

# NINE-TENTHS

By Greg Atkins

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# NINE-TENTHS

*A Collection of Short Plays*

**By Greg Atkins**

**SYNOPSIS:** *Nine-Tenths* is an anthology of nine ten-minute scenes that take the audience through a wide variety of styles, characters, and worlds. Gary wants to propose, until his girlfriend—from the future—arrives to stop him in *Tempus Fugit*. A corporate team building outing gone wrong in *Loanly Ladies*. A humorous look at the modern world of dating in *Swipe*. This production can be done with multiple doubling of characters or each scene can stand alone with its own unique cast.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(2-20 females, 2-21 males)*

### TEMPUS FUGIT

GARY (m) ..... Mid 20's, boyfriend to Cynthia. *(73 lines)*  
 CYNTHIA (f) ..... Mid 20's, girlfriend to Gary. *(35 lines)*  
 FUTURE CYNTHIA (f) ..... Mid 20's. *(47 lines)*

### DUTY

CLAY (m) ..... 30's, confident and charismatic. *(50 lines)*  
 ANGELA (f) ..... 30's, up and coming District Attorney.  
*(63 lines)*  
 DANIEL (m) ..... mid 20's, bearded and a bit unkempt.  
*(16 lines)*

### BUNNIES

OREN (m) ..... 60's, owner of Oren's Antiques and a recent widower. *(87 lines)*  
 RAY (m) ..... 60's, County Police Officer nearing retirement. *(86 lines)*

### THE EXCHANGE

LINDA (f) ..... early 30's, the ex-wife. *(72 lines)*  
 KEVIN (m) ..... early 30's, the ex-husband. *(72 lines)*

**LOANLY LADIES**

KARI (f) .....any age, mortgage broker. *(67 lines)*  
 DIANE (f).....any age, mortgage broker. *(49 lines)*  
 MALCOM (m) .....late 20's, improv coach. *(30 lines)*  
 CROWD (m/f).....Offstage voice or pre-recorded. *(3 lines)*  
 MAN ON GROUND (m) .....Offstage voice or pre-recorded. *(1 line)*

**LOVE**

DAD (m) .....40's. *(60 lines)*  
 MOM (f).....40's. *(50 lines)*  
 KATIE (f).....21, a person with Down syndrome.  
*(48 lines)*

**SWEET BABY NAMES**

CHUCK (m) .....early 30's, the husband. *(74 lines)*  
 ELIZABETH (f) .....early 30's, the wife and very pregnant.  
*(74 lines)*

**FACETIME**

AMY (f).....20's, Mike's fiancé. *(77 lines)*  
 MIKE (m).....20's, an Army infantryman on tour  
 overseas. *(62 lines)*  
 RUSS (m) .....late 20's, coworker of Amy. *(16 lines)*

**SWIPE**

MALE #1-10 (m).....Dating age. *(107 lines)*  
 FEMALE #1-10 (f).....Dating age. *(107 lines)*

**SYNOPSIS OF SCENES****ACT ONE**

TEMPUS FUGIT  
 DUTY  
 BUNNIES  
 THE EXCHANGE  
 LOANLY LADIES

**ACT TWO**

LOVE  
 SWEET BABY NAMES  
 FACETIME  
 SWIPE

**TEMPUS FUGIT**

**AT START:** *A one-bedroom apartment. The living room and kitchen. A sofa, coffee table, recliner, etc. The kitchen area has a stove, refrigerator, sink, etc. It is clean and tidy. Right Center is the front door, a window over the sink, a window over the sofa. Stage Left is a door to the bathroom and the door to the bedroom. [NOTE: The setting can also be very simple: a couch, bar cart with beer, sparkling wine and glasses, a living room table and a blanket. The front door, bathroom door and bedroom door can be simple curtained entrances and exits.]*

*GARY, a friendly looking millennial geek, is sitting on the couch in an Overwatch t-shirt and sports coat. On the coffee table are candles and a small vase of flowers. There is a bottle of California sparkling wine and two mismatched wine glasses. It looks like someone is preparing for a romantic evening. 60's music plays and he fidgets with a ring box. Suddenly a bright orange light blasts through the windows, followed by a loud crack.*

**GARY:** What the hell?

*As he looks out the window, the front door flies open and there stands FUTURE CYNTHIA in a silver leotard with a rainbow lightning bolt on the front and sporting a shimmering golden midi-cape. She has that cute nerd look and you can just tell that she's the smartest person in any room.*

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** Am I too late?

**GARY:** Wow, cool outfit, babe.

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** *(Whispering.)* Is she here?

**GARY:** What?

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** Gary, focus. Is. She. Here.

**GARY:** Who?

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** Me.

**GARY:** Cynthia?

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** *(Noticing. Relieved.)* Oh, my god. You still have the ring.

**GARY:** What ring? *(Puts the ring box behind his back.)*

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** *(Sighs loudly and holds out her hand.)* Gimmie.

**GARY:** *(Shows her the ring box.)* Oh, this? It's just... *(FUTURE CYNTHIA grabs the ring box out of his hand.)* Hey!

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** Look, I don't have much time to explain, but you can't ask me to marry you. *(Goes around blowing out the candles, grabs the remote and turns off the music.)*

**GARY:** How do you know I was going...?

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** *(Grabs the wine and glasses.)* Listen, Gary... *(Noticing the glasses.)* I can't believe we still have these. *(Takes them to the kitchen, putting the wine in the fridge and the glasses in the cupboard. She sets the ring box on the counter.)* Listen, Gary, my boss doesn't know I'm using the TimeSlider and if he does, I'm fired. *(Looks at GARY.)* Are you paying attention?

**GARY:** This is very cool cosplay.

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** This isn't cosplay. This is me. Cynthia. I am from twenty years in the future.

**GARY:** Really? You don't look that much different.

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** Why do you think I put on Oil of Olay every night?

**GARY:** *(Confused.)* I never really...

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** *(Goes and sits with GARY, taking his hands.)* Gary, listen. This is important. I'm going to walk through the front door in just a minute. I'm going to totally ignore all the great romantic stuff you've done and go get a beer. You'll be sitting here all sweet and geeky and I'm going to tell you I was offered a job at Tempus...

**GARY:** Tempus? Really? That's great!

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** And that's exactly what you'll say and then I'll realize something is up and you'll propose and I'll say yes and we'll drink that bottle of wine and then we'll make love right here on the couch and... *(Getting upset at herself and standing up.)* I won't be paying any attention to you because I'll just keep looking at the ring over and over and wondering if maybe a princess cut is a bit much... and, oh, god, was I already that selfish lover that I said I'd never be? Anyway, the point is, I've come back to tell you to not ask me to marry you.

**GARY:** Because you're a selfish lover?

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** No! You're not hearing what I'm saying.

**GARY:** Is that what women wear in the future?

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** What? This? No! Today was dress as your favorite superhero day at work.

**GARY:** *(To himself.)* A job at Tempus? Wow. *(To FUTURE CYNTHIA.)* Way to go, babe.

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** *(Happily.)* Thanks. We finally got health insurance! And dental!

**GARY:** Sweet. So, who are you supposed to be?

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** Mercurial. You haven't heard of her yet. She's new to the Marvel canon and she is epic!

**GARY:** What are her powers?

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** Well, she has the ability to... NO! It doesn't matter! *(Going to GARY.)* Look, Gary, you can't propose to me!

**GARY:** Why?

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** Just... if you ever loved me. *(Pleading.)* Please don't ask me to marry you.

**GARY:** *(Playing along.)* Is it because it'll set a series of events in motion that will spark a nuclear holocaust? Will our love usher in the demise of mankind as we know it? Will our children become tyrannical warlords that bring universes to their knees?

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** *(Sadly.)* No, Gary, it's just that we have a really shitty marriage.

**GARY:** Oh.

*SFX: slam of a car door and the beep of a car alarm.*

**CYNTHIA and FUTURE CYNTHIA:** *(Said together.)* I'm here!

**GARY:** You're here!

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** I can't see me. If I do... *(Puts her hands together, then makes an explosion with them.)* boom! At least I think that's what happens.

**GARY:** Quick, get in the bathroom. First door.

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** I know where my own bathroom is!

**GARY:** Right.

*FUTURE CYNTHIA goes into the bathroom, but catches her cape in the door as it closes. GARY notices and crosses to the door, trying to pull/push the cape back in, but it won't budge. He does business with the cape until the front door opens and in walks CYNTHIA wearing a Hello Kitty backpack. CYNTHIA wears a simple, but cute dress and low heels.*

**CYNTHIA:** *(Throwing her backpack on the floor, flipping her shoes off and heading to the fridge.)* You will not believe the day I've had! Highs and lows, peaks and valleys, but ultimately... victory! Hi, babe.

**GARY:** Hi.

**CYNTHIA:** *(With her head in the fridge.)* Did you drink the last Amstel Light?

**GARY:** Nope!

**CYNTHIA:** *(FUTURE CYNTHIA'S cape zips into the bathroom, as CYNTHIA'S head comes out of the fridge, looking at GARY.)* Sparkling wine? Did we win the lottery? *(With a British accent.)* Are we now members of the Royal Family?

**GARY:** *(Sits on the couch.)* It was on sale and I thought it'd be nice.

**CYNTHIA:** Great, because we have something to celebrate. *(Opens the cupboard blocking her view of GARY and takes out two glasses.)*

**GARY:** *(Smiling.)* We may have a lot to celebrate. *(The bathroom door opens and an Oil of Olay bottle flies out and hits GARY.)* Ow!

**CYNTHIA:** *(Misunderstanding his meaning.)* Owwww is right! *(Catwalk strutting toward him.)* It's your lady comin' at you with... *(Looking at the bottle.)* a sparkling wine that legally cannot be called champagne in the United States to tell you.... *(Sits.)* What are you doing with my Oil of Olay?

**GARY:** I... ah....

**CYNTHIA:** Do not gross me out. Not with my precious Oil of Olay. And anyway your chances of getting lucky are very high tonight. *(Handing GARY the wine bottle.)* Can you open this... or are your hands all greasy?

**GARY:** *(Holding up the lotion bottle.)* I... uh... never opened this. *(Puts the lotion on the table and opens the wine.)* I'll open this.

**CYNTHIA:** So! A peak; Dr. Rogers said my new concepts of the Inherent Paradoxes of Time were dead on. A valley; Morrison said he would not send my paper on Non-Linear Constructs of Time to the Journal of Physics, because, in his words, "Time, my dear, does not slide." He's an ass. And he's wrong. *(Immediately shifting gears.)* You know what?

**GARY:** Nope, I don't know anything.

**CYNTHIA:** Let's go out to dinner!

**GARY:** *(Surprised.)* Okay.

**CYNTHIA:** I want Italian. Carbs stuffed with carbs with carb sauce.

**GARY:** Dominico's?

**CYNTHIA:** Yes! They have breadsticks. I'm gonna take a shower.  
*(Runs off to the bedroom.)*

**GARY:** Wait! The victory? You said ultimately you were victorious.

**CYNTHIA:** *(Offstage. From the bedroom.)* Oh, yeah. Hang on... I have to get out of this dumb ass dress.

*The bathroom door opens and FUTURE CYNTHIA comes out.*

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** *(Whispering.)* Am I always like that?

**GARY:** Like what?

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** Just come in the front door and start talking?

**GARY:** Um, yeah.

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** What a bitch. I didn't even ask you about your day, did I? Do I ever kiss you when I come home?

**GARY:** That's not really something you do.

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** I thought you didn't do it. *(Spots the shoes that present CYNTHIA kicked off. She crosses and picks one up.)* Oh, my god, I loved those shoes! I knew I should have gotten two pair. And what was I thinking with that Hello Kitty bag? No wonder Morrison thought I was an idiot.

*SFX: large thud from the bedroom offstage.*

**CYNTHIA:** *(Offstage.)* OW! Damn it, Gary!

**GARY:** Hide! *(FUTURE CYNTHIA throws herself behind the sofa still holding the shoe. Calling off...)* What happened, babe?

**CYNTHIA:** *(Offstage.)* Ow, ow, ow, ow, ow. I hit my knee on your dumb amplifier. Again! *(Enters in a robe, limping and holding her knee.)*  
Gary, can't you take your amp and your guitar to your moms?

**GARY:** I guess so.

**CYNTHIA:** I'd appreciate it. *(Crosses to get her shoes and only finds one.)* Where's my other shoe? *(Looks around.)* Where the hell did it go? *(The shoe flies up from behind the sofa and GARY catches it.)*

**GARY:** Found it!

**CYNTHIA:** *(Reaches for it.)* Oh, thanks. *(GARY tosses it to her and it goes over her head.)* What is wrong with you?

**GARY:** *(At a loss to explain his throw, he shouts...)* Sports!!

*CYNTHIA retrieves the shoe as FUTURE CYNTHIA crawls from the sofa to the bathroom with her cape over her head to hide her face. CYNTHIA crosses to the bathroom. GARY leaps up, stopping her from going into the bathroom.*

**GARY:** I wouldn't go in there right now. I might give it a moment to air out.

**CYNTHIA:** You befouled our bathroom in the time it took to take off my dress? That's a record even for you. And I didn't hear a flush.

*SFX: toilet flushes.*

**GARY:** I gotta fix that. So, your victory?

**CYNTHIA:** Oh, my victory! So after Morrison denies my paper I'm thinking... we're not married, we live in this shitty apartment, *(GARY looks around at the place... it ain't so bad.)*, so what do I have to lose by quitting this job? I'm too smart for these people anyway... and suddenly my phone dings and I get an offer of a job at...

**CYNTHIA and GARY:** Tempus!

**CYNTHIA:** How did you know?

**GARY:** I didn't.

**CYNTHIA:** You just said it.

**GARY:** I just figured that would be an ultimate victory... and... it is! Congratulations!

**CYNTHIA:** I know? Right?

**GARY:** Tempus? Really? That's great!

**CYNTHIA:** The money is amazing. The projects are top secret, so I probably won't be able to talk to you about stuff, but... Tempus!

**GARY:** Oh, my god, babe. I am so proud of you.

**CYNTHIA:** *(Kisses GARY on the nose.)* Me too. *(Crosses to the bathroom door and puts her hand on the knob.)*

**GARY:** *(Trying to think of something to stop her.)* Ahhhh.

**CYNTHIA:** Yeah, I'm speechless too. *(Opens the door. Waves her hand under her nose, makes a "stinky face" and goes in.)*

*GARY sits on the arm of the sofa waiting for the screaming. Then... CYNTHIA begins to sing, "Hey, Paula." GARY is confused.*

**CYNTHIA:** *(Singing.)* "Hey! Hey! Paula... I want to marry you."

*As the bathroom door closes, the front door opens and FUTURE CYNTHIA enters with some foliage and roses in her hair. SFX: the shower starts.*

**CYNTHIA:** *(Singing.)* "Hey! Hey! Paul, I want to marry you too."

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** I don't remember a rose bush under that window.

**GARY:** It was a housewarming gift from your mom.

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** Oh, really? I don't remember that either. I miss her so much.

**GARY:** Miss her? Miriam died?

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** Oh, yeah, she passed a couple... no! Wait! You can't know anything about the future.

**GARY:** But you've already told me a lot about the future.

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** No I haven't.

**GARY:** Well, I know there is time travel!

**CYNTHIA:** *(Offstage. From the bathroom.)* What?

**GARY:** Nothing! *(Taking FUTURE CYNTHIA'S arm and sitting on the couch.)* Listen, why the hell can't I ask you to marry me? You haven't given me one good reason.

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** Gary, we're just not good together.

**GARY:** Yes, we are. We're great together. We like all the same video games... the same superhero movies... what about Thai food? Hot level 3 in Thailand which is a hot level 5 American... who else knows that? I mean, we love 60's music and know all the words to "Hey, Paula"? Well, I know most of the words. Hell, we even hate the all same things... and everyone knows that's the secret to a happy marriage!

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** Of course it is, but things... changed. All the secrecy at work meant we couldn't socialize with anyone...

**GARY:** That's another thing... neither of us like people!

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** I get my doctorate...

**GARY:** Congratulations!

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** Thanks. *(Realizes she gave away more of the future.)* Damn it! Anyway, it doesn't matter. If my theory is correct, time slides and adjusts to whatever stupid things we do to it.

**GARY:** Cool theory.

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** It's just a theory. I could be wrong and we've just changed the future and unleashed a horde of super aliens on the earth.

**GARY:** Also a cool theory.

*SFX: the shower stops and the sound of the shower curtain being pulled back.*

**CYNTHIA:** Gary?

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** *(Panicked.)* What do we do?

**GARY:** I don't know! *(Wraps his arms around her and flops down on the sofa on top of her.)*

**CYNTHIA:** *(Enters in her robe and drying her hair with a towel oblivious of the couple and with her face obscured with the towel.)*  
Gary, naptime's over. *(Exits to the bedroom.)*

*GARY and FUTURE CYNTHIA sit up. GARY enjoyed the moment.*

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** Really? You're in love with... *(Pointing to the bedroom.)* that woman?

**GARY:** Why shouldn't I be? Now? Twenty years from now?

*SFX: blow dryer.*

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** *(She has to say it.)* Because I cheat on you, Gary! I am an asshole cheater! I have an affair with a Swiss researcher that worked on the Large Hadron Collider.

**GARY:** *(He doesn't know what to say.)* That's... impressive.

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** *(Excited.)* Yeah, right? He had total access. *(GARY looks at FUTURE CYNTHIA. Realizing.)* To the particle accelerator!

**GARY:** Is there something I could have done?

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** No! Stop that! You were great! Through the whole thing! And before... all twenty years. You are just a big LOVE and I suck like a black hole through a straw.

**GARY:** Strange analogy.

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** It's going to be the breakthrough concept, just wait. *(Catching herself.)* Damn it!

**GARY:** It's gonna be okay. *(SFX: the blow dryer clicks off. GARY looks toward the bedroom.)* Oh, boy.

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** Oh, oh, I gotta go. *(Stands.)* I'm already fee... fee... feeling the slippage. It's pulling me back. *(Crosses to the front door and opens it.)*

**GARY:** *(Stands.)* Wait! *(Crosses to FUTURE CYNTHIA.)* Were we happy?

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** What?

**GARY:** Those 20 years? Were we happy?

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** The usual ups and downs. Mostly ups, but the downs are d-d-down. We have kids.

**GARY:** *(Shouting.)* We what?!

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** *(Looking toward the bedroom.)* Shhhhhh!

**GARY:** Boys or girls?

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** *(Smiles.)* You'll find out. *(Then catches herself.)* Or maybe we won't. *(This stops her.)* Wow.

**GARY:** At least tell me if they become tyrannical warlords. It'll make my decision easier.

**FUTURE CYNTHIA:** *(Feeling the effects of the slippage.)* D-d-don't do it, Gary. For both our sakes. Marriage isn't for us... but I do love you. *(Gives him a kiss.)* See ya, in the future.

*FUTURE CYNTHIA exits as GARY closes and then leans against the door. He is crying. A bright orange light floods through the windows, followed by a loud crack.*

**CYNTHIA:** *(Entering in a cute dress and putting on her shoes.)*  
Someone at the door?

**GARY:** Yeah, Scientologist.

**CYNTHIA:** They must have been convincing to make you tear up.

**GARY:** They had me at aliens in a volcano. Ready to go?

**CYNTHIA:** Yes. *(Crossing to GARY.)* It'll be nice to go out, just you and me, in the middle of the week. *(GARY opens the door and CYNTHIA stands exactly in the same position as FUTURE CYNTHIA did.)* Have I told you how much I love you lately?

**GARY:** Yes. *(A pause.)* No.

**CYNTHIA:** Play your cards right and you may hear it a lot over time.  
*(Gives GARY a kiss. They exit and close the door. A moment.)*

**CYNTHIA:** *(Offstage.)* Now what?

**GARY:** *(Offstage.)* Forgot my keys.

*GARY enters and looks around. He spots the ring box on the counter, grabs it and exits. Blackout.*

**END OF PLAY**

**DUTY**

**AT START:** *From black, the lights come up abruptly. CLAY, with his hands in his lap, is sitting on a metal chair at a metal table. Across from him is another metal chair. He is wearing jeans, work boots, with an open Pendelton over a t-shirt. Stage Left is a working door. The audience can see the other side of the door. ANGELA walks up to the door and stops. She takes her hair and puts it in a ponytail and steels herself. She knocks.*

**CLAY:** *(Surprised that someone is knocking. He looks around.)* Come in?

*The door opens and in walks ANGELA. She is in a modest blouse, business jacket and skirt. She carries a briefcase and a brown paper bag.*

**ANGELA:** Sargent Wilson?

**CLAY:** Guilty. *(This stops ANGELA.)* Which I guess is something I shouldn't say to my court appointed attorney.

**ANGELA:** No, I'd go easy on the guilty pleas. *(Holds out the paper bag.)* They asked me to give this to you. *(CLAY lifts his hands to take it and we see he is wearing handcuffs.)*

**CLAY:** Breakfast. Thanks.

*ANGELA sits and opens her briefcase and takes out her papers. CLAY removes a take-out box of Chinese food, chopsticks in a paper wrapper, two fortune cookies, and a small plastic bottle of water.*

**ANGELA:** You must be important if they called me at home to be here by 6 am.

**CLAY:** *(Looking in the bag.)* Is there soy sauce?

**ANGELA:** I didn't look.

**CLAY:** They always forget something, don't they?

**ANGELA:** I wouldn't know.

**CLAY:** (*Opening the chopstick wrapper with his teeth.*) They figure once you get home you aren't going to turn around and go back for soy sauce. That's where they get you. (*Surreptitiously removes the thin wire handle from the take out container and puts it in his lap.*)

**ANGELA:** Okay. (*Getting down to business.*) Well...

**CLAY:** What's your name? (*ANGELA looks at CLAY.*) I should know the name of the person representing me.

**ANGELA:** Angela Taber.

**CLAY:** Well, Angela Taber. Want to see a trick? (*Begins to open up the paper container.*)

**ANGELA:** A what?

**CLAY:** A little trick I know. (*Flattens/folds out the paper Chinese food container to make a plate/bowl.*) Presto chango. (*Puts his hands in his lap.*) These containers are actually plates. Didn't you ever wonder why Chinese places never give you plates?

**ANGELA:** (*Actually amazed.*) No, I never thought... I didn't know they did that.

**CLAY:** See it was worth getting up early today. (*Takes the chopsticks and begins eating.*) Not bad. Needs soy sauce. Bastards.

**ANGELA:** Okay, Sargent Wilson.

**CLAY:** Do you want any? (*Holding up the chopsticks.*) I can break these in half and we'd both have mini sticks.

**ANGELA:** No, no thank you. (*Looks at CLAY quizzically for a beat.*) Where are your handcuffs?

**CLAY:** (*Reaches into his lap and drops the handcuffs on the table.*) It's tough to eat with them on.

**ANGELA:** (*Leans away.*) How did you...?

**CLAY:** The wire. On the container. You should never give a prisoner Chinese food.

**ANGELA:** Do I need to call the officer in?

**CLAY:** (*Eating.*) No, ma'am. I'll be good. FYI... you shouldn't really give them chopsticks either. (*Gives ANGELA a wink.*)

**ANGELA:** I have a busy day, Sargent Wilson, and up until an hour ago you were not part of it. So what do you say we get started?

**CLAY:** Shoot. Which, by the way, is something you shouldn't say to a cop.

**ANGELA:** (*Looks at CLAY, but doesn't crack a smile. She opens a manila folder.*) You were arrested at 1:30 am last night?

**CLAY:** Yes, ma'am.

**ANGELA:** They really are fast tracking you. (*Flipping through her papers.*) You were in a bar fight?

**CLAY:** Not so much a fight as an altercation.

**ANGELA:** And the difference is...?

**CLAY:** A bar fight suggests the idea of two or more people throwing punches. He didn't throw a punch.

**ANGELA:** (*Closing the file.*) Okay, why don't you tell me what happened?

**CLAY:** A gentleman seemed to have some problem with his... wife? Girlfriend? The relationship was a bit hazy... especially to her... but he had a problem with her talking to me.

**ANGELA:** You two were just talking? (*Looking at the papers again.*)

**CLAY:** She was talking to me. (*A beat.*) And she was dry humping my leg.

**ANGELA:** (*Looking up.*) She was dry what?

**CLAY:** She was dancing and seemed to have had a bit too much to drink. I think it was tequila.

**ANGELA:** (*Stopping him.*) Okay, let's hold there. (*Reading from the report.*) The doctor reports that the victim...

**CLAY:** Really, aren't I the victim?

**ANGELA:** ...had a broken wrist. A dislocated shoulder and a... fractured tibia.

**CLAY:** His... ah, shinbone.

**ANGELA:** I know what a tibia is. (*Looking back at the documents.*) And you had...

**CLAY:** A night in jail.

**ANGELA:** He never hit you?

**CLAY:** No.

**ANGELA:** So it wasn't self-defense?

**CLAY:** He had a knife.

**ANGELA:** It says here... a butter knife?

**CLAY:** Still... a knife.

**ANGELA:** With a rounded tip.

**CLAY:** You can do a lot of damage with a butter knife...

**ANGELA:** To butter.

**CLAY:** In the right hands they can be deadly. Like these chopsticks.

**ANGELA:** I'd be more worried about the butter knife.

**CLAY:** Straight on they are extremely strong. (*Demonstrating with the chopsticks, menacingly.*) Through the eye and into the brain. Soft belly fat. The carotid artery. A quick thrust.

**ANGELA:** (*Done with all his bravado.*) Okay, I get it, you are some sort of super soldier. Handcuffs can't hold you. Dental floss is a weapon.

**CLAY:** (*Nodding.*) An awesome weapon.

**ANGELA:** Then why am I here?

**CLAY:** I'm not...

**ANGELA:** You could obviously chopstick your way out of here, leaving a trail of bodies... and I'm assuming broken hearts, but instead they called me. So... why am I here?

**CLAY:** Well, initially the plan was pretty straightforward.

**ANGELA:** The plan?

**CLAY:** I was going to meet you here anyway, but I had to go out for a drink last night. My little "altercation" complicated things. Surprisingly, it all seemed to have worked out.

**ANGELA:** (*Stuffing the folders into her bag.*) Okay, Sargent, my job description doesn't include... whatever this is... so I will go to the courthouse and enter a not guilty plea. (*Standing.*) Would you like that with or without the reason of insanity?

**CLAY:** (*Sternly.*) Sit down.

**ANGELA:** I beg your pardon?

**CLAY:** (*Nicer... charming ANGELA.*) Please sit down. Just for a minute.

**ANGELA:** You do realize there is someone on the other side of that mirror?

**CLAY:** No there isn't.

**ANGELA:** (*Not backing down.*) Officer! (*Looking out to the "mirror." A beat.*) Officer?

**CLAY:** When you walked in, they took a 10 minute break.

**ANGELA:** What's going on?

**CLAY:** (*Kindly, smiling.*) Just sit... for a moment. Please.

*ANGELA reluctantly sits, arms crossed. A beat. CLAY crosses to the door and knocks twice. He crosses back to the table, opens the bottle of water and sets it next to her.*

**ANGELA:** I'm not thirsty.

*The door opens and in walks DANIEL. He carries himself like a man trying to be invisible; baseball cap, sunglasses, dark jacket, jeans, boots and beard. Pissed off, she doesn't turn around.*

**CLAY:** *(To DANIEL.)* We gotta be fast.

**DANIEL:** *(Nods.)* Hi, Sis.

**ANGELA:** *(Shocked to hear the voice. Turns to DANIEL.)* Danny?

**DANIEL:** *(Taking off his glasses.)* Yeah.

**ANGELA:** *(Rushes him and gives him a bear-hug. In tears.)* They said...

**DANIEL:** I know.

**ANGELA:** I saw the...

**DANIEL:** Yeah.

**ANGELA:** What the...? *(Touching his face.)* I don't believe it.

**DANIEL:** *(Taking off his cap and tossing it on the table.)* Yeah, it's sort of a long story.

**ANGELA:** You okay? You look lousy.

**CLAY:** Why don't you two sit down. We only have a minute or two.

**ANGELA:** *(Sits back down. DANIEL crosses and sits opposite her. They hold each other's hands.)* Does Mom know?

**DANIEL:** No.

**ANGELA:** *(At a loss.)* She is going to... to... to be over the moon! You have no idea!

**DANIEL:** *(Looks at CLAY, then back to ANGELA.)* Yeah, Ang... that can't happen right now.

**ANGELA:** *(Noticing the look.)* What? Why? *(To CLAY.)* Why?

**CLAY:** He's in a protection program.

**ANGELA:** Witness protection?

**CLAY:** Yeah, sorta like that. A bit more intense.

**ANGELA:** Danny, I've got to let her know. Since you... you died six months ago... she has wasted away to nothing. It crushed her soul. And there was nothing I can do to help her.

**DANIEL:** Angie, I don't know what to tell you. We can't.

**ANGELA:** This is bullshit. Why? What's going on?

**CLAY:** The only thing we can tell you is your brother is a key witness in an ongoing Federal investigation.

**DANIEL:** (*Intensely.*) It's big, Ang. Bigger than anything you can imagine.

**ANGELA:** And you are part of it?

**CLAY:** He's Whistle Blower #1. Because of your brother we have a good chance of bringing down a lot of bad people. He's a national hero... or will be if we can keep him alive long enough to testify.

**ANGELA:** Keep him alive? Can't you just protect him with a spork and your quick wit?

**CLAY:** You'd think so, wouldn't you? But not in this case.

**ANGELA:** (*To CLAY.*) What are you talking about? (*To DANIEL.*) What is he talking about?

**DANIEL:** Angie, it's sort of ironic. There were a lot of people who wanted me dead, so to keep me safe they faked my death.

**ANGELA:** Leaving us devastated.

**DANIEL:** I know. This is not something anyone wanted. It was just what had to be done.

**ANGELA:** If you could have seen Mom...

**DANIEL:** Stop it, Angie! This is hard enough without the guilt trip!

**ANGELA:** (*Bringing her up short.*) Sorry. I'm just in a bit of shock. (*Takes a swig of water out of the bottle.*) So why are you here? Why are you letting me in on this?

**DANIEL:** (*Without looking up.*) I'm sick.

**ANGELA:** (*Her heart is broken.*) Oh, Danny. With what?

**DANIEL:** I can't even pronounce it. (*Takes a piece of paper out of his jacket pocket and hands it to her.*) I had the doctor write it down.

**ANGELA:** (*Takes the paper and reads it.*) I've never heard of this. That's never good. (*Looking at DANIEL.*) How long?

**DANIEL:** Six months. (*Shrugs.*) Or so.

**ANGELA:** And they think I can help?

**DANIEL:** Yeah. Like I have for my entire life, I need to ask for a favor.

**CLAY:** If you agree, you'll make an appointment with your doctor and they know to run the tests to see if you are compatible bone marrow donor.

**ANGELA:** If I agree? (*Gets up and crosses to DANIEL. DANIEL puts his arms around ANGELA'S waist. She tousles his hair and holds him close.*)

**CLAY:** (*A beat... then another. Looking at his watch.*) Private Taber, it's time.

*DANIEL stands, puts on his cap and grabs his dark glasses. He silently mouths, "I love you," to ANGELA... she silently mouths it back. DANIEL turns and crosses to the door, putting on his dark glasses, opens the door and exits.*

**ANGELA:** *(A beat, then she picks up the water bottle and takes a drink. Turning to CLAY.)* I'll do this, but that means I'm telling our mom he's alive.

**CLAY:** You could be putting all of you in danger.

**ANGELA:** If I don't tell her, she'll die. If I don't help him, he'll die. And what will I have to live for?

**CLAY:** Compelling argument, Counselor. *(Crosses to the table and picks up one of the fortune cookies and unwraps it. He begins to leave, then stops.)* Oh, and don't worry about my "altercation." Someone from JAG will be taking care of it. *(Begins to eat the cookie. A beat.)* It was good meeting you, Angela Taber. *(A beat. He crosses to the door while looking at the paper fortune. He smiles at what he reads. He stops and wants to read it to her, but he doesn't.)*

**ANGELA:** *(Without turning.)* Thanks for the water.

*CLAY exits. The lights fade to black.*

**END OF PLAY**

**BUNNIES**

**AT START:** *Lights up. Welcome to Room 7 of the Nite Owl Motor Lodge circa 1982, featuring a bed with a cheap bedspread, two flat pillows, a nightstand with a reading lamp circa 1970's and a metal box. This box is a Magic Fingers, where for a quarter you can make the bed vibrate. Relaxing to some, irritating to most. There is also a very small round table and a chair that has seen some wear over its 15 years of existence and untold naked butts. On the table is a brown paper bag with a bottle of wild turkey poking out of it. There are two doors, one is a door to the outside (SL) and the other a doorway/door to the bathroom (SR).*

**OREN:** (Offstage.) Dang it to hell!

*OREN comes out of the bathroom wiping his face with a cheap white motel hand cloth. His face, hair and clothes are splotted with red dye. Some of it is on the towel, but it is not coming off his face no matter what he does. He sits on the bed, reaches under it and pulls out an ancient doctor's bag, setting it down next to him. He slowly opens it, keeping his face away from it. Nothing happens. He looks in and pulls out a stack of twenty-dollar bills all of them splotted with red dye. He tries to wipe the dye off and gives up almost immediately.*

**OREN:** Hells bells.

*OREN drops the money back in the bag and shoves it back under the bed. He leans up against the headboard. He looks at his dye covered hands then he spies the Magic Fingers. He notices the paper bag and formulates a plan. He gets up and removes the bottle of Wild Turkey from the paper bag. As he crosses back to the bed he begins fishing in his pocket for a quarter. He finds a coin and props himself up on the bed, opens the bottle of bourbon, reaches over and plops the coin in the slot in the Magic Fingers. He begins to take a drink from the bottle as the bed starts to vibrate, sloshing booze all over his chest and face. Another plan that doesn't go as planned. He jumps up.*

**OREN:** Jesus H. Christ on a crutch! (*As the bed keeps on vibrating, he puts the cork back in the bottle and sets it on the night stand. He then flops himself down on the bed, none too gently, and the bed lurches a couple times and then stops vibrating. Giving up....*) For the love of...

**RAY:** (*Offstage. Knocking on the door.*) Open up! I know you're in there Oren, open up!

**OREN:** You got the wrong room!

**RAY:** No I don't.

**OREN:** You do too!

**RAY:** Oren, I recognize your damn voice!

**OREN:** Go away, Ray!

**RAY:** How'd you know it was me?

**OREN:** I recognize your voice too! So there!

**RAY:** Damn it, Oren, open the damn door.

**OREN:** No!

**RAY:** Oren, so help me...

**OREN:** (*Panicking.*) I got a gun!

**RAY:** No you don't.

**OREN:** I do too!

**RAY:** No you don't, you dropped it outside the bank.

**OREN:** (*So that's where it went.*) Oh, yeah? Well, I got another one!

**RAY:** From where?

**OREN:** Huh?

**RAY:** Where did you get another gun?

**OREN:** It was my daddy's.

**RAY:** The hunting rifle?

**OREN:** Yeah!

**RAY:** You sold that to Bob Strobel two years ago.

**OREN:** Oh. Well, it's another one that you don't know about.

**RAY:** (*Wearily.*) Oren, don't make me kick down the door. Seth and Debbie are having enough trouble keeping this place afloat without having to repair a goddamn door. Now, open the goddamn door.

*OREN crosses and opens the door. RAY, a police officer in his 60's, stands there looking in. He is in a County Police uniform and months away from retirement. The uniform is a little tight as he may have had a few too many chicken fried steaks and donuts during his career. He has sweat rings under his armpits. He looks left, then right, then enters.*

**RAY:** These damn rooms haven't changed a bit since our senior year in high school. Remember that?

**OREN:** They now got Magic Fingers.

**RAY:** A respite for the weary.

**OREN:** What do you want?

**RAY:** Well, I guess to begin with, I'm going to take you to jail.

**OREN:** That isn't happening.

**RAY:** Oren, why, since we were in third grade, have you done everything in your power to make life difficult?

**OREN:** I don't know about that, but I'm not going anywhere with you. Where's your gun belt?

**RAY:** I left it in the car. It's been a long day and it gets damn heavy.

**OREN:** You unarmed?

**RAY:** You thinking of making a break for it, Oren?

**OREN:** I can outrun you. Always could, always will.

**RAY:** Can't argue that, but Seth and Debbie wanted to be my "back-up" so they're sitting across the parking lot with a 12-gauge and they are not happy with you. Not happy with you one bit.

**OREN:** Seth wouldn't shoot me.

**RAY:** No, but I wouldn't put it past Debbie and she's holding the 12.

**OREN:** *(This makes sense knowing Debbie.)* Oh. So, how the heck did you find me?

**RAY:** You parked your damn truck right in front of your room.

**OREN:** I changed the license plates.

**RAY:** Yes, well, I guess the Oren's Antiques magnetic sign sorta gave it away.

**OREN:** *(This takes him a second, then....)* Dang it! I forgot the one on the passenger's side.

**RAY:** Yep. Yep, you did. *(Heading to the chair.)* You mind if I sit? It's damn hot out.

**OREN:** Free country.

**RAY:** I appreciate that. (*Sits.*) Damn, if that don't feel good. My dogs are yelping. (*Kicks off his shoes and begins to massage his stocking feet.*) So, Oren, what was your plan?

**OREN:** (*Playing innocent.*) I don't know what you're...

**RAY:** You rob the bank... the bank where everyone knows you... and you have an account at... and then what?

**OREN:** I didn't rob...

**RAY:** What's all over your face?

**OREN:** (*Simultaneously with RAY.*) Rosacea.

**RAY:** (*Simultaneously with OREN.*) Dye pack.

**RAY:** I see. Well, you got rosacea all over your shirt.

**OREN:** It was pure mean to put that explosive thingy in the money. There should be a law against bank trickery.

**RAY:** Good point. Why not just let the law against robbing banks do its job, huh?

**OREN:** Right!

**RAY:** Oren, just grab your stuff and let's get out of here... but let me go first, I need to wave Debbie off.

**OREN:** I'm not gonna let you take me in.

**RAY:** Well, I guess I can just let you waltz out of here. The state line is only seventeen miles away. Then you'll be their problem.

**OREN:** What do you mean?

**RAY:** You see, I can't cross the state line...

**OREN:** You can't?

**RAY:** Nope. (*Pointing to his arm patch.*) State Police. And you'd be in a different state.

**OREN:** Hot dang! (*Stands.*) Then I guess I'll see ya... wouldn't want to be ya.

**RAY:** ...but the FBI can.

**OREN:** (*Sits.*) Oh.

**RAY:** And they're sorta involved now anyway, since you robbed a bank which falls under their purview.

**OREN:** It was the Northern State Bank.

**RAY:** It may say state bank but it's under the jurisdiction of the Feds.

**OREN:** Well, how the heck was I supposed to know that?

*OREN is getting agitated. RAY spies the Wild Turkey and points to it.*

**RAY:** That up for grabs?

**OREN:** Yeah.

**RAY:** You bought it with the bank money?

**OREN:** No! I paid for it myself.

**RAY:** Good to know.

**OREN:** They wouldn't take the bank money. Dang red dye.

**RAY:** Got a couple glasses?

**OREN:** Yeah. *(Crosses to the bathroom.)*

**RAY:** How is Roz doing? *(When OREN leaves, RAY stretches out his foot and lifts up the bed cover and sees the medical bag of money under the bed.)*

**OREN:** *(Offstage.)* Okay, I guess. She's coming back for the funeral.

**RAY:** It'll be good to see her. She bringing the baby?

**OREN:** *(Entering with two motor lodge glasses wrapped in paper.)*  
Daisy's not a baby anymore. She's 10... going on 30.

**RAY:** Time flies.

**OREN:** *(Handing RAY a glass.)* Dang if it doesn't. *(They unwrap the glasses and RAY pours each a healthy dose of Wild Turkey. RAY holds up his glass.)*

**RAY:** To Lonzie.

**OREN:** To my girl. *(They clink glasses and take a good drink.)*

**RAY:** Burns going in... and lately burns going out.

**OREN:** Mother's milk, as my daddy would say.

**RAY:** *(A beat.)* Look, Oren, the bank manager said you got exactly \$377.00 and a bunch of rolled coins. I don't think they're going to throw the book at you.

**OREN:** If they catch me.

**RAY:** *(Going along with OREN.)* Right, if they catch you. But if you did give yourself up, if it makes you feel any better, I'll be happy to go to bat for you.

**OREN:** Dang it Ray, I'm just not the same since Lonzie died.

**RAY:** I know. We talked at the VFW, remember? *(OREN shakes his head "no".)* You were 4 or 5 sheets to the wind.

**OREN:** I'm just not the same...

**RAY:** Oren, just because you're not the same... doesn't mean you turn into this. And honestly, you haven't even buried your wife. *(A beat.)*  
What the hell were you thinking?

**OREN:** I don't know. I was standing in line at the bank and I just went up to the Thompson girl behind the counter and just... robbed the bank.

**RAY:** Why did you have the gun?

**OREN:** I always take my gun when I'm depositing money.

**RAY:** How much were you putting in?

**OREN:** (*Grinning.*) \$600. I sold that dang potbellied stove.

**RAY:** The one you got from the Turner auction for 100 bucks?

**OREN:** The very same.

**RAY:** That was a good buy. So you were depositing almost twice as much as you stole?

**OREN:** I guess so.

**RAY:** Don't you think people will think that's odd?

**OREN:** I don't know. I guess.

**RAY:** Then what happened?

**OREN:** I sorta just ran. I went home and took the license plates off Lonzie's car and put them on the truck. And took off the mag sign. (*A beat.*) Dang, that still burns me that I forgot the passenger's side one!

**RAY:** Let me get this right, you put the plates from one of your vehicles on to your other vehicle?

**OREN:** Now that you put it that way it sounds dumb.

**RAY:** Well, I guess we don't have to check the "premeditated" box on the arrest form.

**OREN:** I'm not gonna let you take me in, Ray. I'm taking off just as soon as I finish this. (*Holds up his glass. Then RAY pours more bourbon into it.*) Oh, thanks.

**RAY:** Listen, Oren, you're a good man. You know it and I know it, but the Feds are not going to be quite as understanding as I am. You head out that door and this turns into a manhunt. They'll stop at nothing to bring you in.

**OREN:** I don't got no choice.

**RAY:** (*Wearily.*) Yes you do. Turn yourself in to me. We'll talk to them. Together. We'll explain how you didn't mean nothing, that it was just a moment of crazy and that you're sorry and all about Lonzie and all. You got money problems?

**OREN:** Nope.

**RAY:** Even with Lonzie's cancer and all?

**OREN:** Oh, heck, it hit her like a train. One day she's complaining of being too tired to light a cigarette and the next she's at County General. Two days later I go to close up the shop and get her some flowers from Clara's... and she's gone. *(Trying to keep it together.)* Two... dang... days.

**RAY:** Yeah.

**OREN:** I didn't even have a chance to bring her her bunny robe from home. That's all she wanted was her dang bunny robe that Roz gave her two Christmases ago. I figured I should wash it because it smelled like a dang ashtray. *(Starts to breakdown.)* I shouldn't have washed it, I should have just taken it.

**RAY:** Yeah, but you didn't know.

**OREN:** *(Recovering.)* Yeah, well, no one knew. The dang doctors didn't know. She kept saying she was tired. I thought she just needed Geritol or something. *(A beat.)* That dang bunny robe. I burnt that robe in the backyard... along with 4 cartons of those god dang Salem menthols.

**RAY:** I know. I got a call from Frankie next door to you. You can't burn rubbish on Wednesdays.

**OREN:** It wasn't rubbish.

**RAY:** No, no it wasn't.

**OREN:** I don't know why I did what I did. *(A beat.)* How's the Thompson girl?

**RAY:** A little shook up, but it was nothing she couldn't handle. Those Thompsons are a tough clan.

**OREN:** They are. That dang dye thingy caught me unawares. Sneaky little thing. I guess I gotta do an apology to Tommy Thompson.

**RAY:** And his daughter.

**OREN:** And her too. *(They drain their glasses and sit in silence. Then....)* Ray, I just can't... I just can't do it.

**RAY:** Do what?

**OREN:** *(Begins to cry.)* I can't put her in the ground.

**RAY:** *(Truly moved.)* Oh, Oren.

**OREN:** I just can't. I can't look at Roz. I can't look at Daisy. I can't look at my dang self in the mirror. I told her to stop smoking... what... a million times? A hundred million? We smoked our first cigarette behind the library in 4th grade. I gave it to her. I stole one from my Uncle Bill. One puff and I threw up. I couldn't abide it, but she took to it like a duck on a June bug.

**RAY:** You're not taking the blame, are you?

**OREN:** I don't know. *(A beat.)* She used to joke that she was saving them Salem coupons to buy herself a casket.

**RAY:** Yep, I heard her say that more than once.

**OREN:** Yeah.

**RAY:** *(A beat.)* Well, you finished your drink. What's your thoughts?

**OREN:** *(He hesitates... then.)* I'm going head out and take my chances.

**RAY:** I see. *(Slips on his shoes. Standing up with some difficulty.)* Okay. Well, I've got a clear conscience 'cause I tried my best to dissuade you. *(Grabs the arm of the chair.)* Oh, goddamn.

**OREN:** What?

**RAY:** *(Holds his chest.)* It's just that I'm having a pain.

**OREN:** *(Stands.)* Where?

**RAY:** My chest. It's just...tight.

**OREN:** What? Dang it.

**RAY:** *(Holding out his glass.)* Can you get me some water?

**OREN:** Sure, Ray, sure. *(Exits to the bathroom as RAY leans against the table looking bad. OREN enters.)* Here! Here, drink this. *(RAY drinks down the water and sets the glass on the table. RAY seems to be in a lot of pain.)* Better?

**RAY:** I am sweating like a whore in church. Can you get me a cold cloth?

**OREN:** Yeah, don't move, I'll be right back. *(Grabs the dye splotted towel and exits to the bathroom. RAY, seemingly still in pain, begins to cross to the "window" and looks out.)*

**OREN:** *(Offstage.)* Are you getting any pain in your arm?

**RAY:** A bit! *(Goes back to the table.)*

**OREN:** *(Offstage.)* Dang it... dang it... dang it. *(Entering with the wet cloth and totally flustered.)* I bet you're having a heart attack.

**RAY:** Could be. *(Wipes his face with the cloth.)* That feels better. Thanks.

**OREN:** We gotta get you to County General.

**RAY:** Sounds good.

**OREN:** Put your arm around me. (*Puts RAY'S arm around his shoulder.*) Let's go.

**RAY:** Don't forget the money.

**OREN:** Right. (*Makes sure RAY is steady on his feet, then grabs the bag from under the bed.*) Okay, got it.

**RAY:** Wanna take the patrol car?

**OREN:** Sure!

**RAY:** Wanna drive?

**OREN:** Really?

**RAY:** Yeah, judges love heroes.

**OREN:** What?

**RAY:** (*Stopping at the doorway and waving the dye splotted towel.*) Hold your fire, Debbie, we're coming out! (*As they exit.*) You know, I'm feeling a bit better. Maybe we should stop by my office and call my wife.

**OREN:** Whatever you want to do, Ray. I'm just glad you're feeling better.

**RAY:** (*Offstage.*) Yeah, everything's going to be okay, buddy. It'll all be okay.

*The lights fade to black.*

**END OF PLAY**

## THE EXCHANGE

**AT START:** *Lights come up on an empty stage. Perhaps a couple of cement tire stops or a couple white lines on the ground or a trash receptacle... something to let us know we're in a convenience store parking lot. Upstage is an illuminated 7/11 sign. LINDA, smoking a cigarette, calls off.*

**LINDA:** Don't spend all your money on junk! And Robbie, don't steal anything. Oh, and get me a Diet. I'll pay you back. *(She looks up at the sky for a moment, the sound of a truck engine. She notices KEVIN pulling up. She quickly drops her cigarette and grinds it into the asphalt with her foot. She gives herself a quick fluff of her hair. A moment as she readies herself. He enters.)* Thank you for your service.

**KEVIN:** What?

**LINDA:** I figured you now must be in the military or a first responder. *(KEVIN shakes his head... here we go.)* ...you know, backing in to the parking space in case you get a call to rush off to save the free world.

**KEVIN:** Let the ball busting begin.

**LINDA:** You're late.

**KEVIN:** Five minutes!

**LINDA:** The court order says...

**KEVIN:** Goddamn it, I know what it says. There was traffic.

**LINDA:** Is that what you're calling her now?

**KEVIN:** Linda, let's just do this. *(Looks around.)* Where are they?

**LINDA:** Inside. Getting ice cream.

**KEVIN:** Ice cream? I told you I was taking them out to dinner.

**LINDA:** I told 'em not to eat it 'till later.

**KEVIN:** It's ice cream... it's 80 degrees... how the hell are they going to eat it later? *(LINDA shrugs.)* Do you have their bags?

**LINDA:** I do.

**KEVIN:** Can I have them?

**LINDA:** Yes. *(Doesn't move.)*

**KEVIN:** Lin, we're going to be doing this exchange shit for quite a while, I don't expect it to be fun, but at least we could try to make it easy.

**LINDA:** Like Kimberly?

**KEVIN:** For the last time, I didn't sleep with Kimberly.

**LINDA:** That's not what Nicco said.

**KEVIN:** Nicco has like 19 extra chromosomes. Fred has more brainpower than Nicco.

**LINDA:** How is he?

**KEVIN:** Fred?

**LINDA:** Yeah.

**KEVIN:** Hating the heat.

**LINDA:** Poor little guy.

**KEVIN:** And I just had to have him dewormed.

**LINDA:** Awww.

**KEVIN:** Cost me \$45 for the check up and the damn worm medicine cost a fortune.

**LINDA:** You know, I could take him. I have a yard.

**KEVIN:** You got the car, I got Fred.

**LINDA:** I know. The kids miss him.

**KEVIN:** They'll see him tonight.

**LINDA:** I miss him. I use to love how he'd...

**KEVIN:** The bags?

**LINDA:** Oh, yeah. *(Pulls out a "Frozen" backpack.)* Frannie's.

**KEVIN:** *(Taking it.)* Where's the backpack I got her for her birthday?

**LINDA:** She didn't like it, so we exchanged it.

**KEVIN:** I would have got her this one. You told me she wanted the princess one.

**LINDA:** She changed her mind. She's a kid.

**KEVIN:** *(Looking at the bag.)* Aren't these princesses?

**LINDA:** You got the wrong princesses.

**KEVIN:** How the hell am I supposed to keep up with all the goddamn Disney princesses?

**LINDA:** It's a challenge. At the bottom of the bag is her medication. You have to give it to her before bed. She hates it and will scream, but she has to take it or she'll never get rid of that cough.

**KEVIN:** She screams?

**LINDA:** Yeah, it tastes like motor oil.

**KEVIN:** Why didn't you get pills?

**LINDA:** You know she can't take pills 'cause of her gag reflex. She throws up when she looks at pills.

**KEVIN:** True.

**LINDA:** *(Pulls out a pink overnight bag.)* Rose's.

**KEVIN:** Really? I thought it was Robbie's.

**LINDA:** Let's get this over with before the kids come out.

**KEVIN:** Anything I should know about?

**LINDA:** I forgot to pack her phone charger, so she's going to go crazy when her phone dies.

**KEVIN:** I have one.

**LINDA:** You're Samsung, she's iPhone.

**KEVIN:** You bought her an iPhone?

**LINDA:** Grandma.

**KEVIN:** Of course.

**LINDA:** I also put some pads in there.

**KEVIN:** Okay.

**LINDA:** You do know what I mean, don't you?

**KEVIN:** Yeah, an iPad.

**LINDA:** No. Pads. Feminine pads.

**KEVIN:** Oh. Why?

**LINDA:** She's showing all the signs.

**KEVIN:** Of what?

**LINDA:** Her first period!

**KEVIN:** She's 11!

**LINDA:** I started when I was 11. You made fun of me in 6th grade because I bled through my white pants.

**KEVIN:** You were 11?

**LINDA:** Yes, and so were you.

**KEVIN:** That seems so young.

**LINDA:** Well it happens and you'd better be ready for it. She's with you for two months so it may happen.

**KEVIN:** Well, what the hell am I supposed to do?

**LINDA:** Talk to her about it. Help her through it.

**KEVIN:** Isn't that something you should be doing?

**LINDA:** I did, but when it happens she's going to have questions.

**KEVIN:** Who's going to answer MY questions?

**LINDA:** Damn it, Kevin, this is a bad idea. They should just stay with me.

**KEVIN:** The court order says...

**LINDA:** I don't think Judge High And Mighty was thinking about my daughter's period when he gave you visitation for the summer. So go online and find a video that explains it to you. Or have your latest girlfriend pinch hit.

**KEVIN:** I don't have a girlfriend. And even if I did, I wouldn't have the kids meet her yet.

**LINDA:** What? When did you start acting all mature?

**KEVIN:** Linda, goddamn it, I promised myself I wasn't going to fight with you, so let's just get this over with.

**LINDA:** Fine by me. *(Grabs a backpack with homemade graffiti in magic marker of AC/DC, Metallica, Black Sabbath, etc.)* Robbie is on restriction because of his grades. I sent you his report card. He has a chance to change the D's to C's if he takes the second session of summer school. If he took both sessions he could get all his grades up.

**KEVIN:** Sorry, this is my visitation and we're not spending it on summer school.

**LINDA:** Well, he's falling behind. So he's on music restriction. He can listen an hour a day, but that's it.

**KEVIN:** Just an hour?

**LINDA:** I'm trusting that you'll support me on this. You'll have to watch him closely. He's become very sneaky. I think it's because of his new junior high friends. That one kid, Chris...

**KEVIN:** Oh, I like that kid.

**LINDA:** He got picked up by the cops.

**KEVIN:** What?

**LINDA:** Pharming.

**KEVIN:** Farming? He was growing pot?

**LINDA:** No. Pharming. That's where you go through your friend's parent's medicine cabinet looking for prescription drugs... pharmaceuticals. Pharming.

**KEVIN:** That's a thing?

**LINDA:** Apparently. He was caught selling OxyContin... Ritalin... Dilaudid. When they picked him up, he had a shitload of pills and over \$600 on him.

**KEVIN:** Sounds like I need to get in on that.

**LINDA:** Nice, Dad.

**KEVIN:** Did he get into your stash?

**LINDA:** No! What is that supposed to mean? I was taking those because I threw my back out carrying YOUR children around while you were throwing your back out with Kimberly.

**KEVIN:** I was never with Kimberly!

**LINDA:** And just remember that life doesn't stop when they go to dad's house. They have dentist appointments, doctor appointments, Frannie has dance on Saturdays and Rose has swim classes twice a week.

**KEVIN:** Why did you sign her up for swim classes?

**LINDA:** So she won't drown when your dad throws her in the pool!

**KEVIN:** He didn't know she couldn't swim!

**LINDA:** Well, the next time she'll know how to swim.

**KEVIN:** So, when are the swim classes?

**LINDA:** Damn it, Kevin, you have to remember all this shit. Why don't you write it down?

**KEVIN:** 'Cause it's my time and I don't want to do all those things.

**LINDA:** So then what are you going to do for the next two months? Have them stare at their phones and computer screens?

**KEVIN:** No! I'm going to take them camping.

**LINDA:** For two months?

**KEVIN:** And... we're going to my brother's for a couple days. Might go visit my mom.

**LINDA:** Don't let her dye the girls' hair.

**KEVIN:** She won't.

**LINDA:** I swear, if those girls come back with purple hair...

**KEVIN:** She won't! I told her you didn't want her to.

**LINDA:** What? Why did you tell her I said that?

**KEVIN:** You just said...

**LINDA:** Yeah, but you can't tell your mother I said that. She'll get her feelings hurt and she'll be all... it's okay, I'll take care of it. But just so you know I'm telling her you don't want their hair dyed.

**KEVIN:** Okay! *(They pause. He smiles.)* I'm glad you know how to deal with my mom; she turned 60 and went nuts.

**LINDA:** Menopause wasn't kind to her. The hot flashes were so bad you could fry an egg on that poor woman's forehead.

**KEVIN:** *(Laughs. A pause.)* So that's it?

**LINDA:** Hell, no. Three backpacks for three kids for two months? *(Grabs a very large suitcase.)*

**KEVIN:** (*Helps LINDA.*) Here. That's all?

**LINDA:** Yeah. Should be everything they need. Frannie's elephant is in there. It's missing an eye, but she doesn't seem to care.

**KEVIN:** Maybe I'll make an eye patch for it or something.

**LINDA:** She'd like that.

**KEVIN:** Okay, well... (*An awkward pause.*)

**LINDA:** I quit smoking.

**KEVIN:** Really? (*Smiles.*) That's great. After all this time? Wow. I'm proud of you, Lin. I didn't think...well, I'm just real proud of you.

**LINDA:** Thanks. (*A pause.*) Okay, well...

**KEVIN:** I lost my job.

**LINDA:** Oh, Kev. Why would Darren do that?

**KEVIN:** I mean, to be fair, I was asking for a lot of time off to be with the kids and, uh, he sort of...laid me off. (*Quickly.*) But don't worry, it won't affect my payments. I've saved up a bunch and I'll get another job when the kids go back.

**LINDA:** I'm not worried.

**KEVIN:** Okay, then.

**LINDA:** Yeah.

**KEVIN:** (*Looking off toward the 7/11 sign.*) You know they've been watching us for the past 10 minutes.

**LINDA:** Yeah, I know.

**KEVIN:** Well, we better... (*Motions to the kids.*) Come on! Come on out here!

*KEVIN turns to LINDA and smiles. She smiles back. SFX: Doorbell jangles.*

**OFFSTAGE CHILDREN'S VOICES:** Daddy!! Daddy! Daddy! Daddy!

*Blackout.*

**END OF PLAY**

**LOANLY LADIES**

**AT START:** *Center Stage is a 6-foot-tall, 8 x 4-foot scaffolding with locking wheels (or whatever fits the stage... this could also be simply a low wall on wheels.) In the front of the scaffolding is a vinyl banner with "Teamwork Makes the Dream Work" words or logo. The banner blocks the audience's view of seeing through the scaffolding. Standing on top of the scaffolding on the US side is KARI. Her back is to the audience. In the blackout.*

**CROWD:** *(Offstage.) Jump... jump... jump!*

*As the lights come up...*

**KARI:** Shut up!!

*DIANE, enters SR with her back against the scaffolding and walking on the stage floor, she gingerly sidles across, right to center of the scaffolding. She is wearing a t-shirt with "Teamwork Makes the Dream Work" on the front. She is not thrilled to be up so high and forces herself not to look down. She turns, gripping the pipes, and begins climbing. While she climbs the scaffolding rotates 180 degrees revealing KARI, wearing the same style t-shirt w/logo, also has a bungee cord attached to her feet with a carabiner. The cord droops down the front of the scaffold.*

**DIANE:** *(DIANE'S head pops up from the back of the scaffold.)* Hey, Teammate!

**KARI:** Don't get near me or I'm not going to jump!

**DIANE:** Okay, that's fair. I'm just going to get up here so I don't fall, okay?

**KARI:** Go away, Diane.

**DIANE:** I would love to, but I'm your Team Partner...

**KARI:** Ha!

**DIANE:** ...and the VP of Marketing made me. *(Flops up on the top of the scaffolding. Looking out.)* This is very high up.

**KARI:** You think?

**DIANE:** Damn, it's a nice view though. How you doing?

**KARI:** I'm paralyzed with fear is how I'm doing.

**DIANE:** Understandable. Just so you know, we're all waiting for you to jump so we can get on with the day.

**KARI:** Screw you. I didn't want to do this anyway.

**DIANE:** You've made that very clear.

**KARI:** How's the Bungie Guy?

**DIANE:** Dave?

**KARI:** Yeah, I guess.

**DIANE:** He hit the water pretty hard. He'll be okay. He was definitely caught off-guard when you pushed him off.

**KARI:** See! Everyone kept saying this is safe.

**DIANE:** Dave wasn't wearing a bungie cord, Kari!

**KARI:** Well, how the hell was I supposed to know that?

**DIANE:** He was the guy helping you!

**KARI:** Right, him and all of his "safety first" mumbo jumbo. And anyway, I don't know how the hell these damn trust falls and zip lines are supposed to make us better at filling out home loans and repossessing condos!

**DIANE:** It's a corporate teambuilding retreat. It's about building trust.

**KARI:** Ha! Do you trust Dan Schneider any more today than you did when we started?

**DIANE:** Well...

**KARI:** Of course he'd catch us falling off a chair in front of the head of HR, but the minute we're back in the office, he'll steal your lunch from the fridge and your clients from your Rolodex. And what about the candy dish? You want an M&M after he's dug through it looking for a green one?

**DIANE:** Okay, you're right, Dan is vile.

**KARI:** And what about Angela in Foreclosures? That evil idiot. In that dumbass word association game when they said "Religion" she said "Slytherin"!

**DIANE:** I don't...

**KARI:** Slytherin! When they said "Love" she asked for the definition and to use it in a sentence! Did she think they suddenly switched from word association to a spelling bee or did she really not know the word? (*Begins to slip.*) Ahhhh! (*DIANE reaches out to grab her. KARI steadies herself.*) I'm fine! Don't touch me!

**DIANE:** Okay. Sorry... sorry.

**KARI:** I think I'm going to sit.

**DIANE:** Okay, okay. Everything's cool.

**CROWD:** *(Offstage.)* Jump... jump... jump!

**KARI:** *(To the CROWD.)* I will take off this damn rubber band and jump right on top of you losers! *(Awkwardly sits.)*

**DIANE:** Okay, let's just chill. Take a deep breath. You want something to drink?

**KARI:** Yeah. Yeah, that'd be good. Yeah, water would be good.

**DIANE:** Oh, I ah... I don't have any water, but I do have these. *(Pulls out four airplane sized mini bottles of vodka from her purse.)*

**KARI:** Where did you...?

**DIANE:** The hotel. I stole them from Angela's mini fridge.

**KARI:** When did you do that?

**DIANE:** Right after the circle of trust exercise when she broke down and admitted she was an alcoholic, so I thought, "Hell, she's not going to miss them."

**KARI:** True dat. *(Takes one, opens it and clinks bottles with DIANE. They down them in one swallow. Reacting to the vodka.)* Yowza.

**DIANE:** *(Reacting to the vodka.)* I am one giant Grey Goose pimple.

**KARI:** See, this would be a good team building exercise. Won't Ken in Finance be surprised when they see Angela's itemized bill? He's her AA sponsor.

**DIANE:** She'll think she's a sleep drinker.

**KARI:** *(Laughing. Then looking down.)* Let's see if I can hit that recycling bin by that group over there. *(Tosses one of the mini bottles offstage. They watch it fall.)* Wow, there is a bit of a cross wind.

**MAN ON GROUND:** *(Offstage.)* Ow! Son of a...!

**DIANE:** This is not Dave's day. *(Holding out the other mini bottle.)* Another?

**KARI:** Sure. *(Takes the bottle.)* Diane, have you learned a damn thing during this retreat?

**DIANE:** I learned that the zip line was strong enough to hold Ronnie Mac's weight, but the tree limb wasn't.

**KARI:** He was not ready for that ride to start.

**DIANE:** Or when he stopped mid-way.

**KARI:** He just hung there like a screaming, crying, gay Samoan piñata.

**DIANE:** It didn't help when they were trying to push him along with those long sticks. Does the Samoan culture even have piñatas?

**KARI:** No, they just knock coconuts out of trees. Not as much fun.

*(Drinks.)*

**DIANE:** *(Nodding.)* Ah. Feeling better?

**KARI:** Yeah. The vodka's helping.

**DIANE:** You know what helped me get through this weekend?

**KARI:** Vodka?

**DIANE:** That, and seeing Damon Ruiz from Accounting in those short shorts during Toga Yoga.

**KARI:** First of all, you know they've run out of ideas of how to make yoga enjoyable when they offer it with an "Animal House" theme. Second, damn if he didn't look fine in those shorts.

**DIANE:** I caught Helen from HR checking him out. I'm going to leverage that if I ever get written up.

*MALCOM enters from USL and begins to climb the scaffolding. KARI and DIANE don't notice him.*

**KARI:** Helen is the worst. She once wrote me up for calling a kielbasa a wiener.

**DIANE:** Well, to be fair you did keep waiving it around at the Christmas party yelling, "Check out my giant wiener!"

**KARI:** It was enormous.

**DIANE:** It was weird that you had brought it from home.

**KARI:** It was my white elephant gift.

**DIANE:** *(Grossed out.)* Ewww.

**KARI:** Ronnie Mac got it.

**DIANE:** *(Grabbing onto the scaffolding.)* Shit we're having an earthquake! *(Panicking.)* We're gonna die bitches! *(To KARI as a confession.)* I French kissed my cousin in 7th grade!

**MALCOM:** I'm just climbing up to you. Don't panic!

**DIANE:** Oh, thank God.

**KARI:** THAT'S your death bed confession? That is weak.

**DIANE:** I was working up to the big stuff.

**KARI:** How long do you think an earthquake lasts? An hour?

**MALCOM:** It's me, Malcom. Malcom with no "b." I'm almost there!

**KARI:** Malcom?

**DIANE:** The improv guy.

**KARI:** Oh, God, no.

**MALCOM:** (*Appears coming over the back of the scaffolding. He wears a t-shirt with "Staff" on it.*) Wow, that is a hell of a climb. I gotta start doing more Toga Yoga. (*Lying on his stomach.*) So, you are... (*Searching his memory.*) Caring Kari... and... (*Trying to remember.*) it has something to do with cooking... um, Dicing Diane?

**DIANE:** Yep, that's us.

**MALCOM:** See, those memory games work... no matter how few stars ImprovChick602@yahoo gave me on Yelp.

**KARI:** What are you doing up here, Malcom without a "b?"

**MALCOM:** Well, trust is a very important...

**KARI:** The VP of Marketing made you, didn't he?

**MALCOM:** Yes.

**KARI:** Why is everyone so afraid of marketing?

**DIANE and MALCOM:** (*Together.*) They're marketing!

**MALCOM:** They'd like you to either jump or climb down. You're holding up the Trust Lunch.

**KARI:** Do you just put the word "trust" in front of every activity?

**MALCOM:** Pretty much. It's called branding.

**KARI:** It's called stupid.

**MALCOM:** Hey, new thought! Let's find a solution to this little challenge. What do you say?

**KARI:** Call the rescue copter.

**MALCOM:** How about we do a little role playing?

**KARI:** Is... (*Gives MALCOM a raspberry.*) an answer?

**MALCOM:** I'll take that as a "yes, and"! Okay, I'll be Diane... Diane will be Kari and Kari you'll be me.

**KARI:** Okay, I'm you?

**MALCOM:** Yes.

**KARI:** (*Faux crying.*) Why didn't my parents put a "b" in my name? I question my sexuality.

**MALCOM:** Is she always this cruel?

**DIANE:** Pretty much.

**MALCOM:** Kari, please, I think if you give role playing a try you'll see the value of it.

**KARI:** Okay.

**MALCOM:** *(Totally surprised.)* Okay? Really? You'll try it?

**KARI:** Well, you just seem so damn excited about it, how can I not?

**MALCOM:** That's great! *(To DIANE.)* You are me. Kari is Diane and *(To KARI.)* I'm you. I'll start. *(Shakes out his hands and rolls his head, stretching out his neck.)*

**KARI:** I'm having a seizure?

**MALCOM:** Shhhh. Okay. *(In his Kari voice and he mimes typing on a computer keyboard.)* Gosh, Diane...

**DIANE:** Gosh? *(Sarcastically, referring to KARI.)* Have you met Little Miss Potty Mouth?

**KARI:** Go to hell.

**MALCOM:** Shhh! *(In his Kari voice.)* Gosh, Diane, I think we could close a lot more mortgages around here if we just trusted each other a little more.

**KARI:** That is not how I sound.

**DIANE:** Yes, it is.

**MALCOM:** *(Interrupting, in his own voice.)* Concentrate, ladies! And remember the "yes, and..." *(Kari voice.)* Am I right, Malcom?

**DIANE:** *(Malcom voice.)* Yes, and trust is the central hub... that spokes out... in trust spokes that go from the banker to the customer in a... trusty wheel of... *(What else can she say but....)* trust.

**MALCOM:** *(Kari voice.)* That is so insightful, Malcom. So, Diane, what do you have to say about Malcom's very insightful comment?

**KARI:** *(Diane voice.)* Wow, that really hit me in the old G-Spot... *(They look at her.)* the old Gee-Why-Didn't-I-Think-Of-That Spot. If we want our customers to trust us, we must trust each other, I can see that now. So let's, in the spirit of trust, or what the Italians call fiducia, let's link arms... *(Links arms with MALCOM and DIANE.)* and jump together in the vast abyss of doubt...

**MALCOM:** *(In his own voice.)* I don't think the bungee will support our...

**KARI:** *(Diane voice.)* Ah, ah, ah... Kari? What happened to your voice?

**MALCOM:** *(Kari voice.)* I think the bungee will snap, Malcom.

**KARI:** *(Diane voice.)* Oh, Kari, it won't snap, but there is a chance it'll stretch out all the way to the ground.

**DIANE:** *(Fearfully, in Malcom voice.)* It's physics, Kari.

**KARI:** *(Diane voice.)* You're right, this is a one-person bungee and I know Kari wouldn't wimp out. Right?

**MALCOM:** *(Kari voice.)* I'm getting confused. I'm still Kari, right?

**KARI:** *(Diane voice.)* Yes, you are! Badass Caring Kari! *(Unhooks the bungee carabiner from her ankle strap.)* And it's time you faced your fears. Hold this, Malcom. *(Hands it to DIANE.)*

**MALCOM:** *(Kari voice.)* Wait...

**KARI:** *(Diane voice.)* That's not like you, Kari. Where's that fearless woman who trust fell into the arms of a stranger who may or may not have copped a quick feel?

**MALCOM:** *(Kari voice.)* I've never done...

**KARI:** *(Diane voice.)* Anything half-assed? That's right! You are going to be sooo empowered by this. *(KARI slips her feet out of her ankle strap, grabs MALCOM'S legs and puts the strap around his ankles and pulls it tight.)* You do want to be empowered, don't you?

**MALCOM:** *(Kari voice.)* I guess...

**KARI:** *(Diane voice.)* Kari, I admire your commitment and I know that everyone in Team... *(An aside to DIANE.)* what's our team name again?

**DIANE:** *(In her own voice.)* Team Reverse Cowgirl Mortgage.

**KARI:** *(Diane voice.)* That everyone in Team Reverse Cowgirl Mortgage... *(As she hooks the carabiner to the strap.)* are rooting for you not to die. *(Getting MALCOM to stand up with the help of DIANE.)* So, let's break that glass ceiling... from above! Which, I guess, technically makes it a glass floor. And no one wants to stand on that in a skirt. Am I right?

**MALCOM:** *(In his own voice.)* It's really high up.

**KARI:** *(In her own voice.)* Yes, it is. But trust me, your jumping will make us all proud and will take this role-playing exercise to the legendary level. Also, we can get on with our day and get to that Trust Lunch. Now, we're going to carefully climb down and watch your epic leap. Let's go, Diane.

**DIANE:** *(Malcom voice.)* I'm Malcom.

**KARI:** Don't push it. *(They go to the back of the scaffolding and begin to climb down. MALCOM is frozen with fear as he looks over the abyss. The scaffolding begins to turn 180 until we see ladies climbing down and MALCOM'S back.)*

**CROWD:** *(Offstage.)* Jump... jump... jump!

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