

CEASE TO BE ROMAN

BY  
PETER YOUNG

## Cast of Characters

- JOEY: A man in his forties. He's an executive at Black Enterprises.
- MARTIN: A man in his forties. He's an executive at Black Enterprises.
- DENNY: A man in his twenties. He's an overnight security guard.
- MAX: A man in his thirties. He's an overnight security guard.

## Scene

The first two acts takes place in the building that houses Black Enterprises. The third act takes place at a warehouse.

## Time

Act I takes place in the morning. Act II takes place in the early hours preceding Act I. Act III takes place in the daytime following Act I.

ACT I

SCENE 1

SETTING: A dimly lit hallway outside the 2nd floor security room.

AT RISE: Martin and Joey enter from left and are speaking hurriedly as they enter.

JOEY

Are you really sure about this, Marty? I mean, this is our last chance to back out of this.

MARTIN

I've been waiting for this everyday for the last two years. Now we're doing it. Nothing's gonna make me back out. And you're not backing out either.

(pause)

JOEY

Marty... Marty... I don't know about this... I mean what's about to happen... I can't... I don't know if I'm strong enough. I don't know if I want what's about to happen... I don't know if I want it bad enough...

MARTIN

What do you mean? It's good. It's a good thing.

JOEY

I... I ... I'm sorry, Martin. I love you. You know I do.

(Joey turns off the hallway lights. Complete darkness.)

JOEY

I had to, Marty. I'm sorry. I had to...

MARTIN

Joe? What are you talking about?

(A door opens. MAX is there. He shoots three times into MARTIN. Only the light from the silencer on the gun is seen. MARTIN is dead. MAX turns on the hall light. HE unscrews the silencer and tosses it into the room behind him. MAX exits right.)

ACT II

SCENE 1

SETTING:

Act II takes place in the building that houses Black Enterprises. The odd numbered scenes are between Max and Denny in the Surveillance Room of the 2nd floor. The even numbered scenes are between Martin and Joey, in Martin's office. The scenes alternate between one another and are occur simultaneously.

AT RISE:

Denny is near the monitors, seated very carefully, and eating a Frito chili pie. Max enters.

DENNY

What took you so long?

MAX

I had to use the restroom.

DENNY

You were gone for exactly eight minutes and fifty-four seconds.

MAX

I had to go. What, are you timing me now?

DENNY

Jerry just gave me this new stopwatch. He said he wanted me to get used to it, learn how to use it. You goin' to the potty was the first real thing I've had to time tonight.

MAX

Why'd he give you a stopwatch?

DENNY

He said it was from Henry. Said it was my reward for being "Security Guard of the Month". I also got a plaque.

MAX

So what time is it, Stopwatch Boy?

DENNY

It's exactly 5:21 in the AM. Don't call me boy.

MAX

Anything happen while I was gone?

I don't remember, you were gone so long.

DENNY

Did anything happen?

MAX

Yes.

DENNY

Well, what?

MAX

...uh...let's see...Gee...I...

DENNY

Tell me what happened!

MAX

A phone call.

DENNY

From who?

MAX

You know, I'm not sure. I suppose it could have -

DENNY

Denny. Stop Fucking With Me And Tell Me Who Called.

MAX

I said I don't know. They never said a word. I picked up, said, "2nd floor security. What seems to be the trouble?". All I heard was breathing, or something. Prank callers. I'd like to catch the little fucker and rip his ears off.

DENNY

Next time the phone rings, I'll answer it.

MAX

You expecting a call?

DENNY

Yeah.

MAX

Who from?

DENNY

My wife.

MAX

At 5:30 in the morning?

DENNY

MAX

Yeah. She's starting a new job today. Said she'd call before she left.

DENNY

Oh. That's nice. So she got up at what, 4:30?

MAX

Somethin' like that.

DENNY

4:30... There's weird shit on T.V. at 4:30.

MAX

Yeah, I know.

DENNY

Lots of news...Info-mercials...Documentaries...

MAX

I saw this documentary the other night. It was about animals. And there was this rat, and he had enormous nuts. I don't mean he had big nuts; I mean he had BIG FUCKING NUTS. It'd be like if I had pumpkins for nuts, that's how big they were on this rat. He couldn't move much or anything. About all he'd do is take his balls, shove them underneath his ass and sit on'em. All the other rats would be playin' or whatever they do, and this one would just be sittin' on his balls. So I got to thinkin': what would I do if I had nuts that big? I'd be a freak. A fuckin' freak. Hell, I couldn't even sit down. I'd have no choice but to make it public. THEN, I'd be praised. I'd be worshipped. Men, women and children from all over the world would spend their summer vacation, comin' to get a real life look at my balls. There'd be backscratchers, shotglasses, goofy hats, those keyring things with the little picture inside, those spoons... Yeah. I guess that's how it'd be. I'd have no choice but to, just, be proud.

(Pause.)

DENNY

Spoons? What spoons?

MAX

Huh? You know. Those spoons that come in the case with the blue velvet shit, and they say "Grand Canyon" or whatever on the...On the...Spoonhandle, I don't know...

DENNY

Spoonhandle? What's a spoonhandle? The whole thing's a spoon.

MAX

Anyway, the rat had big nuts.

DENNY

Why would anyone buy a spoon for a souvenir? Buncha freaks.

(DENNY scratches at his  
waist)

MAX

I don't know...They like spoons.

DENNY

Did you buy one?

MAX

No.

DENNY

Yes you did.

MAX

No. I didn't.

DENNY

The hell you didn't. You've probably got a whole collection of  
'em.

MAX

No, I don't...

DENNY

Yeah you do. You're just afraid to admit it because you know it's  
fucking WEIRD. What do you do with 'em: do you eat with 'em?  
Probably not since they're Collector's Items. You probably just  
show 'em off to people, right?

MAX

Oh, You Shitty Bastard!

DENNY

OH MAN! This is so much fun to give you hell for a change. So  
what do you say to people when they're over: "Look at this one,  
it's from Fort Knox. Boy, we had a helluva time that weekend!"

MAX

OK.

DENNY

"Here's the one I got at the Statue of Liberty. It's my favorite  
'cause the little torch glows in the dark."

(MAX takes DENNY's Frito  
Chili Pie spoon)

MAX

This. This part of the spoon.

(MORE)

MAX (CONT'D)

This thing right here is the spoonhandle. This. This is the spoon. This is the handle. Therefore, This Is The SPOONHANDLE!

DENNY

All right...I got it...Your spoonhandle...Shit, calm down. Hey, give me my spoon back.

(pause)

MAX

So, you doin' all right?

DENNY

Huh? Oh. Yeah.

MAX

You're holding up better than I would. Damn. I can't even imagine.

(DENNY scratches at his waist)

DENNY

Yeah, yeah. I'd rather not talk about it.

MAX

Hey, I understand.

DENNY

What were we talkin' about?

MAX

The balls on the rat.

DENNY

Oh yeah! Remember when you were a kid...Uh, no. Nevermind.

MAX

What?

DENNY

No. Forget it.

MAX

What? You said, "Remember when you were a kid." That makes whatever you did all right to talk about.

DENNY

Okay, okay, okay. Well, remember when you were a kid, and your dog was layin' on the floor, sleepin' or something, all sprawled out. Did you ever... did you ever... just reach out and thump him on the nuts?



MAX

Oh yeah! I still do it. So does my dad! Yeah, the dog's layin' there like this...He looks so peaceful, and you get down on one knee and WHAP! And he goes...

(MAX acts out the dog getting thumped.)

DENNY

He'd never make a sound or anything. He'd just spring to all fours.

MAX

And when he got there he'd look at you like this...Like: "What in the hell do you think you're doing? These are my balls."

DENNY

Then he'd lay down and go back to sleep.

(The phone rings. DENNY draws his gun and points it at the phone, as if to shoot it. MAX answers it. DENNY whirls his gun around.)

MAX

Security. Yeah...We got some - hold on a second.

(To DENNY)

Excuse me. You're distracting me.

(To phone)

Go ahead. Yeah. No, we didn't get anything like that here on the second floor. I understand. I understand. Okay.

(MAX hangs up.)

DENNY

Who was that? Jerry?

MAX

Yeah.

DENNY

Wha'd he say?

MAX

Just said he got something strange outside the building. Asked if we saw anything up here. He's calling all the floors.

(Pause.)

MAX

You're getting' really good at that.

DENNY

You think?

(DENNY plays with his gun.)

MAX

Yes. I think you might've beaten it this time.

DENNY

Really?

MAX

I don't know.

DENNY

Really? You think I may have beaten it? Really?

MAX

I don't know. Good draw. Good form. Pretty damn good. That thing's loaded, right?

DENNY

Absolutely.

MAX

Why don't you put it away.

DENNY

Are you asking me to relinquish my weapon?

MAX

No. I'm asking you to put it away.

DENNY

Hey man, I'm a professional.

MAX

Well, I'm a professional, too. Please put it away.

DENNY

I'm practicing. Until I am done practicing, I will not put away my weapon.

MAX

Practicing? Practicing what?

DENNY

I'm practicing my control and knowledge of my weapon. The way it feels, the way it moves, its weight. A professional practices these things every day.

MAX

Not with a loaded piece!

DENNY

Yes with a loaded piece. It builds confidence. Trust. I would expect you to know such a thing.

MAX

Denny, I'm only gonna ask you one more time: please put the gun away.

(A beat.)

MAX

Put it away. Put it away. Put it away.

DENNY

All right. Since it's that important to you. I wouldn't want to upset my friend.

(DENNY explodes with irritation.)

DENNY

Damn! These Fucking Boxers!

MAX

What's the problem?

DENNY

I have to wear these damn boxers, 'cause of the accident. The doctor says briefs are too restrictive. These boxers are making me itch like hell.

MAX

I'm pretty much a tighty-whitey guy myself. Every time I wear boxers I feel like I look like Grandpa.

DENNY

Yeah? Seen your Grandpa in his underwear a lot, huh?

MAX

Well, he used to sprawl out on the living room floor, we'd thump him in the nuts... you know.

(THEY laugh)

ACT II

SCENE 2

SETTING: MARTIN's office at Black Enterprises.

AT RISE: MARTIN enters and turns on the lights. The phone rings and he crosses to answer it.

MARTIN

Hello...Hey. What are you doin' up this early?...It probably is... Yeah, monthly meeting. It's no fun...Yeah, I remember; I liked it better that way...Oh, I guess as good as they could be. Kate's good. Kids are good. Jacob's got a t-ball game tonight - he's been asking if you were gonna come see one...I understand...Yeah, yeah I do. It's no big deal...Of course I do: two years. I was thinking about it on the way to work...Oh, just how much I miss him. How much has changed...I wish there was...I know...I know...It's not in my hands, it's not that simple

(JOEY enters. HE's frantic.)

JOEY

I can't handle this. I CAN'T handle this. I CAN NOT handle this.

MARTIN

(Into phone)

Hold on a second.

(To JOEY)

Joey, Joey...slow down!

JOEY

I can't...I.... I can't....Slow Down! Jesus!

MARTIN

(Into phone)

Can I call you back?

(HE hangs up the phone.)

JOEY

Give me coffee.

MARTIN

Sure. You got it...

JOEY

No, wait. Make it Scotch. Or whatever you have.

MARTIN

Scotch, Joey? Don't you think it's a little early...

JOEY

Early my ASS! When Henry, the big man himself, shows up in your office and starts squeezing your dick at any hour of the day, it's a perfect time for Scotch.

MARTIN

Okay.

(HE gets JOEY a drink.)

JOEY

I tell you Marty, I can't take this shit anymore.

MARTIN

So, calm down, have a seat, tell me what happened.

JOEY

Okay. Okay. Okay. I'm calm. I'll just sit down and be calm.

(pause)

Okay. Here it is: I had just arrived at my office. You know, it's early...monthly meeting...the goddamn sun's not even up. Henry and his "guard dogs" come into my office. I mean, I never got a memo, a call...uh...a word from Denise - Nothing.

MARTIN

Outta nowhere.

JOEY

Outta fucking nowhere.

MARTIN

That's serious.

JOEY

You're tellin' me it's serious. Anyway, Henry and his Dobermans come in. They shut the door, he gets coffee. He sits down right in front of me. The others stand at the door.

MARTIN

I've never heard those two speak.

JOEY

I know! It's bizarre. I'm skeptical of the fact that they're even fucking human.

MARTIN

The pricks.

JOEY

And Henry. You know Henry, pompous sonofabitch that he is; he sits right in front of me like he's some god or the fucking king or something. He sits right in front of me, not even looking at me, not even making eye contact, like I'm not there. Just staring at his coffee. Blowing on it.

(MORE)

JOEY (CONT'D)

The whole time I'm sweatin' like I'm in some goddamn sauna with the Lord Of All Evil and Pain, who hasn't acknowledged my presence yet, but I know he will and it's Fucking Killing Me. And I don't know what to do. I'm frozen, like some goddamn...I...I don't...I...HE'S FUCKING PISSING ALL OVER ME! Shit! The fuckin' mutt!

(pause)

MARTIN

What'd he say?

JOEY

It's not so much what he said, but what he did.

MARTIN

What? What'd he do?

JOEY

Like I said: I sat there for what seemed like fifteen days. Sweating. Not a word. Not a sound. Finally, he puts his coffee down and walks over in front of me. He says, "Why are you here?". I said, "It's the monthly meeting, I'm supposed to be here this early.". He stops.

(beat)

And then he slaps the shit outta me!

MARTIN

What?!

JOEY

He slapped me!

MARTIN

He "slapped" you?

JOEY

Right in the face!

MARTIN

What'd he do that for?

JOEY

I haven't a fucking clue!

(pause. MARTIN sits)

MARTIN

So. Go on.

JOEY

Well. Of course, by now, I understand this to be a pretty delicate situation. And I don't know what to do.

(MORE)

JOEY (CONT'D)

I'm frozen, like some goddamn... I ... I don't ... I ... HE'S  
FUCKING PISSING ALL OVER ME! Shit! The fuckin' mutt!

(JOEY becomes violent)

MARTIN

Hey... Hey... Hey - Whoa, easy! Calm down, Joey! Calm Down!

(MARTIN seizes JOEY)

JOEY

I can't take it. My God... Martin. I can't take it. I can't... I  
mean, I'm a grown man. I don't need this shit. Day in. Day out.  
Every day of my life. Something's gotta give, Marty. Something's  
gotta... I don't know... what... I can't breathe...I... Who does  
he -

MARTIN

Look, Joey -

JOEY

Who does he -

MARTIN

Joey...

JOEY

I mean... I can't...

MARTIN

Joey, listen: You need to -

JOEY

I...You know him! How could he -

MARTIN

Joey...

JOEY

...do that? How could he do that to me? There's no way...

MARTIN

(grabs him)

Look! You listen to me now. You need to get a hold of yourself.  
You've got a job to do. You can't let this interfere with what  
you do. Don't crack up on me. Get it together. Yes, Henry's a big  
prick, yes. Get over it. You can't leave here.

(pause)

You know you can't leave here, don't you?

JOEY

Yeah.

MARTIN  
Your family needs you. I need you. Let this settle, Joe. By lunch  
you'll have forgotten all about it.

JOEY  
Henry...

MARTIN  
I know.

JOEY  
Henry...

MARTIN  
I know.

JOEY  
He...

MARTIN  
I KNOW!

(pause)  
I know. Henry is... Look, you know how I feel about Henry. What  
he's done. I know more about Henry than anyone. He's done more to  
me... You know.

JOEY  
Yeah.

MARTIN  
Just think about your family, Joe. Think about your family. There's  
nothing more important.

(pause)

JOEY  
There's more.

MARTIN  
What?

JOEY  
He told me that if my department does not have a 20% increase by  
the end of the week, he will terminate my stay at Black  
Enterprises.

MARTIN  
By the End of the Week?

JOEY  
End of the Week.

MARTIN  
My God.

(pause)



JOEY

Mindy said the most beautiful thing to me this morning. She said,  
"Joe. I'm yin and you're my yang."

MARTIN

That's beautiful, Joe.

ACT II

SCENE 3

(MAX and DENNY are laughing.)

DENNY

It's been good not being here alone for the last few weeks. There were times I thought I'd go nuts.

MAX

Seems longer than a few weeks. Damn.

DENNY

In the eight months I've been here, I've worked with nine different people; most of 'em don't stay very long. I don't know. Being in this little room for seven hours with nothing but T.V. screens and a gun can wear down those of weak mind and heart. Most guys think they can get their certification and be a security guard. Maybe so. But not here. It's different here. Henry Black expects a lot from his guards. I'm sure you've noticed my huge keyring. After six months, you'll probably get one. It means that he trusts you. Do you know what that means? Henry Black trusts you. I have keys! I could open half the doors in this building - maybe all of them; I haven't tried 'em all yet. I am the king's main man! I'm like Lancelot: I'm his Champion. This is very serious here.

(pause)

MAX

You ever talked to Henry?

DENNY

Oh yeah. Once. He said, "Excuse me. Would you leave office 201 open tonight?". I'll never forget it.

MAX

What did you say?

DENNY

I said, "Yes sir", and I did it.

MAX

That's it?

DENNY

Yeah.

MAX

And so you think he trusts you?

DENNY

Yeah. You don't understand. He said, "Excuse me", and he asked me nicely. Most people, he would've just said "Do It or Die".

(MORE)

DENNY (CONT'D)

You see? He trusts me. He respects me. You know why? Because he knows I'm dangerous; and, he knows that right now, I'm on his side. He wants to keep it that way. After that: he gave me a raise.

MAX

You're a dangerous sonofabitch, aren't you?

(beat)

I heard a story that Henry Black murdered an employee.

DENNY

Really?

MAX

That's what I heard.

DENNY

What for?

MAX

I think it was embezzling.

DENNY

That's wrong. There's no way anybody would embezzle from him. I know for a fact that the suits in this building get twice the money that guys who do the same job at other places.

MAX

Yeah? How do you know that?

DENNY

It's all about cash, Max. No one leaves this job. Not even the fucking errand boys. It's like the C.I.A., man: once you're in, you're in for life.

MAX

What about the guys you worked security with?

DENNY

They are not security guards anymore. They're janitors. You see? No one leaves.

MAX

Sounds a little screwy to me.

DENNY

It's all been confirmed, my friend.

MAX

How's that?

DENNY

I banged a girl in payroll.

MAX  
 Ah...So, you...

DENNY  
 Yep.

MAX  
 ...and...

DENNY  
 Oh yeah.

MAX  
 ...and then she...

DENNY  
 You know it.

MAX  
 Clever, clever boy.  
 (beat)

That's one of the most interesting things about sex. The things you talk about. Things you wouldn't even say to yourself.

DENNY  
 I wouldn't say it's one of the most interesting things...

MAX  
 Well, bein' married... my point of view, sex is all retrospective. So, she told you what the executive make?

DENNY  
 Yeah. Oh! Damn! I can't believe I haven't told you this: she told me why Henry gets here so goddamn early every morning. She said that he likes to be here when no one else is, so he can go into every room on every floor, and see that everything is done his way.

MAX  
 She said that? "Done his way"? What the hell is that supposed to mean?

DENNY  
 I don't know.

MAX  
 How does she know all this? I mean, being in payroll, I understand her knowing what everybody makes; but knowin' Henry's business...

DENNY  
 She probably screwed him.  
 (pause)

I bet he did kill an employee. But it wasn't embezzling.

MAX

I heard wrong.

DENNY

Well, you hear stories. Man, I could tell you stories.

MAX

So you're pretty in touch with things around here, huh?

DENNY

I am, what you might call, The Watch Dog.

MAX

The watch dog.

DENNY

Yeah. It's like, how you see rich people, and they always have some big German Shepherd or Doberman that guards the house. And they're always around the owner, like soldiers. They actually hear a lot of things, but their job is not to listen; simply, to protect. You see? You're just a puppy.

MAX

I see. But your not big.

(pause)

DENNY

Hmm.

MAX

It was real good. It was a very good analysis, until that part about big dogs. You're actually more like a...a Chihuahua.

DENNY

You are making fun of me.

MAX

No. I'm just taking your metaphor and putting it in reality. You gotta have a grip, man.

DENNY

So you're saying that as far as dogs go, I'm a Chihuahua.

MAX

According to you: yes.

DENNY

Hmm. I don't think I like that. It's a good thing you're my friend.

(beat)

But you know, the smaller dogs are the most aggressive.

MAX

That's you.

Yeah. DENNY

Of course, they're all bark and no bite. MAX

You don't think I bite? DENNY

Oh, I'm sure you do. But I've never heard of a Chihuahua, or a Dachshund, or a Poodle ripping anyone's head off. MAX

Huh. This is bringing me down. DENNY

You started the whole dog thing, man; I'm just trying to keep up. MAX

OK. So what are you? DENNY

Me? I'm just Max. MAX

(MAX sits)

ACT II

SCENE 4

(JOEY is seated where the previous scene left off.)

JOEY

Terminate me. He's gonna terminate me. Terminate me: what does that mean? Terminate me?

MARTIN

Joey...

JOEY

Did you hear that? I can't... I can't do it. It's too much, Marty, it's too much, I - you couldn't even do it!

MARTIN

I know. Hell, I busted my ass for a month and cleared 15%. Kate nearly sued me for divorce.

JOEY

I CAN'T DO IT!

MARTIN

What are you gonna do, Joe? You gotta try. Attitude like that, you won't get anything done.

JOEY

You're not listening to me. I Can't Do It. I can't do it. It's not possible to do. It can't be done! What the fuck...

MARTIN

I know that. But you know as well as I do that you can't second guess Henry Black. I don't know; maybe he's trying to find something, some... I don't know: maybe he's trying to motivate you.

JOEY

Motivate me? All this is motivating me to do is kill the bastard.

(pause)

I didn't say that, Marty. I didn't say that. You know me, maybe it's the whiskey... something. I don't know. I didn't mean that.

MARTIN

Yes.

(pause)

JOEY

Yes? Yes what?

(pause)

MARTIN

Another drink, Joe?

JOEY  
Sure. Uh...I don't...What are you -

MARTIN  
"Yes", Joe. A simple word.

JOEY  
I understand that part. But what are you saying "yes" to?

MARTIN  
I think I'll have a drink with you. Would you like a cigarette,  
cigar?

JOEY  
Yeah. In here?

MARTIN  
Yes. Right now we are smoking in here.  
(They light their cigarettes.)  
Joey, I've never seen you this distraught before.

JOEY  
I know. I just... I don't know what to do.

MARTIN  
You're scared.

JOEY  
Yeah. I guess I am.

MARTIN  
Yes.

JOEY  
It's hard to admit. I mean, I'm a grown man.

MARTIN  
Yes. You're a scared, grown man.

JOEY  
I know. I want to do the right thing. I don't want to be scared.

MARTIN  
Yes.

JOEY  
I want to be brave. I just don't know.

MARTIN  
You're on the right track. In order to be brave, you must first  
be scared. I know how it feels.

(pause)



JOEY  
 I miss him, too.  
 (pause)  
 Marty?

MARTIN  
 Yeah.

JOEY  
 Why didn't you do anything?

MARTIN  
 What?

JOEY  
 I don't know. Something, something... You and the old guys...

MARTIN  
 There was nothing, Joe. Nothing. The old guys were gone as soon as he was. It was a just a matter of time. They were too weak anyway. Abe, Davenport, Bobby - they'd have had to debate it for months. Hell, those guys couldn't decide where to have lunch.

JOEY  
 Did you have a plan?

MARTIN  
 No. I was too busy being scared.

(pause)

JOEY  
 I'm sorry about bustin' in the way I did. Out of Control. The Scotch seems to help.

MARTIN  
 Yes.

JOEY  
 I drink more than I used to. Don't really know why.

MARTIN  
 (filling JOEY's glass)  
 "We drink to punish ourselves for the sins we've committed."

JOEY  
 You sound like your father talkin'.

MARTIN  
 He told me that once. It was during our fourth year at school, Christmas break. You came over to Mom and Dad's. We got a bottle of cheap whiskey. Drank the whole damn thing. Remember that?

JOEY  
 Yeah, okay. When did he say that?

MARTIN

You had passed out. He came down in the morning for work. I was still up with the last drop of whiskey. He saw me. You. The bottle. I just looked at him. Didn't know what to say. Here I was, a grown man, about to enter the real world, sitting at my mother's dining room table, drunk off my ass, staring at my father as he was preparing for the day. I felt so ashamed. That's when he looked at me and said, "Marty, we drink to punish ourselves for the sins we've committed. Never forget that." Then he smiled, winked at me, and went to make coffee.

(pause)

That's when I decided to abandon my hopes to be a doctor, and go to work for him.

JOEY

He was a great man, your father. I remember in High School when my Aunt and Uncle got me that Camaro. Thought I was hot shit. What was it your dad said?...

MARTIN

Yeah. You grew a beard, too. You came in...

JOEY

Okay, I remember. I came in, and he walked up to me; looked outside at the car, then looked at me. Had that smile on his face, you know. I said, "Hey, John. Wha'd do you think of my ride?" I called him by his first name, you believe that? I thought my balls were as big as the tires on that Camaro. Then he pointed at my shirt and said, "What's this?" So I looked down, and he flipped me on the nose. I didn't know what to think. Then he says, "A nice car and a beard still don't make you a man, JOEY."

(pause)

MARTIN

He always thought of you as a son.

(pause)

JOEY

Really? A son? I didn't know that.

MARTIN

Oh yeah. He kind of felt responsible for you. Loved you like a son.

JOEY

Wow. He never said anything.

MARTIN

I know.

(pause)

ACT II

SCENE 5

(MAX is seated in the same place as the previous scene.)

MAX

Let me tell you, this security job is so much better than at the Franklin Towers. We had stools. Can you imagine seven hours straight with nothing to sit on but a stool? Oh, I'm sorry.

DENNY

Yeah, yeah. Sure you are, dickhead.

MAX

It's not my fault. Maybe if you had invited me on your little hunting trip it wouldn't have happened.

DENNY

It's not funny. What good would it have been having you there?

MAX

First of all, I wouldn't have let your nephew drink beer all day, then operate a loaded weapon.

DENNY

Yeah. That was stupid.

MAX

Stupid? That went well beyond stupid. As I'm sure you know.

DENNY

Mr. Fuckin' Wiseass...

MAX

What did he say after it happened? "Oh. I'm sorry, Uncle Denny. I thought you were a deer." Weren't you wearing one of those bright orange hats?

DENNY

No. I let him wear it.

MAX

Well. That's good. At least that way everyone in the woods could see him when he shot you in the ass.

DENNY

At least he's not afraid of the trigger.

(pause)

MAX

I didn't think you'd come in tonight. I'd think getting shot in the ass is a pretty legitimate reason for not coming to work.

DENNY

It takes more than a bullet to keep me down. Didn't you see "Big Jake"? John Wayne took a bullet and still got his kid out alive. I'm no slacker looking for an excuse not to work. A man is his job and I'm dedicated to mine. I've got an adventurous career with a great company and some hunk of metal in my ass isn't going to interrupt my focus. It'll only make me stronger, help keep my edge.

MAX

You're really into this, aren't you?

DENNY

Damn right I'm into this! I love being a security guard. The Excitement. The Danger. Never Knowing What'll Happen Next.

MAX

Denny, how long you been doin' this?

DENNY

Eight months.

MAX

And after eight months of sitting in this room, staring at T.V. screens all night, you still don't know what'll happen next?

DENNY

Well...I "know". But I don't "KNOW".

MAX

Has anything exciting ever happened here, while you were on duty?

DENNY

No.

MAX

Any intruders...

DENNY

No.

MAX

Some corporate thieves...

DENNY

No - Well, bums and whackos...

MAX

Man. You need a vacation; where none of your relatives shoot at you.

DENNY

Sure. Go ahead. Laugh. Mock me. Have your fun. But know this: Every great man in history has been laughed at.

(MORE)

DENNY (CONT'D)

They laughed at Edison when he said he was going to invent a thing called the light bulb. They laughed at Ben Franklin when he said he was going to fly a kite and figure out electricity. What is considered foolishness, is often greatness. And this is just a starting point for me. I will achieve greatness with my theories concerning private protection in the corporate -

MAX

Denny. I don't want to hear your theories on being a security guard. You know what I want to hear? I want to hear you not talking about your theories. That's what I want to hear. Okay?

DENNY

Okay. Why'd you become a security guard?

MAX

I didn't "become" a security guard. It fits my schedule, so I do it. It's easy.

DENNY

Oh my God. You don't take your work seriously, do you?

MAX

No. Should I?

DENNY

Yes! Being a security guard is a huge responsibility. We are the protectors of this building. Henry Black has entrusted to us his Corporate Empire. We are the Keepers of This World! Don't you see?

MAX

All I see are T.V. screens showing me the 2nd floor.

DENNY

Oh man! It's So Much Bigger Than That! You've only been here a few weeks, Max. After you've been here for awhile...People - Men - like us, we have to have Balls of Steel to put our neck on the line night after night. We are a breed of men that have existed since the Caveman. The Egyptians had us all over the Nile. The Greeks wouldn't have been able to sit around and think without us on the city wall, keeping the goddamn barbarians out. The Romans, The Fucking Romans... They put us all over the world! Julius Fucking Caesar went into battle with men like us and gave birth to an Empire that lasted for five hundred years! And that is who we are today, in the United States of America. Security. We've provided it for centuries past, and will do so for centuries to come. Security. There are a lot of people who'd kill to have that.

MAX

There are a lot of people who'd have you put in a straight jacket.

DENNY

You think I'm crazy?

MAX

Nah. I don't think you're crazy.

DENNY

You think I'm crazy.

MAX

No. I don't think you're crazy.

DENNY

Then what did you mean by that.

MAX

By what? I said, "No. I don't think you're crazy"!

DENNY

I know what you said. But what you meant was, "Yes, Denny, I think you're crazy." So if you think I'm crazy, tell me you think I'm crazy; don't give me this bullshit, saying you don't think I'm crazy, when in fact you think I am crazy. Tell Me You Think I'm Fucking Crazy!

MAX

You want me to tell you you're crazy? Okay: You're crazy.

DENNY

I AM NOT CRAZY!

MAX

Damnit, Denny. What do you want? You tell me this, you tell me that...What the hell do you want me to say? You're crazy, you're not crazy. What the hell difference does it make? You really think I'd sit here every night with you if I thought you were crazy?

(pause)

DENNY

You're right.

MAX

Fuck, man. Why do you have to do that?

DENNY

What? Do what?

MAX

Act that way. You were about to fucking explode.

DENNY

I know. I'm sorry.

MAX

You were making me nervous. That's not good.

DENNY

I apologize. I just...I...I get carried away sometimes.

MAX

I'll say.

DENNY

We both have loaded weapons. You know...we, we shouldn't...I shouldn't...

MAX

Forget about it.

DENNY

We're cool?

MAX

Yeah. Really. Forget about it.

DENNY

Want some Frito chili pie?

MAX

No.

(pause)

DENNY

I used to be in the hospital, you know.

MAX

You mean the nuthouse?

DENNY

No, not the "nuthouse". I was in a mental hospital. I was unbalanced.

MAX

I did not know that. That's something.

DENNY

I used to blow up like that a lot. But now I'm better.

MAX

That's good. What did they do to you... when you blew up like that?

DENNY

They'd sedate me. Put me in a room. Make me listen to music. Sometimes I got a bath.

MAX

What kind of music? Was it that New Age shit?

DENNY

No. We got to choose. The idea was to calm us down, make us feel comfortable. I would request slow, touching songs of the 80's when I felt pensive and thoughtful; The Rolling Stones when I felt emotional and creative. Usually it was 80's.

(pause)

DENNY

Remember that song "Turning Japanese"?

MAX

Yeah. Why?

DENNY

I always wondered: why would this guy wonder if he was turning Japanese? Was it an ethnic thing? Or, did it have something to do with Japan's dominance of world business, which I think is something that could be -

MAX

Can I ask you, 'cause I'm not sure if you're serious or not.

DENNY

I'm always serious. Especially about pop art.

MAX

All right. Have you ever heard the term "turning Japanese" outside of the song?

DENNY

No.

MAX

Well it's not about interracial sex or Jap business taking over. It is, however, a slang term for male masturbation.

DENNY

Jacking off?

MAX

Yes, Denny. Jacking off.

DENNY

How do you get that?

(MAX squints his eyes, bucks his teeth, and pantomimes masturbating with his right hand.)

DENNY

Ohhh. Hmm. Did they do that other song...Mum...That one about...



MAX

Yes. That one from the 80's. From the John Hughes film. Had the cool video. They were British. Weird hair.

(DENNY flips MAX off. MAX laughs.)

No, really. What other song?

DENNY

No, really:

(DENNY flips MAX off again.)

MAX

You're a funny guy.

ACT II

SCENE 6

(MARTIN and JOEY are in the same positions as the end of their previous scene.)

JOEY

How 'bout another drink?  
(JOEY gets up and makes drinks)  
You don't look so good.

MARTIN

I'm fine. I just... Thinkin'.

JOEY

You know he wouldn't have let it go like this. I mean, all his life: it was this business and his family. Then this Henry Black cocksucker. How'd he do it? It's beyond me.

MARTIN

Dad trusted him. So, of course, the old guys did too. He let him in.

JOEY

I don't know, Marty. Maybe your Dad, in a younger day...

MARTIN

Maybe part of him wanted it to happen. You know, rest his mind, his back.

JOEY

How could he have wanted this? Look around. Do you think he wanted to do this to the business. To you. To your mother: I mean, and I apologize for this, but your mother, God love her, has lost her mind. She doesn't even leave the house. And this once beautiful company has gone straight to hell! You can't piss without feeling like a hand is gonna come out of the urinal and rip your dick off! It's like Nazi Germany. And you can't... YOU CAN'T LEAVE! YOU CAN'T FUCKING LEAVE!

MARTIN

I can't imagine that he was that dumb, Joey! How could he have not seen it coming. Tell me. How could my father, the man who built this place for over forty years, how could he purposely let his guard down like that and fuck everything up! He wanted rest, Joe. He wanted rest and he needed someone strong enough to carry the burden; so he could have rest.

(pause)

And it wasn't me.

(pause)

I don't know... Sometimes I think the old man never knew me.

(MORE)

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Never knew me. Loved me, but... He didn't think I was strong enough... didn't think I could do it. I never had a chance. He was always being so strong for all of us, I never had the opportunity to show him how strong I was. Then I think, maybe he knew me better than I did. Look at the way I ran away from everything, you know. Dad was gone, I got scared. Two years. Maybe I never will be that strong.

JOEY

Do something.

(pause)

MARTIN

Like what?

JOEY

I don't know. Something. Something to Henry Black. Bash his fucking... no, no. Something, Martin. Give yourself some rest.

MARTIN

Like what, Joey? Should I just walk up to him with a baseball bat and crack his head open? Maybe poison the sugar he puts in his coffee? You can't do that to men like him. You can't just kill Henry Black. You think I haven't thought of this? Two goddamn years! Besides the fact that I have every reason on Earth to kill the bastard; I don't stand a chance, and he knows it. If I was any threat at all, I'd be dead by now.

JOEY

So what're you gonna do, huh? Bitch about it the rest of your life? Walk into this building, walk into this office, walk into this world that your father built, look at that sign that says Black Enterprises and everyday say to yourself, "Your right Dad. I wasn't strong enough."

MARTIN

Stop it, Joe.

JOEY

You know I'm right; and you know I'm the only person who can tell you this.

MARTIN

SHUT UP!

(long pause)

JOEY

Look, Martin. I'm sorry, I shouldn't have said that. I just... I hate it, you know? I hate it as much as you. Your dad was the closest thing to a father I ever had. And this... this shit... this shit we're dealing with is wrong. I don't know what to do... I don't know what to do about it, but it's wrong.

MARTIN

You're right.

(pause)

You're right.

ACT II

SCENE 7

(MAX reaches for his  
cigarettes. HE only finds  
his Zippo.)

DENNY

You're gonna smoke again, huh?

MAX

Yeah. If I can find my smokes.

DENNY

You shouldn't do that, you know.

MAX

Shut up.

(DENNY watches MAX as he  
looks for his cigarettes,  
which have been under MAX's  
chair the entire time.)

DENNY

My grandfather was hooked up to a machine for the last years of  
his life. He couldn't breathe without it.

MAX

So don't smoke. It's genetic. Skips a generation. My grandfather  
smoked two and a half packs a day for sixty years and died when  
he was 84.

DENNY

Cigarettes finally got him, huh?

MAX

No. Choked to death on a banana at breakfast. He ate bacon every  
morning 'til he was 78. Doctor told him to stop smoking and eat  
fruit in the morning instead of bacon. He decided to do one of  
the two and gave up bacon. Fruit ended up killing him.

(beat)

DENNY

Oh, there they are. Under the chair.

(MAX leans over to get them  
and a silencer falls out  
of his shirt pocket. He  
snatches it quickly, but  
not before DENNY notices  
it.)

What the hell was that?

MAX

What?

DENNY

That peculiar metal thing that fell out of your pocket. What was that?

MAX

Nothing fell out.

DENNY

Bullshit! I saw it! What was that?

MAX

I don't know what you're talking about.

DENNY

There was a small, black, roundish metal object that fell out of your pocket just now and I want to know what it was!

MAX

DENNY! I Don't Know What You're Talking About And Neither Do You.

DENNY

Stop fucking with me. It's right there...

(DENNY reaches into MAX's pocket. MAX grabs his hand and twists it, pushing DENNY away.)

AHH, FUCK, MAN!

MAX

You can't go reaching into another man's pocket, Denny. Don't do that again.

DENNY

I can't believe you. You're a weird fuck sometimes.

(beat)

Are you hiding something from me?

MAX

All right. I didn't want to have to do this.

(MAX reveals the silencer to DENNY and tosses it to him)

DENNY

Holy Mother of God... That's a silencer!

MAX

Yes.

DENNY

I've never seen one of these in real life before. My God.

It's beautiful.	DENNY
(pause)	
Where did you get this?	
	MAX
That's why I didn't want you to see it.	
	DENNY
I don't understand.	
	MAX
They gave it to me.	
	DENNY
Who?	
	MAX
...Jerry.	
	DENNY
Jerry gave you this?	
	MAX
Yeah.	
	DENNY
Wait a second. Jerry?	
	MAX
Yes, Denny. Jerry.	
	DENNY
Jerry gave you this?	
	MAX
Yes.	
	DENNY
Why?...Why did you get one?	
	MAX
I don't know.	
	DENNY
I've been here longer...	
	MAX
I know, Denny. I wish that -	
	DENNY
I deserve this.	
	MAX
You're absolu -	

DENNY

Why you ? ... what have you ... I mean, I Got Passed Over On This!

MAX

I know. I can't tell you -

DENNY

BULLSHIT! This is BULLSHIT! I got seniority here. You get a silencer, all I get, some silly fucking stopwatch?

MAX

It's not silly. It's a fine piece of serious gear -

DENNY

FUCK YOU! All my work... All my... I come here, day after... Fuck, Man Fuck!

MAX

I know this is difficult for you, Denny. And I'm sure that if I were in your place, I'd feel the same way, but you have to listen to me -

DENNY

I quit. This isn't right...It's not right... It's... It's not...

MAX

You can't quit...

DENNY

...it's not...

MAX

They need you. Henry needs you. You're Lancelot, c'mon man.

DENNY

No. No, no. I can't live with this.

MAX

Live with what?

DENNY

This! This...Humiliation!

MAX

Humiliation?

DENNY

Fuck, man. Fuck Fuck Fuck! You have no idea how I feel right now.

MAX

What are you talking about?



DENNY

I'm talking about being here, bustin' my ass, doing what I'm told - doing it very well - protecting this place with my life, my, my fucking soul! Living it, Breathing it! Knowing that any second I could be knocked off by some thug, or have to take a bullet for Henry, or even have to kill some asshole to save this building!

MAX

You're right. You're a very serious man.

DENNY

You. You cynical cocksucker. You act like it's nothing. Like it's no big fucking deal to get a silencer from Jerry! The same man who gives me - the most dedicated, hardest working, fiercest sonofabitch in the whole goddamn building - a STOPWATCH! A FUCKING STOPWATCH! SILLY GODDAMN STOPWATCH!

MAX

Now, Denny -

DENNY

"Now Denny" Bullshit. There's some explaining needs to be done. Either by you, or Jerry, or fucking Henry himself.

MAX

Denny, they love you here. You said so yourself. You got keys, for crying out loud...I don't have keys!

DENNY

Yeah. But you got a silencer.

MAX

It's no big deal. What am I gonna do with a silencer?  
(pause)

ACT II

SCENE 8

(MARTIN and JOEY are where they left off from the previous scene.)

MARTIN

Everything you're saying is right. It's all what I've said to myself for two years, Joe. It's just not that easy.

JOEY

Why? Why is it not that easy?

MARTIN

It's just NOT! You can't just kill a man.

JOEY

Why not?

MARTIN

Because...

JOEY

Why? Tell me why.

MARTIN

Because power is not granted or given. Power is taken. And Will is Power; and I don't know if I have that will.

JOEY

You're afraid.

MARTIN

Afraid of what? The consequences?

JOEY

You're afraid. You're afraid of the power and responsibility that comes with it.

MARTIN

What are you willing to do?

JOEY

You're afraid, Marty and you will always live...

MARTIN

What are you willing to do?

JOEY

... under the shadow of your...

MARTIN

What are you...

...dead father.

JOEY

WILLING TO DO!

MARTIN

(long pause)

JOEY

You want a drink?

MARTIN

Yeah.

JOEY

Me too.

(JOEY gets drinks)

"These are the times that try men's souls." I can't remember who said that.

MARTIN

Answer my question.

(pause)

JOEY

I am willing to do what you are willing to do.

ACT II

SCENE 9

(MAX and DENNY are where they left off from their previous scene.)

Trade you.

DENNY

What?

MAX

Trade you the keys for the silencer.

DENNY

Get the fuck outta here, Denny.

MAX

C'mon. You said you'd rather have the keys.

DENNY

No I didn't. I said the silencer was no big deal. I never said I'd trade.

MAX

Well I'd trade.

DENNY

I don't wanna trade.

MAX

Trade me.

DENNY

Fuck off, man.

MAX

I want the silencer! Please! Trade me!

DENNY

NO! It's mine!

MAX

PLEASE! You said it was no big deal.

DENNY

Now it is and it's mine so FUCK OFF!

MAX

I'm not gonna fuck off on this, Max. I got fucked! I want that silencer. I need that silencer. I deserve that silencer. You and I both know that, so fucking trade me!

ACT II

SCENE 10

(MARTIN and JOEY are where they left off from the previous scene.)

Swear to me. MARTIN

I swear to you. JOEY

'Cause this isn't fun and games, you know. This is business. This is serious business. Are you in? MARTIN

Yes. JOEY

...'cause we both know it's the right thing. MARTIN

Yes. JOEY

We're not just talking about it; it's real. MARTIN

Yes. JOEY

I mean, we're gonna kill a man. MARTIN

Yes. JOEY

You understand? MARTIN

Yes. JOEY

This is serious. MARTIN

Yes. JOEY

You're in? MARTIN

Yes.

JOEY

So. How do we do it?

MARTIN

(pause)

I know a guy.

JOEY

You know a "guy"?

MARTIN

Yes. I know a guy. I've got his number right here. Phone call away.

JOEY

How do you know a "guy"?

MARTIN

You've been in the executive chair too long, Marty. You're too busy with presentations and speeches, you forgot about all the little people here at home.

JOEY

Like who?

MARTIN

Like Lauren, down in payroll.

JOEY

What, she kills people?

MARTIN

No, no, no. She fucks people. She's slept with half the company.

JOEY

Did you sleep with her?

MARTIN

No. Listen: Lauren. Whorin' Lauren, from payroll - you seen her? Pretty. Well, pretty in a nasty sort of way. Always chewing gum, bright red lipstick...

JOEY

Yeah, okay. Blonde. Great legs.

MARTIN

Exactly. Well, I find out from Jerry, Head of Security...

JOEY

...Jerry. Yeah...

MARTIN

JOEY

...The Man Who Knows All, that she's fucking half the company.

MARTIN

When did you talk to him?

JOEY

I don't know... Copula months ago.

MARTIN

Okay.

JOEY

So, I figure she's the kind of girl, needs some attention. So I start talking to her.

MARTIN

No way; you're sleeping with her.

JOEY

No. I'm not. Listen: Hey, you and I have been wanting to get Henry for two years, right? I've been thinking about this. Believe me, I wouldn't come to you wanting to kill Henry if I hadn't been thinking of something.

MARTIN

All right. Go on.

JOEY

So we start talking - business, you know - "talkin' shop"...She mentions "Hank".

MARTIN

Hank?

JOEY

Exactly. I said, "Hank"? She was like: "Yeah". Well, come to find out, Hank means Henry Black Jr.

MARTIN

What?!

JOEY

I know! So, I played along: "'Hank', okay. Henry's son..." She told me how she's talked to him on the phone and he's involved in a lot of our business. Well I don't know what to think. So I ask her about "Hank". She doesn't know much, but she says, "I can't wait to meet him, he might be a flop, but he's so rich".

MARTIN

Uh huh...

JOEY

I'm putting it together...

MARTIN  
So he's invented a young son.

JOEY  
Yes.

MARTIN  
For what purpose?

JOEY  
Protection.

MARTIN  
Goddamnit!

JOEY  
Yes.

MARTIN  
So you check "him" out?

JOEY  
That's right.

MARTIN  
How does this help us?

JOEY  
That's the thing. It doesn't help us. It can't help us. It helps Henry. Where does the money go? It evaporates into the hands of Henry Black JR. You follow?

MARTIN  
Okay...

JOEY  
We have to approach this thing completely anonymous. Henry hides - so do we.

MARTIN  
Okay. So how do we do it?

JOEY  
This guy: all I gotta do is call and we're on in minutes. He tells me where he's at, we go there, take care of this thing. All we gotta do is watch.

MARTIN  
Wait, you lost me...

JOEY  
It doesn't matter. It's good. It's good that you're a little confused. That's your alibi.



MARTIN

Listen Joey: I don't know what you're sayin', I don't know who this guy is, and I don't give a shit about some fucking alibi. I want Henry Black dead. I want him dead. I want him to suffer. I want him to cry. I want him to beg for mercy and I want to spit in his fucking eye. Do you understand? I don't give a shit about anything else right now - you, me, my family - nothing. Nothing. Nothing matters. If you know a guy: call him. Get him on the goddamn phone, tell him I'll pay. I want Henry dead. Dead. Fucking Dead! Do that, please, for me.

ACT II

SCENE 11

(MAX and DENNY are where they left off in their previous scene.)

I'm not gonna trade. MAX

Yes. DENNY

No. MAX

Yes. DENNY

(DENNY draws his gun and puts it to MAX's head.)

I'm not gonna say this again: I need that silencer. It's important that I have the silencer. When this shit is over, I'm leaving with the silencer. Now, how do you want to trade: my keys, or your face?

(pause)

You've got to be kidding me. MAX

Gimme the silencer. DENNY

Don't yell, Dennis. MAX

Don't call me Dennis. DENNY

Dennis. Dennis. Dennis Dennis Dennis. MAX

Shut up! DENNY

Dennis. Dennis the Menace. Denis the Penis. MAX

I'll Kill You! DENNY

Do it. Do it, Denis the Penis. MAX

DENNY

STOP SAYING THAT!

MAX

What, you little motherfucker! Do it! Do it, sonofabitch! Do it!

(MAX knocks the gun away.

Phone rings. THEY ignore  
it.)

You Little Fuck! All I do is listen to your insane shit! Night  
after fucking night! Your blah-blah shit. How big you are. How  
important you are. How dangerous you are. You pull a gun on a  
man, you better be big enough to use it! Especially if it's Me!  
You! Little! Fuck!

(MAX attacks DENNY. They  
fight. During the fight,  
MAX grabs the spoon and  
thrusts it towards DENNY's  
leg. DENNY dodges it and it  
lands in his wound. HE  
screams in pain and falls  
to the floor.)

ACT II

SCENE 12

(MARTIN and JOEY are where they left off from their previous scene.)

JOEY  
All right. Okay. You're in on this, right?

MARTIN  
Yes, Joey. Call him.

JOEY  
All right.  
(pause. JOEY gets number and dials. HE speaks into the phone.)  
Hey. It's me: The Dog.

MARTIN  
"The Dog"?

JOEY  
(To MARTIN)  
I can't use my...  
(To phone)  
Hey listen: The dogs are running in the streets. I got it. You understand?  
(HE hangs up.)  
Well.

MARTIN  
Good.  
(pause)  
Drink, Joe?

JOEY  
Yeah.  
(MARTIN gets drinks. Silence.)

MARTIN  
How do you feel?

JOEY  
Good.

MARTIN  
Me too.  
(pause)  
We're doing it. Finally. Fucking Doing It. What would my father say?

JOEY

I don't know.

MARTIN

Me neither. Huh. I guess he'd be speechless; for the first time. "Hey Dad. I just arranged for the murder of Henry Black. What's new with you?"

JOEY

Yeah...

MARTIN

He'd probably shake his head and look at the ground. Then he'd say, "Don't tell your mother."

JOEY

Huh. Yeah.

MARTIN

Joe. Breathe, Joe. Take a deep breath. Doesn't it feel good? The air feels good.

JOEY

Yeah. It does feel good.

(JOEY gets another drink)

MARTIN

When do we get goin' on this thing? You said we'll be there, right?

JOEY

Yeah...Oh, yeah. You really want to, don't you?

MARTIN

Yes. You said minutes.

JOEY

(Looks at watch)

Yeah. About three minutes, we head that way.

ACT II

SCENE 13

(MAX and DENNY are in the same position as the end of their previous scene.)

MAX

HOLY SHIT! DENNY! ARE YOU OKAY?

DENNY

SHIT! I think it's reopened.

MAX

Oh fuck! You're bleedin' like crazy.  
(as MAX inspects DENNY, he notices the stopwatch around DENNY's neck. DENNY remains in agony.)  
Shit. It's almost six o'clock.

DENNY

Max...What are you doin'? Max? Max?...What are you -

MAX

Shut up!

(MAX attaches silencer to his gun)

DENNY

Is Henry coming, Max? Don't let him see me like this...Thanks, Max.

(MAX is the door peering out)

Even though you stabbed me and all; it was an accident. I know. What are you doing, Max?

(DENNY starts to drag himself toward MAX)

MAX

Shut the fuck up!

DENNY

You're a real pal, you know that? Most friends...I don't know.

MAX

Denny, you have to be quiet! Goddamnit!

DENNY

Friends fight, that's okay...God help me...Could I die like this?  
(MAX holds DENNY)

MAX

I'm sorry, Denny.

DENNY

I know you are. You're great, Max...You may be my best friend.

MAX

Yeah, Denny. I'm your best friend.

DENNY

Max? I just wanna tell you -

(MAX breaks DENNY's neck.  
HE dies instantly.  
Silence.Voices are heard  
outside the door. MAX opens  
door,fires three shots.  
Exits.)

ACT II

SCENE 14



ACT II

SCENE 15

(MARTIN and JOEY are in the same positions as the end of their previous scene.)

MARTIN  
Oh Baby! I feel better already.

(pause)

JOEY  
Yeah.

MARTIN  
It's finally happening.

JOEY  
It really is...It's...Uh...

MARTIN  
I'll be able to sleep nights. Be able to look at my kids.

JOEY  
This is so fast. I mean, this is so...

MARTIN  
Damn right! Not fast enough for me, Joe. I'm gonna greet this thing with open arms.

JOEY  
You know...I was...uh...maybe...

MARTIN  
We could be heroes. Today's my day. Your day too.

JOEY  
You sure? I mean, you sure about this? Really sure?

MARTIN  
What is it, Joey? I've known you too long; what's up?

JOEY  
I don't know, Marty. This has happened so fast. I came in cocked and loaded...Are we sure about this? I mean, we're killing a man.

MARTIN  
Look: We're not "killing a man". We're curing a disease. We're giving rest to a tired old man. You're in this. We're liberating ourselves and everyone in this building. We're heroes, Joe. And I'm willing to suffer the consequences of that.

(MORE)

MARTIN (CONT'D)

After this, I can look my son in the eye, so can you, and I can tell him, "Don't worry, son. Your father's gonna take care of you. Don't worry." Isn't that worth it? Can you live with that?

JOEY

Yeah.

MARTIN

Now let's go.

(HE turns off the lights)

And one more thing: Don't tell your mother.

END OF ACT II

ACT III

SCENE 1

(Audio of JOEY on the phone  
with MAX)

MAX  
Listen to me. Listen to me, Joey.

JOEY  
I can't believe this. I can't...

MAX  
Calm Down. Breathe Deep.

JOEY  
What the fuck! I killed my...

MAX  
Do what I say.

JOEY  
My best. I killed my best...

MAX  
Do what I say, Joey. Do what I say.

JOEY  
Oh Sweet God...

MAX  
Keep it together, Joey.

JOEY  
Forgive me, God...

MAX  
Joey. You OK? You need to be OK or this is front and center in  
the papers. Are you OK?

JOEY  
Yeah. Yes. I'm OK.

MAX  
OK. Go to the warehouse district at 13th and Market St. The  
building with the red garage door. I'll see you pull up and let  
you in.

JOEY  
Right. OK.

MAX  
Don't look suspicious. Don't speed. Don't squeal your tires like  
the movies.

OK. JOEY

This isn't a movie, Joey. Say that: this isn't a movie. MAX

This isn't a movie. JOEY

This is real. MAX

This is real. JOEY

This is now. MAX

This is now. JOEY

This is what we are, who we are, and we will not make excuses for the past. MAX

This is what we are, who we are, and we will not make excuses for the past. JOEY

And don't speed. MAX

Don't speed. JOEY

(Lights up on the warehouse interior. Sound of the door raising. MAX and JOEY enter.)

Come in. Have a seat. MAX

Sonofabitch. It's cold. What are we, uh...What are we doin' here? JOEY

This is where we Divide and Conquer. We settle up. MAX

You do this a lot? JOEY

Cigarette? MAX

Yes. Please. JOEY

Where are we. MAX

I don't know. You tell me. You brought us here. JOEY

No. I mean, what is this. MAX

A garage. JOEY

A warehouse. Wha'd you do with a place like this. MAX

Depends on what kind of work you're in. JOEY

Stop Being a Smart Ass and think for a change! MAX

I'm sorry. I do that. JOEY

Think. MAX

All right. Uh... JOEY

A Warehouse. MAX

Uh...You put things here...? JOEY

Right. Now. What might we put in a place like this? MAX

We? JOEY

Yes. We. MAX

You and me? JOEY

You and me. And...Henry? MAX

Ohhh. Is this where...? JOEY

Right. MAX

Oh fuck. Oh shit. He's here? JOEY

What's left of him. MAX

Oh my God. Oh Moses... JOEY

What would you prefer we do with him, prop him up at his desk and see if anyone notices? MAX

Well...Fuck! How bout bury him! JOEY

Sure! We'll trot right over to the cemetery like Flimsy and Mimsy and tell'em we got a fucking stiff in the trunk that we did in. I'm sure they will be overjoyed to help us out! MAX

Well...Dig a hole! You're a Working Man. JOEY

(MAX immediately has his hand around JOEY's throat)

Don't think. For one second. That you and I are different people. Because now, you're not on the sidelines anymore. You're in the shit with me. MAX

(pause)

Now. Henry Black is behind that door. He will want to meet with us shortly. So, we need to make sure that everything went off as planned, what was fucked up...Reports. You know...

OK. JOEY

Then we settle this business, call in my Korean friend from the pizza joint, and be done with this thing. OK? MAX

OK. JOEY

(MAX sits)

This is the not so fun part. MAX

JOEY  
 What is...This?

MAX  
 Yeah.  
 (MAX pulls out his gun)

JOEY  
 Holy shit! Don't shoot! Don't kill me!  
 (MAX puts gun down next to him)

MAX  
 What? My gun's hot. It was burning my leg.

JOEY  
 Oh. Shit...

MAX  
 Did you think I was gonna shoot you?

JOEY  
 A little. Yes.  
 (MAX laughs)

JOEY  
 You said the "not so fun part"!

MAX  
 No, no, no. I meant "this", the recap. The "make sure nothing was missed so we cover our asses" part. The "paperwork".

JOEY  
 Oh. I thought...  
 (JOEY laughs, nervously)

MAX  
 That's funny.  
 (pause)  
 Ok. So. You took care of getting Martin there at the right time. Good. Did he call anyone while you were there?

JOEY  
 No. Wait. Yes. He was on the phone when I came in.

MAX  
 Who with?

JOEY  
 I don't know. Probably his wife. Or Mother.

MAX  
 Did you hear any of it?

JOEY

No. Oh yeah. He said he'd call back.

MAX

Is he good about returning calls? Do you know?

JOEY

Yes. Very good about it. That's a big thing of his. Always wants to make people feel important.

MAX

Ok. So someone's gonna be expecting a call from him. Maybe twenty minutes to an hour after the call ended. When they don't get it, they will become suspicious. They'll call back. No answer. People start looking for him. Hell, they haven't seen him in awhile either. Inquiries start. "Where's Marty?". So, it's been at best, one hour since the call. Right?

JOEY

Ok.

MAX

The mother or the wife?

JOEY

Right.

MAX

Which is it?

JOEY

Uh...Don't know.

MAX

That's OK. I've got the addresses to both of those, so if there's any interference before we're done here, I should be able to -

JOEY

Wait a second. You're talking about Kate. About his Mom. Are you talking about...?

MAX

If they interfere.

JOEY

What the hell is this?! I didn't go along with this for that sort of thing.

MAX

What sort of thing?

JOEY

For killing! For murder! I mean, that's his wife, for Christ's sake! I'm not in for this! This is fucked up!



MAX

What did you go in for, Joey? Tell me. What was it that allured you into committing murder? What was it that inspired you to arrange the death of you best friend? Do you know? Tell me, Cause I'd Love To Hear It. Tell me! Do you know what it was?

JOEY

I don't...

MAX

Well you better fucking remember, Miss Jane, cause whatever it was that got you into this is the only thing that's gonna get you out alive. If you have the will to kill one, you damned sure have the will to kill many.

(pause)

Now. Let's move on.

JOEY

Goddamnit.

MAX

Let's move on.

JOEY

But...

MAX

Joey. This is not the time to rethink things. Listen to my questions and answer them with the facts that you are aware of or we all die. OK?

JOEY

OK.

MAX

Did he have any appointments today?

JOEY

I don't know.

MAX

That's probably unavoidable. It's been 25 minutes. How long 'til someone notices, do you think?

JOEY

Soon.

MAX

Did his secretary see you with him?

JOEY

No. We were both at the office before his secretary showed up.

MAX

Good.

JOEY

What about you? Anything happen not in The Plan?

MAX

Yeah. I had to kill Denny.

JOEY

Denny? The security guy, the little guy?

MAX

Yeah.

JOEY

Fuck. Wha'd he do?

MAX

He drove me up the wall, for one thing.

JOEY

That's why you killed him?

MAX

No.

JOEY

I mean, please, let me know if I start to bug you.

MAX

All Right.

JOEY

You've yelled at me a couple of times, so...I don't know...

MAX

All Right!

JOEY

Ok. So. What happened?

MAX

He wouldn't shut up.

JOEY

That doesn't seem much different from the reason you gave before. You're not making me feel very good, pal.

MAX

It was time for the hit. We had a fight. He was in pain. Screaming. Screaming in pain. Told me I was his only real friend. I didn't know what to do. I mean, I couldn't blow the hit, you know? Would've fucked up everything if you guys would have heard him screaming. I tried to get him to be quiet. "Be quiet, Denny. You have to shut up." He couldn't stop screaming. He couldn't keep from screaming. He was kind of like a kid brother.

(MORE)

MAX (CONT'D)

But he wouldn't shut the fuck up. So I broke his neck. Snapped it clean. He was even looking at me when I did it. Told him I was his friend. SNAP. Lifeless. Like that.

(pause)

JOEY

You're extremely dangerous, aren't you?

MAX

In this line of work, you don't make too many friends. Very rare. I'd say we were friends. He was good guy. A good little guy. I didn't want to do it.

(a beat)

I mean, he wasn't the mark. I'm not some maniac, you know? Just waiting for some one to look at me the wrong way so I'll have a reason to kill'em. I'm a businessman. I kill with a purpose.

JOEY

So am I.

(pause)

You're right. We are the same. I kill. You kill. We're on the same field.

(JOEY pulls out a gun)

I didn't think I'd need this, but now I know I do.

(MAX looks to his gun on the bench. Raises his hands.)

MAX

Joey. What the fuck is that?

JOEY

Don't you fuck with me! You killed Denny cause he knew, just like me. He knew what was going on. About the hit. He figured it all out and you whacked him.

MAX

That's not true, Joey. I didn't want to kill him. We were friends.

JOEY

Friends, bullshit! You slipped up and he found out what was going on and you did him in.

MAX

That's not it at all. We were friends! Just like you and Martin. Friends. And I had to kill him. Because of business! Just like you.

JOEY

Marty and I grew up together. We go way back. You two sat in stools together for a few months.

JOEY  
I loved him! I didn't want to do it!

MAX  
Neither did I!

(A door upstage opens. HENRY BLACK emerges. MAX and JOEY freeze. Pause. Then HENRY falls to the floor dead. MARTIN stands behind him visible to all. Then he enters the room.)

MARTIN  
Hello gentlemen.  
(JOEY is catatonic. MAX goes to JOEY and takes his gun. JOEY offers no resistance.)

MARTIN  
Max. You're done. You're time is done. You're free to go.

MAX  
Can I look at him? I want to know.

(MARTIN nods. MAX goes to HENRY to make sure he's dead.)  
Thanks, Marty.

MARTIN  
Here's your ticket.  
(HE grabs MAX by the arm.)  
Hope I don't see you again.

MAX  
I hope I don't see you either.  
(THEY embrace.)  
Take care, Marty.

(MAX leaves)

MARTIN  
Just you and me, Joe.

JOEY  
(barely audible)  
I don't...You...I saw you...

MARTIN  
It wasn't going to happen that way. I wouldn't let it. Two years I've been planning this, Joe. I wanted you to come along too.  
(MORE)

MARTIN (CONT'D)

But, as is beautiful about life, you made a choice. And now, I am here. I am here to tell you that you made the wrong choice.

JOEY

But...He shot you.

MARTIN

Blanks, Joey. Bloodpacks. Just like the movies. And you bought it. You paid your seven bucks and got a front row seat. And you were scared shitless. You have done the worst thing. The most despicable act imaginable. You betrayed me, Joey. You stood in my office, my place. The place my father built, the business that he gave his life to, that gave you your life. The place that made my father, made me, and made you. You looked me in the eye and betrayed me. You broke my heart. You broke my father's heart. You Let Me Down! You were to lead me down a road of deceit. You had me killed. Well. Now. I know where we stand. I know who you are. I know what this had made you. You cowered. You crumbled under the pressure of what is right, and what is wrong. You have chosen your side. And you did the worst thing. You betrayed me.

(pause)

You're done.

(HE shoots JOEY. A long pause.

He looks up)

Rest well, Dad. Rest well.

BLACKOUT

THE END