TEN MINUTES FROM CLEVELAND

Place:
Cleveland, Ohio.

Time:
April, 2005.
6 A.M. to Midnight.

Characters:

Detroit-Superior Bridge (a main connecting thoroughfare)


West Side Market (a large ethnic market)

PETE: The Heir to the Perogies.
MOM: The Mother of the Heir.
DAD: The Father of the Heir.
SHOPPERS: Hungry People With Cash.

RTA Train (the rapid transit)

LILA: A Woman Trying To Leave.
ANTHONY: A Man Trying to Arrive.

Legacy Village (an upscale mall)

LUCILLE: A Woman Who Has Shopped A Lot.
DESMOND: A Man Who Has Stopped Shopping.
ANNIE: A Woman Who Has Stopped Shopping.
MARTINIQUE: Another Woman Who Has Stopped Shopping.
MAN IN A SUIT: A Man Who Hasn’t Even Started Shopping.

Cleveland Clinic (a hospital)

DASIA: A Doctor Trying to Make It Better.
SORE THROAT WOMAN: A Patient With Too Many Symptoms.
FRANK: A Nurse Trying to Juggle.
CHOLESTEROL MAN: A Patient With Too Little Time.
COUGHING MAN: A Patient With Too Much Phlegm.
MS. ROBERTS: A Woman With Solutions.
Tremont (a neighborhood in transition)

DOUG: A Transplant.
CHUCK: A Native.
KATHY: A Transplant.

Jacobs Field (a baseball field)

JIM: Baseball Expert.
ALBERTA: Baseball Machine.
SANDY: Baseball Hater.
CARLOS: Baseball Enthusiast.
ROBBIE: Baseball Novice.
KENNY: Baseball Drunken Idiot.

Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame (a tourist trap)

HERBERT: A Man With A Dream.
DELLA: A Woman Who Used To Have A Reality.
DIANA: A Woman With A Dream And A Book Of Matches.

Lakeview Cemetery (a graveyard)

JAQUELINE: An Older Woman Who Wants to Remember.
VANCE: A Young Man Who Wants to Be Remembered.

The Flats (a nightclub district)

SHANEEQUA: A Teller for Key Bank.
ROSIE: A Relationship Manager for Key Bank.
DEMETRIUS: An I/T Guy for Key Bank.
ERNIE: A Relationship Manager for Key Bank.
BETTY: A Project Supervisor for Key Bank.
MR. OBERKIN: A Senior Executive for Key Bank.

“TEN MINUTES FROM CLEVELAND” premiered April 15, 2005 at Dobama Theatre (Joyce Casey, Artistic Director). The director was Eric Schmiedl; Scenic Design by Todd Krispinsky; Sound Design by Richard Ingraham; Costumes designed by Kimberly Castle; Lights designed by Andrew Kaletta.

CAST:

Kimberly Brown..Julia, Martinique, Dasia, Kathy, Robbie, Shaneequa Sadie Grossman..Lila, Annie, Sore Throat, Sandy, Diana, Rosie Nick Koesters..Pete, Desmond, Coughing, Doug, Kenny, Vance,Oberkin Marc Moritz..Scott, Dad, Frank, Chuck, Jim, Herbert, Ernie Jimmie Woody..Anthony, Cholesterol, Carlos, Mfune, Demetrius Nan Wray..Mom, Lucille, Roberts, Alberta, Della, Jaqueline, Betty
DETROIT-SUPERIOR BRIDGE

6:10 A.M.

Lights come up on a man, SCOTT, climbing up a girder -- trying to get a better view under the bridge. He clammers awkwardly for several moments, jotting notes in his notebook.

Then we hear gasping -- wild huffing and puffing... a voice from the distance... it's a jogger, JULIA, wearing a headset and i-pod, running onstage

She stops, heaving, trying to catch her breath. Scott watches her. She eventually looks around. Notices her surroundings -- the sunlight -- the view...

SCOTT

Beautiful, isn't it?

JULIA

(Jumps, turns to see him up on the girder)

Oh my god! -what are you doing?? What are you doing?? Get off of there!

SCOTT

I wouldn't run across this bridge if I were you.

JULIA

(Rips off her earphones)

Whatever it is, it's not that bad, there's no reason to jump, it's a beautiful day, how can you jump on a beautiful day??

SCOTT

I wasn't jumping.

JULIA

It's April! We got sun! Look at the sun, it's gonna be 70 today, sunshine, happy, no more clouds-

SCOTT

It's Cleveland. We'll have two feet of snow by tonight. (He climbs off the girder)

JULIA

You really scared me. I thought -- I mean...
(Squints at the sun, gauges the temperature)
You could possibly make it across.

What?

How fast can you run?

I don't know. This is my first run. Kind of a New Year's Resolution.
(He looks at her)
I'm a little late. But it was the first really great day -- I was just gonna try to get over to West 25th and back.

Yeah, that's the problem. Okay. Here's my advice. Run right along this strip here -- this little column -- and run like your life depends on it.

What are you talking about?

The Detroit-Superior Bridge is about to collapse.
(Julia stops moving)

What?

(Pointing to the ground)
You see those bolts there? Three of 'em are out -- the third fell out last Friday. And that crack running from the bolt holes to the third support beam has been widening millimeters everyday since Friday. My guess is that with the sudden warmth today, this fourth bolt -- the last bolt -- will go. And if this bolt goes, this whole concrete slab goes, it takes those perpendicular support struts out and the whole east side of the bridge goes into the river.

(Beat. Then Julia laughs and starts jogging in place)

Right.
SCOTT
How much you want to jog over the bridge? How fast you can jog over the bridge?

(She hesitates... jogging in place)

JULIA
...That's crazy. A bridge can't collapse because of one bolt.

SCOTT
Unless it's the right bolt. Lookit.
(Pulls out a folded paper and shows her)
Lookit this. I worked out the physics. The weight of the bridge is spread between this axis and this axis with the greatest pressure down and out at these two points. If this point disappears, this point suddenly acts as a fulcrum and the metal twists here, here, and here and it's just steel, its tension index isn't anywhere near high enough. It snaps here, here, here, and here. End of bridge.

JULIA
You worked all this out?

SCOTT
I'm a physics professor at Case. Or was. Gotta keep my mind busy, you know. Unemployment's been a real bitch-

Have you told anybody?

JULIA
That I'm unemployed?

About the bridge!

SCOTT
I've been writing letters and op-eds to the PD for months. Won't print a damn thing. The Free Times said they'd take a picture, but the bastards never did. And don't even get me started on Scene-

JULIA
But we gotta tell someone! We gotta block traffic -- it's Wednesday, this place is gonna be full of cars any-

SCOTT
Here comes one now.
JULIA
Oh my god—
(Waving)
Stop! STOP!!

SCOTT
It won't matter.

JULIA
NO!
(Sound of a car passing)

JULIA (CONT'D)
Is the bolt still there??

SCOTT
Bolt's still there.

JULIA
Did you feel it shake? The bridge really shook—

SCOTT
It always shakes. Haven't you ever walked over this thing before?

JULIA
No! Who walks over the Detroit-Superior Bridge??

SCOTT
I've been out here every day for six months.

JULIA
Well, that was just one car, what happens when rush hour—

SCOTT
Lookit.
(Shows her his paper again)
It doesn't matter how much mass or force you have anywhere along the road. What matters is a small amount of weight straight down right... there.
(Points to a spot ahead of them)
Like a jogger.

JULIA
You're kidding me.

SCOTT
It's physics.

JULIA
Oh god. You saved my life.
It's physics.

Well, I don't know physics. I work for American Greetings.

Oh yeah? I bought one of your cards a couple of years ago. It was one of the funny ones. It had a bear on it-

I'm not in Creative. I'm Accounting.

Oh.

I'll run home and call for help -- my apartment's right over there--

(Starts off)

You stay here and don't let anyone cross the bridge--

(Looking across the river)

You work on the West Side.

Yeah, I'll be--

You ever hang out there?

What? Listen, we don't have time--

You ever been to North Olmstead? Or Middleburg Heights? Or Linndale?

No. Why should I?

Exactly. Everything you need is over here.

...Not everything. I have friends in Ohio City. And there's a great Thai place on Lorain I want to get back to--

That's what I thought. Forget it.

(He stomps his foot toward the bolt)
JULIA
Oh my god! What are you doing??

SCOTT
I'm stomping.

JULIA
Oh my god -- you're insane -- you're a terrorist!!

SCOTT
I am not. I'm a Case professor.

JULIA
This isn't some experiment -- people could get killed-

SCOTT
Hello? I waited 'til there's nobody on the bridge or under it-

Is this like a cry for help? Hire you or you take out a bridge?

SCOTT
Oh please.

JULIA
Then what do you have against the Detroit Superior Bridge??

SCOTT
It's not me. It's you. It's nature.

What?

SCOTT
Look around you. This is the East Side and West Side we're talking about. Have you ever seen two chunks of land trying harder to get away from each other? I mean maybe over four million years ago they were happy together, but the glaciers pretty much put an end to that, didn't they!

JULIA
What are you talking about?

SCOTT
God parting the land from the sea, Moses parting the waters, and now it's the water's turn to part us! The glaciers came barreling through two miles high, smashing down mountains, filling in valleys with the debris plowed up in their path -- you think a bridge going down is loud -- try standing next to an oncoming glacier -- the cracking of a thousand rocks, snapping of millions of trees, the
churning of the land itself, and when the sun finally melted the wall of ice, the water ripped out new valleys washing acres of ground-up boulders and sand and gravel over the scarred land and now people in Shaker Heights can't find Rocky River and people in Westlake can't pronounce Bratenahl! It's the old world from the new, the East Coast from the Midwest, it's the great divide, the GREATEST divide, and man now indulges the folly of thinking he can bridge the chasm, but earth will have none of it -- the land rebels, spitting the bolts out of our erector set spines to return the divided world to its disparate parts and I for one will shun the error of my puny race and finally, triumphantly, gloriously side with my Mother!!

(Beat. They stare at each other...)

JULIA
I should have run in the gym.

SCOTT
I tried to cross over, tried to bring them together -- "I want to live in Lakewood and drive to Case every day." But would they let me? Ha! They fired me!

JULIA
I don't think they fired you because you live in Lakewood.

SCOTT
Oh, open your eyes, Hallmark.

JULIA
American Greetings.

SCOTT
The East Side tolerates the West Side. The West Side puts up with the East Side, but you try moving the orchestra or the zoo or the museums or Memphis Kiddie Park and you'll see the two true faces of our fair city.

JULIA
Why would you move Memphis Kiddie Park?

SCOTT
In 1836 when those East and West-siders got out their knives and pitchforks and Frankenstein rake-thingies and were firing a cannon at each other over the Cuyahoga -- they knew what it meant to be separate-

(He jumps up and down)

JULIA
Ah!

(Beat. Nothing.)
JULIA (CONT'D)
Please don't do that again.

SCOTT
You said it yourself: "Why should I go over there?"

JULIA
Why don't you... walk with me... back down to the RTA park down there and-

(Scott stomps again and jumps back)

JULIA (CONT'D)
Will you please not do that??

SCOTT
You know what I think? I think our combined weight over here is holding that bolt over there in place.

JULIA
Oh, so first it was if I walked across it collapses, now it's if I walk away from it, it collapses.

SCOTT
Pretty much. Yeah.

JULIA
This is insane-

(She turns to go)

SCOTT
Wait! Did you hear that?

JULIA
(Pauses)

What.

That...

SCOTT
Creak?

JULIA
Creak.

SCOTT
...it was just the wind.

JULIA
Have you ever heard a creak from the wind before?
JULIA
One person doesn't make a difference to a bridge -- before I lost all that weight maybe, but-

SCOTT
(Pushing her)
Then go! Yes! Walk away! Do it!
(Pause. They watch the bolt...)

JULIA
Someone's going to walk by today. A ton of cars will pass by -- you can't keep me here.

SCOTT
I'm not! In fact, I'd say the Bridge and I both want you to go home.

(Julia hesitates... Looks at Scott... They both look at the bolt...)

SCOTT (CONT'D)
So which is it, Accounting? Do you go over or do you go back?

(They both watch the bolt... Silence... They stare...)

(Blackout)
WEST SIDE MARKET
6:52 A.M.

(Sounds of the market. A counter with MOM preparing stuff behind it. A young man, Pete, walks in disheveled in hip clothes and sunglasses)

PETE
Hey, Ma.

MOM
Look at what the dog dragged out.

PETE
Hey, I made it, didn't I?

MOM
Smelling like a cat-house. Like the Flats. Dear God, my eyes are watering.

PETE
It's cologne. I put some on to spruce me up.

MOM
A bath spruces you up. That stuff kills insects.

PETE
All right.

MOM
I can smell you over the fish counter!

PETE
All right! Do you want me here or not?

MOM
I didn't call you. It was your father.

PETE
Where is Pop?

MOM
Bringing the stuff into the market from the car. The doors open any minute.

PETE
What stuff?

MOM
I noticed I didn't see you at church again.
PETE

Ma.

MOM

I can only tell the priest you have head lice so many times.

PETE

You don't-

MOM

I think he's getting suspicious. So I told him you had painful explosive diarrhea, and that quieted him down.

PETE

Jesus.

Language.

MOM

PETE

You don't gotta lie for me. I'll show up when I show up.

MOM

Maybe at our funeral.

PETE

I need some coffee.

MOM

(Moving behind the counter)

I'll get you some.

PETE

I'll get some at Big City.

MOM

We got coffee here.

PETE

I like theirs.

MOM

They got all those flavors. It's like Baskin Robbins, it's too confusing.

PETE

I like the flavors.

MOM

We got two flavors here: "Dad made it", "Mom made it". Today is "Mom made it". Good and thick. Like spackle.
I'll be back.

Why don't you just go to Johnny Hot Dog while you're at it, and get a beer for breakfast?

(DAD enters with a box, walking behind the counter)

Peter!

Hey, Pop.

(Sniffing)

Whooo, Dear God in Heaven, is that you?

It's him.

It's my cologne.

(Fishing in his pocket for cash)

Here. Go buy some pork jowls over at Janosz's. Rub'em around your neck, they'll get rid of the stench.

I don't want to get rid of the stench! I like it!

I knew a girl from Hrodna smelled like that, we all thought she was rotting from the inside. Turned out it was perfume. She was a hooker.

Is that the name of your cologne: "Rotting Whore"?

I don't need this. I get outta bed crack of dawn and drive over here 'cause you asked me to-

How was traffic?

It's 6 a.m, Dad, traffic's fine. Only human beings I saw were the crazy guy who's always on the Detroit bridge, and
some lady with him waving as I drove past -- let me give you a hand with that--

(He moves for the box Dad is unloading)

DAD
No, no, no. I can do it. I just wanted you to be here for the unveiling.

PETE
What. You're finally splurging for a new sign?

DAD
Fah. We don't need a new sign.

MOM
Your uncle got the Bruenmuellers to paint that sign in exchange for him doing their dental work. Your uncle was so goddam good with a hammer-

PETE
Are you expanding? Pierogis and Kielbasa not good enough anymore? You guys doing cheesecake now too?

MOM
Don't be stupid.

DAD
It's not expanding. It's updating.

PETE
How.

DAD
We are pummelling into the 21st Century, my boy.

(He puts out a plate of pierogies on the counter with a handmade sign: "TRY OUR NEW LO-CARB PIEROGIES!")

PETE
What?

MOM
Beautiful, isn't it?

DAD
The doors are opening. Get out of the way, boy.

PETE
What the hell is a "lo-carb pierogi"?
MOM
Your father didn't want to scare you, but our sales were slumping this last year.

DAD

MOM
Slipping and slumping. We need to get these skinny people back to our counter.

PETE
But you can't make a lo-carb pierogi. It's scientifically impossible!

MOM
I had my doubts, but papa convinced me.

DAD
I said, "If they can make a remote control T.V., I can make an Atkins pierogi."

MOM
And your father did.

(Pete picks one up with a plastic fork)

PETE
How?

DAD
No more potato and stuffing. It's all beef inside.

MOM
From Danny and Ella over there. It's fresh.

DAD
And no pasta outside. It's spelt.

PETE
It's not a pierogi anymore, Dad. It's some kind of Frankenstein's Undead Ravioli.

MOM
That's why your father didn't let you make the sign.

PETE
(Takes a bite)
Ugh. It tastes like paper.

MOM
Beefy paper.
Those have dried out. Let me put more grease and butter on it-

Then it'll taste like buttery paper.

It's modern. It's not supposed to taste like food.

Do you think anyone's gonna actually want one of these things?

(A SLIM COUPLE walk up with cloth bags)

Hell-o! Are those truly low-carb pierogies?

May we sample some?

Absolutely.

(He makes two Styrofoam bowl-fulls)

It's 12.8 net carbs and 56 calories per serving.

We've been on Atkins for eight months now-

It's terrific to see the old world catching up to the new.

(MM! This is super!

(Eating)
It's so light! Beefy and buttery-

But so delicate! Like paper!

We'll take another order, please.

With pleasure.
PETE
No, this is wrong. The words "delicate" and "pierogi" should never be in the same sentence—

MOM
Shut your mouth, Peter.

PETE
I won't shut my mouth. Pierogies are supposed to be heavy dumpy solid little chunks of fat and carbs. They're little coal furnaces of calories to make it bearable to go out into the Polish January and the Cleveland February and milk the damn cows and chop the firewood and walk from the parking lot by the lake and they are not a fad or a gimmick, they're squat food for squat people and there is no such thing as an Atkins Pierogi!!

(Beat. They look at him. The couple take their order)

SHOPPER MAN
I really like the low carb.

SHOPPER WOMAN
(Paying Dad)
Thank you. We need to get our sun-dried tomatoes now.

(And they hurry off)

PETE
(Calling after them)
Make sure you get the low-carb tomatoes!

MOM
(Bops him with the sign)
Shut your mouth.

DAD
You can't fight progress, Peter.

PETE
This isn't progress, this is Grandma Wyznewski spinning in her grave. When she got here in 1920—

1918.

MOM
1917.

DAD
18.
17. It was the year after Riga, and she got here in '16.

PETE
When she got here she had one dream -- raise her family, keep'em strong and sturdy and warm and she had the best damn pierogi recipe in Cleveland to do it and our family's been sharing that recipe with the world for eighty years-

DAD
73 years.

MOM
74.

DAD
73.

MOM
74. She started selling them at the corner of Prospect first.

PETE
And why do you think she moved to the West Side Market? It called her here! It was waiting for her and for her sons to take over from her, and for you to take over from your brother, and me and Mary and Michael will take over from you and our kids will take over from us -- the same bricks the same windows, the same market -- and the thread that holds it all together is the flour and the dough and the potato and the sauerkraut and the love.

DAD
I was with you up to the love part.

MOM
We still have "Classic Wysnewskis" over here.

(Holds up a pierogi container)

We're just expanding into new territory. Grandma had to leave the old world to see Cleveland. We have to leave some of the old calories to see lower body-fat percentage consumers.

PETE
I'm telling you this is the road to ruin.

(A WOMAN walks up)

SHOPPER WOMAN #2
Ooo, new pierogies! I'll take two orders!

(The previous couple trot back on)
SHOPPER WOMAN
May I have three more orders of the Atkins pierogies to take home?

PETE
Oh god.

DAD
(Serving them up)
Absolutely.

SHOPPER WOMAN #2
(On her cell phone)
Yeah. Gina? You've gotta get down to the West Side Market-

DAD
(Hands her a brochure)
We also just inked a deal to serve these at all the fine restaurants in greater Cleveland-

SHOPPER WOMAN #2
(Into phone)
There's new low-carb pierogies. It's a godsend.

PETE
This is blasphemy. You know that. You're calling down the wrath of God on the whole family-

MOM
Oh, a minute ago we couldn't find you in church and now you're speaking for God-

PETE
Because we're talking about pierogies, Ma!

DAD
(To customers)
Would any of you be interested in our new organic soy kielbasa while you're here?

PETE
WHAT??

SHOPPER MAN
My cousin's a vegetarian!

SHOPPER WOMAN #2
So's my boss!

SHOPPER WOMAN
Why not?
PETE
I'm dreaming. Tell me I'm dreaming.

DAD
It's the future, sweetheart. Change is always difficult.

PETE
This has gotta stop-

SHOPPER WOMAN #2
(Leaving with her food)
Thank you!

SHOPPING COUPLE
(Leaving with their food)
We'll be back on Saturday!
(Pete leaps behind the counter and yells out)

PETE
Get your pierogies! Good old fashioned old world stuffed pierogies right here!

DAD
Hey, hey, hey! No yelling! You know the rules -- no selling by yelling-

PETE
Screw the rules. I'm not yelling for customers. I'm yelling for Grandma Wysnewski!

(Calling out)
Old style potato pierogies here -- get'em with extra potatoes, right here!

DAD
(Yelling out)
New low-carb Atkins pierogies -- the latest and greatest right here-

PETE
(Yelling)
Carbs carbs carbs, get'em while you still can-

DAD
(Yelling)
Most of the flavor, none of the carbs!
(They keep calling out as Mom beams)
MOM
It's so wonderful to see the family working together!
(Blackout)
(Sound of a train leaving the station and cruising along. A man, ANTHONY, sits in a seat on the RTA in a nice shirt and slacks, eyes closed, resting his head on the seatback or window, listening to his ipod. A woman, LILA, in a nice suit, walks on with a large bag and rolling suitcase. She takes the seat behind Anthony, accidentally whacking him in the head with her bag as she settles in. He notices, doesn't say anything, and closes his eyes again.)

(The DRIVER'S VOICE crackles over the intercom)

DRIVER (V.O.)

Dokuzzznez Eewfnuruuh.

LILA

What? What did he say?

(Taps Anthony)

Did you understand what he said?

ANTHONY

I wasn't listening.

LILA

It sounded like he was speaking Turkish in the bottom of a well.

(Pause. Anthony retreats back into himself again. Lila taps him)

LILA (CONT'D)

This is the train to the airport, right?

ANTHONY

What?

(Clicks off his ipod)

LILA

This is the train to the airport?

ANTHONY

Mm-hm.

(He clicks back on his music)
LILA
I hope I allowed enough time.
(To Anthony)
Do you know how long it takes to get to the airport?

ANTHONY
(Clicks off his ipod)
What?

LILA
How long does it take to get to the airport?

ANTHONY
I don't know. Never been.

LILA
Where are you going?

ANTHONY
Tower City.

LILA
Shopping?

ANTHONY
Working.

LILA
Really? What store?

ANTHONY
The food court.

LILA
Oh. Well, that's okay. I've eaten there. Which place?

ANTHONY
Auntie Anne's Pretzels.

LILA
I've eaten there! I had the cinnamon sugar pretzel. Maybe we saw each other and didn't even know it!

ANTHONY
Maybe.

LILA
I was going to an Indians game. Me and two of my girlfriends from work. We stopped at the food court before we went over. Have you been to Jacob's Field?

ANTHONY
Couple of times.
LILA
It's beautiful, isn't it? I think it's beautiful. Don't you think it's beautiful? It's so much fun.

ANTHONY
It's nice, yeah.

LILA
My father used to take me to the old stadium.

ANTHONY
I got patted on the head by Joe Charboneau there. Didn't wash my hair for a week.

LILA
Where did you used to sit?

ANTHONY
I don't know. Wherever we could. Mostly up high with our back to the lake.

LILA
Us too! Maybe we were sitting next to each other and didn't even know it!

ANTHONY
Could be.

(The DRIVER'S voice crackles again)

DRIVER (V.O.)
Eevvfnrrrvvnh Kinndi.

(Lila stands)

LILA
What did he say? What stop is this?

ANTHONY
East 105th and Kinsman.

LILA
They should clear up that intercom. How am I supposed to recognize my stop?

ANTHONY
See that chart on the wall? We're the red line. You got one, two, three stops to Tower City, then another seven, eight, nine to the airport. You can count'em.
LILA
Three and nine. Great. Twelve to go. The first leg took and 1/2 minutes. 1 and 1/2 times 12-

ANTHONY
Not all the legs are equal.

LILA
Oh.

ANTHONY
But the big hint: The airport's the last stop. When the train completely quits moving and doesn't start up again? You should get off.

LILA
That'll be my hint. Thank you.

(Beat. Anthony clicks back on his music. She looks at her watch, out the window. At her watch)

LILA (CONT'D
You're lucky.

ANTHONY
(Clicks off his music)
What.

LILA
You're lucky you can take the train to work.

(Anthony laughs)

LILA (CONT'D
What.

ANTHONY
Yeah, I'm lucky. I also got no choice. I don't have a car right now.

LILA
Oh. I'm sorry.

ANTHONY
Not a big deal. I can walk to work at the Topps, go 'til the midnight shift, walk home, sleep a few hours and catch the train to Tower City.

LILA
Wow.
ANTHONY
What do you do?

LILA
I work at home. I'm a financial planner. Freelance.

ANTHONY
That's a beautiful word: Freelance.

LILA
It's got its ups and downs.

ANTHONY
You set your own hours?

LILA
More or less.

ANTHONY
Then "freelance" is a beautiful word. You count your blessings.

LILA
I started as a consultant at Ernst and Young and I split off to make my own company. No time clock, but no safety net either.

ANTHONY
Safety net? What's a safety net?

LILA
Exactly. Do you have a family?

ANTHONY
I got a little girl. She lives with her mom though. We're separated.

LILA
Oh.

(Pause.)

LILA (CONT'D)
You ever take your daughter to an Indians game?

ANTHONY
You know, I was just thinking that. I think I'm gonna do that.

LILA
I hear the team is on a good streak right now. Maybe she could get a pat on the head from Omar Vizquel.
'Cept he's gone.

ANTHONY

Well, from somebody. Somebody who's going to be famous maybe.

LILA

Yeah, but now I'm a parent. I understand the value of washing hair.

ANTHONY

I see your point.

LILA

You got kids?

ANTHONY


LILA

Eleven more stops?

ANTHONY

You see down 55th down there? That's where I grew up. Down off Central.

LILA

Nice neighborhood?

ANTHONY

All right. Great streets to play in. Us kids didn't know any better. How 'bout you?

LILA

We didn't play in the streets much. It was a major four-lane state route.

ANTHONY

I mean, where'd you grow up?

LILA

In Pepper Pike.

ANTHONY

Ah.
LILA
But I moved to Cleveland Heights because I wanted to live a little more "urban", you know?

ANTHONY
And is it?

LILA
What.

ANTHONY
More "urban".

LILA
Yes. More... electric. Jagged. Colorful.

(Anthony laughs)

LILA (CONT'D)
I didn't mean--

ANTHONY
No, you mean the housing stock's older, a lot of character, more "colorful".

LILA
Yes.

(Anthony laughs)

I'm sorry.

ANTHONY
For what?

DRIVER (V.O.)
Eefirruhforrr.

(Anthony laughs)

LILA
Ten more stops?

ANTHONY
I love old houses. Mine's 80 years old. You don't know trouble 'til you go messin' with 80-year-old plumbing.

LILA
I did my windows. I tried to re-string, reconnect, whatever -- resash mine.

ANTHONY
That's a job.
LILA
I couldn't do it. Holding the weight and the string and the frame -- I'm not strong enough.

ANTHONY
Sure you are.

LILA
I couldn't do it.

ANTHONY
Let me see your hands.
(Holds up his hand)
People think it's all in the biceps, but it's all in the hands -- most women got amazingly strong hands.

LILA
Not mine.

(She holds up her hand -- they touch palm to palm... Beat.... they stare at their hands...)

ANTHONY
See? You got good strong working fingers.

LILA
You have beautiful hands...

BOTH
Piano-playing hands.

(They break the contact, laughing)

BOTH (CONT'D
What made you say that?

LILA
I used to play.

ANTHONY
I used to play piano.

LILA
I was in a band.

ANTHONY
My mom used to make me practice every day.

LILA
Mine too. Then in high school I joined a garage band.
ANTHONY
I never played with anybody. Just concerts for my family. Sometimes neighbors.

LILA
We kept trying to sound like Nirvana and Green Day.

ANTHONY
Oh, man, my mother would have none of that. It was classical or it was silent. Mozart's Sonata in A Major. That was me, baby. By heart.

LILA
Do you still play?

ANTHONY
No. No piano. Just my headset. Keeps me sane.

LILA
Our band never made it out of the garage. Except to play at our drummer's cousin's wedding.

A gig's a gig.

LILA
What we lacked in talent we made up for in volume.

ANTHONY
Actually I lied. I do still play. At my sister's house. She's got a piano in her parlor room, kind of off the living room. Sometimes when everyone's off watching T.V. after dinner, I'll go in there in the dark and sit down and play something. A little Bach or something. Just to feel my fingers talking.

LILA
I know.

ANTHONY
Sitting in the dark playing for nobody.

LILA
Not for nobody.

ANTHONY
For whoever's left in the room. The ones who've gone before, you know. That's what I love about these old houses is every room's got someone left in it, if you just get quiet, you know.

LILA
Or play them a concert.
ANTHONY

Yeah.

LILA

I bet you're really good.

ANTHONY

Nah. There's a reason no living folks stick around to hear me.

LILA

That's why I started. I thought if I could fill our house with music, fill our block, fill our city, fill our country, that there wouldn't be any room for the bad stuff. We'd all be full of beauty.

ANTHONY

So you played beautifully loud.

LILA

So I played loud.

(They smile, watching each other)

DRIVER (V.O.

Toovsii.

ANTHONY

(Looks up)

Whoa. That's me.

LILA

How can you tell?

ANTHONY

Look out there. Tower City from underneath.

LILA

I like that. Being under the city.

(He stands to leave)

LILA (CONT'D

(Holds out her hand)

I'm Lila.

ANTHONY

I'm Anthony. Pleased to meet you.

LILA

Likewise.

(They shake hands)
ANTHONY
See? Good strong grip. You'll get those sash cords changed.

LILA
Maybe I'll see you at Auntie Ann's?

ANTHONY
I'm there most afternoons.

LILA
Or at an Indians game. With your daughter.

ANTHONY
(Heading out)
And you should take up the piano. The world still needs to be filled.

LILA
I'll see you around, Anthony.

ANTHONY
I'd like that.

(He heads out -- steps back in)

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
Oh, hey, stay in that seat. When you leave here, you'll get this amazing view of the Detroit Superior Bridge. Best view in town.

LILA
Thank you.

(And he's gone)

(Sound of the train starting up. She settles into her seat. Looks at her hands. Out the window. Smiles. Pause...)

LILA (CONT'D)
Nine more stops.

(Blackout)
LEGACY VILLAGE
10:16 A.M.

(A woman with two shopping bags sits on a bench outdoors. A young man sits next to her with a shopping bag. These are LUCILLE and DESMOND.

Classic Top 40 music plays quietly in the background)

LUCILLE

90 seconds. I give myself 90 seconds to just sit here before I have to go get the damn barbecue sauce and tongs for Kathy and Doug's party this afternoon. Could they have given me a little more warning? And if I'm not out of here ASAP, I'll catch lunch hour traffic plus the road construction -- that's how I know it's Spring, it's not 70 degree weather, it's orange barrels--

(Her cell phone rings)

--and that'll be my boss wondering where I am -- or the workers replacing my windows asking where to sweep the broken glass-- Why can't the world just let me enjoy my goddam shopping?!

DESMOND

Legacy Village is great, isn't it?

LUCILLE

Yes!! I love to shop! It's the one sliver of my life when I'm free to be me -- it's my imagination, my dreams, my plans... that beautiful expectation of carrying something new to the car -- you can't wait to get it home, to try it out -- I love that. It's the world that's insane.

(Desmond nods)

LUCILLE (CONT'D)

You know what I'm talking about, right? You're trying to do your shopping too, aren't you?

DESMOND

No.

LUCILLE

Oh. I just assumed because you were sitting here -- you're waiting on someone?

DESMOND

No.

LUCILLE

You work here?
I live here.

LUCILLE

In Lyndhurst.

DESMOND

In Legacy Village.

(Pause. Lucille looks at him)

DESMOND (CONT'D)

(Offers his hand)

I'm Desmond.

LUCILLE

Lucille. That's very good. Someone living in Legacy Village.

DESMOND

I got a good laugh when the idea first occurred to me too. Then my credit card ran out.

LUCILLE

You're serious.

DESMOND

It was my fourth trip to the Village in one week. I was trying to buy place mats and a Kentwood frameless mirror at Z Gallerie when my credit card came up short. The cashier just looked at me with pity. Utter pity. And I wandered out in a daze and I staggered over to Claddagh Irish Pub to console myself and I realized my wallet was dead dry. And I just sat in this little plaza -- on this very bench -- staring. And this woman sat down next to me and we started talking and we kept talking--

LUCILLE

And the stores began to close -- it's happened to me--

DESMOND

--And I realized I had absolutely no desire whatsoever to go back to Parma. Everything I needed -- everything I could ever want -- was here in Legacy Village.

LUCILLE

But at some point they kicked you out.

DESMOND

"They" who? It's a big village, Lucille. You move from shop to shop, sleep in different stores, change your clothes occasionally, nobody ever really looks at you anyway.
LUCILLE
But that's insane. I mean, no disrespect, but if you actually lived in Legacy Village... you'd be bonkers.

(ANNIE, a woman in coat and jeans, walks up with a box of food)

ANNIE
Hi, Desmond. Cheesecake?

DESMOND
Lucille, I'd like you to meet Annie. Annie moved here from Euclid right after the Village opened. She was here months before me.

ANNIE
Oh. You told her?

DESMOND
She was having an outer world meltdown. I sensed a need for an intervention.

ANNIE
I feel you. (To Lucille)
Cheesecake?

LUCILLE
You two are pulling my leg.

ANNIE
When Desmond and I first met here on this bench, we went over and had a little Haagen Daz ice cream, some Starbucks coffee, and I invited him back to my place. Which that night was Arhaus Furniture.

DESMOND
We've been going together for three months now.

ANNIE
I picked out his clothes at Talbots for Men. (Offers the box of cake to Lucille)
You really should have a piece of cheesecake. It's still fresh.

(Lucille takes a plastic fork and is about to take a bite)

LUCILLE
Did you pay for this?

(Annie and Desmond laugh)
DESMOND
(To Annie)
We haven't used money since I got here, have we?

ANNIE
They have to throw out the unsold cheesecake after two days. Most places have to clear the kitchen every three hours.

DESMOND
Beautiful, isn't it? Like one long buffet.

ANNIE
But the fondue at Melting Pot begins to taste funny after about 40 minutes.

(Another woman, MARTINIQUE, walks up with a shopping bag and magazine)

MARTINIQUE
Hey, guys, what's the haps?

ANNIE
Hey, Martinique.

DESMOND
Martinique, this is Lucille. We were just telling her about our life here.

ANNIE
She needed a shopping intervention.

MARTINIQUE
I had my breakdown in Crate and Barrel. I had like three lamps and a dinette set and realized there'd never be room in my dink little University Heights apartment.

ANNIE
Never got back to that apartment, did you?

MARTINIQUE
Thank god. Any cheesecake left?

DESMOND
Not for a while. But Stir Crazy should have Moo Shu up soon.

(A man in a suit walks up with a shopping bag and take-out box with a plastic fork. He sits down on another bench. Nods to them and smiles. Holds up his box of food)
Atkins Pierogies. They're brand new at Brio Tuscan Grille.

LUCILLE
Is he one of your tribe too?

MAN IN SUIT
I beg your pardon?

DESMOND
Actually, no. He's not.

MAN IN SUIT
One of what tribe?

MARTINIQUE
Nothing. We were playing a little game.

MAN IN SUIT
Like a people-watching thing?

MARTINIQUE
Exactly.

(Beat. The man looks at them. Smiles. They look at him)

MARTINIQUE (CONT'D)
We're done playing it now.

(A moment more and he uncomfortably focuses on his pierogies)

LUCILLE
(To Desmond)
Sorry.

DESMOND
It's okay. You'll pick it up.

LUCILLE
I'm not going to be here long enough to pick it up. I couldn't live like this -- completely cut off from the world-

MARTINIQUE
How cut off? We have Joseph Beth!

DESMOND
We get eight major papers daily-
ANNIE
More books than you could ever read in a lifetime.

MARTINIQUE
Yeah, but if I see one more Chicken Soup for Anyone's Soul, I'm gonna hurl.

MAN IN SUIT
You can say that again. But I have to admit I do have a fondness for Danielle Steele books...

(Pause. The others stare patiently at him, smiling. He clears his throat and goes back to his pierogies)

LUCILLE
(Quietly, aware of the man)
But... living... the way you do... the same buildings day after day -- it'd be like a prison!

DESMOND
And how much of the world do you see, Lucille? I bet you go from your same house on the same roads to the same office and back, stopping at the same stores for the same supplies. Are you experiencing more of the world than we are?

LUCILLE
But what do you do? You have to do something.

DESMOND
Why?

LUCILLE
Because... you have to stay busy.

DESMOND
Why?

LUCILLE
Because the world needs to keep going, we have to keep doing things-

DESMOND
Are the things you're doing making you happy?

(Pause)

DESMOND (CONT'D)
Once you stop trying to live in both worlds, it frees up a huge amount of space in your life.
ANNIE
(Pointing)
Look. You can hardly see the outside world from here. There's a big stone wall between us and Cedar Road, inside the wall is a wrought-iron fence, inside the fence are two lanes of traffic like a moat -- and then more curbs and then the Village. Safe and secure.

MARTINIQUE
And music! Your whole life has a soundtrack here. If you don't like the music of one store, go to another.

DESMOND
It even follows you outside!

LUCILLE
I was noticing that -- where does the music come from? From the trees and flowers?

DESMOND
Who knows? It just is.

ANNIE
Like Eden.

MARTINIQUE
Everything is so clean. I can't tell you what a change that is from my old apartment!

DESMOND
The only smells are disinfectant and perfumes and new furniture-

MARTINIQUE
And the people are all clean too!

ANNIE
And you see such diversity here -- old and young, singles and families, upper class and upper middle class, people who want furniture and people who only want accessories.

DESMOND
Annie and I are actually going to have our children here.

ANNIE
Can't you just see their little faces when they get one of the demo rooms at Bombay Kids as their very own?

DESMOND
We could never afford that in the outside world -- but here we get the best of everything.
ANNIE
And they'll be dressed in the best from Osh Kosh and Talbots for Kids -- eating at Cookies By Design!

MARTINIQUE
It's like being the first people on Earth all over again!

MAN IN SUIT
What are you guys, on commission?

DESMOND
Nope. No soliciting allowed on the property, sir.

MAN IN SUIT
(Stands to leave)
I don't know if everyone in Lyndhurst is like you all, but I'll tell you one thing: I thank God I live in Wickliffe.

(And he leaves)

ANNIE
(Looks at Lucille)
Now's your chance. Your car is waiting.

(Lucille nods)

DESMOND
Your chance to go back to your village.

(Lucille pauses...)

MARTINIQUE
I'm going rock climbing at the Sports store and then I'm gonna design another kitchen on the Expo computers. See you guys tomorrow.

(To Lucille)
It was sweet meeting you.

(And she's gone)

LUCILLE
I parked over by Giant Eagle.

DESMOND
That's a nice parking lot. Nice view of the perimeter trees.

ANNIE
You want us to walk with you?

DESMOND
We don't have anywhere we have to be.
(Lucille takes her bags...hesitates...)  

LUCILLE  
If I don't leave, my car will probably get towed.  

DESMOND  
One less hassle.  

ANNIE  
It was really important for us to find a village we could walk in.  

DESMOND  
The important thing is for you to find a village you can live in.  

(Lucille looks at Desmond and Annie...hesitates...)  

DESMOND (CONT'D)  
Once it stops being a lifestyle center...  

DESMOND AND ANNIE  
...It starts being a life center.  

(Lucille pauses a moment more...)  

LUCILLE  
You get me a piece of cheesecake, I'll meet you at the Ann Taylor Loft.  

(Blackout)
CLEVELAND CLINIC

11:42 A.M

(A smiling and calm doctor, DASIA, stands in her white coat facing a young woman in jeans and a t-shirt who sits on a rolling stool)

DASIA

How long have you had the sore throat, Miss Jackson?

SORE THROAT

I don't know, man. On and off for a while. I been seen like three times already.

DASIA

And you tested negative for Strep?

SORE THROAT

I think so.

DASIA

Okay. This could just be post-nasal drip irritating the throat-

SORE THROAT

Right! That's what one of the doctors said!

DASIA

Do you remember the doctor's name?

SORE THROAT

...no.

DASIA

Do you remember if it was here at the Clinic?

SORE THROAT

...no.

DASIA

Did this other doctor at this possibly other place give you any kind of prescription?

SORE THROAT

Yeah!

DASIA

And did you get that filled?
SORE THROAT

No.

DASIA

Any idea what they prescribed?

SORE THROAT

I lost the paper.

DASIA

Okay. We're going to start over. We're going to do another throat culture...

(She looks around)

Is that where you put the stick in my mouth?

DASIA

The swab, yes.

SORE THROAT

The other doctor did that.

DASIA

...and I can't find the culture. Hold on.

(She steps away to the "door" as FRANK THE NURSE walks up with a clipboard)

DASIA (CONT'D)

Frank, I need a throat culture in here.

FRANK

I think there's too much culture in there already. If you get a minute-

SORE THROAT

And I've got this pounding headache on and off for like six months.

DASIA

(Flipping through her file)

That wasn't on your report...

FRANK

She didn't mention it.

SORE THROAT

Maybe it's because I haven't taken my blood pressure pills.
DASIA
Oh, well, see, that could be a problem. When did you last take them?

SORE THROAT
Maybe Christmas?

DASIA
Okay.

FRANK
(Looking at the chart)
Blood pressure was high, but not frightening-

DASIA
We're going to take a throat culture and talk about your blood pressure when I come back, okay?
(To Frank)
You'll do the culture?

FRANK
I'll see if Maya can.
(Hands her a file)
#4532996 in twelve is getting testy.

DASIA
Okay.

(She enters another "room" to face a MAN in expensive clothes on his rolling chair, looking at his watch as he talks into his earpiece phone)

CHOLESTEROL MAN
(Into phone)
I'm not going to some office party in the Flats -- if they want the Strongsville property they can meet me at the Tremont barbecue thing at four. Hang on, it looks like a nurse has deigned to see me.

DASIA
I'm Doctor Holloway. Sorry to keep you waiting.

CHOLESTEROL MAN
I don't know about you, but I work for a living.

DASIA
I'm sorry?
CHOLESTEROL MAN
I make $45 an hour outside of this building. You have kept me waiting for 65 minutes and I have yet to be seen. Who's going to reimburse me for my time?

DASIA
(Looking through his file)
Well, I'm seeing you now.

CHOLESTEROL MAN
I made an appointment. I honor my appointments. You're a multi-million dollar institution. I don't see why you can't honor your appointments.

DASIA
Actually we were full before fit you in, Mr. LeCroix-

CHOLESTEROL MAN
And now you stand here making excuses instead of letting me see Dr. Satyarthi-

DASIA
Dr. Satyarthi isn't in today. You wanted to be seen today-

CHOLESTEROL MAN
Apparently my cholesterol is worrisome.

DASIA
I don't know if I'd say worrisome, but it's clearly something we need to-

CHOLESTEROL MAN
Just write me a prescription.

DASIA
Well, actually, you know, I need to check some facts first.

CHOLESTEROL MAN
It should all be in the file.

DASIA
But before we jump to medication we need to talk about diet and exercise.

CHOLESTEROL MAN
Oh good lord.

DASIA
I know. But your insurance may not cover prescriptions until we've tried lifestyle changes for six months.

CHOLESTEROL MAN
Six months? I could be dead in six months!
DASIA

Yes, you could be-

CHOLESTEROL MAN

What??

DASIA

-but so could I and everyone else! The point is-

CHOLESTEROL MAN

"Lifestyle changes" You make it sound like I should stop hanging around gay bars-

DASIA

If that's your connotation-

CHOLESTEROL MAN

I'm not gay! I'm using that as an absurd example!

DASIA

Sir, would you please lower your voice? Your cholesterol has nothing to do with your sexual preference-

(Frank sticks his head in)

FRANK

Dasia? Urgent patient call.

DASIA

Okay. I'm so sorry, sir, I'll be right back.

(She steps away)

FRANK

Why was he yelling about being gay?

DASIA

He's upset about his cholesterol-

(Looking in on Sore Throat)

Has anyone given you a throat culture yet?

SORE THROAT

Does the guy in the room next to me have a problem with being gay?

DASIA

I'll be right back.

FRANK

(Hands Dasia a telephone)

It's Mrs. Habiscus. Says she's called three times. Her fever's 108, she appears to be bleeding, and her heart may have stopped.
DASIA
Okay.

(Into phone)
Mrs. Habiscus? This is Dr. Holloway. It sounds like maybe you need an ambulance, Mrs. Habiscus ...Oh. You're already in the Clinic? Where are you? You don't know either? Is there a sign near you? --Yes, there are a lot of buildings. --No, I'd be happy to write another prescription, but you need to find me first. Especially if your heart has stopped. Frank will give you directions. Okay?

(She hands the phone to Frank)

FRANK
Can you hold please, thank you!

(He pushes a button and hangs up as a COUGHING MAN wheels in on a stool to sit beside Sore Throat and Cholesterol Man. He lets out a horrifying cough. Everyone jumps)

DASIA
Whoa.

FRANK
(Hands her a file)
Beautiful, isn't it? #3886223. Room eleven. Can you take a look at him?

DASIA
Can someone else?

FRANK
They're all with other patients or filling out reports.

DASIA
I'm with other patients. I should be filling out reports-

FRANK
You've got four more to do this hour to meet the quota.

(Hands her files)
Plus reports on #6700972, #4461129, and #5199833.

DASIA
Did any of those people have names?

FRANK
Not that I know of.
(Dasia walks in to see Coughing Man)

DASIA
How are you doing today, sir?

(He tries to speak and lets out a huge hacking cough in her face, almost falling off his stool. The other patients jump)

DASIA (CONT'D)
That sounds pretty nasty.

COUGHING MAN
I think I need an antibiotic...

DASIA
It says here you were already on some. This could be viral.

COUGHING MAN
Exactly. I need more antibiotics.

DASIA
If it's viral, the antibiotics won't help. It just takes time to go away-

(Another cough)

DASIA (CONT'D)
Okay. Obviously staying calm is good. It could be any number of things. It could be post-nasal drip-

COUGHING MAN
From what? I don't have a cold.

DASIA
PND can come from a variety of sources: chronic sinusitis - if it's that we can surgically drain it-

COUGHING MAN
Surgically drain it?? Oh god oh god oh god-

(He starts coughing)

DASIA
Please, sir. Stay calm. We don't know yet-

COUGHING MAN
You're gonna have to go in with a knife or scalpel or something, aren't you?? It's in my nose, right next to my brain-
DASIA
We can treat you with a steroid spray instead-

COUGHING MAN
Steroids?? Oh god oh god oh god-
(Starts coughing)

DASIA
I need... where's a tongue depressor?

COUGHING MAN
I don't want to bloat up like some Barry Bonds-

DASIA
Can you hang on just one moment, sir? I need a tongue depressor -- I'll be right back-

COUGHING MAN
I had some of those new Atkins pierogies this morning -- could that have something to do with it??

(She steps away as he tries to control his cough)

DASIA
(To Frank)
I need a tongue depressor.

FRANK
You need a TB ward. And you have a call from Danny Gerhard about his test results!

(He charges off)

DASIA
Okay.

(A well-dressed woman walks up with a folder and briefcase. This is MS. ROBERTS)

MS. ROBERTS
Excuse me, Dr. Holloway, can I just grab you for a minute?

DASIA
Okay. Ten seconds.

MS. ROBERTS
My name is Dierdre Roberts. I'm with Pharmacure.

DASIA
You're a drug rep?
MS. ROBERTS
I'm a pharmaceutical liaison. I can't help noticing you have your hands full-

(Coughing Man has a huge coughing fit)

MS. ROBERTS (CONT'D)
Obviously, I don't know the details of that patient's case, but from the tenor of his cough, it so happens that our new medication Placebacet could do wonders-

DASIA
I'm sorry, I really don't have time, if you want to leave some studies-

MS. ROBERTS
(Opening her charts and folders)
It so happens we've conducted seventeen independent studies that show-

(CHolesterol Man steps out to Dasia)

CHOLESTEROL MAN
How much longer do you plan on detaining me in this plague house?

DASIA
Please, sir, if you'll step back in your room-

CHOLESTEROL MAN
I am due in Willoughby in 39 minutes, I am not catching Whooping Cough-

MS. ROBERTS
It so happens that Placebacet has amazing effects on Whooping Cough-

FRANK
Dasia, Mrs. Habiscus is on the phone again. She thinks she's in the Cole Eye Institute and wants directions-

DASIA
Tell her to try to find a window. Locate the sun. That should be East.

MS. ROBERTS
(To Cholesterol Man)
How are you doing today, sir?

CHOLESTEROL MAN
I came in here with bad cholesterol and I'm going to leave with dyptheria.
Our new medication Placebecet can actually nullify high cholesterol and dyptheria—

(Dasia hands the phone to Frank and gently moves Cholesterol Man back into his room)

Can you give me one more minute, sir?

I—

I know, that's like 75 cents in the outside world—

(Steps into Sore Throat)

Has anyone done that throat culture yet, Miss Roberts?

I don't think I'm Miss Roberts.

Miss...

Jackson.

Jackson. I'm so sorry.

I forgot to tell you I've been vomiting for six months.

You've been vomiting for six months??

Not every day. Someone at Metrohealth gave me some pills.

...do you have any idea what those pills might have been?

They were white. They were shaped like this.

Okay. The stomach ache and sore throat could mean you have Gastro-Esophageal Reflux Disease. If it is, then your symptoms would be worsened by eating greasy fried food, chocolate, caffeine -- do you take a lot of caffeine?
SORE THROAT
Just a few pops a day. And it's only Mountain Dew.

DASIA
Jesus.

(Coughing Man lets out a huge hack)

SORE THROAT
Is the gay guy dying over there?

DASIA
I'll get right back to you.

(Steps out to run into Ms. Roberts)

MS. ROBERTS
If I could just get a minute, I couldn't help overhearing you mention reflux, which it so happens-

(Frank runs up with a phone)

FRANK
Dasia, it's Mrs. Habiscus. Somehow she ended up out on East 97th. She's looking for a door to get back in.

DASIA
Okay!

(Pushes into Coughing Man's room)

You know what else could be causing your coughing, sir? Reflux.

COUGHING MAN
How can we find out?

DASIA
I'm thinking rectal exam.

(A huge coughing fit)

DASIA (CONT'D
To look for blood in the stool, sir.

COUGHING MAN
It's not reflux, it's not reflux-

DASIA
Then it maybe tuberculous or a tumor.

(Wild coughing fit)
Or maybe it's viral.

COUGHING MAN
Maybe it's just viral. It's probably viral-

(Dasia steps out to see Ms. Roberts pulling notepads and pens from her briefcase)

MS. ROBERTS
I brought Placebecet notepads, pens and letter openers for the staff.

DASIA
Okay.

(Cholesterol Man steps out)

CHOLESTEROL MAN
Why am I still here?? I thought this was the #1 hospital in the state!

DASIA
#1 in cardiac, sir. We're #13 in cholesterol and #99 on patience with impatient patients.

(Takes paper and pen from Ms. Roberts)

Give me one of those notepads.

(Sore Throat staggers out)

MS. ROBERTS
I also brought lunches for the entire staff!

(She pulls a fruit basket from her briefcase)

SORE THROAT
Is there any pop in there?

DASIA
(Scribbling)
No pop.

SORE THROAT
Hershey's bars?

DASIA
No chocolate.

SORE THROAT
Is there a McDonald's around here?
DASIA
Not anymore.
(Grabs an apple)
Have an apple. Keeps the doctor away.

FRANK
Pharmacy on line two, Dasia, insurance question!

DASIA
(Scribbling)
Okay!

MS. ROBERTS
I've got trips to Florida for the whole family-
(Coughing Man staggers out)

COUGHING MAN
Would that help my cough?

MS. ROBERTS
And gift certificates to Ruth's Cris Steakhouse, Lola's-

CHOLESTEROL MAN
Give me those-

FRANK
Mrs. Habiscus on Line Five, Dasia!

DASIA
OKAY!!
(To Ms. Roberts)
You need to back off with your payola pills.
(Shoves a scrap of paper to Cholesterol Man)
You need to see a nutritionist, a fitness expert, and calm
the hell down.
(Paper to Coughing Man)
You need to see an Ear, Nose, and Throat specialist and
CHILL OUT.
(Paper to Sore Throat)
You need to see me and only me and get this to a pharmacy
and take your damn blood pressure medication! OKAY??

ALL
(Mumbling)
...okay.

DASIA
And someone find Mrs. Habiscus. Because I... am going to lunch!

(Blackout)

END OF ACT I
ACT II

TREMONT

1:04 P.M.

(A man in a nice sweater and khakis, DOUG, steps up to a low chain link fence with a sign saying "No Trespassing". There may be a ton of clutter on the other side of the fence)

DOUG

(Calling over the fence)
Hello? Mr. McGinty? Hellooo! Mr. McGinty!

(A rough looking guy in a t-shirt and sweat pants steps into the other yard carrying a beer can. This is CHUCK)

DOUG (CONT'D)
Ah! Mr. McGinty! How are you doing today?

(Chuck looks at him)

DOUG (CONT'D)
You look... you look comfortable.

CHUCK
What happened. Someone break into your car again?

DOUG
No! No. Ha ha! No, that hasn't happened for a few weeks now.

CHUCK
I'm trying to watch the game. Why are you yelling?

DOUG
Well. I didn't want to just march up to your porch. Wanted to respect the "No Trespassing" sign. Good signage makes good neighbors, right?

CHUCK
Why are you yelling my name?

DOUG
Well. I was out cleaning up my yard -- it's a beautiful day, isn't it? Clear blue sky-
CHUCK
Snow by midnight. Watch.

DOUG
Yep. And I just noticed your yard and thought, "Hey! What a beautiful day to clean up! Maybe Mr. McGinty would like some help on his yard while I'm at it!"

CHUCK
I'm okay. Thanks.

(He starts in)

DOUG
It'd be no problem. I'm pretty much done with ours. I can just clear up some of the clutter.

CHUCK
I got everything where I want it. Thanks.

(He starts in)

DOUG
Yep. I know how that is. It's like my coffee mug at work. I know where I put it in the lounge, and I want it in the lounge the next time I look! You know.

CHUCK
We just use Styrofoam cups down at the plant. Once they get used, you know where they are.

DOUG
In the circular file, right?

CHUCK
No, the trash can.

DOUG
Right. Circular file. That's what we call it. In our office.

CHUCK
That's good. That's clever.

(He starts in)

DOUG
So would it be okay with you if I just moved your stuff to the south side of your house?

CHUCK
What?
DOUG
See, here's kind of the big picture. This great weather -- first great day, I thought, let's go crazy and throw a barbecue -- kind of fun, kind of crazy this early in the year, you know-

CHUCK
It's gonna snow.

DOUG
And my boss is down with this, he's like, "What the hell, it's crazy, we'll punch out a little early". Everyone's coming to the house. My house. They've never been to my house before. I printed out maps to Tremont, you know, I want to make 'em feel welcome and show 'em the neighborhood at its best, you know, first impressions, and since our deck kind of looks out over your yard, I was wondering if I could scoot some of the debris around to the south side where they won't see it.

(Chuck stares at him)

DOUG (CONT'D)
For the afternoon. Then I'll help put it all back tonight.

CHUCK
You don't want 'em to see my yard?

DOUG
No. No, no, no. I want them to see your yard! That's just it -- I want them to see the grass, or what's left of it. Not the cans and hubcaps and bottles.

CHUCK
It's my yard. It's none of their business.

I know-

DOUG

CHUCK
It's none of your business.

DOUG
Absolutely. But since we're neighbors-

CHUCK
Did I complain when you moved in here and brought your riding mower for your four square feet of lawn?

DOUG
The mower was a gift from my dad.
CHUCK
You don't need no John Deere. You need a goat.

DOUG
Now, see, a goat might be perfect for your yard -- they eat tin cans, right?

CHUCK
You don't want 'em to see my yard? Keep 'em in your goddam house.

DOUG
Yeah, but they have to walk to the front door, Mr. McGinty, and that means seeing all of your... stuff.

CHUCK
Then why are you having a party at your house? Have it at Lola's or somewhere.

DOUG
See, that's just it, you people don't get it. In a factory it's networking schmetworking, you're stuck 'til they move your job to Bolivia. But it's different for me. If my boss thinks "good party", he thinks "Good Doug", he thinks "important accounts". He sees you, he thinks "crap neighborhood", "crap employee", "Doug who?" I need him to see that I live in a fun classy urban setting!

CHUCK
This is where you live! Look at my yard. I'm Tremont, buddy. You're slumming from Westlake.

(KATHY enters on Doug's side, wearing a nice sweater and skirt, carrying her cell phone)

KATHY
Dougie, honey, I can't reach Lucille to see if she got the basting sauces at Legacy, and now Sandy's not sure she can make it -- she's stuck at the Indians game with her fiancee-

DOUG
Kathy-

KATHY
Sandy was going to bring the baba ganoush. If she doesn't come, we have no baba ganoush.

CHUCK
My god! Let me get out the Bat Phone and see if we can get some flown in!
Excuse me?

Mr. McGinty is feeling a little belligerent about cleaning up his yard-

Why? Didn't you offer to help him?

Okay. First. My name is not McGinty. It's McKinley. If you're gonna insult someone's yard, get their name right.

Well, I'm sorry-

I could have sworn our real estate agent said McGinty when we first met-

Maybe she did. She was an idiot.

Okay, look, you can insult my dad's mower, but there's no reason to start name-calling the Smythe-Cramer staff-

Mr. McKinsey-

McKinley!

McKinley. We just want to help. We all want a beautiful neighborhood.

I want a neighborhood I can live in. If I wanted to measure the height of my lawn grass, I'd move to Shaker Heights.

We're not talking about anything major -- we're not even talking about your paint job-

What's wrong with it?

Well, I mean, the peeling and chipping and fading-
DOUG
You got one side painted blue halfway up, the rest is mustard yellow-

CHUCK
I'm gonna finish that this summer. I just need a taller ladder.

KATHY
But we're not even talking about that! We're just looking at the yard area.

CHUCK
I bet you don't like my van.

DOUG
Actually-

KATHY
I think it's great! And I totally understand how when your driveway is filled up and you still need to work on a vehicle, you need someplace to park it-

Like his front lawn.

KATHY
Yes! But actually, it's kind of handy -- I've taken some landscaping courses in college? And if you want any help camouflaging the cinder blocks the van is up on-

CHUCK
I don't wanta camouflage anything. I wanta watch T.V. on my day off and have my damn yard left alone. You people move up here to live on the ridge-

DOUG
Bluff.

CHUCK
What?

DOUG
Tremont's not a ridge, it's on a bluff overlooking the Cuyahoga valley.

CHUCK
You move up here to our ridge, makin' everything expensive, tearing down perfectly good houses-

KATHY
We didn't tear down anything! We just gutted the kitchen and added a deck-
DOUG
And if we want to hold a party for our friends and co-workers, we ought to be able to walk out on our deck without being visually assaulted by your pile of white trash crap!

CHUCK
You're gonna be assaulted more than visually, asshole-

DOUG
You think I'm scared of a "No Trespassing" sign? Huh? You wanta take this outside?

Huh?

CHUCK
We already have to look at the little old Mexican lady's yard-

KATHY
She's from Puerto Rico!

KATHY
—with her saints and virgins and Chief Wahoos -- but at least that has some charm. She doesn't speak English, she's old-world -- that's the difference. Her yard is tacky and cute -- your yard is tacky and... tacky.

CHUCK
Look, the day I listen to cracks on Mrs. Rodriguez's lawn ornaments from Lucy the Lousy Landscaper-

DOUG
That's it. You can insult my dad's mower, you can insult our real estate agent, but you do not call my wife a lousy landscaper-

CHUCK
Why are you even here?? Why didn't you buy one of those pastel condos on the edge-

KATHY
Townhouses.

What?

KATHY
They're townhouses on the edge of the bluff.

CHUCK
You know the proper goddam names for everything but your
neighbors!

DOUG
We don't want to live in the townhouses! We want to live in the fun and funky neighborhood that's still unexplored! We're urban pioneers!

CHUCK
Well, you just ran into the urban Shoshone, asshole! Circle the wagons!

(Chuck throws his empty beer can over the fence into Kathy and Doug's yard)

KATHY
What are you doing??

CHUCK
Sharing the wealth, lady! Hope you like MGD!

(Doug throws the can back)

DOUG
You keep your damn recyclables on your side of the fence, buddy!

CHUCK
(Grabs a shovel)
You want my land? Hah? You want this land? I'll give it to you! A shovel-full at a time -- I'm gonna shovel my whole damn yard onto your property! You like that??

DOUG
(Grabs a weedwhacker)
Yes!! Anything you throw over here gets chopped into our compost pile, McChimpy! I'd just watch your fingers if I were you!

CHUCK
(Grabs up an old chainsaw)
You know what else is goin' in that compost pile? Your deck!

(Doug snarls and charges off)

KATHY
You start that thing up and I'm getting the cops all over you so fast for violating the noise ordinance-

CHUCK
Who cares?? I'm just doin' a little landscaping!
(Kathy lunges over the fence and grabs Chuck by the throat)

KATHY
Why can't you be a good neighbor?? Why. Can't. You. Be. A. Good. Neighbor!?!?

(Chuck grabs her with one hand while holding the chainsaw)

CHUCK
Back to Westlake! Back to Westlake!

(Doug charges on with a can of gasoline and a lighter)

DOUG
I've got the final answer to your weed problem, Appalachian Boy! Hope you like the smell of napalm in the morning!!

(They're all over each other -- yelling -- then the sound of an engine driving by -- Doug looks up -- his eyes go huge)

DOUG (CONT'D)
Cheezit -- Stop! Stop!!

(Chuck and Kathy turn in mid-strangle)

CHUCK
Whozit? The cops?

DOUG
Worse.

KATHY
It's Lolly the Trolly.

(They all break apart as a man's voice calls over an loudspeaker)

TOUR GUIDE (V.O.
On your left you'll see some other houses here in historic Tremont, as well as some neighbors out for some of the first conversations of the Spring. Hi, folks!

(Kathy, Doug, and Chuck wave)
TOUR GUIDE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Truly it's that sense of community that makes Tremont one of the jewels of the West Side that it is. And as we round this corner, you'll see still yet another church-

(The engine fades away... Doug, Chuck, and Kathy stand there a moment longer... look at each other... And with warriors' YELLS they're back on one another, going for the kill)

(Blackout)
JACOB'S FIELD

3:18 P.M.

(The bleachers. FIVE FANS sit near one another though not together, an older man and woman, JIM and ALBERTA (who never takes her eyes off the game), a younger couple – arms folded SANDY and inebriated KENNY – and CARLOS who strains for a better view)

JIM
This is the year. This is absolutely the year.

ALBERTA
We just gotta get Belliard home from second...

SANDY
Please let it just be over.

CARLOS
Whoo! Come on, Casey!! Hit it!

SANDY
Hit it so we can go home!

(ROBBIE, a young woman, walks up and sits beside Carlos with drinks and hot dogs)

ROBBIE
Did I miss anything?

CARLOS
Where you been? It's bottom of the frickin' ninth, woman!

ROBBIE
I was gettin' dogs and beers.

CARLOS
You left at the 7th inning stretch!

ROBBIE
I got all turned around. This place is worse than the Clinic. I was lookin' for 185 and I ended up way in 581 up there. I could see Tremont, I could see Canada, my nose started bleedin' -- but I found this place selling these new pierogies-

CARLOS
You got my change?
ROBBIE
What change.

CARLOS
I gave you a twenty for two hot dogs and two beers.

ROBBIE
Like I said, what change?

CARLOS
Damn. This better be some sweet-ass alcohol.

JIM
Would you mind holding it down?

CARLOS
What, you can't hear the third base coach? You can barely see back here, much less hear.

KENNY
WHOO! Knock it out, Thome!

JIM
Thome?

CARLOS
Jesus! This beer sucks.

ROBBIE
Yeah, but now you get to keep the cup.

KENNY
I'll take your beer if you don't want it.

ROBBIE

CARLOS
Aah! Batter spills her damn beer on her damn husband!

ROBBIE
Sorry. They didn't give me no napkins, baby.

KENNY
If you soaked it up with napkins you could squeeze it into my cup.

ROBBIE
Excuse me?
KENNY
They don't sell beer after the 7th. I'm getting a little dry, maybe I got a napkin-

JIM
Will you please can it?

ALBERTA
We just gotta get Belliard home and we tie it up.

JIM
Yeah, but Blake is batting and we already got two outs.

ALBERTA
Yeah, but Blake batting against lefties with a man on is .329.

CARLOS
How do you know that?

SANDY
(Into her cell phone)
Yeah, Kathy? It's Sandy, I don't think I'm going to make it to the barbecue -- I'm still at the stupid baseball game.

KENNY
What are you doing?

SANDY
If I'm gonna be stuck here, I'm at least gonna entertain myself.

KENNY
It's the bottom of the ninth! How can you not be entertained?

SANDY
(Into phone)
I'm sorry, Kathy, I missed that, your neighbor did what with a chainsaw?

ROBBIE
Who's that down in front of us?

CARLOS
Read his shirt.

ROBBIE
I can't.

CARLOS
Looks like... Salmon.
ROBBIE
Salmon?

JIM
Sexson. He plays left for the Mariners.

ROBBIE
But he's not on our team?

CARLOS
'Course not. We're batting.

ROBBIE
(Yelling out)
Sexson! Sexson! ...You suck!

JIM AND CARLOS
What are you doing?

ROBBIE
Distracting him.

JIM
Don't be rude.

CARLOS
At least wait 'til the ball's comin' toward him.

ALBERTA
Sexson's already made three errors this season. He's
distracted because his wife filed for divorce and his
mother just went into rehab.

CARLOS
How do you know that?
(Alberta shrugs)

KENNY
(Yelling out)
Salmon! Saal-mon!!

ROBBIE
(Yelling out)
Buy your mom a drink for me!

KENNY
And me!

SANDY
(Into phone)
I can't hear you -- Kenny's yelling at the players. This
is why I don't go to sporting events--
JIM
Come on, Blake, come on...

ALBERTA
He knocks in Belliard, Sizemore comes to the plate,
Sizemore knocks in Blake, our streak goes to five.

CARLOS
We've won four in a row?

ALBERTA
First time we've won five straight in April since games 2-

CARLOS
Damn, you're good!

JIM
She's got the facts, but I got the watch.

'Scuse me?

JIM
Last game of the playoffs in '95, I got so excited I put my
watch on my right hand, upside-down, see, I'm right-handed,
usually wear it on my left hand-

CARLOS
Yeah.

JIM
And I went to the game and we won.

CARLOS
Yeah.

JIM
Every home game I been to since then, I wear my watch
upside-down on my right hand and we win.

ROBBIE
Yeah, so what time is it?

JIM
I have no idea. It looks like a quarter to ten.

(The beating tom-tom starts in the
distance)

KENNY
Oh god. Is that me, or the guy with the drum?
ROBBIE

Drum man.

KENNY

Good. I thought I was having a stroke.

SANDY

(Into phone)

No, some bozo's beating a drum -- I don't know how he got it past security -- they make me dump my Chai tea, but they let Mr. Timpani carry in his heap big wampum-

ALBERTA

He beats it to rally the crowd in crunch time.

KENNY

I'm rallying! Whoo! WHOOO!

SANDY

Can we please leave now? This guy's the last out.

ALBERTA

You never leave. Not when the Tribe's got one swing left.

CARLOS

They can't lose. You got the watch thing.

ALBERTA

May not be enough to break the Curse of Colavito.

What curse?

JIM

We never should have traded Rocky Colavito in '60, now we'll never win a title, but listen, during the '97 World Series I realized I was wearing the same pair of underwear every time we won. The one time I changed to wash'em, Game Seven.

ALBERTA

Never again.

JIM

Not this season.

CARLOS

So what you're saying is you haven't washed your underwear since the season started?

JIM

...I don't gotta tell you that.
(Drumming starts again. Robbie stands and sits)

CARLOS
What are you doing?

ROBBIE
Starting the wave.

ALBERTA
You don't start the wave with two outs, two strikes and the tying run on second.

CARLOS
And you can't start the wave by yourself.

ROBBIE
Watch me.

(She stands and sits. Kenny staggers up too late... looks around... and sits back down)

(Drumming louder)

JIM
Here comes the pitch.

SANDY
Please, please, please, please, please-
(CRACK! Huge crowd cheer!)

JIM, CARLOS, KENNY, ROBBIE
YEAH! Go! Go! Go! Go!

SANDY
(Yelling into her phone)
I think something's happening! Maybe the game is over!

JIM AND CARLOS
Home! Home! Home!

KENNY
Where's the ball? Where's the ball?

(Robbie is dancing)

JIM AND CARLOS
Tie Game!!

SANDY
So it's not over.

JIM
The batter drove in the run and got to second.
CARLOS
We drive him home, we win!

JIM
Lucky watch!

CARLOS
Lucky underwear!

SANDY
Oh for God's sake, Kenny, it sounds like Kathy and Doug aren't even having the barbecue -- something's happened in Tremont -- can we just get out of here and-

KENNY
Hey, you wanta go, you can catch the RTA back to Brook Park.

SANDY
Please. You know what kind of freaks you meet on the RTA?

KENNY
(Calling out)
Whoo-hoo! Go Thome!

JIM
Thome hasn't played for us for three years, sir.

KENNY
When did this happen?

CARLOS
(To Alberta)
What do we know about the batter?

ALBERTA
Grady Sizemore. He's .263 against left-handed Seattle pitchers in the bottom of the ninth of home stands with two down and men in scoring position in April when the temperature is over 40 degrees but the wind is blowing in from the northwest.

CARLOS
That's what I thought.

( Drumming starts)

SANDY
Again with the drumming!

JIM
One swing of the bat...
ALBERTA

One swing of the bat...

CARLOS

Come on, Grady!

ROBBIE

(Dancing and singing)

Go, go, Grady! Go, go, Grady!

SANDY

Kathy, are you there? I can't hear you with the idiots shouting-

ROBBIE

Who you callin' an idiot?

SANDY

You're the only one doing the Grady Hustle.

(Kenny staggers to his feet and attempts to dance)

KENNY

No we're not! Look! Slider's dancing!

ROBBIE

The big purple thing with the squash on his face?

KENNY

He's the mascot. That's his nose.

ROBBIE

He's like a Dr. Seuss fever dream.

JIM

Will you hold it down?

SANDY

I think Kathy's in jail for assault, Kenny!

JIM

(To Sandy)

And you get off the phone!

ROBBIE AND KENNY

Go, Grady!

KENNY

And Thome!

ROBBIE

And Slider!
JIM

PLEASE SHUT UP!

(They all do, shocked.
Drumming continues...)

JIM (CONT'D
This is the moment. These are the seconds that make baseball the greatest game in all of pro-sports. Look at 'em... Look at 'em! The pitcher and the batter staring each other down -- each one knows exactly what he can do, what the other guy can do -- two men on the edge of a precipice waiting for the move, the look, the microsecond that demands reaction -- it all comes down to this, no armor, no coaches, only their minds and muscles in the split-second... eight men will explode into motion in one breath... and it's this breath. This is the moment. This is why we're here.

(Beat. Drumming continues)

ROBBIE
I'm just here to get out of the house.

CARLOS
I'm here to watch us win.

KENNY
We are gonna win. We deserve to win!

SANDY
No, here's the problem--
(Pokes Kenny and Carlos)
This is you.
(Point out)
That's them. See the great distance between us? The fact that they have a body and you have a body? We are not winning or losing. We are watching. Psychiatrists have a name for when you think you're someone else.

ROBBIE
Yeah, but we're gonna win.

KENNY AND ROBBIE
Go, Grady! Go go, go Grady!

SANDY
Arrgh!

ALBERTA
(To Jim)
You want to break the Curse of Colavito?
JIM

We have to!

ALBERTA

You know how the Boston Red Sox broke their curse and won the World Series in 2004?

JIM

How?

ALBERTA

Human sacrifice.

JIM

No way.

ALBERTA

Top of the season. Real quiet. Desperate curses call for desperate measures.

JIM

It worked?

ALBERTA

Who won the title?

JIM

(Looks around)

But how... who would...

SANDY

(Yelling out)

Come on and strike out so we can go home!!

(Alberta and Jim look at each other)

ALBERTA

We're thirty feet off the ground. A little push over the railing...

JIM

It'd stop the game. We'd never win.

ALBERTA

You'd have to time it right at the last out.

(Jim looks at Sandy... back at Alberta)

ALBERTA (CONT'D)

How much do we want to win?
(CRACK! The ball is hit -- they all look up...)  

ROBBIE  
It's coming toward us!  

CARLOS  
It's gonna be a home run!!  

KENNY  
It's gonna hit us!  
(Sandy ducks)  

SANDY  
Don't let it hit me I don't wanta get hit-  

JIM  
(To Alberta)  
We didn't have to do it! We just had to threaten human sacrifice!  

ROBBIE  
Here it comes here it comes-  

(They all reach -- duck-- and watch the ball fall below them. Collective "Ohhhh")  

KENNY  
What happened?  

CARLOS  
It didn't clear the field, that's what happened.  

KENNY  
Salmonella caught it?  

CARLOS  
He caught it.  

ROBBIE  
(Calling out)  
Sexson-!  

CARLOS  
You suck!  

ROBBIE  
And your ex-wife's got pain killers for your mom!  

KENNY  
And me!  

(They all look at him)
KENNY (CONT'D)
What? You know whose fault this is? It's Slider's! He was over there dancing and distracting Grady. Sonofabitch mascot!

SANDY
So... it's over?

ALBERTA
It's not over. It's a tie.

JIM
Extra innings.

SANDY
(Sinks into her chair)
Oh god.

ALBERTA
This is the tribe. You get used to waiting.

JIM
(To Alberta)
What you said. About Boston...

ALBERTA
How long do you want to wait to break the curse of Colavito?

(They both look at the furious Sandy)

KENNY
Ninth inning stretch! Who's comin' with me to kick Slider's ass?

(Blackout)
ROCK AND ROLL HALL OF FAME

5:44 P.M.

(A middle-aged man in a sweater and coat, HERBERT and a woman DELLA, in a skirt and coat stand looking at something O.S. Rock music plays)

DELLA
(Staring)
Yep. There it is.

HERBERT
(Staring)
I can't believe I'm standing next to it...

DELLA
It's a little smaller than I thought.

HERBERT
She was a small woman, Della. I mean, she was huge, but she was small. You know.

DELLA
But the car is just small.

HERBERT
But it's her car. The Janis Joplin Porsche.

DELLA
I can kind of see her driving up and down from L.A. to San Francisco in it.

HERBERT
(Singing)
"Come On! Take another little piece of my heart now, Baby!"

DELLA
Herbert.

HERBERT
You know she was wailing with the windows down and her hair whipping her sunglasses flying down the California interstate. Oh man.

DELLA
It's a good song.
HERBERT
(Singing)
"You'll know you got it... when it makes you feel good!"

DELLA
People are looking at us.

HERBERT
Let'em! This is rock and roll, Della! We all been there. We all felt it.
(Calling out)
Am I right? I mean, this is Janis Joplin's car, baby!

DELLA
Should we go into the rest of the museum? I've got our tickets.

HERBERT
The paint job is even more psychedelic in person. Can you imagine staring at this car on acid?

DELLA
I can't imagine staring at it on three cups of coffee anymore, let alone acid.

HERBERT
Oh, this is so awesome. This is so cool. This is so worth the drive from Jersey City.

DELLA
Cleveland in April looks like Trenton in April, don't you think?

HERBERT
Let's do it in the car.

DELLA
What??

HERBERT
I want to make love to you in the backseat of Janis Joplin's Porsche.

DELLA
Herbert. I think you need to sit down. I'll get you some water-

HERBERT
I'm serious, Della. The guard's not looking, we jump in, we make out-
DELLA
Herbert Jackson Willis, that is the most lame-brained suggestion-

HERBERT
You didn't think it was lame-brained at the Allman Brothers concert in Philly.

DELLA
That was thirty years ago.

HERBERT
And as I recall I'm not the one thought of a quickie in the porta-pottie at the Stones concert.

DELLA
Oh my god. I hadn't thought of that in years...

HERBERT
Are you kidding? I think about it every day!

DELLA
Every day?

HERBERT
Well, not every day. But I think about it.

DELLA
I was a young woman then, Herbie. I was crazy, I was daring-

HERBERT
So was I.

DELLA
I didn't have arthritis.

HERBERT
That's Janis' car, Della, you touch it, your arthritis will probably disappear, it's like the Waters at Lourdes-

DELLA
What's gotten into you?

HERBERT
It's what's gotten out of me, Della! When was the last time we pulled an all-nighter to figure out the meaning of life? When was the last time we just took off and drove for three days for a concert we didn't even have tickets for? When was the last time we rocked, Della? There's only so many years a man can teach Renaissance Literature before he has to get back to his honest-to-God wild roots!
DELLA
Oh god. You would have your mid-life crisis in Cleveland.

HERBERT
Do you see me chasing younger women? Am I trading in our Corolla for a Ferrari? I want my job, I want my house, I want my wife -- and I want to give it to you in the back of Janis' car!

DELLA
This building is a museum, Herbie. Not a rock concert. A museum. With a gift shop and a cafeteria.

HERBERT
It'd be like making love to HER. Both of us! To the music! It's our last chance to BE rock and roll!

(A young man bursts in and falls to his knees in front of the car, bowing his head, mumbling a prayer under his breath. This is MFUNE. Herbert and Della look at each other)

DELLA
I can't have sex when someone's praying near me. You know that.

HERBERT
(To Mfune)
Beautiful car, isn't it?

MFUNE
In the Second Age of Rock and Roll, the world of men divided into three: Acid, Bubblegum and Soul. And from the land of Port Arthur, Texas in the year One-Thousand-Nine-Hundred-And-Forty-Three A.D. there rose One Woman to Rule Them All.

HERBERT
Wow. You know your stuff.

MFUNE
And in the year One-Thousand-Nine-Hundred-and-Seventy, in the land of Hollywood, a hotel handmaiden of the name of Betsy Harris, was called upon to service a room rented to the One Who Ruled Them All--

DELLA
Ohmygod -- did she find Joplin's body?

MFUNE
No one was there. But in the chamber Betsy Harris found a small bag of plastic containing the elixirs necessary for a
fix of heroin. And thinking that the articles in the bag of plastic could ultimately prove fatal to the One Who Ruled Them All, Betsy Harris removed one item. The One Needle there could be no doubt had recently been in the arm of the One Who Ruled Them All.

HERBERT

Oh my god.

MFUNE

And Betsy Harris completed her work of stripping the sheets and she fled as chambermaids are wont to do. And it was not two days hence that the One Who Ruled Them All discovered another needle and completed her task of self-annihilation irregardless.

HERBERT

God rest her soul.

DELLA

What happened to the maid?

MFUNE

Betsy Harris was at the time co-renting her apartment with a sister, Rita Harris, while she attempted to create a band of funk known as "The Queens of Sheba"

DELLA

I never heard of them.

MFUNE

They never recorded. But as time passed it was ultimately realized that merely possessing the Needle of the One to Rule Them All was creating disruption and violence in the band -- a seriously bad mojo. And as the band began to disintegrate, the sister took the Needle from the apartment and delivered it unto a brother in Detroit. And things that should have been remembered... were forgotten. And that brother had a son, Mfune Harris, son of Walter, who in the Fifth Age of Rock and Roll attempted to create a ska band by the name of "Horns Aplenty". But as was the way of the One Needle, strife and discord began to rend the band asunder. And Mfune Harris discovered the Needle's unearthly will to destroy the Music of Men. And in that instant the quest of an age was undertaken -- facing the very depths of his own anguished soul and braving the construction on I-71, Mfune must return the Needle from whence it had come. Hour after hour, day after day, Mfune's resistance to the siren call of the Needle would be sorely tested, until at last Mfune reached the shrine of The One Who Ruled Them All. And he delivered the One Needle.
(He pulls out a plastic bag with a syringe needle in it)

DELLA
Oh my god.

HERBERT
So that's the needle Janis used to O.D.??

DELLA
It's the second-to-last needle. Didn't you listen to the story?

HERBERT
Still, that could be worth a ton on e-bay-

MFUNE
You mustn't touch it! I alone have been entrusted with the One Needle, and I alone must see it to its conclusion. You know not what you do.

DELLA
But why don't you take it to her grave?

MFUNE
Because this is where her music still lives. And where her car is.

HERBERT
See? He knows. My wife and I were just discussing getting it on in the backseat of her car.

DELLA
Herbert!

MFUNE
I understand that. It would be like making love to The One. To the music itself.

HERBERT
See? He knows.

MFUNE
And now, after all the perils and heartbreaks of this quest, at last I repair the One Needle to its rightful owner-

HERBERT
Wait. Can you wait 'til my wife and I are done? I don't wanta get a syringe in the tuckus in the middle of cookin', you know what I mean? Not even her syringe.
But I must return the needle!

Gimme ten minutes!

It's been taking more than ten minutes lately, Herbie.

Janis's car, Della, Water of Lourdes.

Look, there's a great gift shop and cafeteria -- you can go pick up some Earth, Wind, and Fire refrigerator magnets or something--

(A young woman in wild attire and sunglasses enters, staring at the car. This is DIANA. The other three look at her)

Whoa. So this is the car.

Yes.

A car. One of many cars here. Maybe you want to go check out John Lennon's car.

No. I want Janis' car.

As do we all.

I want to destroy it.

What?

It's gotta go so that she can live, man.

Oh my god. What is it about this car??

It's not the car. It's the music.
HERBERT AND MFUNE

Yes.

DIANA
And the music can't breathe in this building, man. They had to build glass pyramids and domes of white steel and load it with as many talismans as they could dig up just to make a strong enough vault to hold the soul. But they did it. They trapped Janis and John Lee and Bessie and Elvis and Alan Freed and all of them in this tomb.

(Touching Della's chest)
But they're still trying to get out in here.

(Beating a heartbeat lightly)
In here. In here. Telling you what it always told you to do. If we want to let the music do it's thing -- to change the world -- we gotta set it free again.

(She takes out a book of matches and a can of lighter fluid)

HERBERT
What are you doing?

DIANA
I'm gonna burn this mother down with the exact replica of the matches and lighter fluid Jimi Hendrix used to set his Fender Stratocaster on fire at Monterey. I bought 'em in the gift shop.

DELLA
Whoa whoa whoa-

MFUNE
I must place the One Needle first-

HERBERT
I must boink my wife first-

DIANA
Yes! Destruction and Creation! The true meaning of Rock And Roll!

HERBERT
So let us do our little Creation/Destruction thing, and then you can do your Destruction/Creation thing-

DELLA
(To Herbert)
You really think the guards won't notice?
HERBERT
Screw'em if they notice. You think it's a coincidence all of us are here at the exact same place at the exact same time? It's meant to be, Della!

MFUNE
The One would never have cared if people noticed.

DIANA
Rock wants people to notice. It's all about turning up the volume.

MFUNE
I'm going to distract them. The security.

HERBERT
How?

DIANA
Dude. I am so ready to start singing all "500 Songs That Shaped Rock and Roll" at the top of my lungs.

MFUNE
I'll join you. And then I'll hurl the Needle into the car-

DIANA
And this whole place will go up like a bonfire at Woodstock!

HERBERT
(Singing)
"Freedom's just another word--"

DELLA AND HERBERT
"For nothing left to lose--"

ALL
"And nothing don't mean nothing if it ain't free!"
(Holding each other, singing)
"Feeling good was easy, Lord, when he sang the blues--"

DELLA
"-- feeling good was good enough for meeee--"

ALL
"-- good enough for me and my Bobby McGee!"

(It's a beautiful tableau -- we hear sirens -- security guards... and...)

(Blackout)
LAKEVIEW CEMETERY

7:37 P.M.

(A young man in jeans and army jacket, VANCE, stands facing an unseen tombstone D.S., shaking a can of spray paint, preparing to spray. A woman walks up behind him in an overcoat, carrying flowers. This is JAQUELINE)

JAQUELINE

Oh, excuse me.

(Vance quickly looks around -- sees no one but the woman)

VANCE

What.

JAQUELINE

I didn't see you there. It's getting dark so fast. I'm just passing through. Going over there.

VANCE

Okay.

(Stops to squint at the "tombstone")

JAQUELINE

He was a great man.

VANCE

Who.

JAQUELINE

(Gestures) Rockefeller. Did a lot for this city.

VANCE

Yeah.

JAQUELINE

The parks, the gardens, money to the museums and orchestra and things.

VANCE

Yeah.

JAQUELINE

Why were you going to spray paint his tombstone?
'Cause I can.

JAQUELINE
Ah.
(Beat.)
I heard on the radio coming in about a big fight in Tremont and some people attacking Janis Joplin's car at the Rock Hall. There's something about this city makes people want to tear stuff down.

VANCE
I don't want to destroy it. I just wanta add to it.

JAQUELINE
What are you gonna add?

VANCE
My name.

JAQUELINE
You got a really special name?

VANCE
Vance.

JAQUELINE
That's okay. Doesn't scream out to painted on Rockefeller's grave.

VANCE
Rockefeller's grave don't scream out the need to jut fifteen feet in the air givin' the finger to heaven, either.

JAQUELINE
He was a great man.

VANCE
And when someone stops to think about him, I want'em to think about Vance Kramer too.

JAQUELINE
They'll probably think "Vance Kramer was a hoodlum".

VANCE
That's fine. Long as they think about me.

JAQUELINE
They'll clean off your name, you know. It won't last.
VANCE
I'll put it on again. Or on Garfield's monument. I'm not done yet.

JAQUELINE
That would be good on a headstone. "I'm not done yet".

VANCE
I'm not gettin' a headstone. That's why I got spray paint.

JAQUELINE
Headstones aren't that expensive. Your family chips in-

VANCE
Which is good for people who got families.

JAQUELINE
Ah. Well, you won't be needing one for a long time anyway.
(Beat.)
Right? You look pretty young. Pretty strong and healthy-

VANCE
Ain't you got someplace to put those flowers?

JAQUELINE
My mother's grave. It's right over there. She died eight years ago. It's her birthday today. Carnations were her favorite -- beautiful, aren't they? My father always wanted her to have more expensive taste in flowers. But she loved carnations. I started getting them for her when I was five. Every birthday.

VANCE
I hate to break it to you, but I don't think she cares much anymore.

JAQUELINE
I do. Every birthday I finish my work, drive to Li Wah's for dinner, then over to Brunswick Florist to get carnations, and come to Lakeview to say hello. It's always so gorgeous at sunset. But usually it's snowing. We got lucky tonight.

VANCE
Your mom's lucky you're still around.

JAQUELINE
When I'm gone, it's gone. I'm the only one left.

VANCE
Then it all just disappears and in a hundred years it won't mean nothin'.
JAQUELINE
What about today?

VANCE
What.

JAQUELINE
Today I'm giving my mother flowers.

VANCE
Great.

JAQUELINE
And you're defacing another man's grave.

VANCE
Only the Rockefellers. I promise not to mess with your mom's grave, okay?

JAQUELINE
And my father.

VANCE
And your father.

JAQUELINE
And my aunts and uncles. And grandparents.

VANCE
The whole bunch. All the non-Rockefellers. Fine.

JAQUELINE
I have a plot there. Waiting for me. You won't deface that, will you?

VANCE
I promise. Now can you move it along? It's gettiin' dark.

(She stands there with her flowers)

VANCE (CONT'D)
I'm serious. Can you just... go lay your flowers.

JAQUELINE
Is this a political thing? Like you're sticking it to the Man?

VANCE
The only thing I got against Rockefeller is that we're standin' here talking about him seventy years after he died, and nobody's gonna be talking about us seven days after we're gone.
JAQUELINE
So what's the problem?

VANCE
Don't you wanta be remembered? Don't you want'em to think about you when you walk outta the room?

JAQUELINE
So do something memorable.

VANCE
I'm trying!

JAQUELINE
Oh please. This isn't memorable, it's a nuisance. You need to do something solid. Work on a skyscraper or something. Something you can look at and say "That's mine. I did that and it'll last."

VANCE
Have you done that?

JAQUELINE
No. I'm a teller at Key Bank.

VANCE
That's gonna go down in history.

JAQUELINE
All right. It's bullshit. The Rockies will tumble, Gibraltar will crumble -- the Detroit-Superior Bridge is gonna come down some day. Rockefeller's big finger here is gonna be as dusty as he is soon enough.

VANCE
But that don't make no sense. Why are we even here if nothin' we do is gonna matter?

JAQUELINE
I said it wouldn't last. I didn't say it wouldn't matter.

VANCE
Yeah, that was the problem with the dams too.

JAQUELINE
What dams?

VANCE
These dams we'd build when I was a kid, in the gutters by the curb. Just mud and leaves and sticks, and then my pops would turn on the hose and run water down the gutter to test us, to test what we made, and we'd try to save it, keep adding dams, encirclin' the water, whatever it took.
But eventually the water always broke through and ran down the storm drain back to the lake. Then the other kids would go play football or watch T.V., and I'd still be there, working on that dam. Cause it did matter and it should have lasted.

JAQUELINE
You ever see the sand painting?

VANCE
The what?

JAQUELINE
The Tibetans. They came to the Art Museum a while back. A group of Buddhist monks brought all this colored sand, reds and blues and golds and everything. And they made this huge glorious painting on this big low table in the armor court. A few grains at a time, praying and working for hours everyday for weeks. Heaven and Earth and the Afterlife and karmic journeys and it was all perfectly symmetrical, one grain after one grain after one grain. It was the one perfect thing I ever saw in my whole life.

VANCE
Is it still there?

JAQUELINE
When they finally got it done all those weeks later, they had a big ceremony -- it felt like the whole city of Cleveland was there -- and they took the painting, carried it down to the lagoon by the museum... and they chanted and prayed... and then they blew the sand into the water. Whooosh. Nothing. No trace it had ever existed. Only in our memories. And in God's memory, I guess.

VANCE
Did they make a lot of money?

JAQUELINE
Just enough to live on. And some to take back to their home temple or wherever, I guess.

VANCE
Sounds like a pretty cheap stunt to screw up something beautiful just because you can.

(Jaqueline looks at him. At the spray paint can in his hand. He looks at it too)

VANCE (CONT'D)
This is different. I'm trying to mark somethin', not erase nothin'.
JAQUELINE
I think their point was that even the most gorgeous marks have to be erased.

VANCE
Then why do anything??

JAQUELINE
I don't know. To create memories?

VANCE
Memories are the first to go. Ask my pops.

JAQUELINE
I'm not sure about that. If all of my memories add up to one tiny grain of sand. And all yours add up to another. And someone else's another and another, different colored sand flowing out into patterns we can't even see, making new valleys and hills and expanses to the horizon, shaping the landscape for all the other grains of sand to follow long after we're gone... We're making homes for the memories of children not even born yet. Right now, I think you and I are leaving something because we'll remember meeting each other.

VANCE
You're gonna remember me?

JAQUELINE
I've been coming to Lakeview since I was a little girl. I never met a man about to deface Rockefeller's grave before. I'll remember you.

VANCE
Thanks...

JAQUELINE
(Holds out her hand)

Come here.

(Vance pauses...)

JAQUELINE (CONT'D)
I want you to come meet my mother. I'll give you some memories about her and you can give me some memories about someone. We'll mix our colors up a little. (She holds out her hand. Beat. He takes it. She hands him the flowers in the same hand as the spray paint)

JAQUELINE (CONT'D)
Come on.
(They exit.)

(Blackout)
THE FLATS

11:54 P.M.

(Thumping rock music from indoors. Two women stumble out of a club in the night air in nice party clothes, SHANEEQUA, sober, and ROSIE, not.)

SHANEEQUA
-it's freezing out here!

ROSSIE
April in Cleveland. Let's go back in.

SHANEEQUA
Not 'til you tell me what he said.

ROSSIE
He was looking at you down the bar and he leaned over and said, "That woman is the angel I'm going to marry." And he got tears in his eyes and stuffed another handful of party mix in his mouth.

SHANEEQUA
See, this is why this is a bad idea. Work parties in the Flats always go like this. It always ends up with someone proposing or getting pregnant or getting fired or moving to Columbus.

ROSSIE
Which one's the worst?

SHANEEQUA
I'm not marrying him. I don't even know his name. He's just the I/T guy.

ROSSIE
It's okay. I don't think he knows your name either. That's what the wedding is for.

SHANEEQUA
Please, let's just go before he comes out here after us-

(Demetrius, in party clothes, stumbles out, smashed)

DEMETERS
Ladies!!

SHANEEQUA
Oh god.
ROSIE
Hey, I/T Guy!

DEMETRIUS
Demetrius. My name's Demetrius.

ROSIE
(To Shaneequa)
See? There's one bridge crossed.

SHANEEQUA
Burn it. Just burn the bridge now.

ROSIE
I'm Rosie and this is Shaneequa.

DEMETRIUS
Those are the most beautiful names I have ever heard in my entire life. Would you ladies like to come back in out of the cold and I'll buy you a drink and we can maybe shake it out on the dance floor a little?

SHANEEQUA
See, if we shake you, I'm afraid of what'll come out.

(Demetrius busts out laughing.
Rosie joins him)

SHANEEQUA (CONT'D)
The only thing worse than after-hour Flats parties are after-hour Flats parties with employees of Key Bank.

DEMETRIUS
That is so true. You are so right. See, that's what I dig about women is there's this ancient wisdom...

SHANEEQUA
Get your ancient breath out of my face.

(Rosie and Demetrius bust out laughing again. A slightly tipsy man walks out in a suit, ERNIE)

ERNIE
Hola, compadres -- Whoo! Chilly! Party's moving outside, huh?

ROSIE
Absolutely! We got the river, we got the night, we got the bridge arcing over our heads like an arm of the Earth Goddess reaching across space to grab the opposite shore!
DEMETRIUS
The bridge Bob Hope built!

ERNIE
Actually, it's the Detroit Superior. Hope Memorial is over there.

ROSIE
It's Cleveland, it's the little shed over there where Moses Cleveland first set foot and said, "By God, there may be bugs and sweltering heat and hostile natives and lousy planting soil and freezing cold and storms off the lake that'll rip your frickin' lungs out -- but by God people can live here!!"

DEMETRIUS AND ROSIE
YEAAAHHH!!

ERNIE
Actually, that's not Settler's Landing, that's just Heritage Park One. It's just a little shed.

DEMETRIUS
Damn, man, who are you?

ERNIE
I'm Ernie Bernicello from Brecksville. I'm the Relationship Manager for the Serpentini Chevrolet account. I conduct targeted sales and business development activities to expand their commercial finance portfolio and promote the Key Difference in commitment.

(Handing a card to Demetrius)
I'd be interested in knowing what you do and would love to meet with you sometime to exchange information.

DEMETRIUS
I'm just the systems guy. What we got to talk about?

ROSIE
Ernie. Ernie. You don't come to the Flats to network. You come here to blow out the night and knock this city on its obese ass.

ERNIE
Ah. Well. I figured I could do both. A little networking. A little knocking obese asses.

(Handing her a card)
I'd be interested in knowing what you do and would love to meet with you sometime to exchange information.

ROSIE
I'm Rosie. That's all you need to know.
SHANEEQUA
And I'm cold. If we're not leaving, I'm gonna go in and at least check out the stupid Indians game or something-

ERNIE
Actually it's over. The Indians won.

ROSIE
Really?

DEMETRIUS
Go Tribe!!

ERNIE
I just saw it on the T.V. Bottom of the 17th inning, Belliard hit it to left field and I guess some lady fell out of the bleachers over the field just as the ball hit the home run porch.

DEMETRIUS AND ROSIE
WHOOF! Go Tribe!

ROSIE
First the Cavs, then the Tribe, then the Browns and the Barons and the Force and everyone-

DEMETRIUS
This is the year we take it all...

SHANEEQUA
We take it home. Rosie. Rosie, look at me. Give me your keys so I can do my job.

ERNIE
(To Shaneequa, getting out a card)
Before you go in, here's my card, I'd be interested in knowing what you do and would love to meet with you sometime-

(A woman steps out in nice clothes and a coat, a little drunk. This is BETTY)

BETTY
Oh, hi. Hi, everyone. Whoo, chilly, isn't it?

(To Shaneequa)
Hi, I'm Betty. I'm a Project Manager.

SHANEEQUA
I'm Shaneequa. I'm a teller-
BETTY  
Oh, that's so wonderful. I thought about becoming a teller. I'm a people person.

SHANEEQUA  
I was too 'til tonight.

DEMETRIUS  
Why you gotta be so sour, woman?

ROSIE  
She doesn't drink.

DEMETRIUS, ERNIE, AND BETTY  
Ahh.

SHANEEQUA  
I do too! I'm just the designated driver!

BETTY  
I don't like to drink either. I'm just being social. I like friends.

ERNIE  
(To Betty)  
So do I. I'm Ernie Bernicello.  
(Hands her a card)  
I'd be interested in knowing what you do and would love to meet with you sometime to exchange information.

BETTY  
I would love that.

(A man in a nice suit and slacks walks out. This is MR. OBERKIN.)

MR. OBERKIN  
Ah, hello, everybody!

SHANEEQUA, BETTY, AND ERNIE  
Mr. Oberkin!

MR. OBERKIN  
Relax! Relax, people. It's Skip. For tonight, it's not Mr. Oberkin. It's Skip. Okay?

ALL  
Okay.

MR. OBERKIN  
Getting some fresh air, eh?
ALL

Yes. Yeah. Yeah.

MR. OBERKIN

A little on the chilled side, isn't it?

ALL

Yes. Yeah. It certainly is. Yes.

(Pause. Silence. The all stand... waiting...)

MR. OBERKIN

I suppose we'd all be a little warmer if the river caught fire again, eh?

(The they all laugh appreciatively. It dies out. Pause. They wait... tipsy...)

BETTY

I was just saying how pretty the river is, Mr. Oberkin.

MR. OBERKIN

Skip.

BETTY

Skip. I'm Betty Lammens. I'm the Project Manager for the Partnership Enhancement between Key Center and TransNational.

MR. OBERKIN

Super. How's that going?

BETTY

For shit. (They stare at her)

I mean super! We're overcoming human capital issues and functionality models that have their challenges. I just don't know if anyone likes me, sir. I mean, that's the God's Honest Truth, I've never been popular and here I am in charge and I mean, they respect me, but there's no love, you know? I mean, if I died tonight, they wouldn't -- I mean, I don't have anyone, sir. It's just me and the cats out in Avon Lake, and God's Honest Truth, if I died tonight those ungrateful sons-of-bitch cats would just as soon eat me as mourn me, sir. Do you know what that's like, sir? To be so lonely that the cats are going to eat you in the dead of night? Jesus, oh, Jesus-

(She breaks down, sobbing into his suit)
MR. OBERKIN
I, ah, that sounds rough, Ms. Labbison-

BETTY
It's Lammens! You don't even know my goddam name!!

DEMETRIUS
(Steps to Betty)
I feel you, sister. I feel you. I'm in there implementing authentication infrastructure day in day out, and do you think anyone gives a good rat's ass?

No!

DEMETRIUS
No. We're all alone in this world. It's only people like you and me that realize that all the Key Difference on Earth don't mean nothing without Love!

Yes!

(They hold each other)

ROSIE
Whoo-hoo!

(Rosie starts dancing)

Do you like dancing, Skip?

MR. OBERKIN
Um-

SHANEEQUA
Rosie, please, I don't think-

ROSIE
I'm just dancing. Nothing wrong with dancing at a company party, is there, Skip?

MR. OBERKIN
No! It's a chance to let our hair down and facilitate the two-way communication process! I'm sure that includes dancing!

(He tries a few awkward steps)

ERNIE
Mr. Oberkin. Skip. I'm Ernie Bernicello. Relationship Manager for the Serpentini Chevrolet portfolio. We met at the Christmas party.
MR. OBERKIN
(Still dancing)
Of course. Ernie.

SHANEEQUA
Please, Rosie, let's go -- I really don't feel good-

(Rosie takes Shaneequa's hands and starts slow dancing with her. Demetrius and Betty awkwardly slow-dance as well. Everybody is now moving to the thump of the music from inside. Several moments pass. It's beautiful. Weird.)

ERNIE
(Dancing next to Mr. Oberkin)
I'd love to meet with you and discuss how we're building the Key Center clientele referral pipeline.

MR. OBERKIN
I'd like that.

ROSIE
Skip, you know Shaneequa, don't you?

MR. OBERKIN
I, ah, I don't I believe I do.

ROSIE
No, you guys were getting it on at the Christmas party down here -- remember you dancing to that Michael Stanley song?

SHANEEQUA
I gotta go.

MR. OBERKIN
Well, of course I remember! How are you doing, Shaneequa?

SHANEEQUA
Oh now you want to know? Twelve voice-mails and ten emails later and now you want to talk?

ERNIE
She's a teller, Mr. Oberkin. One of our chief assets in maintaining our Key Corp commitment.

MR. OBERKIN
And when our tellers want to go home we certainly let them-

SHANEEQUA
You want to know how I'm doing? I'm pregnant, you asshole!
(Beat. They all stop dancing and stare at Shaneequa and Mr. Oberkin)

MR. OBERKIN
See? Two-way communication! The company party's working!

ROSIE
He got you pregnant??

BETTY
Demetrius, will you marry me?

DEMETRIUS
(To Shaneequa)
You won't give a black man the time of day, but you let this white dickwad knock you up?

SHANEEQUA
Is it any of your business-

MR. OBERKIN
I don't think there's any call for verbal abuse, Mr....

DEMETRIUS
Demetrius Blanchard, you sonofabitch.

ERNIE
One of the I/T guys, sir.

BETTY
I'm just so tired of being alone, Demetrius-

DEMETRIUS
(To Mr. Oberkin)
This your way of expanding her portfolio, Skippie?

MR. OBERKIN
Listen, this may be a fun informal way to establish a team environment-

DEMETRIUS
(Moving for Mr. Oberkin)
I ain't workin' for no sexual harassing Area Retail Leader-

MR. OBERKIN
Unsafe environment! He's creating an unsafe environment!

DEMETRIUS
This is the Flats, you mother. You want safe, go back to Mentor.

MR. OBERKIN
That's it! You're fired!
Aahh!

DEMETRIUS
You can't fire me! I'm moving to Columbus!

(He charges Mr. Oberkin -- Betty, Ernie and Rosie keep them apart--)

SHANEEQUA
I think I'm gonna throw up...

ERNIE
(To Demetrius)
If you're in Columbus, will you give my card to Gina in HR? They're looking for Key Center Relationship Managers--

MR. OBERKIN
Key Difference! Key Difference! Key Difference!!

(And a light snow begins to fall over them...)

(They pause...)

DEMETRIUS
What the...

ROSE
Snow! It's snowing!

SHANEEQUA
Of course it's snowing. It's April in Cleveland.

(CLUNK. A large bolt falls from the sky, landing in front of them. They yell and jump back)

BETTY
Oh my god!

MR. OBERKIN
Where'd that come from?

ERNIE
That's not snow.

ROSIE
It's Cleveland snow! It's Rust Belt Factory Snow from Heaven!

SHANEEQUA
It came from the bridge.
BETTY
The Detroit Superior Bridge is falling apart?

(They all look up...)

ERNIE
It seems to be holding...

SHANEEQUA
There's two people up there... a man and a woman looking
down at us...

MR. OBERKIN
...and waving.

(They all vaguely wave back)

DEMETRIUS
Jesus. Look at that bridge. Ain't nothing could tear that
down.

BETTY
Not even a midnight snow in Cleveland.

(Pause. They all stand in the dark
looking up at the snow. Distant sound
of traffic...)

ROSIE
Beautiful, isn't it?

(Blackout.)

END OF PLAY