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What He Had Never Done Before and Other Plays

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Alex Odom. WHAT HE HAD NEVER DONE BEFORE AND OTHER PLAYS. (Under the direction of Mary Carroll-Hackett.) Department of English and Modern Languages, May 2010.

The purpose of this thesis is to conduct an exploration of masculinity through the creation of fictional voices and use of dramatic structures. The five pieces of dramatic writing which make up my thesis, four plays and one screenplay, collectively entitled "What He Had Never Done Before and Other Plays," have proven to be an examination of masculinity through personal relationships, primarily the roles of brothers and husbands. These relationships focus on the guilt associated with perceived masculine behavior, the often wrong decisions boys make to feel more like men, the often violent or dishonest behavior. The plays explore the moments when that guilt weighs too heavily, leaving men to struggle for redemption. My characters are often working-class men, and their actions and decisions are deliberate and unapologetic; the incorporation of these traits is my attempt to make my plays, what Arthur Miller called, tragedies of the common man. What I strive for in my writing is to capture the complexities of brotherhood, the speech of masculinity, and moments of redemption. At the end of my title play, Larry and Fielding embody these three goals when they find a connection through their guilt. Fielding tells Larry he has never admitted to feeling guilty about his brother's suicide to anyone else, and Larry says, "You should tell your other brothers. I bet they feel just as guilty." With my thesis, I hope to understand that guilt which holds me hostage in the middle of the night, forcing me to question the decisions I have made on my journey to becoming a man.

WHAT HE HAD NEVER DONE BEFORE AND OTHER PLAYS

by

Alex Odom

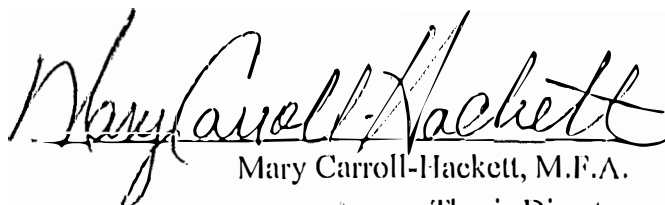
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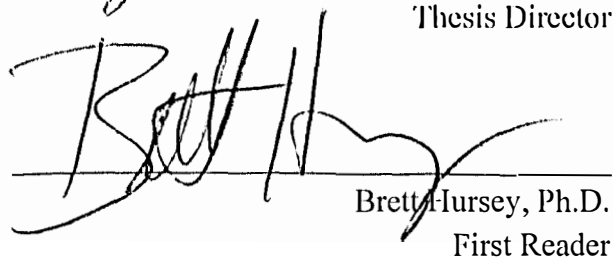
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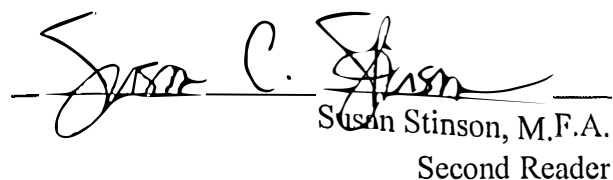
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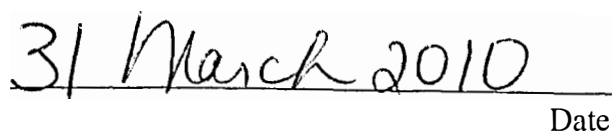
Department of English and Modern Languages

March 2010


Mary Carroll-Hackett, M.F.A.
Thesis Director


Brett Hursey, Ph.D.
First Reader


Susan Stinson, M.F.A.
Second Reader


Date

Dedicated to my wife, Courtney, for her support and understanding – even when I wallpapered the house with the pages of this thesis – and my parents, Angela and Kenneth Odom, for their support and for teaching me how to work.

With special thanks to Brett Hursey, for reminding me to have fun with writing. Also, to Susan Stinson, for always recognizing when I needed encouragement. And finally, to Mary Carroll-Hackett, for leading me to my people and showing me this life; thanks for the A.B.C.'s. In addition, I would like to thank my writing friends; your eyes and your comments are invaluable.

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A Stone Face Killer (Published by One Act Play Depot in 2007)

The master bedroom of Detective STONEFACE. MRS. WADSWORTH and MRS. STONEFACE enter carrying coats.

MRS. STONEFACE
You can put your coats in here.

They lay the coats on the bed.

MRS. STONEFACE
Don't forget them when you leave.

MRS. WADSWORTH
Oh, thank you so much. I just can't stand to be too hot.

MRS. STONEFACE
Well then, why did you wear the coat in the first place?

MRS. WADSWORTH
Well, I declare, I can't stand to be too cold either. I'm afraid I am just as fickle as can be.

MRS. STONEFACE
That is a shame now, isn't it?

MRS. WADSWORTH
Yes, I suppose it is. I hate to bother, but would it be too much trouble to open a window?
It is a little stuffy in here.

MRS. STONEFACE opens the window.

MRS. STONEFACE
I suppose you'll want your coat again shortly.

MRS. WADSWORTH
I just might. I won't bother you with it though. I'll send Mr. Wadsworth up for it, if I need it.

MRS. STONEFACE
Is there anything else I can get you? Perhaps you'd like a hand fan to cool yourself off?

MRS. WADSWORTH
I think I'll be quite all right, thank you.

MRS. STONEFACE exits. MRS. WADSWORTH wraps a scarf around her neck and exits. WADSWORTH and STONEFACE enter in mid conversation.

WADSWORTH

...when I opened the door, an army man with a nylon string wrapped around his neck was hanging there. I noticed the plastic man's arms had been removed, and I couldn't help but wonder what offense was worthy of this? The smell of death was overwhelming. I gagged and tried to fight the feeling of nausea, when I spotted a note simply marked ... *You*.

Pauses, takes a breath.

WADSWORTH

And that's why I won't listen to Kenny Rodgers. I don't write fan letters to anyone anymore either.

STONEFACE

Yes, of course, that makes sense. Get back to the subject, though.

WADSWORTH takes a bite of his sandwich and says with his mouth full.

WADSWORTH

Right. I hate mustard... Hmm turkey week. Want some?

WADSWORTH holds out the sandwich. STONEFACE glares.

WADSWORTH

Anyway, I hate mustard. If I order a sandwich and it's on there, I send it back immediately. Some people just scrape it off but not me. I couldn't live with myself if I did. Although one time, *one time*, I said "What the hell," so I just wiped it off with a napkin and ate it. I couldn't get the taste out of my mouth for a week. Now I can't even get near the stuff without feeling sick.

STONEFACE

That's a damn shame, but I was talking about the case.

WADSWORTH

That's right. The evidence has led us to this point. The Rock Face killer's calling card is placing a small rock on the face of all his victims. It's peculiar. I've never seen anything like it.

STONEFACE

You know another word for rock is-

WADSWORTH

Pebble. Now look, Stoneface, we don't have time to play word games. The one thing I can't figure out is why the killer would send me an invitation to his party.

WADSWORTH pulls out the invitation and reads.

WADSWORTH

(Addressing the audience) The invitation read: *You are invited to Stoneface's New Year's Party. We will ring in the New Year with a bang; it should be a killer time. Signed. The Rock Face Killer. Please R.S.V.P. if you can't make it.* That's quite a coincidence, you and the killer having the same name.

STONEFACE

Yes, well, the latest research has found people with the surname Stoneface are ten times more likely to be killers.

WADSWORTH

Maybe it has something to do with that particular last name, but I'm no scientist. What I am wondering is why he's having his New Year's party so late – in the middle of February.

STONEFACE

What? What are you babbling about?

WADSWORTH

I'm on the seventeen month plan.

STONEFACE

What?

WADSWORTH

Three week months -- they coincide with my dietary needs. You see, I became aware, some years back, when I was just a rookie, like yourself, that my stomach worked in cycles. One week ham, next week turkey, and finally chicken. I tried adding a fourth week to the cycle, beef; it wouldn't take. My stomach rejected it almost immediately. It knew it was ham week and so did I. So the only logical thing to do was change my month from four weeks to three.

STONEFACE

Maybe you're just allergic to beef.

WADSWORTH

Impossible. I'm not asthmatic.

STONEFACE

Well, doesn't your schedule conflict with normal life? Couldn't you just keep a normal twelve month calendar?

WADSWORTH

You are obviously not a man who has ever felt a powerful lust for a Smithfield ham. It's actually very simple; I added five months to the year, Jebruary, Febarch, Mune, Jugust, and Septober. I couldn't combine June and July because I kept coming up with the same word, and I liked the way Septober sounds more than Augtember.

STONEFACE

Wait a minute. How do you know when to pay bills, when to set your clocks back and-

WADSWORTH

Pull yourself together; we have a job to do. I can't be wasting time answering questions about my dietary needs. Now look, Stoneface, I think we should be on close watch here at this Stoneface's party. It could be a trap. After all, what kind of killer invites you to a New Year's Eve party, especially in the middle of Jebruary?

STONEFACE

Maybe one that wants to get caught because he can't live with the things he's done. One who never really wanted to be a killer but was forced to follow in his father's footsteps, even though he really just wanted to be an actor.

Brief pause.

STONEFACE

So he became a killer, anyway, because he let people push him around his whole life. He also has sexual identity issues because his wife says he isn't a real man and that his manhood is his gun. And she told him if he wants to see a real man, he should meet the man she is cheating on him with. Who isn't even old enough to drink, so I would hardly even call him a man.

WADSWORTH

That's a hell of a profile, Stoneface. *(To Audience)* Stoneface is a brilliant profiler, really gets into a killer's head. Maybe it's because his father was a serial killer. He grew up around it, understands it like no other man I've met. Or maybe it's because he acts on the side. He can really get into a role, become a character. Hell of a gumshoe. Not a bad actor either, played a pretty good Kenickie in the Chamberlin Community Theatre's production of *Grease* last year. Either way, he's one of Richmond's finest. Although, I do think he lacks confidence because his wife sleeps around.

STONEFACE

I can hear every word your saying. Just because you're not looking at me doesn't mean I can't hear you.

WADSWORTH

Well, I'm looking at you now, kid, and I see a fine detective.

STONEFACE

Well, Wadsworth, I appreciate the vote of confidence. It's nice to know I am respected in my field. However, I'm failing miserably as a party host. My wife has been stalling for me long enough; I really ought to make an appearance.

WADSWORTH

I understand. How is your wife anyway?

STONEFACE

We're getting a divorce. She's cheating on me.

WADSWORTH

I'm sorry to hear that. I don't know what to say. (*Without hesitation*) It wasn't me, just so you know.

STONEFACE

Well, that really narrows it down. I've got to get back to my party.

WADSWORTH

I'll stay here, stake out the place; see if there are any suspicious party hosts around.

STONEFACE exits. WADSWORTH snoops around the room and opens a drawer.

WADSWORTH

Hmm, a drawer full of rocks... and a bloody glove.

Enter MRS. WADSWORTH. WADSWORTH doesn't notice.

WADSWORTH

No substantial proof. I need hard evidence that will stand up in court.

WADSWORTH shuts the drawer.

MRS. WADSWORTH

Honey...

WADSWORTH, startled, draws his gun.

WADSWORTH

Oh, it's you, dumpling. (*WADSWORTH holsters the gun.*) What are you doing up here?

MRS. WADSWORTH

I came to get my coat. I declare, these people keep their house like an icebox. (*She puts on her coat.*) I'm sorry to frighten you.

WADSWORTH

You can't sneak up on me like that, darling. You know how quick my reflexes are; I could have shot you. Must I remind you why we don't have the dog anymore?

MRS. WADSWORTH

How many criminals would call you "honey?"

MRS. WADSWORTH opens a drawer, takes the bloody glove out and puts it in a bag then hands it to WADSWORTH.

MRS. WADSWORTH

Would you please come back to the party? Mrs. Stoneface is showing off her lover again, and frankly, I feel rather uncomfortable standing there alone. Besides you might need to talk to Stoneface; he's in the corner crying. You know how he gets when Mrs. Stoneface shows off Mr. Fidelity.

WADSWORTH

Look, I appreciate you trying to help with the case; unfortunately, I don't need this.

WADSWORTH throws the bagged glove in the trashcan.

WADSWORTH

Bloody gloves never make good evidence; they never seem to fit. I'll get back to the party in a little bit.

MRS. WADSWORTH

Sugar Dumpling, I smell alcohol. Have you been drinking?

WADSWORTH

No, I've only been drinking punch.

MRS. WADSWORTH

There isn't anything in that punch, is there?

WADSWORTH

Well, I think someone would have told me if there was.

MRS. WADSWORTH

Okay. Hurry back to the party.

WADSWORTH

I just have to catch the murderer in the act so I can arrest him. Then I promise I'll come mingle with all of your friends.

MRS. WADSWORTH

They aren't my friends; I just want you there so they're reminded that my husband didn't run away with his secretary.

She picks up the glove and hands it to WADSWORTH.

WADSWORTH

I don't have a secretary.

He throws the glove away.

MRS. WADSWORTH

And you never will.

She pulls the glove out of the trash.

MRS. WADSWORTH

I don't understand why you are still wasting time on this case. I told you the "Rock Face Killer" is Stoneface. He leaves a stone on the face of all his victims. Oh, pumpkin, he is practically telling you it's him. He leaves a *stone* on the face. Stoneface. The killer is Stoneface.

WADSWORTH

It's a rock, not a stone. Besides we already knew all that, my lemon meringue pie. Stoneface and I just have to figure out who *this* Stoneface is. Stoneface thinks he might be using a fake name -- that his name is not really Stoneface. But something completely different, but he picked the name Stoneface because that's Stoneface's name.

MRS. WADSWORTH

Did you just call me *lemon meringue pie*?

WADSWORTH

Yes I did. It ... didn't come out as well as it sounded in my head. I'll just stick to pie types that are two syllables, like pumpkin pie, or honey pie, or sweetie pie; although that is a little redundant. All pies are sweet, well, except for meat pies.

MRS. WADSWORTH

Meat Pie wouldn't work, anyway, because it's only a one syllable type of pie.

Pause for five seconds.

MRS. WADSWORTH
What were we talking about?

WADSWORTH
I was just explaining to you that the “Rock Face Killer” has taken the alias “Stoneface” because it’s the same name of detective Stoneface, my partner, so as to throw me off track.

MRS. WADSWORTH
Stoneface, your partner, is the Rock Face killer. He signed the invitation as the “Rock Face Killer.” He is trying to confess. He murdered our garbage man right in front of us just a week ago, and then he asked us if he could bury the body in our back yard.

WADSWORTH
I don’t remember that.

MRS. WADSWORTH
It was the night he invited us to this party. He gave us the invitation when he knocked on the door to borrow our shovel.

WADSWORTH
Ah yes. That was the night that the garbage man disappeared. We found a Rock on top of a bloody glove, so we linked the crime to the Rock Face Killer. No body, just a single bloody glove.

MRS. WADSWORTH
I know, and this (*Pointing to the bagged glove*) is the other glove.

WADSWORTH
That’s right. All we found was a glove.

He takes the glove from her, throws it in the trashcan and kisses her on the cheek.

WADSWORTH
Look, darling, I’ll get back to the party shortly. I’m just going to stake out this room a little longer.

MRS. WADSWORTH
Well, please hurry up. I want Mrs. Smith to see you before you leave. That witch is telling people you left me for a stripper and ran away to Tijuana. The nerve. If I wasn’t a lady, I’d give her a good smack.

MRS. WADSWORTH exits.

WADSWORTH

Tijuana. This time of year. We'd freeze to death. Maybe in August; the snow's melted by then.

WADSWORTH continues snooping around the room.

NED FIDELITY (*Voice heard off stage*)

Your husband sure does get upset easy, Mrs. Stoneface. Does he always cry that much?

Laughter is heard from MRS. STONEFACE. WADSWORTH hears the noise and hides behind a table. NED and MRS. STONEFACE stumble into the room. It is apparent where WADSWORTH is hiding but they ignore him.

MRS. STONEFACE

It isn't as if this is something new to him. You think he'd be used to the idea of me cheating on him by now. If he wasn't a cop, I would have killed him years ago.

MRS. STONEFACE sits in the chair next to the table. WADSWORTH lifts his head slightly and ducks back down. WADSWORTH pulls out a notebook and begins recording the conversation.

NED FIDELITY

I'll do it for you.

MRS. STONEFACE

Okay.

NED FIDELITY

Just like that, huh?

NED sits on the bed.

MRS. STONEFACE

What?

NED FIDELITY

Just like that? No thought to it or anything. Just okay.

MRS. STONEFACE

You said you would take my husband out, and I said "okay." As in, sure, go ahead, kill the bastard.

NED FIDELITY

But what I meant was you didn't even really think about it. You just said, "sure, kill him." Not even a second thought.

MRS. STONEFACE

What's to think about, Ned? I want the man dead. It's just like garbage. You don't think twice about throwing away rotten food. Why give it a second thought?

NED FIDELITY

I don't know about you, Mrs. Stoneface, but my rotten food doesn't talk, breathe, or walk around.

NED laughs nervously.

MRS. STONEFACE

Ned, you said you would kill my husband. Are you going to do it or not?

NED FIDELITY

Well, to be honest, I was kind of just saying it in the heat of the moment. I didn't really mean it.

MRS. STONEFACE

Kind of like when I tell you I love you.

NED FIDELITY

What?

MRS. STONEFACE

Nothing. I'll kill him myself. (*She looks around.*) Did you forget the champagne? Damn it, you're so worthless, Ned. I have to do everything myself when I'm with you. Even my husband is good for a thing or two. You're lucky I'm a rich middle-aged woman who is going through her "sleeping-with-the-pool-boy stage," or else I would have dropped you weeks ago.

NED FIDELITY

Wait a minute. You're middle-aged? How old are we talking, like forty-five, fifty? Because my mom is forty-eight and that would be totally weird if you were my mom's age.

MRS. STONEFACE

Just get the champagne.

NED exits. WADSWORTH attempts to sneak out of the room.

MRS. STONEFACE

Hello, Wadsworth.

WADSWORTH

Hello, I was just ... using your bathroom.

MRS. STONEFACE

Go fix yourself another drink or a glass of champagne to celebrate.

WADSWORTH

No, thanks, just punch for me. I'm a recovering alcoholic.

MRS. STONEFACE

That punch is spiked with rum.

WADSWORTH

Hmm ... So I guess I'm back off the wagon, then. Where's the scotch?

MRS. STONEFACE

It's downstairs on the kitchen table.

WADSWORTH exits. STONEFACE enters.

STONEFACE

Was the pool boy fixing the pool again?

MRS. STONEFACE

We don't have a pool.

STONEFACE

I know that, damn it. *(Pause)* You know, I would be willing to forget all this happened if you would just drop him and come back to me.

MRS. STONEFACE stands.

MRS. STONEFACE

Look, detective, you don't make enough money and, frankly, I'm tired of you spending my daddy's fortune. Besides, I don't love you.

STONEFACE

Oh and the pool boy makes enough money to keep you happy? Sure as hell doesn't seem like he does too much work on swimming pools. Or is "swimming pool" your nickname now? Well, my sweet little swimming pool, we have guests to attend to, other than the pool boy. So unless you intend to invite the whole lot up for a "swim," I suggest you head downstairs.

MRS. STONEFACE

Cute, darling — maybe you should go entertain the guests yourself. Perhaps, they'd enjoy watching you cry in the corner some more.

STONEFACE

Not enough tears to fill you, my darling swimming pool. Then again, that's what the booze is for, isn't it? Since I'm paying Ned to service my nonexistent pool, maybe we could get him to weed the garden, get a little work out of him at least.

She turns her back to him.

MRS. STONEFACE

I only stayed with him so he would kill you. But it turns out homicide isn't exactly his forte.

STONEFACE

Well, in that case --

STONEFACE pushes MRS. STONEFACE out of the open window.

STONEFACE

Oops.

WADSWORTH runs back into the room, holding a glass of scotch.

WADSWORTH

Stoneface, I've been looking for you. Your wife is the killer. I heard her and the pool boy plotting to murder you. It all makes sense now; Stoneface is her last name, and we knew the killer's name was Stoneface. I really should have put that together sooner.

STONEFACE

Well, we won't have to worry about that. She just committed suicide -- jumped out the window. Case closed, detective.

WADSWORTH

Couldn't live with what she'd done -- just like you said.

WADSWORTH takes a drink.

WADSWORTH

This really is disappointing though. I was hoping I'd get to shoot someone. I've never gotten to shoot any suspects. Twenty years on the force, never shot anyone. Well, I take that back -- there was that one year at Thanksgiving. But technically, I didn't fire the gun. It went off when it hit the floor. That sure was a good dog.

STONEFACE

I'm sure you'll get to shoot someone, eventually.

WADSWORTH

You really think so? Yeah, it's bound to happen. *(Pause)* By the way, I was sorry to hear about your wife jumping out a window.

STONEFACE

Thanks.

WADSWORTH

Well, I guess we better scrape her off the pavement and call an ambulance to haul her off.

WADSWORTH exits. NED enters holding a champagne bottle and two glasses.

NED FIDELITY

I'm back with the cham ... Hey Mr. Stoneface.

STONEFACE

Looking for my wife, Ned?

NED FIDELITY

Actually, no; I brought this for us. Oh and look, I have two glasses.

NED puts the champagne bottle and glasses on the bedside table.

STONEFACE

Cut the crap, Ned. She's dead anyway.

NED FIDELITY

Dead, huh?

STONEFACE

That's right - fell out the window.

NED FIDELITY

Well there's really no point in me hanging around. I guess I'm gonna go then. *(Pause)* Do you think you could give me a ride?

STONEFACE

Sit down!

NED sits on the bed.

STONEFACE

I know about your plan to murder me, Ned. Needless to say, I wasn't very happy about the prospect of being killed by my pool boy.

NED FIDELITY

Sir, you don't own a pool, so technically I'm not your pool boy.

STONEFACE

Shut up, Ned. Don't you think I know that? Do you know how my wife died, Ned?

NED FIDELITY

Well, you said she fell out the window, so I assume the fall killed her.

STONEFACE

That's exactly right, Ned.

STONEFACE picks up the Champagne bottle.

STONEFACE

Except for the part where I pushed her out the window.

NED FIDELITY

Hey, it's cool, Mr. S. I won't tell anyone.

NED turns to leave.

STONEFACE

Right again, Ned.

STONEFACE hits Ned on the back of the head with the bottle.

WADSWORTH enters, holding a glass of scotch in his hand. He stands an inch from NED (who is lying on the floor) and does not notice him.

WADSWORTH

Well, that's all taken care of. I've got the meat wagon coming to pick her up.

STONEFACE

So ah ... she *is* dead then?

WADSWORTH

Well, I didn't check for a pulse because I didn't want to get my hands bloody. But there was a small child poking her in the eye with a stick; she didn't move, so that confirmed it for me.

STONEFACE runs to the window, looks out before desperately spinning back around.

STONEFACE

How can you be certain I killed her if you didn't check for a pulse?

WADSWORTH

Look, partner, I know she was your wife and her suicide was tragic, but I hardly think you were what killed her. She had a lot of problems other than you. I'm sure it was more her drinking problem that drove her over the edge – literally. I hope you don't think anyone blames you.

STONEFACE

Yes, I have noticed your total lack of suspicion, despite my numerous attempts to confess the whole thing to you.

WADSWORTH

Hey, buddy, this is hardly the time or the place. I mean I know you're struggling with some stuff, but your wife's corpse is still fresh. The flies haven't even hit her yet.

STONEFACE

What are you talking about?

WADSWORTH

We all know. You don't have to say it.

STONEFACE

Then how come you haven't arrested me?

WADSWORTH

Arrested you? What do I look like, a Nazi?

STONEFACE

Wait a minute. You don't think I'm-

STONEFACE stops short, as NED stands. WADSWORTH almost spills his drink.

WADSWORTH

Whoa, Ned, where the hell did you come from?

NED FIDELITY

The Southside of Richmond ...

STONEFACE

He was laying on the floor right in front of you. *(Pause)* You're from the Southside? My wife cheated on me with a damn redneck.

WADSWORTH

You West-Enders are such snobs.

NED FIDELITY
What happened?

STONEFACE
My wife tried to kill you and then killed herself.

NED FIDELITY
Why would she do that?

WADSWORTH
You knew too much about the plot to kill her husband.

NED FIDELITY
That bitch!

WADSWORTH
Ned Fidelity, you are under arrest for conspiracy to murder a police officer.

NED FIDELITY
Wait a minute. He killed her. (*He points at STONEFACE.*) He confessed the whole thing to me.

MRS. WADSWORTH enters.

MRS. WADSWORTH
Ned is telling the truth. Stoneface tried to kill him with a wine bottle just after he pushed his wife out of the window. (*Pause*) Are you almost ready to go, sweetie? I'm getting tired.

WADSWORTH
I'm sorry, honey, but this crime scene clearly tells a much different story. So let me just get this worked out and then we'll leave.

STONEFACE
(*To MRS. WADSWORTH*) I'm impressed – how did you know?

MRS. WADSWORTH
Mrs. Smith and I were listening to the argument through the vent. We heard the whole thing happen. We figured out you had pushed your wife out the window when we saw her fall to the ground. We then figured you hit Ned with something because of the thud. I guessed it was a bottle based on your wife's drinking problem – lots of handy bottles around. Mrs. Smith, however, thought it was a candlestick. That old gossip's been playing too much Clue with her grandchildren. Honey, are you drinking? Dear lord, Mrs. Smith is going to have a field day with this.

WADSWORTH
It's okay. I accidentally fell off the wagon.

He takes a drink.

NED FIDELITY
Wait a minute – how come you didn't try to stop Mr. Stoneface from killing people?

MRS. WADSWORTH
Well, neither of us really liked Mrs. Stoneface, and I don't really know you that well. By the way, I don't think we have been formally introduced, I'm Mrs. Wadsworth.

NED FIDELITY
Oh hi. Ned Fidelity.

They shake hands.

NED FIDELITY
I think my mom knows you.

MRS. WADSWORTH
We play cards together. How lovely.

They all look around at each other awkwardly.

MRS. WADSWORTH
Well, I guess I'll be getting back to the party. It was nice to finally meet you Ned. (*To WADSWORTH*) If you could wrap this up, darling, it really is getting late. Stoneface, do you suppose you could keep my husband from drinking more? Thanks.

MRS. WADSWORTH exits.

WADSWORTH
What'd she say? I spaced out there – wasn't really paying attention.

NED FIDELITY
She said I'm not guilty.

STONEFACE
Wadsworth, I can take care of this.

NED FIDELITY
Don't leave me alone with him; he's a murderer.

WADSWORTH

Don't resist arrest, Ned. You're only making this harder on yourself. Well, I guess it makes it hard on me, too. So stop it, you're making this hard on both of us.

Voices are heard offstage, "*Five, Four, Three, Two, One, HAPPY NEW YEAR!*"

WADSWORTH

Ha. Poor fools. Who wants to be the one to tell them New Year's was a month and half ago?

STONEFACE

No one came to your New Year's Eve party, did they, Wadsworth?

WADSWORTH

No -- no, they didn't.

WADSWORTH takes a drink.

NED FIDELITY

My New Year's resolution is to not get murdered this year. So I guess I'll be going then.

STONEFACE

Don't move, Ned. Hey, Wadsworth, how about you go get some food? My wife made those spicy little chicken wings you like.

WADSWORTH

What are you trying to do to me, partner? You know it's turkey week. If my stomach got thrown for a loop like that, my schedule would be pure chaos. I have to practice extreme discipline.

WADSWORTH gulps the last of his drink.

STONEFACE

It's a new week as of one minute ago. I think there's some more scotch floating around somewhere down there, too.

WADSWORTH

You don't have to twist my arm. Good luck with that New Year's resolution, Ned.

WADSWORTH exits.

STONEFACE

New Year's resolutions can be a tricky thing to keep, Ned.

NED FIDELITY

Look, it would be really cool if you didn't kill me ... sir.

STONEFACE

Sorry, Ned, but you slept with my wife and then plotted to kill me. I'm past being a cool dude. Plus killing people is my hobby and you've given me more than most of my victims ever have... a motive.

NED FIDELITY

All right, I tell you what, man-

STONEFACE

Sir!

STONEFACE pulls his gun and points it at NED. MRS. WADSWORTH enters.

MRS. WADSWORTH

I'm terribly sorry to interrupt. Ned, your mother just called. She said she would like you home no later than two. Now you don't be late, or she'll go off thinking I didn't relay the message, all right?

NED FIDELITY

Yes ma'am.

MRS. WADSWORTH exits.

NED FIDELITY

Okay, look, I'll make a deal with you. If you let me live, I'll clean your pool for free, every week, for a year.

STONEFACE

Well, Ned, as you, and my dear deceased wife, know, I don't own a swimming pool. However, I do have a whirlpool bathtub, and that has the word pool in it. So, I don't know, maybe you could give that a good scrubbing.

NED FIDELITY

That works for me, sir.

STONEFACE

Well, I guess we have a deal.

They shake hands.

NED FIDELITY

Hey, thanks for not killing me. *(Pause)* You know I don't care what your wife said; you're a pretty cool guy.

STONEFACE

The tub's just in there, Ned-o.

NED enters the bathroom. STONEFACE follows and closes the door. A gun shot is heard. WADSWORTH enters, drunk and holding a bottle of scotch.

WADSWORTH

Hey, Stoneface, it's fireworks. They're shootin' fireworks.

MRS. STONEFACE climbs through the window looking disgruntled and battered.

WADSWORTH

Hey, Mrs. Stoneface. Good to see you again. Of course, the last time we talked you weren't so beat up.

MRS. STONEFACE

Yes, Wadsworth, and you weren't so drunk. Oh, how the times do change. If you would please excuse me, I have to speak to my husband.

WADSWORTH

Right.

WADSWORTH exits. STONEFACE emerges from the bathroom still holding his gun.

STONEFACE

Aw shit.

MRS. STONEFACE

I ought to kill you here and now. Pulling a stunt like that in front of all our guests.

STONEFACE

That was no stunt, dear. I tried to kill you ... and for that, I'm sorry-

MRS. STONEFACE

You bastard, I'm going to tear you apart.

MRS. STONEFACE steps forward to attack, but STONEFACE waves his gun in the air.

MRS. STONEFACE

I didn't realize you were carrying your manhood on you this evening.

STONEFACE

Happy New Year, dear.

MRS. STONEFACE

Happy New Year? That's all you can say?

STONEFACE shrugs.

STONEFACE

April fools?

MRS. STONEFACE pulls a suitcase from under the bed.

MRS. STONEFACE

I'm going to my mother's.

MRS. STONEFACE turns to her dresser and begins throwing clothes into the suitcase.

MRS. STONEFACE

Please don't call. You know daddy doesn't like it.

STONEFACE

So what's your New Year's resolution this year? Move up from pool boy to cabana boy? I was thinking we might take a cruise, anyhow.

MRS. STONEFACE

There is no need to leave food out for Pierre; he broke my fall.

STONEFACE

You killed my cat.

STONEFACE sits on the bed.

MRS. STONEFACE

You can hardly blame me, dear.

MRS. STONEFACE crosses to the bathroom and enters. There is a short pause and she exits the bathroom.

MRS. STONEFACE

You killed my pool boy?

STONEFACE

You can hardly blame me, dear.

MRS. STONEFACE

You *killed* Ned.

STONEFACE

He was asking for it, the little bastard.

MRS. STONEFACE

You always were a bully.

STONEFACE

I never could push you around though. With the exception of the bedroom window.

MRS. STONEFACE

You didn't really want to kill me. Like a fall from a second story building ever killed anyone. So why don't you give this whole macho *I'm going to kill you* trip a rest. I'll have someone come for the rest of my things in a few days.

STONEFACE

If you leave, who is going to clean up the mess your guests have made?

MRS. STONEFACE

Well, you certainly weren't thinking of that when you pushed me out the window, were you?

STONEFACE

I can see I am never going to hear the end of that. Seriously though, did you see the mess Ned made in the bathroom?

MRS. STONEFACE

I'll see you when I see you.

MRS. STONEFACE exits. STONEFACE goes to the window looks out and closes it. WADSWORTH enters.

WADSWORTH

Holy crow, Stoneface, you won't believe whose dead wife I just saw.

STONEFACE

Mine?

WADSWORTH

Yours. (*Takes swig from the bottle.*) Imagine my surprise.

STONEFACE

The fall didn't kill her; it just pissed her off.

WADSWORTH

Ghosts are scary... speaking of dead people, the ambulance is here to pick up your wife's body. But we can't seem to find it.

MRS. WADSWORTH enters.

MRS. WADSWORTH

The ambulance just arrived. Should I tell them to pick up Ned?

STONEFACE

Ned?

WADSWORTH

Ha. What does he need -- his stomach pumped? That kid can't hold his liquor. He was just passed out on the floor a little while ago.

MRS. WADSWORTH

He's dead, honey. Your partner just killed him. Do you need to investigate the crime scene or should they just take the body now?

WADSWORTH

Yeah, that kid's dead all right. Dead drunk. Am I right, Stoneface?

MRS. WADSWORTH

Honey, I really suggest you arrest your partner. I need to go call his wife a taxi.

MRS. WADSWORTH moves to exit but STONEFACE moves toward her.

STONEFACE

Not so fast. You're not going anywhere.

MRS. WADSWORTH

Really, Stoneface, give it a rest. No one is buying the tough guy act.

MRS. WADSWORTH exits.

STONEFACE

Well, I suppose the jig is up.

WADSWORTH

Hey, I'd say the party's just startin'. (*Takes swig from bottle.*) You know what, Stoneface? You're too tense. You should really learn to control your stress. If you don't deal with that, one day you could just explode and kill someone.

STONEFACE

I did kill someone, Wadsworth. I am the rock face killer. I killed your garbage man, the jogger in the park, and the hot dog vender – that short changing bastard. I even killed good old Ned.

WADSWORTH

I like hot dogs, too. But there you go getting off the subject again. We were talking about how stressed you are all the time. I couldn't care less whether Ned likes jogging and hot dogs. Plus he is a pool boy, not a garbage man; he cleans *your* pool, for Christ sake.

STONEFACE

I don't have a pool, damn it. No one is this dumb. I'm tired of your games, Wadsworth.

STONEFACE draws his gun.

STONEFACE

I'm not going to let you take me down.

WADSWORTH

There you go – guns. It's a party now.

WADSWORTH pulls his gun and starts dancing around.

STONEFACE

Put the gun down, Wadsworth.

WADSWORTH

What's going on? I thought we were going to shoot at stuff.

Enter MRS. WADSWORTH.

MRS. WADSWORTH

Pardon me, boys. Playing a little rough now, are we? Honey, learn to open your ears a bit; your partner's just confessed to murder. I declare, I don't think you've heard a word of it.

STONEFACE

Put the gun down now.

WADSWORTH

Oh, I see what's going on. You gotta' be the big man with the gun in front of the little lady.

WADSWORTH puts his gun down.

STONEFACE

Now kick it over here. Nothing funny.

MRS. WADSWORTH

All right, sugar dumpling, I think we ought to be leaving now.

STONEFACE

Not so fast. The only place you two are going is the city morgue.

STONEFACE aims the gun.

MRS. WADSWORTH

Mr. Stoneface, I am simply appalled. That is no way to treat a lady. No wonder your wife left you. (*She turns to WADSWORTH.*) Come on now, we're leaving.

WADSWORTH

All right, Stoneface, I'll see you at work Monday morning. You're buying the donuts, rookie.

WADSWORTH turns to exit.

MRS. WADSWORTH

Don't forget your gun, dear.

WADSWORTH

Oops.

WADSWORTH turns around and picks up the gun. STONEFACE lowers his gun.

MRS. WADSWORTH

I declare, you would lose your head if that neck didn't hold it on. Anyhow, thank you for inviting us to the party. We had a lovely time. Tell your wife she keeps a lovely home.

WADSWORTH

Don't worry, partner; we'll show ourselves out.

MRS. WADSWORTH

Goodnight.

MR. and MRS. WADSWORTH exit. STONEFACE sits on the bed and briefly pauses. He un-cocks his gun and puts it in a drawer, then takes a cell phone out of his pocket and dials.

STONEFACE

It's me. I'm going to sleep on the couch, in case you want to come home. I'll clean Ned up in the morning - after I bury my cat. (*Hesitates*) Goodnight.

STONEFACE hangs up the phone, turns off the light and exits the room.

Black Out.

Louisville Swinger

Lights up in a bar. NIGEL and SHERRY sit on stools at a cocktail table. NIGEL has an empty beer glass, and SHERRY has a cocktail.

SHERRY finishes her cocktail.

NIGEL waves impatiently, holds up his glass and points to it.

NIGEL

Jesus Christ. What do you have to do to get another drink?

SHERRY

Well, Nigel, if you had just tipped him after the first round-

NIGEL

Tipped him after the first round?

SHERRY

For the *first* round.

NIGEL

The first round?

SHERRY

First. Yes.

NIGEL

Sherry, you know how I feel about tipping. I always leave the tip after the *last* round. That's when you leave the tip so you can judge the overall service. People feel like they deserve tips for showing up or something. I'll tip him after we order our last round.

SHERRY

It's been fifteen minutes since that bartender even looked over here; I think this *is* our last round.

NIGEL

More like half an hour.

SHERRY

It's only been fifteen minutes.

NIGEL

Maybe your watch is broken.

SHERRY

Maybe, since *you're* the one who gave it to me. (*Pause*) What are we doing in a bar, Nigel? We aren't bar people.

NIGEL

I don't know. (*Pause*) Look, I know I didn't take you out much the first time around. I guess I thought it would be fun for our trial run. If you want to go, that's fine. We can just head back to the hotel and call it a night.

SHERRY puts her hand on NIGEL'S.

SHERRY

No, this is fine.

NIGEL

Just fine?

SHERRY

I'm having fun being with you. (*Holds her glass upside down.*) I just need another drink.

NIGEL

I'll go up to the bar. You want the same thing?

SHERRY

Surprise me.

NIGEL

You know I always hated when you said that.

SHERRY

But you always surprised me.

NIGEL

Come on, what do you want?

SHERRY

I just want a surprise.

NIGEL

What kind of booze goes into that?

SHERRY

Smart ass.

NIGEL

If I'm not back in ten minutes, check the local jail because I've murdered the bartender.

NIGEL exits. SHERRY fidgets with her cocktail glass. TOM walks past looking at her the whole time, and she doesn't notice. He walks past again and sits in NIGEL's chair.

TOM
How we doing?

SHERRY
Um, hi. *I'm* okay, but that seat is taken.

TOM
Yeah, we noticed that.

SHERRY
We?

TOM
I'm here with my wife.

SHERRY
Well, then maybe you should go back and talk to her. I'm here with someone.

TOM
Sounds like we're on the same page.

SHERRY
No, I don't think we are.

TOM
So, who's the guy? Boyfriend? Lover, maybe?

SHERRY
Husband. And he'll be back in just a minute.

TOM
I'll call my wife over then.

SHERRY
Why would you do that?

TOM
Ha, right. Why *would* I do that? I get it. (*Slight pause*) So do you two have any kids?

TOM pulls out his wallet and holds it sideways.

TOM

This is our son, little Tommy.

SHERRY

He's cute. (*Slight pause*) No, my husband and I never had time to have kids. We both work a lot.

TOM

So you're on vacation now?

SHERRY

Yeah ...

TOM

Do you two "come to Louisville" much?

SHERRY

Ah, no. This is our first time.

TOM

First timers, huh? You nervous?

SHERRY

Actually, yes. I'm really not sure how this trip will go.

TOM

That's pretty natural. So whose idea was it?

SHERRY

Louisville? It was Nigel's.

TOM

Yeah, it's usually the guy's idea. Nigel. Now that's a name you don't hear every day. Is he British or something?

SHERRY

No he's American ... He's from America. Virginia, actually.

TOM

Too bad. My wife digs accents.

SHERRY

(*Pause*) I'm sorry, is there something you wanted?

TOM

My wife and I "come to Louisville" all the time. (*He winks*)

Pause.

SHERRY

And?

TOM

We'd love to show you and your husband the ropes.

NIGEL enters with no drinks.

SHERRY

Oh, my god.

SHERRY hides her face with her hand.

NIGEL

That goddamn asshole kept ignoring me. (*Notices TOM*) Who are you?

TOM

Name's Tom.

TOM holds out his hand. NIGEL doesn't shake it.

TOM

Your wife was just telling me you've never been to Louisville before.

NIGEL

I've been wanting to come here for a while, but she wasn't into it.

TOM

Glad to see she came around.

NIGEL

Me too.

SHERRY

Nigel, I don't think that's what he means.

NIGEL

What's that?

TOM

My wife and I "come to Louisville" all the time. We could help you figure things out.

NIGEL

Great. You could tell us how to get some service in this town.

TOM

Now we're talking. Why don't you talk to my wife? (*He points*) She's sitting over there.

NIGEL

Great.

SHERRY

Nigel, I'm ready to go.

NIGEL

We don't have to go yet. I'm just about to figure out how to get a drink around here.

SHERRY

But Nigel ...

NIGEL exits.

SHERRY

We aren't ...uh ... swingers.

TOM

Of course- you can't say you like the wine until you've had a glass. I get it. (*He laughs*) I know the first time seems weird, but believe me, you'll wonder why you never got into it sooner.

SHERRY

We aren't looking to become swingers. My husband just misunderstood.

TOM

Are you sure about that?

SHERRY

Yes ... well ... we've had our misunderstandings, but I think I'd know if he wanted to ...uh ... swing.

TOM

Yeah, I'm sure you would. "Going to Louisville" is a great way to work through relationship problems.

SHERRY

Yeah, that's what we were thinking. Wait – no. I'm really not sure what you're saying. Is "Louisville" code for ... orgy or something?

TOM

We don't call them that.

SHERRY

Okay, whatever they are. We- *I* am not interested. My husband and I are here to try and fix our marriage, and that sounds like a horrible way to do it.

TOM

Okay, I get it. So what's the deal then?

SHERRY

I don't even know you.

TOM

Don't worry, I'm good with strangers.

SHERRY

(Slight pause) Nothing means what it means with you does it? Look, I haven't even talked to my friends about this, and I'm sure as hell not going to talk to a strange man about it.

TOM

I get it, but maybe talking to a stranger about your relationship will make you more comfortable about talking to your friends. Like practice.

Slight pause.

SHERRY

We're separated.

TOM

That's a tough deal. How long's it been?

SHERRY

About four months.

TOM

You two seeing other people?

SHERRY

We're allowed to, but I don't ... I haven't. I really don't know about him. I've been afraid to ask.

TOM

You sound like swingers to me.

SHERRY

We aren't swingers!

TOM

Hey, it's cool. I can remember back when I wasn't swingin' either.

SHERRY

Why am I talking to you? Would you please leave me alone?

TOM

Okay. Let me know if you change your mind.

TOM exits. SHERRY fidgets with her drink. NIGEL enters with a cocktail in his hand.

NIGEL

I finally got you a drink. That guy's wife ordered it for me.

NIGEL hands the drink to SHERRY and sits down.

SHERRY

What is it?

NIGEL

It's called a "Louisville Swinger." Apparently it's the house special.

SHERRY

Why doesn't that surprise me?

Pause.

NIGEL

So... (*Slight pause*) I'm pretty sure those people wanted to have sex with us.

SHERRY

Yeah.

NIGEL

I think this is a Swingers' bar.

SHERRY

Yeah.

NIGEL

You'd think they would make that a little clearer somehow.

SHERRY looks down at the drink and swirls a cherry around in it. There is a long pause before she looks up again.

SHERRY

I know things haven't been exactly perfect, but I do appreciate you doing this.

NIGEL

Taking you to a Swingers' bar?

SHERRY

No.

NIGEL

Okay, because I told her we weren't into it.

Pause.

SHERRY

Remember our honeymoon – how it rained the whole week and we didn't get to go out on the beach once?

NIGEL

And we picked a secluded beach with nothing else to do. How could I forget?

SHERRY

Do you think we're cursed?

TOM walks past thrusting his hips in their direction.

NIGEL

No. I think we just shouldn't go outside anymore.

Pause.

SHERRY

I appreciate you making an effort.

NIGEL

I'm just trying to make things work this time.

SHERRY

I know. It's sweet – even if we are... here.

SHERRY takes a swig of the drink and looks disgusted.

SHERRY

This drink tastes awful.

NIGEL

Want to go back to the room and rent a movie?

SHERRY

(Suspicious) What kind of movie?

NIGEL

Comedy.

SHERRY

That sounds perfect.

BLACK OUT

The Death of Margaret Thatcher

MS. THATCHER (*Male in early twenties*) is found center stage wearing a conservative woman's suit jacket and a long matching skirt. JANET (*Female in thirties*) enters stage left. DOUGLAS (*Male in thirties*) enters stage right.

MS. THATCHER

This is the story of how Janet (*Motions to JANET who freezes*) broken hearted and scorned, set out to kill her cheating husband Douglas (*Motions to DOUGLAS who also freezes*). Douglas was a serial adulterer who cheated on Janet with five different women, three different men and had taken part in two separate orgies. Janet, who knew about two of the women and one of the orgies, decided she'd had enough.

JANET pulls a large pistol from her purse.

MS. THATCHER

Janet, having discovered the address of Douglas's current mistress, waits down the street for him to leave.

JANET and DOUGLAS unfreeze and move slowly towards each other. CINDY (*Female in twenties*) enters stage left and walks quickly past JANET and DOUGLAS. DOUGLAS turns and stares at CINDY as she passes.

MS. THATCHER

Douglas does not notice his disgruntled wife walking towards him with a large caliber hand gun because he is staring at a passing woman's spectacular ass. Janet takes note of this distraction and becomes more resolved than ever to end her husband's life.

JANET takes aim at DOUGLAS. PHILLIP (*Male in Twenties*) enters stage right jogging with his head turned to look at CINDY.

MS. THATCHER

Phillip, a jogger, also notices the woman's fantastic buttocks and immediately recognizes it as belonging to his long lost love Cindy. Distracted, Phillip bumps into Janet.

PHILLIP bumps into JANET, the gun fires, and DOUGLAS drops to the ground.

MS. THATCHER

The gun fires into a nearby window, accidentally wounding an elderly woman. Janet panics, drops the pistol and runs.

DOUGLAS looks up.

MS. THATCHER

Douglas, actually looking at his wife for the first time in years, sees a familiarly silky pair of legs fleeing the scene of the crime. He does not recognize them as his wife's.

DOUGLAS stands.

MS. THATCHER

Douglas assumes the familiar legs belong to a former lover who, having discovered his marital status, decided to extract revenge. He has not once thought of his wife in the last six months and, therefore, never suspects her of the attempted murder.

PHILLIP

Cindy? Is that you?

CINDY

Oh my god! Phillip?

PHILLIP

Yeah, how are you?

CINDY

I'm great.

PHILLIP

Yeah, wow... you look great. Your ass still looks amazing.

CINDY

It does, doesn't it? (*Pause*) God, how long has it been?

MS. THATCHER

It had been a long time.

PHILLIP

It's been a long time.

MS. THATCHER

About five years.

CINDY

Like five years, I think.

DOUGLAS

Are you guys okay?

PHILLIP

Never better.

DOUGLAS rubs his pants roughly with a handkerchief. CINDY and PHILLIP move up center stage and talk softly to each other.

MS. THATCHER

As Douglas regains feeling in his limbs, he wonders if the fresh urine stain, newly formed on his crotch, will ruin his favorite pair of slacks. Cindy and Phillip, reunited after five years, are completely taken with each other. Each one rediscovers their feelings of passion for the other, although not at the same time. First Phillip ... then Cindy. It will take each of them another few minutes to realize that a high powered handgun has been fired within twenty feet of them.

DOUGLAS

Has anyone called the police yet?

PHILLIP

No. Why?

DOUGLAS

I almost died.

CINDY

Are you okay?

DOUGLAS

I'm calling the police.

Pause.

PHILLIP (*To Cindy*)

We should go out some time. We were so great together back in college.

MS. THATCHER

Actually they weren't great together back in college. Cindy cheated on Phillip six and half times during the two weeks they dated. Phillip had previously known about three and a quarter of those times, until two years of intense therapy helped him repress most of the details of their relationship. The only details he remembers now are that he dated a girl named Cindy and that she had an almost flawless rear bumper – a fact no man can forget. No matter how much therapy he gets.

CINDY

Yeah, we had some good times.

PHILLIP

I don't know why we ever broke up.

CINDY
Neither do I.

MS. THATCHER
Cindy knew full well why Phillip ended their relationship. In fact, she remembered each incident in great detail, except for the face of *one* of the men she had cheated with.

DOUGLAS
(*To CINDY*) I'm sorry to interrupt, but do we know each other?

CINDY
I don't think so.

MS. THATCHER
But they *did* know each other. *This* was the face of the man Cindy could not remember. Douglas did not remember her face either but, rather, recognized the amazingly shapely features of her butt. Honestly, who could forget that booty – and, to be fair, it was very dark and smoky in that bathroom stall.

JANET enters as POLICE OFFICER wearing a police uniform.

POLICE OFFICER
I received a report of gun fire.

PHILLIP
Gun fire?

DOUGLAS
Yes, officer, a woman fired a shot at me, then took off.

PHILLIP
She did?

POLICE OFFICER
Could you describe the woman?

DOUGLAS
Parts of her.

PHILLIP
(*To CINDY*) Were we almost shot?

POLICE OFFICER
I'm going to need all your names and a statement from each of you.

PHILLIP, DOUGLAS and CINDY crowd around the POLICE OFFICER who is taking down notes.

MS. THATCHER

As the Police Officer takes down each person's name and statement, she can't help but wonder why Cindy strikes her as so familiar.

POLICE OFFICE

(*To CINDY*) Have I seen you before?

CINDY

I don't think so.

MS. THATCHER

But she *had* seen Cindy before – specifically Cindy's firm-as-a-peach ass. Cindy had slept with the Police Officer's husband. The Police Officer had come home early and caught them but had only seen Cindy's rear as she snuck out the back door.

PHILLIP

Wait a minute. You're telling me a gun was fired right next to me?

POLICE OFFICE

This man (*Gestures to DOUGLAS*) claims you were standing right next to her.

PHILLIP

I don't remember that.

POLICE OFFICER

(*To CINDY*) What about you, ma'am? Did you get a look at the shooter?

CINDY

I only saw her back when she ran.

POLICE OFFICER

You wouldn't believe how often that happens.

DOUGLAS picks up the gun and hands it to POLICE OFFICER.

DOUGLAS

This must be the gun.

POLICE OFFICER

I'll just collect this evidence and then I'm done here.

POLICE OFFICER puts the gun in a bag and exits. DOUGLAS exits.

MS. THATCHER

Cindy and Phillip talk for hours. They go out for dinner at a very upscale restaurant and then back to Phillip's apartment.

CINDY turns her back to the audience and flashes PHILLIP.

MS. THATCHER

They have a one night stand.

CINDY and PHILLIP frantically kiss as they exit the stage. DOUGLAS enters and walks across the stage.

MS. THATCHER

As Douglas walks home that evening, he considers the events that have taken place. His near death experience leads him to a life changing epiphany.

DOUGLAS

I'm an asshole.

MS. THATCHER

He realizes, for the first time in his life, how his actions have affected other people and, for the first time in a long time, he thinks of his wife.

DOUGLAS

I'll never cheat again.

MS. THATCHER

Unfortunately for Douglas, he arrives home to find his wife has left him.

DOUGLAS exits. JANET enters wearing dark glasses.

MS. THATCHER

Janet, fearing arrest for her attempted murder, flees the country.

JANET exits.

MS. THATCHER

She lives out the rest of her days in Mexico, believing herself to be a fugitive on the run.

JANET and DOUGLAS enter. JANET is wearing beads.

MS. THATCHER

Five years later, Douglas sees his former wife Janet while on spring break in Cancun. Somehow neither recognizes the other...

JANET turns her back to the audience and flashes DOUGLAS.

MS. THATCHER
They have a one night stand.

JANET and DOUGLAS frantically kiss as they exit the stage.

MS. THATCHER
As for the elderly woman accidentally wounded by the bullet shot by Janet, intending to kill her husband Douglas...

MS. THATCHER puts on a gray wig.

MS. THATCHER
I, Margaret Thatcher, eventually died from that accidental bullet wound. Many people read the papers the next day and felt my death was a tragedy. In fact one woman said I might have cured cancer had I not been killed. The truth of the matter is this: although Janet intended to kill Douglas for cheating on her, she succeeded in killing the mistress who had knowingly helped Douglas cheat. Yes, I was Douglas's mistress, and yes – I was a seventy-two-year-old woman who was addicted to sex. I may have been old and post-menopausal, but I had the soul and sex drive of a twenty year old male. *(Brief Pause)* So, in a way, I suppose, my death was not unwarranted. I knew I was playing a dangerous game, dating a married man half my age, but I did it anyway. *(Brief Pause)* Those who knew me think of me fondly. They remember I always watched *Wheel Of Fortune* and ate chicken noodle soup. That I loved a good spanking and, during rough sex, the safety word was always *Shazaam*... I also enjoyed sunsets and long walks on the beach.

Black Out.

What He Had Never Done Before

The stage is split into two sections. Stage left is a simple police interrogation room with a table and two chairs. Stage right is a kitchen with a table and chairs. No walls should divide the two sets so that the actors may freely move from one set to another.

LARRY's voice is heard, but he is not seen.

LARRY

They had me sit in a small room with white concrete walls and no windows— I think it was around four in the morning. There wasn't any two-way mirror or anything like what you see on cop shows – no lights hanging over my head, no detectives in button up white shirts. Guess that's what I was expecting, but it just looked like an old storage closet. It kind of pissed me off, actually, because I was ready to make a show of things— toss a coffee cup, suck down cigarettes—then they put me in this boring room that smelled like bleach. You probably would have laughed at me, probably would have smirked at me and said, "That's what you get, dumbass." Actually, I know you would have said that.

Lights up on the kitchen. LARRY (30), GLEN (*Late 20's*) and MOMMA (*50's*) sit at the table eating breakfast.

GLEN

Well, that's what you get, dumbass.

LARRY

Glad you cleared that up for me, Glen, because I'm too damn stupid to realize why this happened.

MOMMA

Boys ...

GLEN

What? You parked your car in a tow away zone, and you got towed. This is the nature of justice.

LARRY

The nature of justice? Did I ask for an explanation? Nature of justice. Do you know what a dick you sound like when-

MOMMA

It's too damn early, boys.

GLEN

What is it you want, Larry?

LARRY
Just need a ride.

GLEN
Sure, I can give you a ride.

LARRY
That ain't too much for you, is it?

GLEN
No, it shouldn't be a problem, I don't think.

LARRY
You sure? Because when you say "I don't think" it sounds like your saying, "Goddamn, you're a real pain in the ass."

GLEN
You are a pain in the ass, but that's not how I meant it.

LARRY
Well, fuck you and however way you meant it.

MOMMA
Larry. Son. Are you going to act difficult all morning?

LARRY
I haven't even started getting difficult, yet.

MOMMA
I swear you're the most aggravated soul I ever met.

LARRY
I'm just foul because of my truck.

GLEN
You should really buy something new.

LARRY
We can't all afford new cars, Glen.

MOMMA
You should have called this morning instead of walking all this way over here.

LARRY

Didn't want to wake you up, Ma. 'Course if I had known Glen was driving over, I would have asked him to pick me up. What are you doing over here anyway, Glen? I thought you worked.

GLEN

I could ask you the same question.

LARRY

Called in and told Mike I'd be late – that my truck was towed. What's your excuse? Did things start filing themselves down at the courthouse?

MOMMA

Who wants more to eat? I'm not planning on making eggs to order all morning, so last call.

LARRY

I'm good.

GLEN

I'm fine, thank you.

MOMMA

Well, I'm going to get changed then.

MOMMA exits.

LARRY

You get fired or something?

GLEN

You're such a dick. I'm just taking some time off.

LARRY

Sounds like you got fired. You piss in the coffee pot? Always said I was gonna do that, but here I sit— employed.

GLEN

There's something wrong with you.

LARRY

It's what gives me my charm. You gonna' eat the rest of your eggs?

LARRY takes GLEN's plate before he can respond and starts eating his eggs.

GLEN
Are you done with my shotgun yet?

LARRY
You mean Dad's shotgun, and no, I still need it.

GLEN
I lent it to you almost a month ago.

LARRY
Still need it. I got this old dog hanging around my place, barking all damn night.

GLEN
I didn't loan you the gun so you could kill some kid's dog, Larry.

LARRY takes GLEN's juice glass and drinks from it.

LARRY
Who says it's a kid's? For all I know it could be some old blind lady's seeing-eye dog. Besides, I haven't killed it yet. It stopped coming around.

GLEN
Then you shouldn't need it anymore.

LARRY
No. He'll be back. These things tend to repeat until you do something about them. (*Eating eggs*) Speaking of coming back, I saw the blanket on the couch.

GLEN
So.

LARRY
So ... what the hell are you doing over here? Don't tell me you were just stopping by to see Mom. I know you white collars boys don't get up before nine, especially if you're – what'd you call it? *Taking time off*.

GLEN
What do you care?

LARRY
I don't.

GLEN
Then what's with the questions?

LARRY

Just thought you should be off playing golf or something.

GLEN

I don't play golf.

LARRY

Right. So why's Mom sleeping on the couch?

GLEN

She's not. I'm staying here for a while.

LARRY

Why?

GLEN

Because Mom needs help.

LARRY

Bullshit. Mom doesn't want or need any help.

GLEN

Just because you don't want to help her-

LARRY

That's bullshit, Glen, and you know it. What are you doing over here?

GLEN

Eating breakfast.

LARRY

No shit. Why are you eating breakfast with me instead of your wife?

GLEN

That's a good question.

LARRY

How about a good answer?

GLEN

Since when do you care what I do?

LARRY

I don't. But I can tell this is buggin' the shit out of you.

Pause.

GLEN
Rachel kicked me out, okay.

LARRY takes a long drink from the glass of orange juice.

GLEN
Happy?

LARRY
Now why would that make me happy— you fucking up your marriage? She find someone else? She'll do that. Course, you know about that. Who'd she leave you for? She already had me, so I guess she's done with our family.

GLEN
Fuck off, Larry.

LARRY
Sucks, don't it?

GLEN
I'm serious, Larry. You need to drop it.

LARRY
Unless, maybe she found Dad and started shacking up with him.

GLEN stands and takes a threatening step toward LARRY.

LARRY
You got a little fight in ya' this morning, little brother? (*LARRY stands*) You gonna give me a ride to get my car or what?

GLEN
No. I'm not.

LARRY shoves GLEN out the way.

LARRY
Then what good are you? Tell Mom I said bye.

LARRY walks to the edge of the kitchen. MOMMA enters. LARRY overhears their conversation.

MOMMA
He left?

GLEN

Yeah.

MOMMA

You should have just given him a ride.

GLEN

Not when he's like that.

MOMMA

He needs your help, Glen.

Lights up on the interrogation room. LARRY walks from the kitchen into the interrogation room seamlessly. Lights out in the kitchen. Larry paces. Lights up in the kitchen. YOUNG LARRY and YOUNG GLEN sit at the kitchen table. DAD is heard but not seen.

DAD (*Offstage*)

Glen, come in here.

YOUNG GLEN exits.

DAD (*Offstage*)

Have a seat, boy. I'm leaving.

YOUNG GLEN (*Offstage*)

Why?

DAD (*Offstage*)

Your mom doesn't want me around anymore. Here, I want you to have something.

YOUNG GLEN (*Offstage*)

Mom's not going to let me keep it.

DAD (*Offstage*)

Sure she will. You're the man of the house now. Go on. Check it out. It's not loaded. This was your grandpa's gun. He made the stock himself. You take good care of it; polish the stock with wood varnish; keep it clean and oiled.

YOUNG GLEN (*Offstage*)
What am I supposed to do with it?

DAD (*Offstage*)
Protect your family. (*Pause*) And, son, if
you ever see me come up those steps again,
point that shotgun at me and remind me I
left.

Lights out in the kitchen. FIELDING enters the interrogation room
holding a case file.

FIELDING
Hello, Mr. Bryant, my name is Fielding. Have a seat for me.

LARRY sits down at the table and puts his feet on the table.

LARRY
Fielding. That's a hell of a name. Your parents not like you or something?

FIELDING sits down and places the case file on the table.

FIELDING
It's my last name.

LARRY
Aren't you supposed to say what you are?

FIELDING
I don't follow.

LARRY
You a Detective, Sergeant, Maestro- what's your title?

FIELDING
I'm a Detective.

LARRY
Why didn't you say so?

FIELDING
I thought you might feel more comfortable just calling me Fielding.

LARRY
Think I'd be more comfortable calling you Maestro.

FIELDING

Mr. Bryant, do you understand the seriousness of the situation?

LARRY

Think you could get my cigarettes back? Some big woman— looked like a man— took them. You know who I'm talking about?

FIELDING

You can't smoke in here and I asked you a question. Did you hear me?

LARRY

Yeah, I heard you.

FIELDING

Do you understand how serious this is?

LARRY

Yeah ...

FIELDING

Good. This conversation will be recorded.

FIELDING removes a tape recorder from his pocket and places it on the table.

LARRY

You really don't let people smoke in here, huh? 'Cause on TV these little rooms are always smoky, you know? You should call up the TV studio--- let them know how it is. I bet a lot of people ask if they can smoke in here, huh?

FIELDING

No, actually.

LARRY

That's surprising.

FIELDING

Mr. Bryant, I'm not sure you do understand. This isn't a joke.

LARRY

Of course I know it's not a joke, Maestro. You brought me down here in handcuffs— I'm not stupid. It's just that this always happens. Bad things happen, and I start acting like a smart ass. You ask my mom, she'll tell you. This always happens.

FIELDING

We already spoke to her.

LARRY

Yeah, I guess you would have. (*Pause*) How's she doing?

FIELDING

She certainly seems more shaken up than you.

LARRY

Guess this does look pretty bad, huh?

FIELDING

Well, it doesn't look good.

LARRY takes his feet off the table and sits up in the chair.

LARRY

I guess you want to know why I killed my brother.

FIELDING

If you're ready to talk about it.

LARRY

Yeah, I guess that'd be all right.

FIELDING pushes the tape recorder closer to LARRY

LARRY

It wasn't my fault. It was self defense.

FIELDING writes in his notepad.

LARRY

I should have a lawyer, shouldn't I?

FIELDING

You have the right to have an attorney present.

LARRY

See, I knew that. That's one thing those cop shows got right.

FIELDING

Would you like to call an attorney?

LARRY

Not yet. Let's just see if I'm going to need one.

FIELDING

Mr. Bryant, that was a pretty messy scene back at your mom's house – you might want to think about calling a lawyer.

LARRY

I thought I was here to talk about those unpaid parking tickets.

FIELDING

Mr. Bryant-

LARRY

I know why I'm here and I told you already it was self-defense.

LARRY leans across the table so that he is as close to FIELDING as he can be without standing.

LARRY

So what is it you want to know?

Pause. LARRY settles back into his seat.

FIELDING

What time did you go over to your mother's house?

LARRY

What does that matter?

FIELDING

It could be very important. Just give me an estimate. About what time did you go over to your mother's house?

LARRY

If all time is eternally present

All time is unredeemable.

What might have been is an abstraction

Remaining a perpetual possibility

FIELDING

What is that? What you just said?

Lights up on the kitchen. YOUNG LARRY (15) and YOUNG GLEN (13) sit at the kitchen table doing homework; YOUNG LARRY reading *Four Quartets*; YOUNG GLEN doing math homework.

LARRY
Lines from a poem.

DAD is heard but not seen.

DAD (*Offstage*)
Larry. Bring me another beer.

YOUNG LARRY doesn't look up from reading.

DAD (*Offstage*)
Larry?

YOUNG GLEN
He isn't listening, Dad. He's reading poetry.

FIELDING
You like poetry?

DAD (*Offstage*)
Come here, Glen. Bring me a beer.

YOUNG GLEN gets up, takes a beer from the refrigerator, and exits the kitchen.

DAD (*Offstage*)
Thank you, son. What did you say your brother is doing?

YOUNG GLEN (*Offstage*)
Reading poetry. A girl at school gave it to him.

DAD (*Offstage*)
You don't read that stuff, do you Glen?

YOUNG GLEN (*Offstage*)
No, sir. I hate it.

DAD (*Offstage*)
At least your brother's only reading it to try
and get some pussy.

Lights out in the kitchen.

LARRY
Yeah. I like poetry. Why?

FIELDING
That's surprising.

LARRY
I can't like poetry?

FIELDING
I just wouldn't have pegged you as the type.

LARRY
Shouldn't you be off somewhere eating donuts, officer?

FIELDING
Fair enough. I apologize.

LARRY
You like poetry, Maestro?

FIELDING
I never really read much. I wasn't much of a student.

LARRY
Neither was I. What was it you were asking me?

FIELDING
What time did you go over to your mother's house?

LARRY
No clue.

FIELDING
You really don't know?

LARRY
It was dark— had been for a while. What else you wanna' know?

FIELDING writes a note on his pad of paper.

FIELDING

Did you and your brother have a turbulent relationship?

LARRY

Turbulent?

FIELDING

Yes.

LARRY

What am I, a goddamn 707? Are you asking if we got along?

FIELDING

Yes.

LARRY

Say what you mean, Maestro.

Lights up on the kitchen. YOUNG LARRY and YOUNG GLEN enter the kitchen. YOUNG LARRY has YOUNG GLEN in a headlock.

LARRY

No, we didn't get along

YOUNG LARRY holds an electric razor in one hand and struggles to keep YOUNG GLEN in a headlock. YOUNG GLEN squirms and punches YOUNG LARRY's legs.

YOUNG GLEN

Let go of me, you stupid jerk.

LARRY

We fought a lot.

YOUNG LARRY

Call me stupid one more time, Glen.
Because I'm telling you now, you're going to look like the fucking stupid one when I shave your head.

YOUNG GLEN

Fine, you aren't stupid, Larry. You're a complete idiot.

YOUNG LARRY turns the razor on. Lights out in the kitchen.

FIELDING

Did your confrontations ever get violent?

LARRY

Nah.

FIELDING

But you said you fought a lot.

LARRY

You know how brothers fight.

FIELDING picks up a paper and reads from it.

FIELDING

Your mother told us she had to make frequent trips to the hospital.

LARRY

We were active kids.

FIELDING

You didn't (*Reads from the paper again*) push your brother from a rooftop when you were fourteen?

LARRY

He always said I pushed him.

FIELDING

You didn't?

LARRY

He was my brother.

FIELDING

So you're telling me you never pushed your brother off a rooftop?

LARRY

Let me ask you something, Maestro.

FIELDING

My name is Detective Fielding.

LARRY

Thought you said I could call you Fielding?

FIELDING
Yes, I guess I did.

LARRY
So, Fielding, you got any brothers?

FIELDING
Three.

LARRY
They all cops?

FIELDING
Two of them.

LARRY
What about the other one? He a fire fighter?

Pause.

FIELDING
We're not talking about me.

LARRY
But you know what I'm talking about— the way brothers are.

FIELDING
Mr. Bryant, please just answer the question.

LARRY
Which one?

FIELDING
Did you ever push your brother off a roof?

LARRY
Did I push Glen off a rooftop?

FIELDING
Yes.

LARRY
No. What else you want to know?

FIELDING

Well, Mr. Bryant, can you explain why your mother would have told us you did, if it wasn't true?

LARRY

She's an old woman. She doesn't remember things sometimes. Besides, Ma' always liked him better than me.

Lights up in the kitchen. YOUNG GLEN sits at the kitchen table lighting matches. YOUNG LARRY enters.

YOUNG LARRY

What the hell are you doing?

YOUNG GLEN stares transfixed as a match burns in his hand.

YOUNG LARRY

Glen?

A smoke detector starts beeping.

YOUNG LARRY

You idiot.

YOUNG LARRY takes the matches from YOUNG GLEN and pushes him onto the floor.

YOUNG LARRY

What are you, stupid?

MOMMA rushes into the kitchen. She turns on YOUNG LARRY and sees the matches in his hand.

MOMMA

Have you lost your mind?

MOMMA snatches the matches from YOUNG LARRY.

YOUNG LARRY

It wasn't me.

MOMMA sees YOUNG GLEN on the floor. She grabs YOUNG LARRY by the arm and pulls him toward YOUNG GLEN.

MOMMA
What did you do to him?

YOUNG LARRY
Nothing.

MOMMA releases YOUNG LARRY.

YOUNG LARRY
I didn't do it.

MOMMA
And who did, your brother?

YOUNG LARRY
Yeah.

MOMMA
You could have burned the house down,
son.

YOUNG LARRY exits. Lights out in the kitchen.

LARRY
Any chance I could have a cup of coffee?

FIELDING
Sure. What were you saying about your Mom?

LARRY
She liked Glen better than me. Gonna need at least two creamers in that coffee.

FIELDING
Why do you say that? About your Mom and Glen?

LARRY
Because it's a fucking fact, okay?

FIELDING stands up from the table.

LARRY
I like sugar, too, if you got it.

FIELDING exits. LARRY stands and slowly paces the room. Lights up in the kitchen. GLEN sits at the table.

GLEN

You know it's kind of ironic how you always watched those police shows on television as a kid. Everyone thought you would be a cop.

LARRY doesn't turn to acknowledge GLEN.

GLEN

What, you're not talking to me anymore? Even when we fought as kids, you at least talked to me. Sure, it was always something like, "Fuck off, shit eater," but we talked. There's no reason not to talk to me. At least tell me to go fuck myself. This isn't healthy, us not speaking. (*Laughs*) Or maybe it is healthy since I'm dead. How's Mom doing? How is Mom doing now that her favorite son is dead? Go ahead, talk to me, maybe they'll give you the insanity plea.

FIELDING enters carrying two cups of coffee and a sandwich.

GLEN

No, you're going to talk your way out of this one, but whose fault was it this time, Larry? Yours or mine?

FIELDING

Take a seat, Mr. Bryant.

LARRY sits and FIELDING hands him a cup of coffee.

FIELDING

Where were we?

LARRY

No creamer?

FIELDING

We're out.

GLEN

I bet there's creamer in his coffee.

FIELDING

You were telling me about your relationship with your mother.

GLEN

Take a look, Larry. I think there's creamer in his coffee.

GLEN walks to the edge of the kitchen and peeks over.

GLEN

Oh there is. He lied to you, brother.

LARRY

My relationship with my mother was fine. We got along all right.

GLEN

Except that she didn't love you as much as me.

FIELDING

But you said her relationship was better with your brother?

LARRY

No, I don't think she had a favorite. I don't know why I said that.

GLEN

Yeah, go ahead and lie your way through this.

FIELDING unwraps his sandwich.

FIELDING

You'll have to excuse me, Mr. Bryant, I missed dinner.

GLEN

Mmmm... that's a tasty looking sandwich. I think I'm going to make one.

GLEN opens the refrigerator, pulls ingredients out, and puts them on the kitchen table.

FIELDING

Were you jealous of your brother?

LARRY

He was a kiss ass.

GLEN

Don't get nasty, Larry.

FIELDING

I understand there was some tension about Glen's wife, Rachael.

GLEN

Uh oh.

FIELDING

You had a relationship with Rachael prior to your brother's engagement to her.

LARRY

What does that matter?

FIELDING

It may not matter. I won't know until we talk about it.

LARRY

Nothing to talk about.

GLEN

Don't kiss and tell.

FIELDING

So you never had a relationship with Rachael?

LARRY

We dated in high school. Ancient fucking history.

FIELDING

Did you ever ask Rachael to marry you?

LARRY
Who told you that?

FIELDING
Your mother. Is it true?

LARRY
Yeah.

FIELDING
What happened?

GLEN
She loved me. That's what happened.

LARRY
She said 'no' ... told me she loved Glen.

FIELDING
You hated Glen after that, didn't you?

LARRY
I hated Glen before that.

GLEN
That hurts, Larry. Almost as much as getting shot.

GLEN starts laughing.

FIELDING
Mr. Bryant, did you murder your brother?

GLEN
Go ahead. Tell him.

LARRY
Already told you it was self-defense.

GLEN
There you go. Stick to your story, you'll get away with it.

LARRY

You taking notes over there, Maestro?
Because you keep asking me the same
questions. Maybe I do need a lawyer after
all. I'm starting to think you're trying to
frame me.

FIELDING

Mr. Bryant, I can assure you-

LARRY

And I asked for some fucking creamer.
You only give creamer to people with
lawyers, is that it?

FIELDING

Mr. Bryant, you're going to need to calm
down. I told you we were out of creamer.

LARRY

I bet you have creamer. I bet you used all
the creamer in your coffee.

GLEN

He has creamer. I'm just saying, I think
he's lying to you.

LARRY lunges across the table at the coffee cup. FIELDING stands,
removes his club, and hits LARRY with it. LARRY falls limp on the table.
FIELDING walks to the other ends of the table and pushes LARRY back
into his seat.

FIELDING

Are you out of you mind? You're in a lot
of trouble; care to add assaulting a police
officer to the list?

LARRY does not move. GLEN peeks over again.

GLEN

Larry, I was wrong. He doesn't have any
creamer in his coffee.

FIELDING

I'm trying to be decent here, but I will put
you back in those cuffs.

GLEN
Sorry, Larry. I was wrong. (*Laughing*)
Dead wrong.

FIELDING
Do I need to restrain you, Mr. Bryant?

LARRY
I never was into all that kinky stuff.

FIELDING
This isn't a joke.

LARRY
No. I'll be a good dog.

FIELDING
I'm going to find some creamer for your
coffee.

FIELDING exits. GLEN goes back to making a sandwich.

GLEN
I tell you what, Larry. This is going to be a
good sandwich. Not as good Mom made
them, but it's going to be pretty damn
good.

GLEN finishes making his sandwich, holds it up to take a bite, and stops.

GLEN
Hey, Larry.

LARRY turns his chair so that he is not facing GLEN.

GLEN
Larry. Can dead people eat sandwiches?
Hey, Larry, I'm talking to you. Since you
killed me, and I'm dead and all, do you
think I could eat a sandwich? Can. Dead.
People. Eat. Sandwiches. Larry.

LARRY spins out of his chair and faces GLEN.

LARRY

I don't fucking know, Glen. You tell me.
Better yet, why don't you just fuck off?

GLEN

There he is. Thought for sure you weren't
going to talk to me.

Lights out in the kitchen. LARRY sits back down. Lights up in the
kitchen. YOUNG LARRY and MOMMA sit at the kitchen table. YOUNG
LARRY eats a sandwich, and MOMMA drinks iced tea.

MOMMA

How's that sandwich?

YOUNG LARRY

It's all right.

MOMMA

Just all right, huh?

YOUNG LARRY

I don't really like ham that much.

MOMMA

That right?

YOUNG LARRY

Yeah.

MOMMA

You never said anything before.

YOUNG LARRY

Doesn't mean I liked it.

MOMMA

I swear, Larry, you're the most aggravated old soul I ever met.

YOUNG LARRY

I'm not old.

MOMMA

That's not what I said. I said you got an old soul, son.

MOMMA takes a long drink of iced tea.

MOMMA

There's something about your eyes. I can just tell you've been around a while. Your father was like that too, he'd been carrying some ancient guilt around as long as I'd known him.

MOMMA stands and puts her iced tea glass in the sink.

MOMMA

It doesn't really mean much, being an old soul.

YOUNG LARRY

Are you an old soul, too?

MOMMA

Yeah – I think I am. Eat your sandwich, son.

Lights out in the kitchen. FIELDING enters the interrogation room and tosses two single serving creamers onto the table.

FIELDING

That's all I could find.

LARRY takes the creamer and pours it into his coffee.

FIELDING

I'm going to need a statement of the events leading to your brother's death.

LARRY

I wouldn't know where to begin. (*Takes a deep breath*) Well, he was born at St. Bridget's Hospital in 19-

FIELDING

Start with that evening. Your mother said you stopped by the house and spoke to Glen.

LARRY

Well, I had been by earlier that day to see if I could get a ride to get my truck— one of your cop buddies had it towed for me; maybe one of your brothers— one of the two that are cops. What's the other one do, again?

FIELDING

I didn't say.

LARRY

That's right. What does he do?

FIELDING

Let's get back to you telling me about what happened.

LARRY mixes the coffee with his finger and takes a drink.

LARRY

Much better. Anyway, I asked Glen to give me a ride; we got into a fight, and he said 'no,' so I walked to the impound lot.

Lights up on the kitchen. GLEN sits at the table. LARRY walks from the interrogation room into the kitchen.

GLEN

Did you get your truck back?

LARRY

Yeah. Had to walk about twenty miles.

GLEN

That's a hike.

LARRY

Where's Mom?

GLEN

Aslccp.

FIELDING

Why did you go over there again?

LARRY

(Turns to Fielding) Don't know. I guess I wanted to apologize.

GLEN

What do you want, Larry?

LARRY

I left my coat over here. I've been walking around in the fucking cold.

GLEN exits.

GLEN *(Offstage)*

You should have called someone to give you a ride.

GLEN enters with the coat.

LARRY

I asked you for a ride, and you said 'no.'
So, fuck you.

LARRY takes the coat.

FIELDING

What were you apologizing for?

LARRY

(To Fielding) We had some words earlier
that morning. We each said some things we
shouldn't have.

GLEN

So you didn't call anyone?

LARRY

What the hell do you care?

GLEN

I'm just wondering if you called anyone
after you left. I was worried.

LARRY

Worried? I walked; no thanks to you, you
fucking prick. I'm freezing and tired
because I've been walking in the fucking
cold all goddamn day.

GLEN

I'm sorry. I should have helped you out.

LARRY

I don't need your help, Glen. Tell Mom I'll
stop by sometime next week.

GLEN

Rachael said you called and asked her for a
ride.

FIELDING
How did he respond to your apology?

LARRY
(*To Fielding*) He told me to fuck off.

GLEN
Are you so pathetic that you couldn't find anyone else to call but her?

LARRY
Fuck off, Glen.

LARRY
(*To Fielding*) He accused me of fucking his wife.

FIELDING
Were you having an affair with his wife?

LARRY
(*To Fielding*) No, but they were having some problems.

FIELDING
Your mother mentioned that.

LARRY
You're the fucking pathetic one, living here with Mom. Isn't it about time you left? You're putting her out staying here with her.

GLEN
Since when do you give a shit about putting Mom out?

FIELDING
Why did he think you two were having an affair?

LARRY
(*To Fielding*) Because we talked on the phone that day. I asked her for a ride to my truck, but she was busy. She must have told him we talked to make him jealous.

GLEN

I'm moving out tomorrow. Rachael and I worked things out.

FIELDING

Was Glen overly protective of her?

LARRY

(*To Fielding*) Yeah. He always thought other guys were looking at her.

LARRY

She's done fucking around already, huh?

FIELDING

Was anything said that might have provoked either of you?

GLEN

That's funny, Larry. You know what else is funny? Rachael said you asked to see her some time.

LARRY (*To Fielding*)

No. Just that he thought his wife and I had been fooling around.

FIELDING

But neither of you said anything to provoke the other?

GLEN

Did you really think Rachael would go back to you? She doesn't love you.

LARRY (*To Fielding*)

No.

LARRY walks to the middle of the two rooms.

LARRY

From now on, you call before you come over. If I'm here, don't you show your goddamn face.

GLEN
That's ridiculous, Larry.

LARRY
Don't show up at my place either; I'm done with you.

GLEN
Can I at least come by tomorrow and get my shotgun? Then I won't bother you again.

LARRY
I'll bring it to you.

LARRY walks to the interrogation room and sits. Lights out in the kitchen.

LARRY
I need a cigarette.

FIELDING
I already told you – smoking isn't allowed in this building.

LARRY
Okay. I know how to smoke outside.

FIELDING
You're not going outside.

LARRY
I won't run away.

FIELDING
I'm not done interviewing you.

LARRY
Well, I don't really need the job, so I'm gonna go.

LARRY stands.

FIELDING
You're a murder suspect, Mr. Bryant. Sit back down, and answer my questions.

LARRY
Yeah, that's not gonna happen.

FIELDING stands.

LARRY

You gonna knock me around again?

FIELDING

Mr. Bryant, I am warning you; sit down and cooperate.

LARRY

I'm not answering another goddamn thing until I smoke a cigarette.

FIELDING

If you don't answer my questions, you can sit in lock up with the rest of the killers. Then you can have a talk with a judge about how you were obstructing a police investigation.

LARRY

Yeah, that sounds good. Maybe we can talk to that judge about your police brutality on the same day.

LARRY sits down.

LARRY

I'm feeling kind of dizzy – think you gave me a concussion.

LARRY rubs his neck.

LARRY

My neck's hurting, too.

FIELDING

You acted aggressively – I'm well within my right to defend myself.

LARRY

Think that tape (*points to the tape recorder*) shows that? I bet it does – and I'm pretty sure the judge won't ask why no one else was present for this interrogation. Probably won't ask why I didn't have a lawyer here, either.

FIELDING pauses for a second then turns to leave.

LARRY

Get me another coffee, too.

LARRY pushes the cup across the table.

LARRY
This cup got cold. Two creamers.

FIELDING leaves the cup, walks to the door and turns before exiting.

FIELDING
I'm only doing this because I'm tired of looking at you.

LARRY
Whatever helps you sleep.

FIELDING exits. Lights up in the kitchen. YOUNG GLEN and YOUNG LARRY sit at the kitchen table working on homework. MOMMA sits at the table sipping hot tea.

YOUNG LARRY
Mom?

MOMMA does not respond.

YOUNG LARRY
Mom, I can't do these fractions.

A door is heard opening and slamming shut. MOMMA stands suddenly.

MOMMA
Stay down here, boys.

MOMMA exits.

YOUNG LARRY
Hey, Glen.

YOUNG GLEN
What?

YOUNG LARRY
How do you do multiple fractions?

YOUNG GLEN
You figure it out.

MOMMA and DAD can be heard yelling offstage.

MOMMA (*Offstage*)
You miserable bastard.

DAD (*Offstage*)

Don't you take a tone. Don't even get a tone.

MOMMA (*Offstage*)

I'll take a tone every time you come home smelling like that-

DAD (*Offstage*)

Like what? Smelling like what, Martha?

MOMMA (*Offstage*)

You know what you smell like. Don't play dumb with me.

Both YOUNG GLEN and YOUNG LARRY put their pencils down and turn to listen.

DAD (*Offstage*)

You're losing it.

MOMMA (*Offstage*)

I'm losing it?

DAD (*Offstage*)

You just wish I was messin' around to make yourself feel better for what you did. Think it's easy for me to forget that? Think it's easy to look that boy in the eye, wonder whether he's mine?

A door slams. MOMMA and DAD are still heard but it is muted.

YOUNG GLEN

You have to find the common denominator. It's kind of tough, at first.

YOUNG GLEN reaches over to write on YOUNG LARRY's homework. YOUNG LARRY punches YOUNG GLEN in the face, knocking him onto the ground.

YOUNG LARRY

You're not better than me.

Lights out in the kitchen. After a moment, lights come up in the kitchen. GLEN sits at the kitchen table, arms crossed, facing LARRY. LARRY sits in the interrogation room facing away from him.

GLEN

See, I never thought you and I were related. Not fully, anyway. Sure, there was always that question, but when you get right down to it, the answer was always right there. We each looked enough like Mom, but why was I so much taller than you? More athletic and smarter than you? I was always better with people, better with women – Rachael certainly proves that.

LARRY

Fuck you.

GLEN

And that temper. God only knows where that temper came from.

LARRY

You were a clerk, Glen. Nothing but a goddamn clerk, so don't start getting high and mighty.

GLEN

You're absolutely right. I was a clerk, and now I'm dead, and you're going to prison. Personally, I'd rather be dead.

FIELDING enters, holding a cup of coffee in one hand, cigarettes and a lighter in the other.

GLEN

I know I never said it before, but I always thought of you as my bastard half-brother.

Lights out in the kitchen. FIELDING places the cup of coffee on the table in front of LARRY. LARRY takes the cup and drinks from it. FIELDING sits down and holds up the cigarettes and lighter.

FIELDING

Are you ready to answer my questions?

LARRY

Yeah.

FIELDING

Good.

FIELDING tosses the pack to LARRY. He places the lighter in the center of the table.

FIELDING

That lighter stays on the table. Put your ash in that other cup.

FIELDING slides the old cup back to LARRY. LARRY takes a cigarette and lights one.

FIELDING

I don't say this to many people, but you're a real asshole.

LARRY

Yeah, I know.

FIELDING

Why is that?

LARRY

Why the hell do you care?

FIELDING

Well, you killed your brother, and you tell me it was in self defense, but you haven't cried or shown the slightest feelings of regret since you stepped foot in this room. So I have to wonder who I'm dealing with. What makes you so cold?

LARRY

You think I'm cold?

FIELDING

If you ask me, your behavior is consistent with that of a sociopath.

LARRY

You a shrink?

FIELDING

I've taken classes-

LARRY

How many letters you got behind your name?

FIELDING

I don't follow.

LARRY

Do you have a Ph.D.?

FIELDING

No.

LARRY

Then what the hell do you know about it?

FIELDING

I talk to a lot of people, and you're just a little too cool. It's unusual.

LARRY

Let me ask you something. Why is it you freeze up every time I mention your other brother, the one who's not a cop?

FIELDING

He died.

LARRY

How?

FIELDING

Suicide.

LARRY

Well, officer, why is it that you look so guilty?

FIELDING

Because I knew he would do it. I felt responsible. (*Pause*) And I was upset for years about it.

LARRY

You think I'm not upset about what happened? Sure I am.

FIELDING

You're not acting like it.

LARRY

What, so I have to cry like a pussy for you to believe my story? Let me ask you – do I seem like a man who cries a lot?

FIELDING

I guess not.

Lights up in the kitchen. GLEN is sitting at the kitchen table, drinking a beer.

LARRY

So, if I flopped all over that floor, crying my goddamn eyes out, that might look out of character?

GLEN

I would pay good money to see that.

FIELDING

Yes, I guess it would.

LARRY

I don't know what you expect. Do you want to know if I loved Glen? I think so. Did we get along? No, we fought like hellcats. But could I intentionally kill someone? No.

GLEN

Damn, it smells in here. What is that? ●h man, it's the biggest pile of bullshit I've ever seen.

LARRY

Glen came at me ... and I did what I had to do.

FIELDING

And what was that?

LARRY

Shoot him.

GLEN

Shoot me.

Lights out in the kitchen.

FIELDING

Why don't you tell me exactly what happened?

LARRY

Glen called my house around nine-thirty in the morning. Said he needed to talk to me – that it was urgent.

LARRY walks from the interrogation room into the kitchen. Lights up in the kitchen. LARRY is holding the shotgun.

LARRY

When I got there, Glen was sitting at the kitchen table. The shotgun was sitting on the table, and he was drinking.

FIELDING

Was he drunk?

GLEN

Wait a minute. I don't drink.

LARRY

(To *FIELDING*) I think so.

GLEN

They'll check for alcohol in my blood.

LARRY

(To *FIELDING*) Or maybe he wasn't, but he got up to get a beer when I got there.

GLEN doesn't move.

GLEN

That's not where the refrigerator goes, Larry. You're remembering this wrong.

LARRY

(To *FIELDING*) When he got up, I took the gun. Told him I thought he was drunk—that I'd give it back in the morning.

LARRY points the shotgun at GLEN.

GLEN

What are you doing, Larry?

FIELDING

Did he ever aim the gun at you?

LARRY

(*To FIELDING*) Yeah, when I first came in. He aimed it at me and cocked it. When I took the gun from him, he went nuts. Grabbed a kitchen knife, told me he was going to gut me.

FIELDING

He had a knife?

LARRY

(*To FIELDING*) He started walking toward me with it.

GLEN

What? Are you going to shoot me?

LARRY

(*To FIELDING*) I told him to back off.

GLEN

Put the gun down, Larry.

LARRY

(*To FIELDING*) I told him to put the knife down.

GLEN stands and takes a few steps toward LARRY.

GLEN

Let's just forget what happened today. Just leave the gun on the table and we'll talk tomorrow.

LARRY

You can't make me love you like everyone else.

FIELDING
Did he say anything?

GLEN
That's ridiculous; of course I can't make
people love me.

LARRY
(*To FIELDING*) He said I couldn't make
her love me.

FIELDING
He was referring to Rachael?

LARRY
You never tried to make Rachael love you?
Or Mom? Or Dad? Tell the truth.

GLEN
Larry, I can help you. Let me help you.

LARRY fires the shotgun. Lights out in the kitchen. LARRY walks back
into the interrogation room and sits at the table.

LARRY
Yeah. He was talking about Rachael. Then he came at me and tried to stab me. I pushed
him away – I didn't think to put the safety on – and the gun went off.

FIELDING
What did you do after the gun went off?

LARRY
I don't know. I don't remember.

FIELDING
Are you sure?

LARRY
Yeah.

FIELDING
Is there anything else you would like to add? Something else you might have
remembered?

LARRY

No.

FIELDING writes a few notes on his notepad.

FIELDING

Okay.

FIELDING stands.

FIELDING

Your mother has been asking to speak to you, so now that we have your statement, I'll go ahead and let her in.

FIELDING takes the tape recorder off the table and puts it in his pocket.

FIELDING

We may ask you some more questions later.

FIELDING exits. MOMMA enters.

LARRY

Hey, Mom.

MOMMA

Son.

LARRY

How are you?

MOMMA

I'm holding myself together.

LARRY

Good.

MOMMA

They treating you okay?

LARRY

Yeah.

LARRY lights a cigarette.

MOMMA

They told me I couldn't smoke in here.

LARRY

They told me that, too; I threw a fit.

MOMMA nods her head slowly.

MOMMA

That sounds about right.

LARRY

You want one?

MOMMA

Sure.

LARRY takes a cigarette from the pack, lights it and hands it to
MOMMA.

MOMMA

Have they given you a lawyer yet?

LARRY

Don't want one.

MOMMA

I'll call one when I leave.

Both look down and smoke in silence for a brief pause.

LARRY

They said they talked to you?

MOMMA

Yes.

LARRY

What'd you tell them?

MOMMA

The truth.

LARRY

Oh.

MOMMA

They thought I was lying.

LARRY

You didn't tell them what happened?

MOMMA

I told them what I knew.

LARRY

And what's that?

MOMMA

Son, the only person who knows what happened is you. I guess I could have told them what I thought happened, but I figured you were in enough trouble already.

LARRY

Yeah.

MOMMA

I don't want to know what happened, by the way.

LARRY

What if I'm innocent?

MOMMA

What could you be innocent of, son? You pulled the trigger. Whether you did it out of hate or out of fear don't really matter much, now.

Pause.

MOMMA

You boys hated each other a long time – even if Glen was here right now, that would still be true.

MOMMA cries softly.

LARRY

I'm sorry, Mom.

MOMMA

For which part, son?

LARRY

For the way we acted all those years ... for what happened.

MOMMA

Don't worry too much.

LARRY

I didn't mean to cause you any trouble.

MOMMA

Trouble like this doesn't come for no reason. (*Pause*) I must have done something big to deserve this.

LARRY

You haven't done anything to deserve to be hurt like this.

MOMMA

That's just it, son. This don't feel much like hurt. You get hurt, you heal.

MOMMA takes a long drag of her cigarette and then pauses to watch the ember burn.

MOMMA

This is penance. Now I'm going to lose you, too.

LARRY

You won't lose me.

MOMMA

Don't be stupid, son. They're gonna lock you up, even if it wasn't all your fault.

LARRY

Only for a few years.

MOMMA

I won't live forever. And I really don't want to. This life's been long enough; felt like forever.

LARRY

You're just tired. It's been a long day.

MOMMA

And what am I supposed to do if that day has no end in sight?

LARRY

I don't know.

MOMMA

I didn't expect you would.

MOMMA nods.

MOMMA
What did you tell them?

LARRY
(*Pause.*) Self defense.

MOMMA laughs sadly.

MOMMA
After I heard that shot, I knew what happened. I tried to convince myself that it was anything else, but I knew. Only thing I didn't know was which one of you boys I would find on the floor.

MOMMA takes the pack of cigarettes and the lighter from the middle of the table. She tries to light her cigarette, but her hands are shaking too violently. LARRY holds out his hands. She hands him the lighter and cigarette, he lights it and hands the cigarette back.

MOMMA
You did that, too. When I came down the stairs ... I couldn't see Glen, but I could see you. I watched you light a cigarette. Your hands didn't shake a bit.

LARRY lights a cigarette for himself.

MOMMA
You were looking down, looking down like there was something familiar there – it was your brother.

She takes a drag.

MOMMA
When you were a kid, I used to take you to watch sunsets down by the pond. You never once looked impressed – it was like you had seen them a thousand times before. After a while I knew, it was just your old soul looking at nothing new. That was the way you looked at your brother, dead there on the floor – like nothing new – like you had killed him a thousand times before.

LARRY looks down. *Pause.*

LARRY
You told them that?

MOMMA
No.

LARRY
Oh.

MOMMA
I posted your bail.

LARRY
You don't have that kind of money.

MOMMA
I've got money. Money you don't know about.

LARRY
From what?

MOMMA
Your father.

LARRY
Dad doesn't have a dime.

MOMMA
He didn't, but he's dead. I collected the life insurance I put on him.

LARRY
Dad's dead?

MOMMA
Yeah.

LARRY
When?

MOMMA
About six years ago.

LARRY
You didn't say anything.

MOMMA
I didn't want to bother you boys with him—he never bothered himself with you. As far as I'm concerned, he died the day he left us.

LARRY

Mom, you kicked him out.

MOMMA

No. That ain't true. Your daddy had wild notions – he thought he was a good man. He figured he was a good enough man that leaving wouldn't count against him too much, but he was ignorant to his own faults. No, he left us. Only reason I knew he had left for good was because of what he said to Glen.

LARRY

What'd he say?

Pause.

MOMMA

I don't really remember...

LARRY

Yes, you do. We both do. He told Glen to use the gun to protect us against him.

Pause.

LARRY

Why'd you let us think you kicked him out?

MOMMA

I don't know, son. He was broken. There's something wrong with a man who will abandon his kin. Hell, maybe I wanted to believe it was me who sent him off. Make believe I saw him for the bad man that he was and sent him away from my boys.

LARRY

I'm sorry.

MOMMA

No need to be – not for that anyway.

LARRY

Can I ask you something?

MOMMA nods.

LARRY

Did you love Glen more?

Pause.

MOMMA

Glen was easier to love. Some days you just didn't seem to want anyone to care about you. But I tried to love you both the same.

MOMMA stands.

MOMMA

I'm going to post your bail and you're going to skip out – and you're not going to show up here again.

LARRY

What?

MOMMA

I don't want to see you anymore. It hurts too damn bad. And if I know you're sitting in that jail, I'll break down, show up and hurt all over again. So you're going to leave. That's your penance.

LARRY

Mom-

MOMMA

Why did you hate him so much?

LARRY

He knew he belonged.

MOMMA exits. Lights up on the kitchen. GLEN is sitting at the kitchen table.

GLEN

I won't go away, Larry.

LARRY

I'm not going to pay attention to you.

GLEN

Don't be so fucking stupid. Do you really believe this is our kitchen?

LARRY

We grew up in that house, Glen. I ate breakfast in that kitchen every morning for twenty years.

GLEN
Where are the walls?

FIELDING enters the interrogation room.

FIELDING
Forensics is going to run some test, but it looks like your story checks out. Your mom posted your bail, so you're free to leave.

GLEN
What color are the walls in this kitchen, Larry?

FIELDING
It's going to be a few days before we go to court, but it looks as though you will be tried for self defense.

GLEN
Is there wallpaper?

LARRY
(Quietly to GLEN, without looking at him)
No.

FIELDING
Excuse me?

GLEN
If they are real. What. Color. Are. They. Larry?

LARRY
(To GLEN, without looking at him) They're yellow.

FIELDING
Who is yellow?

GLEN
No, they aren't.

FIELDING

Mr. Bryant, I'm a little confused.

GLEN very carefully flips the kitchen table over.

GLEN

Tell him the truth.

LARRY

(To GLEN, without looking at him) No.

FIELDING

Is there a problem?

LARRY

No.

GLEN

Have it your way.

GLEN meticulously begins stacking all of the kitchen chairs, in a teepee shape, on top of the kitchen table.

FIELDING

Okay, I'm going to go finish drawing up your statement.

LARRY

(To GLEN) Stop.

GLEN

Where does Mom keep the varnish?

FIELDING

Is there something you want to tell me?

GLEN

Tell him.

LARRY

I may have left out a few little details in my statement.

GLEN

Does she still keep it in the hall closet?

GLEN exits.

FIELDING
How little?

GLEN (*Offstage*)
Found it. This shit is so flammable.

LARRY
I wasn't entirely honest about some things.

GLEN enters the kitchen holding a small bottle of varnish. FIELDING sits down at the interrogation table.

FIELDING
I'm listening.

GLEN
Me, too.

LARRY
I asked Rachael to leave my brother for me.

FIELDING
Is that it?

LARRY
Yeah.

GLEN
Not good enough.

GLEN pours the varnish on the chairs and table.

FIELDING
I'll make a note of it in the report.

GLEN
Are the matches still by the fireplace?

FIELDING turns to exit.

GLEN
Wait. I have some in my pocket.

GLEN pulls the matches out and lights one.

LARRY
Wait.

FIELDING turns.

FIELDING
Mr. Bryant, you're wasting my time.

GLEN
You don't have to tell him.

LARRY
I killed my brother.

GLEN blows the match out.

FIELDING
What?

LARRY
It wasn't self defense.

FIELDING
Excuse me?

LARRY
I murdered him. I hated him.

GLEN
No you didn't.

LARRY
I went back to my mom's house knowing I
was going to kill him. I had the shotgun.
There was no struggle.

FIELDING steps back a few steps.

FIELDING
You're telling the truth?

LARRY puts a cigarette in his mouth and nods.

GLEN

I still have to do this, Larry.

GLEN lights a match at the exact moment that LARRY strikes the cigarette lighter. LARRY lights his cigarette and GLEN drops the match on the kitchen chairs and table. The kitchen chairs and table go up in flames. Lights out in the kitchen. GLEN can be seen behind the flames, as LARRY sits at the interrogation room table and smokes. After a moment, FIELDING walks over to the door.

FIELDING

I'm going to have to write up another statement. You will need to sign it.

LARRY nods. FIELDING heads toward the exits.

LARRY

Fielding. You ever tell anyone you feel guilty for your brother?

FIELDING

Just you.

LARRY

You should tell your other brothers. I bet they feel just as guilty.

FIELDING exits.

GLEN

What about what Mom asked for?

LARRY

This is what she asked for.

GLEN

*And hear upon the sodden floor
Below, the boarhound and the boar
Pursue their pattern as before
But reconciled among the stars.*

GLEN exits. The fire dies.

Black Out.

THE BOATMAN

EXT. GRAVEYARD ENTRANCE -- LATE AFTERNOON

The sheriff's car drives through the open gate into the cemetery. The sign above the gate reads: Bluestone Cemetery.

EXT. GRAVEYARD

A small backhoe sits in the middle of the cemetery, a panel open to expose the engine and other mechanics. Several different wrenches lay around on the ground.

EXT. A DIFFERENT PART OF THE GRAVEYARD

The sun is starting to set as GAVIN (30) digs shoulder deep in a hole.

A bucket, with water in it, ten crushed beer cans and two full ones floating around, sits next to the hole.

Gavin stops digging, grabs a beer, opens it and drinks.

INT. KITCHEN GAVIN'S HOUSE

DOROTHY (50) stands at the counter shaping biscuits onto a pan. She opens the oven and puts the biscuits in.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE HOUSE

Dorothy is seen in the kitchen through the window as the Sheriff's car pulls up. Her face looks tired and weary as if she can barely stand to look out.

SHERIFF ED BATEMAN (Late 50's) steps out of the car in uniform; he fixes his hair in the side mirror, walks to the front door and knocks.

EXT. GRAVEYARD

The sun is almost all the way down. Gavin shovels one more load of dirt out of the hole and then lays the shovel on the ground outside the hole. He watches the sunset for a moment while he finishes his beer, then crushes the can and shimmies out of the hole on his belly.

Gavin throws the crushed can into the bucket, takes the last full one out and opens it. He picks up the bucket and dumps the water out, then walks toward the house.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM IN GAVIN'S HOUSE

The living room is sparsely decorated with an old antique love seat, a couple end tables with oil lamps on them, an old "rabbit ear" television and a recliner. A few pictures sit on a shelf next to the television and a Celtic cross hangs on the wall behind the couch.

Sheriff and Dorothy stand by the doorway.

DOROTHY

Sheriff. Something I can help you with?

SHERIFF

He's been running his mouth off again, Dorothy.

Sheriff hangs his coat on the coat rack.

DOROTHY

Have a seat, Sheriff.

Sheriff moves to sit in the recliner, and Dorothy puts her hand on his back gently pushing him back up.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

That's Gavin's chair. Have a seat over here.

Sheriff sits on the couch.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Can I get you anything?

Dorothy motions to the kitchen.

SHERIFF

Tea.

Dorothy exits to the kitchen. Sheriff leans forward in his seat and looks into the kitchen. Through the kitchen doorway, we see Dorothy from behind. She turns and scowls.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

Has he found her yet?

Sheriff turns away and leans back in his seat.

DOROTHY (O.S.)

Don't reckon he has.

Gavin walks in from the front door, puts the bucket by the door. Sheriff stands. Gavin stares at Sheriff as if he doesn't see him. Gavin sits in his recliner.

SHERIFF

Gavin. You find it today or not?

Dorothy enters and hands Gavin a beer. She turns to Sheriff, gently pushes him back into his seat and hands him the glass of tea.

DOROTHY

Now, Sheriff, you give my boy here a moment's rest. He's been workin' all day.

Gavin stares into his beer can to avoid eye contact with Sheriff.

SHERIFF

Yes or no's all I need.

DOROTHY

Why don't you stay for dinner? We'll talk more about it then.

Dorothy walks back into the kitchen. Gavin opens his beer and drinks. Sheriff puts his glass down hard on the side table next to him and crosses his arms.

SHERIFF

How you like having your mother move in with you?

Gavin stares at the wall.

GAVIN

Guess it's better than living alone for the last thirty years.

Sheriff's face tenses, and he grudgingly picks the glass up and drinks from it.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE HOUSE -- TWILIGHT.

The wind picks up, shaking tree limbs. Storm clouds move in.

INT. THE KITCHEN

Gavin and Sheriff sit at the table while Dorothy serves them roast. She serves Gavin a noticeably bigger portion.

SHERIFF

So Gavin, have you found anything yet?

Gavin shovels food into his mouth.

GAVIN (HIS MOUTH FULL)

Couple of tin cans.

SHERIFF

Goddamn it, Gavin. That's not what I mean. Have you found your wife's body?

Dorothy picks up a butter knife and points it at Sheriff as she speaks.

DOROTHY

Sheriff, I'd appreciate you quiet your tone, and cut out that language at my table. I don't much care who you are.

Gavin pauses to chew. He swallows hard.

GAVIN

Haven't found her yet.

Dorothy sits.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Gavin, please say the blessing.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Gavin is heard saying the blessing while we see a picture of Gavin as a boy with his mother and father, Gavin and his wife in their twenties on their wedding day, and the Celtic cross on the wall.

GAVIN (V.O.)

Bless this, oh Lord, and these thy gifts which we are about to receive, from thy bounty, through Christ our Lord, Amen.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE HOUSE -- NIGHT.

The wind blows strongly and it's raining. Lightning strikes, lighting up the cemetery; it briefly reveals over fifty round holes dug up in one part of the cemetery. Through the window, we see the three eating silently.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM IN GAVIN'S HOUSE

Dorothy and Sheriff stand by the open front door. Sheriff points toward the kitchen.

SHERIFF

He's stalling, Dorothy.

Stepping in closer and speaking softer than Sheriff.

DOROTHY

My boy didn't kill anyone, especially not Rose. He loved her too much.

SHERIFF

I'd like to believe you Dorothy, but if he didn't do it, why does he keep telling people he did?

Dorothy takes another step toward Sheriff. She rubs the back of her neck; she's tired of arguing but certain she's right.

DOROTHY

Ed, how long you known my boy? Over twenty years?

Sheriff takes a step backwards out the door as though he has lost.

SHERIFF

That really don't matter. Gavin is obstructing justice and wasting my god damn time. I'm coming back to get him tomorrow.

We see through the open door as Sheriff turns and walks toward his car. Dorothy lets him get halfway there before speaking.

DOROTHY

Come on back inside, Ed.

Sheriff turns with his hands on his hips and faces her.

INT. THE KITCHEN IN GAVIN'S HOUSE

The dishes and leftover food have still not been cleared off the table. Gavin carries his plate to the trashcan and slides the uneaten food off with a fork.

The muffled sounds of Sheriff and Dorothy having sex can be heard. The bed is heard hitting the wall and Sheriff can be heard grunting occasionally, Dorothy doesn't make a sound.

Gavin looks up at the ceiling; he tosses the fork and plate back onto the table and sulks into the living room.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM IN GAVIN'S HOUSE -- LATER

Gavin sits in his chair and watches television. The volume on the television is very loud.

Sheriff enters tucking in his shirt.

SHERIFF

See you next week, boy.

Gavin holds up his middle finger as Sheriff passes. Sheriff exits.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE -- MORNING.

A small office with three desks, a bench and a couple of filing cabinets. Maps of a large lake hang on the wall, as well as a map of a very small town.

Sheriff sits at a desk, reading a newspaper. SECRETARY (30's) is sitting at a desk and OFFICER (20's) sits on top of the same desk, drinking a cup of coffee.

OFFICER

Why are we wasting time on this, Ed? We have six witnesses that could testify to his confession.

Officer spills coffee on his shirt. He puts the coffee cup on the desk and pulls his shirt away from his body to inspect it.

SHERIFF

We don't have a spot of evidence and not a damn witness with a sober brain cell.

Secretary hands Officer a napkin, and he starts blotting the stain.

OFFICER

But no one's seen his wife in a couple of months. I think we could get him.

Sheriff laughs and goes back to reading his newspaper. The phone rings and Secretary answers it.

SECRETARY

Blue Stone County Sheriff's Department. Hey, Jim. Okay, I'll let the sheriff know. Bye.

Secretary hangs up the phone.

SECRETARY (CONT'D)

Gavin Williams is down at The Lighthouse Pub, drunk again, and running his mouth.

Officer jumps up takes a sip of his coffee and puts it back on the desk. Sheriff picks his gun belt off the desk, puts it on and walks toward the door. Officer follows him.

SHERIFF

You stay here.

EXT. THE TOWN

The Sheriff's car moves through town. The buildings are all old brick, packed tightly together. The car passes by an old music shop, an antique shop, a funeral home, and a small church. The sheriff's car passes over a bridge with a large lake below it. A couple of bass boats skip past.

INT. THE LIGHTHOUSE PUB

A small, dark room with a long bar, about seven bar tables and a pool table. Green glass light fixtures hang over the bar, the tables and the pool table.

Gavin sits at one end of the bar hunched over an almost empty pint, facing away from everyone. BARTENDER and BAR PATRON are at the other end of the bar. STEVE (20's) is sitting in a backwards chair, facing Gavin.

STEVE

If she was so goddamn beautiful, why'd you kill her?

Steve, grinning and holding a Miller Bottle, inches closer to Gavin in his chair.

GAVIN

Told her I was leaving, she says to me she'll kill me. I was set to leave, and she came after me with a kitchen knife. It was a case of self defense. I never meant to kill her.

Steve finishes his beer and shakes it in the air. The bartender nods at him.

STEVE

You stab her?

The Bartender walks to Steve hands him another bottle, takes his empty and walks back around the bar. He continues his conversation with Bar Patron.

GAVIN

I cracked her skull.

STEVE

With your hands?

Steve laughs, stands up and puts his chair next to a table and walks over to the pool table.

EXT. THE LIGHTHOUSE PUB

The Sheriff's car pulls up outside in a gravel parking lot. Four other cars sit in the lot. Sheriff gets out of the car.

INT. THE LIGHTHOUSE PUB

Steve is chalking a pool stick, still laughing. Sheriff enters; everyone looks up at him but Gavin.

STEVE

Hey there, Sheriff; that one there says he's a killer. Crack a skull in one punch. Been ramblin' on about cartin' dead folks around in a boat or something. I'm not sure if you should lock him up or send him to the nut house.

Sheriff stands behind Gavin and unhooks the latch on his holster.

SHERIFF

All right, Gavin. Get up.

Gavin flicks him off. Steve laughs harder.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

I'm not playing with you today.

Gavin finishes his beer, stands and faces Sheriff. Sheriff holds out a pair of handcuffs.

GAVIN

Fuck off, Sheriff. I'm drinking.

SHERIFF

Damn it, boy. Why do you always have to act like such a dick?

GAVIN

Because you're a cunt.

Gavin doesn't move at first, but then takes the handcuffs and puts them on his wrists.

SHERIFF

Yeah? That so? Well, your momma seems to likes me. That mean she likes cunts? She a lesbian?

Sheriff checks the cuffs.

GAVIN

Son of a bitch.

Sheriff pushes him forward.

SHERIFF

You walked into that one.

The two exit.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE -- AFTERNOON.

Officer and Secretary sit at different desks. Secretary works on paperwork and Officer is eating a hamburger. Sheriff enters escorting a handcuffed and stumbling Gavin through the office.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE THE CELL ROOM.

A narrow hallway, with no windows and two jail cells next to each other. Sheriff pushes Gavin into a cell and shuts the cell door. Gavin holds his handcuffed wrists through the bars and Sheriff removes the cuffs.

Sheriff exits. Gavin pulls a flask from his pocket and drinks. Sheriff enters with a note pad and a pen. He tosses both into the jail cell.

SHERIFF

I want a confession by morning.

Sheriff exits.

SHERIFF'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

An unmade bed, dirty clothes cover the floor. A couple of fishing poles lean against a corner. A framed picture is on the wall of Sheriff with a large fish in his hands.

The door to the bathroom is open and the light is flickering on and off. The bathroom is filthy.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM IN SHERIFF'S HOUSE

Sheriff is passed out in a recliner, still in uniform. The television is on the blue screen and it lights up the room. Dirty dishes are on the couch and the coffee table. An almost empty bottle of whiskey and an empty glass sit on the side table next to the recliner.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE -- MORNING.

A coffee maker drips coffee into a pot. Secretary and Officer are sitting at their desks; Officer is eating a breakfast sandwich. Sheriff enters, tucking in his shirt.

SECRETARY

Morning, Sheriff.

OFFICER

Sheriff.

SHERIFF

Morning, everyone.

Sheriff walks to the coffee maker and fixes himself a cup.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE THE CELL ROOM.

Sheriff walks over to the cell and looks down at the pad of paper on the floor outside the cell. The pen rests neatly on top and the paper reads:

INSERT:

Fuck Off.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE -- MORNING.

Sheriff unbuckles his gun belt and lays it on an empty desk.

OFFICER

What do we do about him?

Sheriff sits down at the desk.

SHERIFF

Let him go.

EXT. A BRIDGE -- MORNING.

Gavin walks slowly across the bridge off to the side. The Sheriff follows behind him in his car. Three cars are lined up behind the Sheriff waiting to pass. A couple of boats skip past on the water below.

EXT. A BACK ROAD -- NOON.

Gavin walks along the side of the road. The Sheriff follows closely behind in his car.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CEMETERY -- AFTERNOON.

The Sheriff's car is parked outside the cemetery. Sheriff sits in his car and watches Gavin through the cast iron fence. Through the fence, we see Gavin, knee deep, digging a new hole.

Dorothy enters with a bucket of ice with beer packed into it. She puts it near the hole, stares at Sheriff before she leaves. Gavin pauses digging to open a beer.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CEMETERY -- LATE AFTERNOON.

Sheriff paces outside the cemetery gates. Gavin is digging waist deep in the hole now. He has removed his shirt; his arms and chest are toned from years of digging. He has a Celtic cross tattoo on his arm.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CEMETERY -- NEAR SUNSET.

Sheriff sits on the hood of his car. He has taken off his uniform shirt and now wears a white undershirt, his gun belt and his uniform pants. The sun is setting behind him. Gavin, shoulder deep in the hole, places the shovel next to the hole and crawls out. He picks up his bucket and leaves.

Sheriff gets in his car and drives off.

INT. THE LIGHTHOUSE PUB -- NIGHT.

Sheriff sits at the bar, eating from a basket of French fries smothered in mustard. He finishes his glass of scotch and puts it down hard on the bar. Bartender looks his way; Sheriff points to the glass, and Bartender walks over and refills it.

The only other people in the pub are Steve and DRUNK GUY (20's) playing pool.

STEVE

Hey, Sheriff. How is it this town don't see a murder in twenty-five years, and then we get a killer who confesses, and you can't catch him?

Steve walks across the bar and sits down next to Sheriff at the bar.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Seems like all you gotta do to be sheriff is drink lots and not catch killers.

DRUNK GUY

Hey, Steve, maybe you should be sheriff.

They both laugh. Sheriff tenses and looks straight ahead.

STEVE

What do you think, Sheriff? Think maybe one day I could be sheriff like you, not catch killers?

Sheriff grabs Steve by the collar.

SHERIFF

You won't ever be anything, boy.

Sheriff pushes Steve backwards in his bar stool. Steve falls to the ground, pushes himself backwards and stumbles to his feet. Drunk Guy takes a few steps forward with a pool stick in hand. The bartender tenses and looks back and forth between Sheriff and Steve.

Sheriff pulls his wallet from his back pocket, pulls money out and throws it on the bar. Without looking at anyone, he puts his wallet back in his pocket, stands and leaves.

EXT. OUTSIDE GAVIN'S HOUSE

Sheriff is drunk outside the house with his car door open, speaking through the CB into a megaphone.

SHERIFF

Gavin, this is the Sheriff's department. Come on out.

A few lights in the house come on. Gavin and Dorothy come out the front door. Dorothy is in pajamas, and Gavin is wearing jeans and no shirt.

DOROTHY

What the hell's all this about?

SHERIFF

New evidence.

DOROTHY

I'm calling a lawyer, Ed. I've had enough of your bull.

Dorothy goes back inside the house.

EXT. THE CEMETARY

Gavin and Sheriff stand in the cemetery, Sheriff is holding a shotgun in one hand and shovel in the other. He throws the shovel on the ground at Gavin's feet.

SHERIFF

You won't sign a confession until you find the body. Well, you're gonna find it tonight. Dig.

Gavin doesn't move. Sheriff hits him in the stomach with the butt of the gun. Gavin falls to the ground. Sheriff kicks him in the stomach and then steps back.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

I won't say it again.

Gavin grabs the shovel and stands; he holds it like a weapon. Sheriff takes a step back and points the gun at Gavin. Gavin starts to dig.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

You know, I was almost your daddy.

Gavin throws dirt on Sheriff's boots. Sheriff kicks it back at Gavin.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

Your mom and me went out a few times. Then your dad showed up in town, everyone thought he was a big war hero. Drunk loser is what he was. Bet you thought the other day was the first time I fucked your mom.

Gavin stops mid scoop and stares hard at the little earth he's unmasked. While Sheriff isn't watching, Gavin climbs out of the hole.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

Twice back in high school. Then your daddy came-

Gavin takes three threatening steps toward Sheriff before he points his gun and cocks it. Gavin stops. Sheriff hits Gavin across the face with the butt of the gun. Gavin falls to the ground, Sheriff kicks him a few times before stepping back.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

I think that's enough digging for tonight.

EXT. OUTSIDE GAVIN'S HOUSE

Sheriff puts Gavin in the backseat of his car, then opens the trunk and throws the shovel inside.

INT. THE BACK OF THE SHERIFF'S CAR

Gavin sits in the backseat in handcuffs; he is muddy and his face is beaten and bleeding. Through the fogging window we see Dorothy come out of the house. Sheriff and Dorothy argue, but we can't hear what they say. Sheriff gets in the car and starts it.

SHERIFF

Too many people say you got blood on your hands. This all ends when you confess.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE -- NIGHT.

Sheriff and Gavin are the only two in the Sheriff's office. Gavin sits at a desk, handcuffed with a Sheriff's Department jacket pulled over his shoulders; he writes his confession on a note pad. His face is more visibly beaten. Sheriff watches him from a different desk.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE -- MORNING.

Gavin sits handcuffed to a bench. Sheriff sits at a desk reading over Gavin's confession. Officer stands behind him and reads over his shoulder. Secretary sits at her desk, filling out paperwork; she stops to look over at Gavin every couple of seconds.

OFFICER

Here's what I don't get, Gavin. If you'd just buried your wife, how come you couldn't find the body a week later?

GAVIN

I was drunk.

The phone rings. Secretary picks it up and writes as she talks.

SECRETARY

Blue Stone County Sheriff's Department. Who's this? I'm sorry can you say that again? Where is she now? Okay. Thank you.

Secretary hangs up the phone.

SECRETARY (CONT'D)

Sheriff, Rose Williams turned up in North Carolina.

SHERIFF

North Carolina? Can you explain that, Gavin?

Sheriff stands and walks over to the bench.

SECRETARY

No, Sheriff. She's not dead. That was Dorothy Williams, she just spoke to her. Rose left two months ago, been drivin' around, hadn't spoken to anyone. Until now. She called to see if Gavin had gotten the divorce papers. She says he never laid a hand on her.

SHERIFF

You didn't kill her? She left you?

GAVIN

That's someone joking. I knocked her head in.

SHERIFF

She left you, Gavin.

GAVIN

I'm ready to sign that confession now.

SHERIFF

Call back and get the number she called from, I need a confirmation.

Secretary dials a number. We see her speak, but we don't hear what she says. Sheriff paces, and Officer speaks to him, unheard. She hangs up the phone and says something to Sheriff.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE -- AFTERNOON.

Sheriff grabs Gavin by the handcuffs and unlocks them. Gavin slowly gets up and walks out of the station without looking at anyone.

EXT. BRIDGE

The sky is grey and it's raining outside. Gavin walks slowly across the bridge, off to the side.

EXT. A BACK ROAD -- NOON.

Gavin walks slowly along the side of the road.

EXT. THE CEMETERY -- AFTERNOON.

Gavin stands ankle deep digging a new hole. Dorothy enters with a bucket of ice and beer and sets it down next to the hole. Gavin pauses digging.

GAVIN

I didn't mean to kill her momma.

Dorothy nods and hands him a beer. He opens it and drinks.

DOROTHY

I know you didn't.

GAVIN

I know everyone thinks I'm crazy. They won't when they die, and I'm the one who ferries them across.

DOROTHY

We'll keep that our secret.

EXT. THE CEMETERY -- LATE AFTERNOON.

The cemetery can be seen in full. Half of the cemetery is marked with gravestones, and the other half has hundreds of hole dug into the earth. Gavin works on the end closest to the gate, and Dorothy treks back to the house.

The sun is setting. A few cars pass by the gate, slowing, almost to a stop, when they pass Gavin by the gate.

FADE OUT.