but the faucet doesn't work.)

LEMKIN. It's a fixer upper. "One chore a day."

(He looks in a large pitcher, which is set in a basin.)

LEMKIN. The water has small bugs in it. I'll change the filter, that will solve the problem. *(A sound on the roof.)* Hum, what's that thumping? Retirement? Finally. *(Picking up his crossword puzzle.)* Dead, according to Nietzsche: *(Easily writes in the word.)* Lily of Utah: "Sego." *(Trying a new clue.)* Land of a thousand hills:...? *(Staring at crack in wall.)* Woah that crack is expanding! What's happening?

(A black MAN squeezes in through the crack, turning off the lights and ignites his cigarette lighter to illuminate the darkened room.)

MAN (JP). Recorders? Surveillance? Are there any?

LEMKIN. Are there any what?

JP. Bugs?

LEMKIN. No, just the ones in the water.

JP. General, this is no time for jokes!

LEMKIN. General?

JP. Are we being watched?

LEMKIN. Where did you come from?

JP. I've got a deal for you but I only have five minutes.

LEMKIN. I don't know who you are.

JP. JP, a trainer for Hutu Power.

LEMKIN. Hutu Power? Is this some kind of tribal dispute?

JP. Don't play dumb!

(JP notices the champagne bottle.)

JP. Champagne at a time like this? Lay your gun down on the table.

LEMKIN. I carry a pencil. Now would be an absurd time to start carrying a gun.

JP. Ha, ha. General, thousands of machetes just came in from China...

(LEMKIN blows out the flame of JP's lighter and turns the light back on.)

LEMKIN. No open flames in here.

JP. I'm training Hutus to kill in Rwanda!...

LEMKIN. *(Referring to crossword puzzle.)* The land of a thousand hills.

JP. They've got caches of weapons for the militias. *They will kill every Tutsi child. (Pronounced: TOOT-see.)*

LEMKIN. "Tutsi"? That would be down near Teutonic Knights and Prussian Pagans.

JP. They've made the lists of people to assassinate.

LEMKIN. *(Starting to go.)* All right, take me to these weapon caches and we'll go from there.

JP. I show you the caches when *you* get me: passports, protection for my wife—kids, transport, general.

LEMKIN. It's kind of you to give me such rank...

(JP hands LEMKIN a list.)

JP. These are my family's names.

(LEMKIN passes his hand over the names on JP's list.)

LEMKIN. All neatly written in a row. I carried a list like this at Nuremberg. Is that what *you* are? "Tutsi"?

JP. *Worse*—I'm an informant. One thousand can be killed in the time we've been talking. How long has it been?

LEMKIN. Two minutes. *(Picking up his law.)* Let's go.

JP. First, you make me a promise of protection.

LEMKIN. *(Referring to law.)* This is your protection. Genocide is condemned by the civilized world.

JP. *(Laughing.)* Civilized?! I'm going to get hacked to pieces! WHAT ABOUT MY FAMILY? If I can't get them out of here, their deaths will be on your head.

LEMKIN. *(Starting to go.)* Listen, I know people—I can help. Take me to the weapons.

JP. Not without a guaranty.

LEMKIN. *(Showing law.)* Here it is.

JP. *(Throwing law on the floor.)* That's just a worthless piece of paper to clean your ass.

(JP exits through the crack in the wall. LEMKIN picks up his law.)

LEMKIN. I need to patch that crack.

(PROXMIRE reenters from where he exited.)

PROXMIRE. Thanks for your hospitality, Lemkin. Did I mention the incident at Kolmeshohe? [*Pronounced: COHL-mess- HOE-ah.*]

LEMKIN. The cemetery in Bitburg? No.

PROXMIRE. The fluke that made your law pass.

LEMKIN. Fluke?

PROXMIRE. Reagan laid a wreath at Bitburg for the anniversary of World War Two...

LEMKIN. He did? At the graves of the SS?

PROXMIRE. He enraged the left and the right. Reagan couldn't look soft on Nazis, your law made good press. I'm sorry.

LEMKIN. I just had a frightening visit from a Rwandan trainer. The crime of barbarity repeats itself with near biological regularity.

PROXMIRE. Hey, what about those crossword puzzles? I don't see you resting!

(PROXMIRE exits.)

LEMKIN. I'm not.

(LEMKIN turns on another light and starts to sit. An old shoe falls from the rafters.)

(Lemkin's MOTHER comes out from the fireplace, holding spoons and a knife, moving towards a door in the house.)

MOTHER. That was a shoe, Raffy. A strange one. *(Trying to remember.)* What birds fly South away from danger?

LEMKIN. Is this one of your tests, mom?

MOTHER. Ah, yes, your lessons. The Cro Magnons making love!

LEMKIN. You'd paint scenes of anthropology for my exams. Why not take it up again?

MOTHER. Painting? The part of the brain that knew colors, died in a snowstorm, son.

LEMKIN. There is a margin of error, mother.

(She acts out a knife chasing spoons.)

MOTHER. What could we tell our dinner guests when they saw our little boy under the dinner table playing “genocide” in the dark? Spoons running across the floor chased by evil dictators, *the knives?*

(LEMKIN does a puppet show with the spoons and knife for his MOTHER.)

LEMKIN. Mom, when I grow up I'm going to get us a big house where we'll be safe. *(Playing MOTHER spoon.)* With a garden? *(Playing his younger self.)* Yes, we'll never have to run away.

(The MOTHER takes back the spoons and knife.)

MOTHER. We'd have to lure you back up with sugar!

LEMKIN. I loved the desserts—strawberries from the farm, the cream.

(Grains of rice spray from the ceiling.)

MOTHER. Oh, a wedding! Is your lady friend arriving soon?!
RICE!

LEMKIN. Mom, I'm afraid it's a bit late for marriage.

MOTHER. *(Picking up shoe.)* Why do shoes fall from the sky?

(LEMKIN studies the ceiling.)

LEMKIN. I haven't checked the entire house. I may have termites. I should get poison.

MOTHER. *(Looking at shoe.)* Big ones.

LEMKIN. I'm looking for a sliver of...

(He searches through cabinets, finding a bottle of white powder.)

MOTHER. Cake?

LEMKIN. *(Ignoring her.)* Would it be so bad to ask for a modicum of peace?

MOTHER. *(Nodding.)* Peace cake.

(LEMKIN gets on his knees, laying white poison on the floor.)

LEMKIN. Peace isn't a cake, mom.

MOTHER. It IS most certainly a cake, and a very delicious one.

LEMKIN. Dessert just isn't everything.

MOTHER. You left. *(Going to typewriter on desk.)* You could have been a novelist—written about something happy. Sunsets, cowboys?

LEMKIN. *(As he lays the white poison.)* Cowboys? I'd like a house, a place to live in some semblance of...

MOTHER. *(Brightly.)* Sawdust?

LEMKIN. That's not helpful, mother. I'm trying to remember. *(Looking around.)* What was it? What we thought the world would be? Before the pogroms?

MOTHER. A renaissance festival!

(A BLACK WOMAN in a nurse's uniform rushes through a door, dropping a machete at LEMKIN's feet.)

BLACK WOMAN (NAUSICAA). Doctor!

MOTHER. Perfect, you might as well stay on your knees for the proposal.

LEMKIN. Mom...

NAUSICAA. It's blades-gone-mad out there!

MOTHER. Her face is cut.

NAUSICAA. I saw...breasts and vaginas hanging from the trees...

LEMKIN. *(Taking the machete.)* The Hutus are using these?

MOTHER. You don't offer a bride something to eat?

NAUSICAA. I SAW them in the branches, I didn't make it up! Running from the murder site.

MOTHER. How can a vagina hang from a tree?

LEMKIN. Mother, you shouldn't be listening to this. *(To NAUSICAA:)* Didn't JP get someone to raid the caches?

NAUSICAA. JP. He was hanged. (*Picking up Lemkin's battered briefcase.*) No time, your doctor's bag, hurry!

LEMKIN. I'll help you carry people. (*Looking at cut on her forehead.*) First let me wash that.

(*LEMKIN washes the cut with a handkerchief.*)

NAUSICAA. Nothing compared to what I've seen, doctor. At the church—south—there's about ten, chopped to pieces.

MOTHER. Women are always the first to be marked, Raphael.

(*The MOTHER exits into the fireplace.*)

NAUSICAA. The West says "Be patient."

LEMKIN. Yes. When the Reich wrote the book of death in my family's blood, I was told to be patient.

(*LEMKIN finishes cleaning the cut and she starts to exit, clutching his briefcase.*)

NAUSICAA. Thank you. Now, come.

(*NAUSICAA exits out a door. LEMKIN tries to follow.*)

NAUSICAA. Come on.

LEMKIN. I can't.

NAUSICAA. What do you mean, you can't?

LEMKIN. I can't move.

NAUSICAA. What?!

LEMKIN. My body won't go.

NAUSICAA. What are you saying?

LEMKIN. When I was alive I was haunted by the dead. Now I'm dead and I'm haunted by the living.

NAUSICAA. (*Slapping him.*) You're crazy!

LEMKIN. Please, listen, help your family escape.

NAUSICAA. Fly away in a silver machine?

LEMKIN. Don't go until they come with you.

NAUSICAA. Leave the land of our ancestors?

LEMKIN. *I sailed away. What's your name?*

NAUSICAA. Nausicaa—I'm *Tutsi*—now I'll die—Come! (*Pro-nounced: Nau-si-KAY-ah.*) Come through the damn door, doctor, and help.

LEMKIN. (*Going back to his desk.*) I'm stuck here but the U.N. will stop it.

NAUSICAA. Just a crazy old man living life from his chair.

(She exits. He picks up the lighter JP left on the desk and ignites it, troubled. He flicks it off, going back to the crossword puzzle.)

LEMKIN. Traumatic stress. Yes! Acronym...Four letters?... (*Trying a new clue.*) Sommelier's concern: "winecellar" ...Prefix denoting the opposite action. (*Filling in letters.*) "U.N."

(A natty U.N. OFFICIAL enters with his female ASSISTANT, who holds folders and a box of baked goods. They begin to do paperwork.)

OFFICIAL (JACK). General, what are you doing here?

LEMKIN. I live here.

ASSISTANT (CAITLIN). At the United Nations? (*Looking to JACK for help.*) Jack?

JACK. What are you talking about? No one lives at the U.N. And I must say, as the Assistant Secretary General to Africa, shouldn't you be in Rwanda, general?

LEMKIN. Rwanda. If I'm truly the general, Jack, then let's follow the Rules of Engagement and seize the caches now.

JACK. That's outside your mandate. General, you're not going to be able to stay long. We need to write our weekly department of peacekeeping operations memo.

CAITLIN. It was due an hour ago.

LEMKIN. Where is your boss? He must not be receiving the cables from Rwanda. They're stockpiling weapons. If we act now we can stop this before it starts.

JACK. There's no mandate to intervene, and Mr. Annan is not in the country.

CAITLIN. He's in Paris and then he goes to Rome.

LEMKIN. Does "Annan" know this is a *genocide*?

JACK. We don't use "the G word."

LEMKIN. The G word?

JACK. It hasn't escalated to that level. We aren't allowed to use that word.

LEMKIN. Dismemberment of tutsis, tutsi women's sex organs hanging from trees is not sufficient escalation for you?

JACK. The word makes certain security council members nervous.

LEMKIN. (*Getting dictionary on desk.*) If you open the dictionary, Jack, you'll find GENOCIDE between "genius" and "genome."

JACK. "The G word," general—we don't even like to say... "ethnic cleansing."

LEMKIN. There are actually leaders who think if they don't use a word, they don't have to do anything about it?

CAITLIN. Yes.

JACK. One who is very important to us.

JACK/CAITLIN. U.S.?

LEMKIN. But the U.S. leads the world.

JACK. Any intervention the U.S. is going to veto.

JACK. They don't want another Somalia.

LEMKIN. Do these politicians have a Webster's? Would they prefer the word "*holocaust*"?

JACK. No, no. General, your job is to chisel out a peace accord.

LEMKIN. With what? Machetes?

JACK. Look, your cables have been put in the black folder.

CAITLIN. The top priority folder for the security council.

LEMKIN. Apparently your color-coding system isn't working. I don't care if Mr. "Annan" is in Paris or on his way to the ninth circle of hell, get me the president of the council.

JACK. The council isn't meeting today.

CAITLIN. (*Overlapping.*) I'm so sorry, Mr. Keating's not available.

(*LEMKIN picks up the machete NAUSICAA brought in, threatening them.*)

LEMKIN. I need to see someone on the council.

JACK. That is an utter impossibility. Where are you staying?

CAITLIN. What hotel?

LEMKIN. I'm staying here. On this beautiful turkish carpet.

JACK. It's not turkish.

CAITLIN. It used to be in the Cambodia department but when we stopped the *genocide* talks, we put in a request for it.

JACK. Caitlin.

LEMKIN. (*To CAITLIN.*) Cambodia?

JACK. Call him a car.

CAITLIN. One point seven million died. I think that's a genocide.

JACK. There was nothing to do, borders were closed.

LEMKIN. And no one broke down the borders?

JACK. General, are you sure you're not going native on us? There are rumors you're turning into a cowboy over there.

LEMKIN. (*To CAITLIN.*) Cowboy.

CAITLIN. Off the record. You want to shoot off your guns.

LEMKIN. Cambodia. Right before "Ceylon" on the genocide list...

JACK. *(Correcting him.)* “G-word” list.

LEMKIN. Shut up.

CAITLIN. *(Offering LEMKIN the box of baked goods.)* Why not have a donut? They're from “Between the Bread.”

JACK. Actually a “*beignet.*”

CAITLIN. We just call them donuts, makes it easier, but technically they're apple.

JACK. Like turnovers. I'm not sure why we call them donuts. This is the U.N. we should call them what they really are.

CAITLIN. Have one.

LEMKIN. I find it difficult to understand why we are talking about DONUTS?! *(Banging machete on desk.)* Don't you care?

JACK. Doesn't matter if I care. There's no political will, general.

LEMKIN. But you're alive, Jack?

JACK. Last time I checked.

CAITLIN. *(Muttering.)* Barely.

LEMKIN. Then you're the political will.

(JACK motions furtively to CAITLIN and they quickly exit.)

(An old radio in the house begins to blare a Hate-Radio broadcast. Loud gunshots surround the house and a black MILITIAMAN, high, drinking beer, bashes through a door. He treats LEMKIN as a little boy.)

MILITIAMAN. Where is she?

LEMKIN. This is a private home. Get out.

MILITIAMAN. No home is private to the *Interahamwe.* *[Pronounced: Inter-uh-HAHM-way.]*

LEMKIN. *(Putting it together.)* “Hutu Power.” *(Praying Psalm 122 to himself.)* “Peace be within you. For the sake of the house.”

(A well-dressed BLACK WOMAN enters through a door, throwing LEMKIN a mobile phone, speaking as if to appease a small child.)

BLACK WOMAN (AGATHE). My little lad, press number-six on the telephone and warn the general.

LEMKIN. Little lad? I feel ninety four.

AGATHE. Don't play games. Mommy is interim prime minister. Press number-six. *(To MILITIAMAN.)* Be calm.

MILITIAMAN. *(Taking out a gun.)* Calm people are dead people.

LEMKIN. Leave her alone! *(Looking at phone.)* No cord?

(The MILITIAMAN grabs the phone from LEMKIN.)

AGATHE. Stop playing, love, and run tell the peacekeepers to escort Mommy to the radio station.

(He can't go through the door.)

LEMKIN. I can't go outside.

(The MILITIAMAN taunts AGATHE with the beer bottle.)

MILITIAMAN. Drink from my bottle, Agathe!

AGATHE. *(To LEMKIN.)* The militias are putting up roadblocks.

MILITIAMAN. *(To AGATHE.)* Drink! What, my beer's not good enough for you?

(On the radio we hear, "Inyenzi! Cockroaches! Kill the cockroaches!")

LEMKIN. *(Urging AGATHE.)* Run, "Mommy," run out the door!

(She opens the door, which has the bricks behind it.)

AGATHE. *(With forced calm; to LEMKIN.)* Son, you must listen to me carefully...

MILITIAMAN. Such a beautiful home to be full of cockroaches.

AGATHE. I am Hutu, like you.

MILITIAMAN. Those who live with cockroaches die like cockroaches.

AGATHE. Peacekeepers are waiting outside to take me to the station.

MILITIAMAN. Peacekeepers? HA, HA, HA!

LEMKIN. Yes, peacekeepers, they're right outside.

MILITIAMAN. And I'm going to listen to a little boy? *(Taunting AGATHE with beer bottle.)* What's wrong, Mommy? You prefer your fancy wine from your fancy winecellar? Don't you want some of mine? DRINK, SLUT!

LEMKIN. *(Grabbing beer bottle from him.)* GET AWAY FROM HER!

(The MILITIAMAN points the gun at LEMKIN.)

MILITIAMAN. One more move and you're dead.

LEMKIN. Again?

AGATHE. *(Urgent.)* My little love, go hide.

MILITIAMAN. Your peacekeepers are all dead, Agathe.

AGATHE. *(To LEMKIN.)* Tell the general: "He promised to save Agathe's little boy."

MILITIAMAN. My little love!

(In stylized movements the MILITIAMAN pins LEMKIN and AGATHE against the brick wall.)

MILITIAMAN. COCKROACH!

(The MILITIAMAN shoots AGATHE in the face. He raises her skirt and forces LEMKIN to stick the beer bottle in between her legs.)

MILITIAMAN. Drink from my bottle.

(LEMKIN stares at AGATHE as the MILITIAMAN exits with her.)

(Lemkin's MOTHER appears. She is in a train car. We hear train sounds.)

MOTHER. We can't come with you, Raphael.

LEMKIN. Come with me?

MOTHER. Our journey lies in another direction.

LEMKIN. Which way?

MOTHER. But there are some clothes you can take, they're hanging on the wash line... We follow the one ahead.

A star. And come to a fork in the road.

LEMKIN. A fork?

MOTHER. A crossroad. Inside the woods. Left. Or right. Walking. I don't remember. A fork or perhaps a spoon, the kind you lap up cream with.

LEMKIN. And...you go?

MOTHER. Left. Into the chamber. The bark is white, paler than old telegrams I can be certain, and some others darker than an egg in a dove's nest. Firewood.

LEMKIN. How long...did you last?

MOTHER. Longer than the hair on a ribbon that got away, but shorter I think than the drip of ink drying on paper.

LEMKIN. My law's a bad Polish joke, mom. Meaningless words.

MOTHER. Your syllables. *(Tenderly.)* Shaping in your mouth, that can help.

LEMKIN. Genocide destroys a culture like fire destroys a house.

MOTHER. *(Smiling.)* Ah, the intellectual.

LEMKIN. Yes, the jewel of the family.

MOTHER. Watch out for the bubbles.

(She exits. He takes a sip of the champagne; it has gone sour.)

LEMKIN. Baah.

(He sits at his desk and inspects the mobile phone AGATHE brought in. He closes it and goes back to the crossword.)

LEMKIN. Seventeen down: Persistent rock pusher. Who writes these things? *(Writing in the word.)* Elephant of children's tales: "Bar-bar."

(A WOMAN in labor enters, screaming.)

WOMAN (ROSE). Help me! The baby, it's coming! It's coming! The baby!

LEMKIN. Look, this is a disaster area. It's no place for a baby.

ROSE. A towel, please. The birds are circling. That's where the killing is. I was running.

(LEMKIN finds a towel in a cabinet.)

LEMKIN. Here, use this, please.

(In stylized movements ROSE knocks away the towel, starting to deliver her baby.)

ROSE. Thank god, doctor, you are here, thank the lord!

LEMKIN. I'm not a doctor.

ROSE. Don't leave! *(Grabbing his arm.)* Help me. I lived in a house right next door to him.

LEMKIN. Who?

ROSE. The man who raped me. Hutu. *(In pain.)* He made me drink lighter fluid.

LEMKIN. Just try to breathe. That's good. You are Tutsi?

ROSE. Yes. Aaahhh.

(LEMKIN looks under her skirt, trying to help her.)

LEMKIN. I see its head. It's coming. Oh my god? I don't know how to deliver a baby.

ROSE. Owwwwwwwwww!

LEMKIN. I see its brow, its chin. What's your name?

ROSE. Rose.

LEMKIN. Push, Rose, one good one for me!

ROSE. Aaahhh!

LEMKIN. Here comes your little boy!

ROSE. This baby comes out in flames!

(Sound of baby crying. LEMKIN delivers the baby, from under Rose's skirt. The baby is portrayed with fabric from her skirt.)

LEMKIN. *(Looking at newborn baby.)* Look Rose. No smoke, no fire. You ran far enough, you kept him safe. See, no flames—just eyes, a nose, a perfect little human being.

(LEMKIN offers the baby to ROSE. She refuses.)

ROSE. Take him. No food for orphans. He's yours.

LEMKIN. I'm sorry Rose but I'm somewhat ill equipped for infants...

ROSE. You take care of him. I'm tired.

(LEMKIN holds the baby.)

LEMKIN. What's his name?

ROSE. "Cockroach." Give them what they hate.

(ROSE staggers off.)

(Note: During this interlude in the New York City production, LEMKIN holds the baby and his MOTHER enters behind him. They share a moment looking at the baby, then she exits.)

End of Act I

ACT II

(LEMKIN, *withdrawn, holds the baby. He hears a helicopter and watches its lights. A MAN with a briefcase and wearing a military cap enters through a door.*)

MAN (VICTOR). General, we're going to need to get those numbers before you go.

LEMKIN. What numbers? (*Quick; to baby.*) Shhshh, sleep.

VICTOR. (*Introducing himself.*) Right, Victor, here to debrief you.

(*VICTOR picks up the machete.*)

VICTOR. Now is this really an appropriate souvenir to take home, general? Wouldn't your wife prefer a bolt of pretty fabric?

LEMKIN. An appropriate reminder for me to look at. Regularly.

VICTOR. (*Writing himself a note.*) Uh, oh.

(*VICTOR finds files in a cabinet and puts them on the desk.*)

VICTOR. Very well-organized. Now I know the ends of missions are always hard, general.

LEMKIN. Yes, they are. (*Cradling baby, urgently.*) A woman was screaming for help...the baby...

VICTOR. Time to go, huh? You'll have plenty of time to say your goodbyes and catch your chopper.

LEMKIN. I'm not deserting him.

VICTOR. (*Referring to files.*) Now, now if you can just tally up the casualties by dates—the time from April 6th to August 19th—we at the reporting department want to figure out a unifying equation so the American people might better understand what happened here in Rwanda.

LEMKIN. You count bodies after a genocide is over?

VICTOR. You know the files. Do you have an assistant? Secretary? Intern?

(*LEMKIN moves to the desk, holding baby.*)

LEMKIN. No. Generals always tally the lists of the dead. Look, I know the numbers by heart—starting from April 6th. I couldn't do anything for them. I see their eyes, Victor.

(Sitting at the desk, holding the baby, LEMKIN starts to tally numbers with a pencil.)

VICTOR. General, we're simply looking for the amount of dead that would be needed to justify one fallen American soldier.

LEMKIN. *(Tallying and comforting baby.)* It's all right...

(VICTOR hands him a calculator.)

VICTOR. Here use this.

LEMKIN. I can't get the bodies out of my mind...

VICTOR. There's a lot of dust in here, shall I open a window?

LEMKIN. *(Abruptly.)* Please! Don't.

VICTOR. Hum, are you getting enough to eat? *(Looking up as he hears thumping.)* What is that sound?

LEMKIN. Squatters.

VICTOR. What?

LEMKIN. Tutsis living in the ceiling. The rice? The shoe? They're still under our protection!

VICTOR. You need to relax.

LEMKIN. I'm accountable.

VICTOR. *(Referring to Lemkin's tallying.)* Look, I'll submit the final statistic in our report for future peacekeeping missions. It'll help, I promise.

LEMKIN. I should have taken the law into my own hands, used force...

VICTOR. You did well to play by the rules, General.

LEMKIN. Thousands, hacked, slashed...?

VICTOR. You didn't desert your troops—we respect you for that.

LEMKIN. I don't. (*Staring at total of tallied numbers.*) Damn, I'm not seeing straight.

(*VICTOR takes Lemkin's tallying.*)

VICTOR. Okay, definitely a pro. Woah, no wonder, these figures have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder written all over them. (*Taking out a tin.*) General, I have some sardines. They're the ones soaked in tomato sauce. I'd feel better if you'd eat some sardines.

(*LEMKIN sings a Polish lullaby, "Raisins, Nor Almonds," rocking baby.*)

LEMKIN. *Lulinke may zun, lulinke main zun.* My son.

(*VICTOR looks toward the windows.*)

VICTOR. A couple years ago I was here in Rwanda. Streets were buzzing, humming with life.

LEMKIN. Victor, there are notes in these files asking for help when the weapons started pouring in—an informant who switched sides, warned me and was executed. And you actually left a "General" no recourse but to *watch* a genocide?

VICTOR. (*Reviewing Lemkin's tallying.*) Ouch...The number's eighty five thousand, general.

LEMKIN. Eighty five thousand what?

VICTOR. Eighty five thousand dead Rwandans are worth one dead American soldier.

LEMKIN. (*Protectively.*) Well, *his* little life is worth more.

VICTOR. Classic symptom—over-empathizing with the victims.

(*Opening a plastic container.*) Take these. Pills for post-traumatic-stress-disorder.

LEMKIN. Traumatic stress was in the crossword.

VICTOR. Good idea, crossword puzzles. They occupy the mind and your mind is going to need to heal. (*Showing him the container.*) One in the morning, one at night.

LEMKIN. (*Staring at pills.*) There's actually a pill for genociditis?

VICTOR. There is.

LEMKIN. (*Panicked.*) I can't breathe.

VICTOR. Sit in that chair, lower the lights...

(*VICTOR flips open a cassette player.*)

VICTOR. Relaxation tapes. And here's your subpoena. Now remember at the war crimes tribunal, you're only being called to testify against the Mayor of Taba.

LEMKIN. Taba?

VICTOR. Taba.

LEMKIN. Taba?

VICTOR. Taba! The rapes of the Tutsi women there. Everything else the U.N. forbids you to talk about.

LEMKIN. How can they forbid me to talk about it?

VICTOR. You may want to write down what I said. You may forget.

LEMKIN. No conscience, Victor?

VICTOR. Who has time for guilt? (*Starting to go.*) I'm an Observer.

LEMKIN. I won't forget. You know why?

VICTOR. Why?

LEMKIN. Because I blame you for everything. Someone with more skill would have been able to get them to stop the killing.

(*VICTOR sticks a tape into the cassette player.*)

VICTOR. Relax, you're just the fall guy.

(*He exits. We hear ocean sounds as LEMKIN nestles the baby. He finds a vodka bottle underneath his chair and drinks deeply.*)

LEMKIN. We've got to move, little lamb. How 'bout "Baja California"? A *palapa*—a grass hut by the sea? No genocide ever recorded in the history of "Baja." People there are poor, but happy eating fish and crustaceans. This peninsula, "neck of land" as they call it, is too

skinny to be of use to anyone, my boy. The sunsets, the Pacific! The waves with their generous dumping of salt water, incessantly lush.

This barrack is really starting to feel like less than a house, don't you think? (*Remembering.*) Of course, even in Baja, there was the genocide of the indigenous Indian tribes, fleeing as they were slaughtered by the American colonists. *Lakota, Navajo, Sioux*. Such names. (*Baby cries.*) Damn it. Kid, even on the smallest slice of land, it can't be avoided.

(LEMKIN pours out a pill from the container and washes it down with vodka.)

LEMKIN. A pill to counter human hatred. An interesting idea.

Wash it down with some vodka useful for the most despairing moments.

(He drinks, starts to offer some to baby, decides no.)

LEMKIN. A cockroach? Is there a gene that makes people see humans as bugs? I see eyes EVERYWHERE—thousands of ghosts in the ashes. What I wouldn't give for a *kanapka*: a pickle, and some good *chleb* to break. [*Pronunciation of Kanapka: Kah-NAP-kah. An open-faced sandwich.*] That's what they eat at a funeral in Poland. (*Looking at baby.*) I may not be up to taking care of you, lad. Hey, little guy. Tiny little fists. Born from hate. Oh. (*Kissing him.*) Hello, "Little Cockroach."

(A WOMAN, coughing, with blood on her clothes, is pushed into the room by a GUARD with an AK-47, who then exits.)

LEMKIN. Oh my god.

(She looks at LEMKIN with disgust.)

WOMAN (TATJANA). What are you waiting for? Just do it.

LEMKIN. Do what? (Looking at her.)

TATJANA. (*Seeing his stunned state.*) What's wrong with you? Turn off the light, *chetnik*.

LEMKIN. *Chetnik*? I'm Polish.

TATJANA. Yeah. DO IT! Get it over with.

LEMKIN. I don't know...

TATJANA. *(Cutting him off.)* Turn off the light so I won't have to see your face.

LEMKIN. Why?

TATJANA. I'm not up for your fucked-up, weird game. Just do it FAST or give me something. Do you have any alcohol?

LEMKIN. No!

TATJANA. Pills?

LEMKIN. No. *(Showing her baby.)* I was unexpectedly left with a baby. He's a cute one, yes?

TATJANA. Oh god, a nutcase. Camp getting to you, buddy?

(She sees Lemkin's vodka and pills, and takes some.)

LEMKIN. Camp? Why do you want pills?

TATJANA. *(Coughing.)* Do you know how to get to the roof?

LEMKIN. Actually I haven't checked that part yet. What's your name?

TATJANA. Tatjana. Who are you?

LEMKIN. Well, I was a lawyer. I made up a word which is causing a certain amount of turmoil.

TATJANA. *(Coughing.)* What word?

LEMKIN. Genocide.

TATJANA. Right! You look homeless.

LEMKIN. I toted a fine leather briefcase, wore this white suit. *(Looking down at suit.)* It was white.

TATJANA. *(Looking at baby.)* Okay, okay! What's up with the baby?

LEMKIN. A woman named Rose left me with "Little Cockroach." He misses her. Can you hold him?

TATJANA. I can't stand it. *(Coughing.)* I'm sick. Just give me something.

LEMKIN. You took my pills. They're for my stress disorder.

TATJANA. P.T.S.D.?

LEMKIN. *(Looking at crossword.)* An acronym, four letters. How did you know?

TATJANA. I'm a physician. Was.

LEMKIN. We could have used you a few minutes ago. To deliver this guy.

TATJANA. Right. Can you take me to the roof?

LEMKIN. Why?

TATJANA. I can escape out a window upstairs if we can just tie some sheets together. Can you help me?

LEMKIN. Escape from where?

TATJANA. The camp.

LEMKIN. What camp?

TATJANA. Listen, men used to break their backs in this iron mine, now they're breaking ours. The serbs say they want to bless us with their babies to populate the race. Can you get some sheets?

LEMKIN. You hold "Little Cockroach," I'll see what I can find.

(He places the baby in her arms.)

LEMKIN. His mother has quite a spirit, like you.

(He exits as she hears the GUARD, with AK-47, enter with a male AID WORKER. LEMKIN hides behind an open door, as TATJANA puts the baby in a basket.)

GUARD. You can start in here.

AID WORKER (ANTOINE). I cannot begin my interviews of the prisoners until the Norwegian ambassador gets here.

GUARD. No, you'll start now with her. She has...another appointment.

(The GUARD motions to ANTOINE with his gun.)

ANTOINE. The Ambassador will file a complaint.

(The GUARD shrugs as ANTOINE moves TATJANA away. TATJANA coughs.)

ANTOINE. Are you okay? Come, stand over here so I can look at you.

TATJANA. How did you get in here?

ANTOINE. Antoine. International red cross. *(Handing her a bottle.)* Here, drink some water.

(The GUARD grabs the bottle from TATJANA.)

ANTOINE. We have received approval from the head of camp to check on the health of the prisoners.

TATJANA. *I need pills.*

ANTOINE. *(Speaking softly.)* Are they feeding you?

TATJANA. *Pills.*

ANTOINE. *(Softly.)* Are there human rights abuses?

LEMKIN. *(Stepping from behind door.)* Yes!

GUARD. *(Looking at him.)* Who are you?

LEMKIN. ...The Ambassador. We have permission from your superior to make a list of the sick prisoners.

(LEMKIN goes to the desk and gets paper and pencil.)

GUARD. *Only the men.*

ANTOINE. *(Catching onto LEMKIN.)* Yes, the Red Cross and the Norwegian embassy are working together to authorize their release.

LEMKIN. And Antoine, we'll need to make a list of the names of the women who are sick.

GUARD. Don't be stupid.

LEMKIN. International law.

GUARD. There's no law.

ANTOINE. Resolution 3318. United Nations Commission for Human Rights. Protection of Women and Children in Armed Conflict.

LEMKIN. 3318, you heard him, it's the law.

(The GUARD scowls at ANTOINE, motioning towards TATJANA with the gun. ANTOINE checks her vital signs: pulse, eyes and her forehead for fever.)

ANTOINE. Can you tell me how many women are in your area?

TATJANA. Eleven.

GUARD. Just give her the medicine.

LEMKIN. Do you know any of the women's names?

TATJANA. All of them.

GUARD. THE MEDICINE.

ANTOINE. We have been sanctioned to make this list.

LEMKIN. Please begin.

TATJANA. Others have tried this before, it didn't work.

LEMKIN. This is a list that will work. The names, please.

TATJANA. Yes, Gordana, Amela, Emina... *[Pronounced: GOR-da-na. Eh-mih-na.]*

(LEMKIN writes.)

GUARD. This is pointless.

TATJANA. Alexandra, Mirza. *[Pronounced: MEER-Za.]*

LEMKIN. "Z" or "S"?

TATJANA. "Z." And Fatima, Sonja, Mirjana, Selma, Tatjana... *[Pronounced: FA-tee-mah, Sonya, Miryana, Tatyana.]*

ANTOINE. *(Softly.)* Is this a rape camp?

TATJANA. *(Nodding.)* There are two Tatjanas...

LEMKIN. *(Writing.)* Two Tatjanas. With a "J," your name?

TATJANA. *(To ANTOINE.)* Yes.

(The GUARD points the gun at ANTOINE. LEMKIN hands the list to ANTOINE.)

LEMKIN. Present this list to the head of camp. We expect the international community to demand the release of all prisoners on this list. Is that clear?

GUARD. *(Laughing.)* Not a chance in hell. See you...soon, Tatjana.

(The GUARD ushers ANTOINE out, as LEMKIN searches the room and finds pieces of cloth.)

LEMKIN. Here, we can tie these together.

TATJANA. Sheets.

(He picks up the baby from the basket.)

LEMKIN. It'll be our Plan B...The Norwegians are working on your release.

TATJANA. Sure, but I'll feel better if we start tying these, just in case.

(She tears the sheet into three strips and ties the ends together.)

TATJANA. My "godchild" was a baby *girl*, a Serb.

LEMKIN. You're Muslim?

TATJANA. Yes. I bought my friend's baby a gold bracelet. It said her name and the date she was born. The little chain looked so delicate on her arm. That there could be fingers so small, nails. Sometimes her mother would leave her with me, as if she was mine.

LEMKIN. The Serbs are exterminating the Muslims.

TATJANA. *(Nodding.)* We set our books on fire. One by one, watching the words we shared burn in front of us, rubbing our hands over charred words to stay warm.

LEMKIN. The same nationalistic zeal—it's happening again.

TATJANA. They say the *chetniks* grind dead prisoners into animal feed.

LEMKIN. *(Hearing a noise.)* The guard's coming back.

TATJANA. Don't say anything.

(TATJANA hides the rope she is making under the desk and goes to the door, as the GUARD enters.)

GUARD. The sick prisoners will be released. Including the women.

LEMKIN. I knew it would work.

GUARD. However, three women's names were not on the list.

TATJANA. Mine?

(The GUARD throws her a package.)

GUARD. They left you some bread!

(The GUARD laughs, exiting.)

LEMKIN. They promised everyone on the list would go free.

TATJANA. There were two Tatjanas. That's the problem with my name, everyone in Bosnia has it.

LEMKIN. We need to speak to the Serbs.

TATJANA. They know who gave out the names. I'll be dead by tonight.

(She pulls out the sheets from under the desk.)

TATJANA. We need to finish the rope. Help me. Most of the women were released because of you, you're brave! I know another woman escaped from the roof. It's possible.

LEMKIN. Let's talk to them.

TATJANA. There's no time. I've been here for months, I know.

(LEMKIN holds the end of the three strips while TATJANA braids them. She looks at baby.)

TATJANA. I used to dream of babies. I wanted a daughter. I even had a name—Alma...What's yours?

LEMKIN. Raphael.

TATJANA. Do you have children?

LEMKIN. I never married. One of the great tragedies of my mother's life. And mine.

TATJANA. It might still happen?

LEMKIN. No.

TATJANA. If you had a baby, would you want a boy or a girl?

LEMKIN. I'd be very bad with babies.

TATJANA. No. I know you'd be good.

LEMKIN. During the first world war my family had to hide in the forest. I kept Samuel, my baby brother calm. I'd do bird calls.

(He does a birdcall.)

TATJANA. How'd you do that?

LEMKIN. Simple magic tricks. Anything to make him laugh. He didn't survive. I'd make up lullabies.

TATJANA. Really?

(He sings to the melody of the Polish lullaby, "Raisins, Nor Almonds".)

LEMKIN. Sleep my dear boy
The moon is in the skies
Dreams full of joy
Soon will fill your eyes

TATJANA. (Joining him; singing.)
And in the morn

LEMKIN. We'll face the rising sun

TATJANA. And know my dear boy

LEMKIN. The new day has begun.

(He stops singing.)

LEMKIN. I'm no father. I read about death all night, never go to sleep.

TATJANA. But with a nice wife?

LEMKIN. She'd love a man who writes one hundred letters a day for a law about slaughter? My parents died in a camp.

(She pulls herself to him by the braided rope.)

LEMKIN. *(In Yiddish.)* Voos iz áynin iz buhlépt.

TATJANA. *Buhlépt?*

LEMKIN. One's own is beloved.

(She kisses him.)

LEMKIN. I was afraid I'd love a child too much. I'd stop working for the world.

(LEMKIN puts down the braided rope as TATJANA takes the fabric of the baby and puts it on her head, transforming into his MOTHER with a head scarf.)

MOTHER. My son, that thin coat? You're weak...

LEMKIN. You and father must come with me. Please.

MOTHER. *(Beckoning to the fire.)* Come, sit by the fire.

LEMKIN. Hitler will kill us all.

MOTHER. Let me give you some hot water. You're so tired, smell the warm bread, in the oven. The life of *the heart* my son.

LEMKIN. Sweden. We have to go now.

MOTHER. Sweden? Have you lost your mind? We have a home. Our village will stick together.

LEMKIN. I lost my job.

MOTHER. You were fired?

LEMKIN. Everyone Jewish has been fired.

MOTHER. Drink.

LEMKIN. He will celebrate our *deaths* even more than our exclusion.

MOTHER. You're home!

LEMKIN. Mother, I'm trying to tell you, we must...

MOTHER. Tell your father to call them next door, they have a daughter just returned from Warsaw too. A family— Raphael— children—Raphael...

(He kneels in front of her.)

LEMKIN. There's no place safe. You know I never get down on my knees.

MOTHER. *(Smiling.)* That's the problem.

LEMKIN. In my pocket there's a draft of my law.

MOTHER. Shsh, enough.

LEMKIN. We have to go. It's our only chance.

(She touches his head, as if anointing him with a wand.)

MOTHER. *Voos iz áynin iz buhlépt.* One's own is beloved. My home is here. *No one* can make me leave. You stay.

LEMKIN. I can't. *(Standing.)* Goodbye, Mother.

(The MOTHER becomes TATJANA again as she takes off the scarf and cradles the baby.)

LEMKIN picks up the braided rope.)

TATJANA. The rope is done.

LEMKIN. Good.

TATJANA. You know, it was always hard for me to look a man I love in the face.

LEMKIN. I can imagine your child. Alma.

TATJANA. *(Cradling baby.)* Such a teeny one. His fists are fighter fists. Little Cockroach. What a sweet face. *(Admitting her grave situation.)* The ugliness, Raphael.

(LEMKIN retrieves a piece of bread from the package.)

LEMKIN. Eat.

(He eats a piece with her.)

LEMKIN. If you break bread, you are vowed to wed.

(She puts the baby in LEMKIN's arms.)

TATJANA. Cover his head so he doesn't catch cold. *(The baby cries.)*
Oh, he's waking—lull him to sleep...

If you had a family where would you live?

LEMKIN. Right here, with you.

TATJANA. I want you to sing with me. Don't look. Turn around.

LEMKIN. *(Turning away from her.)* What shall I sing?

TATJANA. Your lullaby for Alma.

(She exits with the rope.)

(He sings to the "Raisins, Nor Almonds" melody.)

LEMKIN. Little Alma, close your eyes.

Tate sings his lullaby.

TATJANA'S VOICE. *(Joining in offstage.)* Alma, almond-shaped eyes.

LEMKIN. A daughter.

(Singing.) Alma, don't you cry—

(Upstage we see the braided rope being thrown over a pipe. The sound of a stool being kicked away and the noose goes taut, swinging. LEMKIN goes to investigate, returns and sits.)

LEMKIN. On a pipe, by a noose.

(He whips out the fabric of the baby and the baby is gone. Simultaneously, a brisk MAN in a rumpled suit enters with a newspaper and a battered briefcase, sipping coffee. He starts to type a resignation letter.)

MAN (PALMER). That's it—I quit. That picture of "Tatjana" hanging from the pipe? Everyone in Washington says, "Hey Palmer, she looks like your wife."

(LEMKIN dry heaves.)

PALMER. You okay? (*Typing.*) “The spy satellites snap thousands of photos a day and we pretend there’s no genocide.” I’m putting that in my resignation letter to the state department.

LEMKIN. Wait. Didn’t you say it yourself, the photo looks like your wife?

PALMER. Raphael Lemkin.

LEMKIN. You can’t quit! Our warning is like Paul Revere’s: through fog and light the fate of humanity is riding tonight!

PALMER. Still the genocide man.

LEMKIN. Thank you. I didn’t have the good sense to prepare a disciple to continue my work. Here you are. TATJANA’S DEATH MUST MEAN SOMETHING.

(*PALMER faces LEMKIN.*)

PALMER. Lemkin, I’m not your mirror-image. Never had a bit of charm.

LEMKIN. Now wait a minute.

PALMER. I’m not diplomatic. And I get too emotional.

LEMKIN. *I’m* emotional.

PALMER. Too obsessed—don’t eat, sleep.

LEMKIN. I don’t either, someone recommended crossword puzzles.

PALMER. Hate ’em. In the seventies in Cambodia I listened to the refugees, no one believed me.

LEMKIN. “Cambodia.” *I* believe you.

PALMER. In the eighties, Iraqi-Kurds, gassed to death, no one cared.

LEMKIN. The Kurds, that would be right after Iraq-ruled-under Hulago in the thirteenth century.

PALMER. Alphabetized? I do that too.

LEMKIN. That’s wonderful.

PALMER. I keep hearing the gassed-birds THUMPING on the roof...

LEMKIN. *(Looking up.)* Oh, that's what that is.

PALMER. I called the gassing, Iraq's "Final Solution," Congress didn't like the Holocaust reference.

LEMKIN. But it's essential.

PALMER. I know, I proposed sanctions but we were allies with Hussein. My real downfall: I don't iron my shirts, or wear a clean tie.

LEMKIN. I used to wear a crisp white suit when I lobbied Congress.

PALMER. What happened?

LEMKIN. The end of my life. But you can't keep a G man down. *(Picking up the newspaper.)* The genocide's still happening in Bosnia. We are going to stop it!

PALMER. Clinton administration turns a deaf ear.

LEMKIN. There's got to be a survivor out there? Which organizations are on the ground?

(PALMER stares at him, putting on his headset phone.)

PALMER. You are the real thing, man.

LEMKIN. *(Acting like a cowboy.)* No you are, partner.

(They do a little buddy-type hand movement.)

PALMER. I'll give it one more shot but at Srebrenica there may be no one left. *(Clutching chest.)* Shit, my heart is beating too fast. This career isn't healthy. *[Pronounced: Sre-bre-neeza.]*

LEMKIN. Relax.

(PALMER speaks on his phone head-set.)

PALMER. Put me through to the Sarajevo aid workers. I need a refugee who can testify.

(He presses buttons on his desk, as lights cross-fade to a male REFUGEE, taking off a bloody blindfold, giving testimony.)

HASAN. Instead of roots and insects the earth is jammed with bodies. I push off blindfold. I only wearing underwear. I see gray hand above me in dirt. The blue finger has wedding ring. A man's thigh drips blood onto my chest.

LEMKIN. Start at the beginning.

PALMER. What's your name?

HASAN. Hasan. They bring us into Stadium at Srebrenica. Tell us to say our families goodbye. He promises us nothing will happen.

PALMER. Who?

HASAN. Mladic. Many of the men believe him. They tie our hands, load us into stolen U.N. trucks. "Remove clothes!" loudspeaker says. "Not Allah, not U.N. not anything can help you. I am your God." [*Pronounced: Mladich.*]

LEMKIN. Where did they take you?

PALMER. Show us on the map.

HASAN. Outside of town.

PALMER. *(On phone.)* Have the Secretary of State check the satellite photos for mass graves.

HASAN. In meadow, I see muddy trench. "Turn around," they say to us. A bullet grazes my skull. I wake up under bodies, buried. I take these clothes from a corpse and run into the forest! I raise up my head. I see sunlight! I hear birds sing!

LEMKIN. When I fled Warsaw I came out of the forest above my village, my eyes were wet and it made my land shine.

HASAN. But when I run near Zepa, I hear shooting. They kill all Muslim men in Zepa now. You can still save some. [*Pronounced: Jeppa.*]

(Lights go out on HASAN.)

LEMKIN. We can't give up.

PALMER. *(On phone.)* Tell the Secretary of State, Zepa is next. We have the testimony from a survivor. *(Listening.)* I don't give a fuck about the Hague. This is *now*, people don't just disappear. Refugees don't lie.

LEMKIN. After Zepa, there'll be more.

PALMER. *(On phone.)* Tell him we need air strikes.

(PALMER listens shocked as the phone call ends. He removes the headset in disbelief.)

PALMER. Clinton is bombing.

LEMKIN. *(Ecstatic.)* You did it! The U.S. is intervening. *(To himself.)* Tatjana... This *is* the most beautiful day...

PALMER. We're actually back at square one. Three ethnically divided states. And Serbia's ripe with nationalist neo-nazis...

LEMKIN. Progress is slow, it takes time.

(PALMER puts his resignation letter in the mail slot on the wall.)

PALMER. Time to resign. I have a daughter, *she* keeps me up at night now.

LEMKIN. That's exactly why you have to go on.

PALMER. I want to relax, work on my house.

LEMKIN. NO, TRUST ME, THAT'S A BAD IDEA! You and I, "we can change the world." My mantra. Repeat it over and over.

(PALMER starts to pack his things into his briefcase.)

PALMER. A ten-year old girl raped to death in Liberia while her mother has to watch. And now Darfur.

LEMKIN. Listen, we'll indict every country that breaks the law.

PALMER. Sue the world? That's a dream.

LEMKIN. It's not a dream, it's the *law*. But someone has to enforce it.

PALMER. You're not of this world.

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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