

Flim-Flam
By John Fisher

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A Play in Two Acts by John Fisher

Characters:

Actor 1: AARON, early-50s, an actor

Actor 2: ENDIN, 20s, an actor

Actor 3: DOBBINS DEL REY, early-70s, an actor

Actor 4: HARRIBLE JONES, BUSKER, PM, VULTURE, TS 2, CAMPFIRE

Actor 5: ABBY, MAVIS, BOY (RYAN), ACTORS, HAMMER, TS 1,
ANOTHER VULTURE

Actor 6: SAFFRON, GABY, GIRL, ACTRESSES, SARAH, MARTHA, ZIKA
MOM (MRS. FOSTER), WIND

(Note: Casting works best if Actors 2, 5 and 6 are played by actors of color and Actors 1, 3 and 4 by Caucasian actors.)

Setting/Time: The play is set in New York City, Hollister - a city in California
- and places in between. The time is now.

Flim-Flam

(An open stage, multi use setting. The action is continuous, flowing from one scene to another using lights to delineate change of time and location. All roles are played by five men and one woman.)

(NYC. AARON and ENDIN are dressed as waiters. They wait in a kitchen. They both stare at their mobile phones.)

AARON: I didn't get it. I didn't get it. I didn't even want it and I didn't get it.

ENDIN: You wanted the money.

AARON: Three callbacks and I didn't get it.

ENDIN: And you wanted the exposure.

AARON: Who else did they find? I mean, am I too skinny to play a typical American? Maybe I should quit that gym and get fat. Then I'd look like I've had some kids.

ENDIN: Women get fat from kids, not men.

AARON: You haven't heard of Daddy fat? I need some daddy fat. Shit.

(Bell. They gather up plates.)

ENDIN: You're a good waiter. You can tell yourself that.

AARON: I'm a good waiter because I flirt with the customers.

(They cross to their respective tables.)

AARON: (Very flirty) Hello ladies, so I have the scrumptious Russian mushroom parfait with endive and radicchio.

ENDIN: (VERY flirty) Hello gentlemen. Here's the hummus and green beets with cucumber and spruce oil. Mmmmm tasty.

AARON: YUM!!!

ENDIN: Yummy, yum, yum, yum!

(AARON tears off his apron and is now auditioning.)

AARON: "My son says his next step is college. And I'm proud of myself because I can say, 'You go where you want, son. Wherever you want.' Why? Because I'm ready. I planned ahead. I invested in America and you know what? America paid off. US Savings Bonds. It's called a bond because it bonds you with your kids."

(ENDIN is auditioning)

ENDIN: "Where will I spend my summer vacation? Where can I get culture as old as the Gods and sun as old as the Heavens? Mexico. Yes, Mexico. The wall's there to keep them out, not us."

AARON: (On phone) Did they give a reason? Sarcastic? I'm not sarcastic. I went to college. I believe in college. I didn't seem like I care about my son? Is this an anti-gay thing? Is it because I'm gay? Is that it? Gay men have sons. That guy could be gay.

ENDIN: (On phone) Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Ok, I can work on that. Sure.

AARON: (Tying on apron) So now I don't look like a parent? I don't look middle-class enough? I'm the definition of middle-class. In everything but income.

ENDIN: (Ditto) Apparently I don't look like I want these vacations. I look too refined. Like I want just the culture, not the beaches.

(Ding-ding.)

AARON: (To chef) Yeah, yeah, we're going. Your food's a little better if it's cold.

ENDIN: (Ditto) If we serve it too quickly they don't think it's fresh.

(AARON is crossing into dining room but he loses the mime plates, removes this apron, and immediately is in the character of a Roman gladiator, sword in hand.)

AARON: "Come Marcus, unsheathe your sword and answer for the crimes of democracy. The Republic is finished. Long live Caesar!"

VOICE: (From the dark at back of house) Ok, that's it! There's no one in the house.

AARON: (Still fighting) "This for Caesar, and this for Caesar, and this!"

VOICE: That's it! The last just one walked out.

AARON: What?

VOICE: The last one just walked out. Stop acting.

(AARON stops and looks out into house.)

AARON: There's a guy over there.

VOICE: That's the usher. He's asleep.

AARON: Well, wake him up.

VOICE: No audience. We don't perform. Union rules.

AARON: But we're half way through, we're almost to intermission.

VOICE: They've all left. Show's over.

AARON: Well can't we at least finish it? Just for continuity.

VOICE: Nope. Time to go home.

(ENDIN is on his phone. He is wearing an Indian headdress.)

ENDIN: So what did Spielberg say, was he in the audience? Did he like it? Racist? I could be part Indian. Ok, well, did he like my acting? I don't see what difference it makes that I'm not American-Indian. I mean, I am a minority. A waste of his time? He's a movie director. What does he know about acting?

(They both start stripping down to bathing suits – they are at the YMCA. As the scene proceeds, they "swim.")

AARON: (To ENDIN) They've cancelled the show.

ENDIN: (To AARON) I wish they'd cancel mine. There are picketers at the theatre every night. Comanche picketers.

AARON: Five weeks of rehearsal all wasted.
ENDIN: The *Village Voice* liked it. They liked your performance.
AARON: I wrote that review.
(DOBBINS enters in bathrobe.)
AARON: Dobbins, how long have you been acting?
DOBBINS: Forty years.
ENDIN: What's the trick?
DOBBINS: You just have to love it, boys. You just have to love it.
AARON: It's killing me.
ENDIN: Me too.
DOBBINS: You have to love every moment of it. The commercials, the plays, the corporate events, the training films; no matter how lame the gig you have to love becoming someone else.
AARON: But we can't even get there, Dobbsy. The plays get cancelled. We don't get the commercial work. All we do is audition and rehearse.
DOBBINS: Then ya gotta love that. Anytime you get to depict something, even if it's only an audition for a commercial, you have to love believing something new.
AARON: Even if it's only believing in a savings bond?
ENDIN: Or a vacation?
DOBBINS: I had to play Genghis Kahn once and I had to believe in tyranny, in my right to be a dictator. It was magnificent.
ENDIN: How did you get cast as Genghis Kahn?
DOBBINS: It was a different era boys, a different set of standards. Now I get commercial work for AARP. And I love it. Because I believe. I believe in the diapers and the colostomy bags and the walkers. I'll say anything. I love believing.
AARON: But Dobbsy, this is what we're telling you. We can't even get to the belief. We're stuck just trying to get the gigs.
DOBBINS: There's a solution, boys. When you're ready for it. Come to me.
ENDIN: What is it?
DOBBINS: You're not ready yet.
(HARRIBLE enters in robe.)
HARRIBLE: Oh, hey, Dobbins.
DOBBINS: Hey, Harrible. (Starting to leave) Excuse me.
HARRIBLE: That's all right, Dobbsy. Don't leave on my account.
DOBBINS: Excuse me. (To ENDIN and AARON) Gentlemen. (Exits.)
HARRIBLE: Great actor, Dobbins Del Rey. A great actor.
ENDIN: You've worked with him?
HARRIBLE: Sure, sure. Great actor.
AARON: He certainly works a lot.

HARRIBLE: Sure, sure. He works a lot. But is it the right kind of work?

ENDIN: How do you mean? He makes a living at it.

HARRIBLE: Commercials. Print ads. But is he famous? Does he play the great stage roles? Is he in films telling exciting new stories?

AARON: No.

HARRIBLE: And do you know why?

ENDIN: Can't get the parts?

HARRIBLE: No. He's afraid. He's afraid of success. It's a common American flaw. Fear of success.

AARON: Really?

HARRIBLE: Gentleman, Dobbins acted for me for years, for years. We made film after film together. And then he stopped. He was getting too good at it. Much too good.

AARON: What are you talking about?

ENDIN: Why would he do that?

HARRIBLE: I make little films, gentlemen, little ones. But I make them, and they're good, Dobbins starred in eight of them. But he gave up. Location work is difficult. And my films are demanding. So he gave up. He gave up on the dream.

AARON: Who the hell are you?

HARRIBLE: I'm Horrible Jones. Heard of me?

ENDIN: No.

AARON: Yeah, yeah, I've heard of you. You're Horrible the Terrible.

HARRIBLE: Yes, I am. A name I'm not proud of but it's a name.

AARON: (To ENDIN) He had three huge Indies in the, the what, the Nineties, right?

HARRIBLE: Late-Eighties, early-Nineties. Yes, indeed. They were huge Indies. Won a lot of awards.

AARON: Dobbins Del Rey wasn't in any of those.

HARRIBLE: No. He was in my late-Nineties, early-Aughts films. Eight of them. They didn't get far but they are things of beauty. Each one a masterpiece.

AARON: Jesus, I always wondered what happened to you. I loved your stuff.

HARRIBLE: Thank you. And I'll tell you what happened to me. Nothing. I've been at it this whole time. Making my films, telling my stories. They just haven't had the exposure of the early ones. It hasn't stopped me.

AARON: So how do you pay for it?

HARRIBLE: There's always money, gentlemen. Always someone to invest anew in the dream of filmmaking. I have the Midas touch. Because I can sell a dream. Maybe I can sell you one.

ENDIN: What are you talking about?

HARRIBLE: I'm casting a new film. And I'm interested in you two. But we'd have to go out of town. You'd be on location for two months. It would be hard work. And you'd find yourself doing things other than acting. We're a small team. We all chip in. You'd act, but you'd also move lights, pack trucks, book hotels, revise scripts. You'd have to be a part of my dream team. But the roles, the roles I'd give you... They would transport you. You would be transported to the highest plains of the depictive art.

ENDIN: You sound like a guru.

AARON: No, I know this guy. I saw his early movies. They were intense. Actor movies. Movies where actors actually got to act.

HARRIBLE: Yes. I believe in actors. I don't rely on cuts or music or clever shots. I rely on talent. Acting talent.

ENDIN: Really?

AARON: Yeah, yeah, he does. I remember that about him. *Way Out West*, it had, it had one of the most realistic fight scenes I've ever seen. I remember that scene.

HARRIBLE: The Dry Gulch fist fight. I remember the day we shot it like it was yesterday.

AARON: The actors... the actors...

ENDIN: What?

AARON: The actors looked like...

ENDIN: Like what?

AARON: Like they actually got hurt.

ENDIN: Yeah?

HARRIBLE: That's the other thing about my films. They're dangerous. Because they're real. That was another thing that scared Dobbins.

ENDIN: Horrible the Terrible.

HARRIBLE: A nickname I'm not proud of. But it's a name.

AARON: And the emotions.

HARRIBLE: Ah, yes, the emotions.

ENDIN: What?

HARRIBLE: I make actors do things on screen that... some would say... are emotionally unsafe. In my films you have to just go with it, go with the emotions, go with the actions, go with the flow...

AARON: Yes. I remember Deeanna James in that film.

HARRIBLE: Ah, dear Deeanna.

ENDIN: Deeanna James?

HARRIBLE: Yep.

ENDIN: She killed herself, didn't she?

HARRIBLE: Yes, she did. She killed herself after *Way Out West*. She had

a breakdown and slit her kneecaps, bled to death. It took three days. Three days on the floor of a Motel Six.

AARON: Because of that film.

HARRIBLE: Some have said that.

AARON: She had a breakdown because of the way you treated her.

HARRIBLE: I won't say I'm proud of that. I won't. But she won many awards. She won the Scheherazade Award for Best Actress at the Bagdad Film Festival.

ENDIN: But she wasn't there to accept it.

HARRIBLE: No, because she was dead. Many great actors have been too dead to accept their awards – Heath Ledger, Peter Sellars. That doesn't mean they weren't great actors. In fact, they were the best. They had insane actor syndrome. It killed them but it made them great.

ENDIN: Well I don't want to end up insane and dead.

HARRIBLE: Did I push Deeana over the edge? An edge she'd been standing on for years? Maybe. But I immortalized her first. She was on the downward slide. I merely gave her godhead before she hit bottom.

AARON: Yes, I remember all that. I do remember it.

HARRIBLE: You act for me boys you'll go to the depths. You'll see yourself doing things you never imagined you could do, never imagined you wanted to do, as actors. But you'll be astonished by the results.

ENDIN: Why us?

AARON: Yeah, why us?

HARRIBLE: I saw you two. You in *Comanche Rising* and you in *Gladiator! Live! Onstage!* I was astonished by the bravery of your performances, the willingness to embarrass yourselves and not flinch.

ENDIN: Embarrass ourselves?

AARON: What do you mean?

HARRIBLE: You because you performed two thirds of the play for one person. One. It was so beautifully pathetic.

AARON: You were that one person? On Saturday night?

HARRIBLE: Yes, I fled the theatre before intermission. It was just too ridiculous to watch. You were working so hard and no one cared. I thought, here's a man with no personal dignity. I like that in an actor. (To ENDIN) And you, crossing that picket line, saying your lines through the booing. Wiping the Indigenous Persons' spit off your face as you struggled into your headdress every night. I thought, "Here are two men who understand humiliation." If you act for me you will dance on the precipice of humiliation. Great acting always resides in closest proximity to embarrassment. Think Deeanna James in *Way Out West*.

AARON: (To ENDIN) Well?

ENDIN: Well what?

AARON: What have we got to lose?

ENDIN: I don't even know this guy.

AARON: I do. He's legit. Or at least he was. If he was still legit he wouldn't be into us, he'd be into stars.

HARRIBLE: That's right. I'm a has-been and you two are never-weres. That's a match made in heaven.

AARON: What will you pay us?

HARRIBLE: I'll pay you scale. When we get back to New York. Otherwise, food, housing and transport while we're on location.

ENDIN: Location.

HARRIBLE: Council Bluffs. Council Bluffs, Iowa.

AARON: Come on, let's do it.

ENDIN: I haven't even seen a script yet.

HARRIBLE: There is no script. Only an idea. You'll make the script. You'll "go with it."

AARON: It's how he works. This guy is famous. It's legit. I remember his movies.

EDNIN: That was twenty years ago.

HARRIBLE: Nineteen. *Way Out West* was nineteen years ago.

AARON: He's a legend.

ENDIN: This is how I get cast? In a locker room?

HARRIBLE: I'm going with my gut here. That's how I work.

AARON: Look, I'm in. You don't need to convince me. You already have. You did a fifth of a century ago with *Way Out West*.

HARRIBLE: It's both of you or no go. I believe in gut and you two are in my gut, together, that's what my gut says.

AARON: Come on.

ENDIN: My show hasn't closed yet.

HARRIBLE: Finish the run. Humiliate yourself five more times. Your bus tickets will be for Monday morning at eight am.

AARON: Bus?

HARRIBLE: Yes, bus. Van Gogh didn't travel by air, he travelled by bus.

ENDIN: There weren't any buses.

HARRIBLE: You get the idea.

AARON: Come on. Come on, Endin. I want to act. That's all I want to do. It's all I've ever wanted to do. This is real. It's a miracle. A tiny miracle, but it's real. Come on.

ENDIN: Ok. All right.

(Blackout. Announcement: "Welcome to Council Bluffs, Iowa, the pork packaging capitol of America. Bring us your pigs, we'll put 'em in plastic.

That's the Council Bluffs Way." Lights up on HARRIBLE and AARON with travel gear. SAFFRON, an ingénue, stands with them, wearing sunglasses, chewing gum.)

HARRIBLE: Ah, Council Bluffs. Council Bluffs, Iowa. The heartland. The new frontier.

AARON: (On phone) Ok, well increase my limit please. Thanks.

HARRIBLE: Thanks for doing that, Aaron.

AARON: It's ok.

HARRIBLE: We'll settle accounts when we get back to New York. Can't think what's wrong with my credit cards. Is the motel all set?

AARON: Yeah, my new limit will cover it.

HARRIBLE: I'll see you and Endin there in an hour. We'll start with the shower scene. Come on, Saffron.

(Lights. Hotel room. ENDIN enters in bathrobe.)

AARON: You all set?

ENDIN: How did he get the camera in that bathroom? It's tiny.

AARON: The man's a genius.

ENDIN: It's so close. And that actress can't remember her lines. I tried running the scene with her and she just kept improvising. Jesus, I can't sit still.

AARON: Relax. It's a love scene. A love scene.

ENDIN: I'm just nervous. I have to take these tablets.

AARON: Why?

ENDIN: He told me to take them. They'll calm me down.

AARON: (Handing him water) Here. Here's some water. (ENDIN pops pills.)

HARRIBLE: (Entering) Ok. Come in. Listen, Saffron is a great actress but she has trouble memorizing lines.

ENDIN: I noticed.

HARRIBLE: So we'll improvise. Be gentle with her but go with it.

ENDIN: Ok.

HARRIBLE: Just follow her lead.

ENDIN: Ok.

HARRIBLE: You look great kid. You'll do great. You take your pills?

ENDIN: Yep. What are they-

GARRIBLE: You got your lines memorized?

ENDIN: Yeah, it's just, they seem awfully corny.

HARRIBLE: Life is corny.

ENDIN: Then they just stop, they don't go anywhere.

HARRIBLE: That's where the action starts. Follow Saffron's lead. Go with it.

ENDIN: Ok, ok, here I go.
HARRIBLE: Raw, raw, raw.
(They exit. Lights. Later. ENDIN enters in bathrobe eating power bar. His bathrobe hangs funny.)
AARON: How're you?
ENDIN: Oh, oh, hey.
AARON: How's it going?
ENDIN: Good. Good. It's hard work.
AARON: Yeah?
ENDIN: Yeah. I have to keep eating protein. Protein, protein.
AARON: You all right?
ENDIN: Yeah, I'm just having trouble.
AARON: With what?
ENDIN: My erection. It won't go away.
AARON: Oh.
ENDIN: She's a good actress. I love working with her.
AARON: Oh, yeah.
EDNIN: Yeah. He's very demanding. I'm really glad I'm doing this.
AARON: Yeah, it's a good experience.
HARRIBLE: (Entering) Ok, come in, come in. Just follow her lead, follow her lead.
ENDIN: (Exiting) Yeah, yeah, ok. My pleasure.
AARON: Oh, Harrible...
HARRIBLE: Yeah, Aaron.
AARON: The van is ready and I got the food.
HARRIBLE: Good. Good.
AARON: Your credit card didn't work again so I put it on mine.
HARRIBLE: Yeah sure, save the receipts.
AARON: Is the swimming pool for my scene?
HARRIBLE: Yes, your scene then another scene for Saffron and Endin.
AARON: Oh, ok.
HARRIBLE: Arrange a dinner for us there. Get some food delivered. Pizzas. Pizzas with a lot of protein.
AARON: Oh, ok.
(Blackout. In the dark: HARRIBLE: "Great, great, Endin. Now let's get it from another angle. Renew the energy." We hear groaning sounds. "Good. Endin, get your leg out of the way, I want to see the connection, that's it. Saffron, don't block your boob with your arm, honey. No, you're left boob with you right arm. Good!")
(Lights. ENDIN enters doubled over.)
ENDIN: Shit.

HARRIBLE: (Entering) Come back.

ENDIN: I can't... I can't stand up straight. I'm having some trouble. What was in those tablets you gave me?

HARRIBLE: Just a mild stimulant.

ENDIN: Stimulant?

HARRIBLE: They're herbal. Don't worry.

ENDIN: Ahhhhh....

(ENDIN exits.)

AARON: Um... so Harrible.

HARRIBLE: Not now, not now, we've got to get this shot. While I've got wood.

AARON: Wood? Look...

HARRIBLE: We're in the zone, dude.

AARON: Yeah, I just... I've got the diner on the phone, they want payment.

HARRIBLE: I'm in the zone right now, Aaron, give me headroom.

AARON: Yeah, yeah, ok.

(HARRIBLE exits. Blackout. In the black – moaning. HARRIBLE: “Too much thigh, Saffron sweetie, open up to the camera. Aaron, don't bother me. Look in Endin's pants, there must be a credit card there. Don't look at your pants, Endin. Renew the energy. Just twenty more minutes.” Lights up on AARON sitting on the edge of pool.)

AARON: “And if I catch you with her again... him again... If you catch herm with shim again...” shit...

HARRIBLE: And cut! Perfect. Next set-up. We're back in the Jacuzzi, right?

AARON: Uh, Harrible-

HARRIBLE: Yeah.

AARON: I screwed up my lines.

HARRIBLE: It's fine. We'll fix it in editing.

AARON: But I didn't even get half way through my speech.

HARRIBLE: We got the meat of it. Speaking of meat. (To ENDIN) You all set?

ENDIN: Yeah.

HARRIBLE: Take your pills?

ENDIN: Uh-huh. Yeah.

HARRIBLE: (Pushing him off) Ok, Tiger.

AARON: Harrible. You spend hours on his takes, you do one of mine.

HARRIBLE: You're a veteran. He's just a kid. Get us another meal. And get the bubble bath ready.

AARON: Yeah, sure.

(Lights. Later. ENDIN enters clutching himself. HARRIBLE right behind him.)

HARRIBLE: Come on, come on.

ENDIN: I can't. I can't. I'm exhausted. I'm...

HARRIBLE: Come on, I just have to shoot you from behind and we're done.

ENDIN: (Crawling) I can't... my dick hurts, it kills. Oh, my God.

HARRIBLE: Aaron.

AARON: Yeah.

HARRIBLE: You're on. Get in there.

ENDIN: No, don't go.

HARRIBLE: You'll step in for Endin. Butt double. How's your ass?

AARON: I don't know. I mean, it's clean.

HARRIBLE: Get in there.

ENDIN: Don't. She's a monster. She's like a stunt rider.

HARRIBLE: Get in there.

ENDIN: She should work for the circus. Don't do it!

HARRIBLE: Get!

AARON: Then we'll shoot my monologue?

HARRIBLE: Shoot?

AARON: And my drunk scene?

HARRIBLE: The shoot shot! Thanks for reminding me!

ENDIN: Don't take the tablets! Don't, Aaron!!!

(Lights. Announcement: "Welcome to the New York City and the Port Authority Bus Terminal. Surveillance cameras are no guarantee against criminal activity. For security purposes do not stay in the bus station for any amount of time whatsoever. Please grasp your luggage securely to your person and run for your life! Have a nice day." Lights up on HARRIBLE and AARON with travel gear. SAFFRON stands nearby wearing glasses.)

HARRIBLE: The Big Apple. It's good to be back in civilization.

AARON: Where's Martin?

HARRIBLE: Martin?

AARON: Your bookkeeper. You said he'd meet us here. To pay us.

HARRIBLE: Where is he? Where is Marvin? Well, we are late. Listen, you guys run along. Get dressed up, have a shower, I'll meet you at my office in an hour, pay you and then we can all have dinner. My treat.

AARON: We don't have a place to shower. We moved out.

HARRIBLE: Well go to the Y. Have a steam. Freshen up. See you in an hour. (Hands him a card) Here's the address.

AARON: Ok.

HARRIBLE: I'm excited. I think this is my best work. My very best. Better than *Way Out West*. (SAFFRON exits; he follows) Oh, Saffron, wait for Daddy.

(ENDIN enters hunched over with a travel bag.)

ENDIN: Where's Harrible?

AARON: Split. He's going to pay us later. Take us to dinner.

ENDIN: Oh, ok, how's your dick?

AARON: It aches. Dull throb. Yours?

ENDIN: It still hasn't gone down.

AARON: That's three days, Endin.

ENDIN: Now my back hurts from walking this way.

AARON: Let's get to the gym. The sauna will help.

(Lights. DOBBINS enters. They are peeling down to swimsuits for a steam.)

ENDIN: Hello, Dobbins. How are you?

DOBBINS: Pretty good. Pretty good.

AARON: We're just back from shooting a film with your old friend Harrible.

DOBBINS: Oh, yeah? You get paid?

ENDIN: Well, no. We're meeting him in an hour.

DOBBINS: Oh, yeah? Where?

AARON: His office.

DOBBINS: His office?

AARON: Yeah, what about it?

DOBBINS: Where's his office?

AARON: 800 East 47th.

DOBBINS: 800? It's in the middle of the East River, boys. Don't take off your swimsuits. Oh, don't worry, boys, the Viagra wears off in about three days. He gets the horse formula. Works best with amateurs. The last film I made for Harrible he had me in a sling. He said it was a parachute drama. Then I saw what I was parachuting into. And I didn't like paying for the pleasure. He used to cast people by looking at their credit cards. I got wise after a few films. It wasn't even high quality porn.

ENDIN: Porn?

AARON: Porn!

ENDIN: My Mommy! Oh, my God, what will my Mommy think?

DOBBINS: She'll never find out. Unless she likes Pornhub.

AARON: Pornhub!?

DOBBINS: Your parents even living, Aaron?

AARON: Yes, my mother's in memory care.

DOBBINS: So if she sees it she'll forget. She can have the experience over and over again.

ENDIN: Porn!

DOBBINS: Did you find yourself doing things you never thought you could as an actor?

AARON: Having sex with a woman? Yes.

DOBBINS: Did you?

(ENDIN smiles then shakes it off.)

ENDIN: My Mommy!

DOBBINS: Don't worry. He usually cuts off the guy's head. Except... well, you didn't eat her out, did you?

(ENDIN groans.)

DOBBINS: That's a tough edit.

(ENDIN weeps.)

DOBBINS: Live and learn, boys. Live and learn. When you guys are ready, come to me. There's a whole world out there for good actors. It's called the United States.

AARON: You mean regional theatre?

DOBBINS: Not really. I mean little places, forgotten corners of the country just waiting for culture, eager for something real, something live. And they'll pay for it. They'll pay handsomely. But you need some seed money. Something to get us out there, something to set us up.

AARON: But we'd have to leave New York.

DOBBINS: That's the catch. Are you ready to leave the Big Apple?

ENDIN: Never! I'm an actor, this is my Mecca!

DOBBINS: Come to me when you are. And when you have some seed money.

(Lights. AARON and ENDIN in the park. Street noises.)

ENDIN: Did you believe him? About the United States and all that?

AARON: Sure.

ENDIN: I mean we've been hustled before.

AARON: Dobbins is for real. I've known him forever. He's a survivor.

(STREET PERSON enters sucking on a bottle of cheap booze. He makes hideous noises.)

ENDIN: Ewww. You're gross.

AARON: Jesus, look at us, we're bums. No better than him.

ENDIN: Go away, disgusting street person.

SP: Nahawwww! (He exits.)

ENDIN: Do you have any more money?

AARON: No, it all went into paying for your porn debut. Jesus, homeless in New York. It finally happened. I'll have to start drinking again. To fit in.

(Making a street person noise) Nahawwww!

ENDIN: What are you doing?

AARON: Getting into character.

(A BUSKER enters with a bucket tied to his waist that says "Support the Arts" and plays his instrument.)

ENDIN: I wish I was a busker. We could make some money.

AARON: (To BUSKER) Hey, fuck off. We're broke. (BUSKER flips them off and exits.)

ENDIN: (An idea!) Hey, we could do scenes. Scenes from plays. To make money.

AARON: Right here?

ENDIN: Yeah, why not? All these people want to see a Broadway show. We could give them one for free.

AARON: Ok, how about *Salesman*? Or *Streetcar*? I could do Stanley.

ENDIN: No, something without royalties.

AARON: Shakespeare.

ENDIN: Yeah, great. I did the bedchamber scene in high school. I think I know that.

AARON: Cool. You be Desdemona.

ENDIN: Why should I be Desdemona?

AARON: You're younger. The women were always played by boys.

ENDIN: But you can't play Othello, you're-

AARON: Look, Othello's a role I've always wanted to play and I'm playing Othello, now lay down. Do it.

ENDIN: We need a bucket.

AARON: A bucket?

ENDIN: For donations.

AARON: Hold on.

(AARON exits, we hear a shriek from the off-stage BUSKER, then AARON re-enters with BUSKER's bucket. He sets it down in front of them.)

AARON: Ok.

ENDIN: Step right up, step right up folks and see a Broadway show for nothing, for the price of your time.

AARON: William Shakespeare's immortal tragedy *Othello, Moor of Venice*. (They start the bedchamber scene. GABY and ABBY, a young woman and man, enter and watch for a bit.)

ENDIN: "Alas, he is betrayed and I undone.

AARON: Out, strumpet! Weep'st thou for him to my face?

ENDIN: Oh, banish me, my lord, but kill me not!

AARON: Down strumpet!

ENDIN: Kill me tomorrow – let me live tonight!

AARON: Down strumpet! Down, down, down!"

GABY: (Interrupting) Hey, HEY!!! I think this is really offensive.

AARON: What, oh, well, that's how it's written. It's a violent paly.

ABBY: But Othello is a role for a black actor.

GABY: And Desdemona's a woman. You're taking a role away from a woman actor.

ABBY: And a black actor.

ENDIN: Oh, well, we can do a scene from *Hamlet* instead.

AARON: "Alas, poor Yorick, I knew him, Horatio."

GABY: I can't even watch you now I'm so offended by what I saw before.

ABBY: And you're too old for Hamlet. He's supposed to be in college.

AARON: Well, I could be like a continuing education student.

ENDIN: Went back to get his Masters.

GABY: You're taking a role away from a younger actor.

AARON: We could do *King Lear*.

ABBY: You're too young for Lear.

GABY: There are actors in their seventies begging for work and you're going to take one of the few roles written for a man in seventies.

AARON: Well, what would you suggest?

GABY: (Angry) I can't even look at you I'm so offended. (AARON turns away.) Don't look away from me. Don't. I'm talking to you. When a young person talks to you, you need to listen. It's just ageist. You're ageist. You hate the young. And women. (Gasps.) You're a misogynist! And don't smirk. (To ABBY) Film this.

ABBY: (Filming) I am.

GABY: What you've done here today has embarrassed yourself and everyone on this sidewalk. Open up to the camera. (AARON does.) Do you even realize what you've done?

AARON: Yes, I think so.

GABBY: Don't lie. If you're not sincere, don't lie. I hope you lose your job. I hope you're fired.

AARON: I'm unemployed.

GABY: You see, that's what's wrong with your generation, you always have to defend. You always have to have an excuse. You need to learn to listen, to listen. You're not in charge here. You're not. Who did you vote for?

AARON: I didn't vote.

(GABY gasps.)

GABY: You're evil. You are evil.

ABBY: That's enough. My battery's low.

GABY: You disgust me.

ABBY: Wait. That was good. (Raises phone.) Say it again.

GABY: You fucking disgust me.

ABBY: Good.

GABY: I think it was better with the fucking.

ABBY: Much.

(They leave.)

AARON: Did we get anything?

ENDIN: (Looking in bucket) Some rubles.

AARON: Maybe we should do Chekhov.

ENDIN: (Sees something off stage) Hey look.

AARON: What? (Sees.) Shit man. Ok, here, turn around, talk to me.

(They pretend to talk. HARRIBLE enters with SAFFRON on his arm and starts to pass them. They surround him.)

ENDIN: Hi Harrible.

AARON: Harribly.

HARRIBLE: Oh, oh, hello gentlemen

ENDIN: Off to pick up our money?

HARRIBLE: Yes, yes, I am as a matter of fact.

ENDIN: Well, we'll just go with you. See what we find at 800 East 47th street.

HARRIBLE: Oh, well... actually, here it is. I have it right here. An envelope for each of you.

ENDIN: How convenient.

AARON: What a coincidence.

(He hands them envelopes and as they look inside he punches each of them in the stomach. He starts to run off but AARON manages to grab him. A fight ensues – it is vicious, realistic, like the legendary one in *Way Out West*. SAFFRON screams and runs off. GABY and ABBY enter and begin filming the fight. AARON takes HARRIBLE's wallet.)

ENDIN: Only take what he owes us.

AARON: Let me check my receipts.

HARRIBLE: Uhhhhhh...

AARON: Shut up. (He kicks HARRIBLE. They notice the filming.)

ENDIN: Hey.

AARON: Hey. Stop filming, stop filming.

GABY: No way.

AARON: Here, here's some money, take it.

ABBY: Thanks.

AARON: Get out of here. (They run off.)

ENDIN: I said only take what he owes us.

AARON: I gave them the rubles.

ENDIN: Oh, ok.

AARON: Take off. Go. Go. (ENDIN exits. AARON takes the rest of the money.) You should have used me in some more of the sex scenes.

Ageist pig.

(He kicks HARRIBLE again, runs off. Lights. We're back in the gym.)

DOBBINS: Ha-ha-ha. Nice to see old Harrible get a taste of this own medicine.

ENDIN: (Shaken) I don't believe in violence.

AARON: I don't either. I just practice it.

ENDIN: I'm now a porn star who beats people for money. I wasn't raised this way.

AARON: I was!

ENDIN: My Mommy, oh, my Mommy!

DOBBINS: Gentlemen, you're learning the first rule of this profession.

Don't wait. It's all out there, ready for you, but you can't wait for it.

ENDIN: What are you talking about?

DOBBINS: What I said before. All those roles you always wanted to play. All the parts you've dreamed of. You can have it all. By casting yourself, making your own opportunities.

AARON: But where can we do that?

DOBBIN: In the provinces.

AARON: But how will we make money?

DOBBINS: We'll teach acting. After school programs for kids. Every community needs them. And the parents will come back at night to see the shows, bring their friends. We can go somewhere where they don't have theatre, where they watch movies and TV but never knew, never even dreamed that they could do it themselves, have their own local stars, their own little piece of Hollywood right in their own back yard.

ENDIN: Places like that exist?

DOBBINS: You've spent too much time in cities, Endy. America's full of places just waiting for culture, hungry for it though they don't know it yet.

ENDIN: Like Council Bluffs.

DOBBINS: Council Bluffs is a metropolis compared to what I'm talking about. I'm talking about a backwater, a crap hole, a pit.

AARON: How do we find such a place?

DOBBINS: With this. I have a nose for Philistines. I can do the Lears, Aaron here will do the Willy Lomans and the Richard IIIs, and you my boy: Romeo, Hamlet...

ENDIN: What will we use for women? Actresses?

DOBBINS: There are always women, Endin. Women and men. There are dreamers, everywhere. Just waiting. Sitting around on their cans waiting for their big break. And we'll be it. You know *The Music Man*?

AARON: "You got trouble, right here in River City."

DOBBINS: Exactly! River City. You're professor Harold Hill bringing the dream to River City. That's us! With your nest egg and my savings we can get out there, set up, launch ourselves.

ENDIN: I don't know.

AARON: Come on, Endin. He's not talking about Viagra and erections that don't go away. He's talking about great roles, great plays, opportunity.

ENDIN: Ok.

AARON: Ok.

DOBBINS: Hallelujah!

ALL: Hallelujah!

(Transition: They sing an improvised Hallelujah song!)

DOBBINS/AARON/ENDIN:

*HALLELUJAH! HALLELUJAH!
WE'RE OFF TO SEE AMERICA
GET ON THE BUS,
COME ON WITH US.
WEEEEEE...*

*DON'T GIVE A SHIT
IF THE PLACE IS A PIT,
IF THEY'VE GOT THE DOUGH
WE'LL ACT AS THOUGH
IT'S SHANGRILAH
HALLELUJAH!*

(Dance. They transform the set. Lights. On a bus. They bounce with their luggage around them. AARON holds a Zabar's bag, munching a pastry.)

ENDIN: Back on the bus.

DOBBINS: We're seeing America.

AARON: Anyone want a baby bunt cake?

ENDIN: You and your bunt cakes.

AARON: I have to have my Zabar's baby bunt cake every day. So I've stocked up. Keeps me regular, keeps me happy.

ENDIN: When are we going to find this place, Dobbysy? We're almost in California.

DOBBINS: My nose will tell me. It hasn't told me yet.

AARON: Seems like we've passed through a lot of crap hole pits already.

DOBBINS: When we see it, we'll see it. My nose will tell me.

ENDIN: Just look at that town for instance. It looks cruddy enough. Don't they need culture?

DOBBINS: Meth Country. A lot of it is Meth Country. Tough doing theatre for meth heads.

(We hear motorcycles and whooping noises.)
ENDIN: (Looking out bus window) What's going on out there?
DOBBINS: Hooligans.
AARON: What?
ENDIN: I can't see anything.
DOBBINS: It's hooligans. They stalk the Interstate Highways.
(We hear a crash against bus.)
AARON: Jesus!
ENDIN: Fuck, man.
AARON: That was a rock.
(Another one hits.)
ENDIN: They're throwing rocks.
AARON: Jesus.
ENDIN: We're slowing down.
DOBBINS: (Moving to front of bus) Keep going, driver. Don't stop!
(DRIVER just whines throughout this section, later cowers.)
AARON: Get my bag!
ENDIN: Which one?
AARON: The one with the baby bunt cakes. (Deadly serious) Gimmie the Zabar's!
DOBBINS: Driver, keep going. They'll rob everyone on board, then steal your bus. Keep driving.
AARON: Everyone lay down. Get the window open. Please lay down between your seats. (To ENDIN) Hand me a baby bunt cake.
DOBBINS: Increase speed. They won't attack us if we're moving too fast.
(AARON throws a bunt cake out the window. We hear a skid and crash.)
AARON: Hand me another. Keep them coming.
DOBBINS: Don't be afraid, driver. Here. I'll take the wheel. No. I've got it. You lay down between the seats. [DRIVER can be mimed or played by the box office manager.]
AARON: Keep 'em coming.
ENDIN: Are you hurting them?
AARON: It's a baby bunt cake.
ENDIN: I hate violence.
AARON: So do I. Ahhh!!!
(He throws another. Skid and crashing sound.)
ENDIN: That guy just bit the dust.
AARON: He shouldn't attack buses.
DOBBINS: Hang on everyone!
AARON: Bunt! Bunt!
DOBBINS: I'm swerving. Everyone hang on.

(They all swerve.)

DOBBINS: I'm swerving again.

(They swerve. Skid and crash.)

ENDIN: My God, that motorcycle just flipped.

AARON: He's all right, he was wearing a helmet!

ENDIN: There's one on the right.

DOBBINS: Here we go again!

(They swerve.)

AARON: Missed him. He swerved.

DOBBINS: Aaron!

AARON: Yeah, Dobbins!

DOBBINS: We need to coordinate our efforts. You hit 'em with a bunt cake then I'll swerve. As they're focused on the cake they'll be distracted from the swerve.

AARON: Ok. Keep 'em coming, Endin.

ENDIN: Ok. But won't they get hurt?

AARON: Shut up, Endin! All set, Dobbins?

DOBBINS: All set, Aaron.

AARON: Bunt! (He throws.)

DOBBINS: Swerve. (They swerve. Crash.)

ENDIN: Next. (ENDIN tosses one to AARON. ENDIN is hysterical.)

AARON: Bunt!

DOBBINS: Swerve!

(Crash.)

ENDIN: Next.

AARON: Bunt!

DOBBINS: Swerve.

(Crash.)

ENDIN: I can't keep doing this! People are getting hurt!

DOBBINS: It's ok, Endin. There are children on this bus. Who do you care more about? Highway Hooligans or a child?

MRS FOSTER: (Coming into view) My child's in danger!

DOBBINS: Hear that, Endin?

ENDIN: It's still wrong.

AARON: Endin!

ENDIN: Next.

AARON: Bunt!

DOBBINS: Swerve.

(Crash.)

ENDIN: I can't do this.

DOBBINS: Hold up that child, madam.

MRS. FOSTER: (Holding up swaddling) My child! My child!
DOBBINS: Look, Endin! Look!
ENDIN: I see.
DOBBINS: On the left.
ENDIN: Next.
AARON: Bunt.
DOBBINS: Swerve!
(Crash.)
ENDIN: I can't do this!
DOBBINS: What's that child's name, Madame?
MRS FOSTER: ZB. His name's ZB.
ENDIN: ZB? That's a terrible name for a child.
DOBBINS: How old is he?
MRS. FOSTER: He's two.
AARON: Two, Endin. Two.
ENDIN: A two year old in swaddling?
MRS. FOSTER: He has special needs!!!!
DOBBINS: Another on the left!
ENDIN: Next.
AARON: Bunt.
DOBBINS: Swerve.
(Crash.)
ENDIN: It's horrible.
DOBBINS: Tell me about the child, Madame.
MRS. FOSTER: He's a zika baby. He has microcephaly. He might not live to four.
AARON: A zika baby. That's who they're persecuting, Endin. That's the face of victimization. A zika baby.
ENDIN: (Having a revelation) A zika baby.
DOBBINS: On the right.
ENDIN: Next.
AARON: Bunt!
DOBBINS: Swerve.
(Crash.)
DOBBINS: And two more.
ENDIN: Next. Next.
AARON: Bunt. Bunt.
DOBBINS: Swerve. Swerve.
(Crash. Crash.)
ENDIN: Can't we just call 911?

DOBBINS: I'm trying that. But were passing through different counties.
They keep transferring us.
ENDIN: What about Congress? They help zika babies.
DOBBINS: Congress is deadlocked, Endin. Deadlocked along party lines.
AARON: There's no help for us, Endin. None.
DOBBINS: Time to help yourself, Endin.
MRS. FOSTER: Save my fucking zika baby! Save him!!
AARON: Come on, Endin! Feed me! Feed me!
DOBBINS: Everyone. Everyone on the bus. Save us! Save us!
(A chant starts.)
MRS. FOSTER: Save my zika baby dammit!!!
ENDIN: Ok, ok, I'll do it. Next.
AARON: Bunt.
DOBBINS: Swerve.
(Crash.)
ENDIN: Next.
AARON: Bunt.
DOBBINS: Swerve.
(Crash. Blackout. Siren. Lights. HIGHWAY PATROLMAN [PM] has entered.)
PM: Then what happened?
DOBBINS: We hit them with bunt cakes, Officer.
PM: Full size bunt cakes?
AARON: Baby bunt cakes.
PM: That's all right then.
AARON: From Zabar's.
PM: They're lucky then.
DOBBINS: Eventually we got all of them.
PM: Ok.
(ENDIN is hysterical.)
PM: What's wrong with him?
AARON: PBSO.
PM: What's that?
AARON: Post Bunt Stress Disorder.
ENDIN: Was anyone hurt?
PM: Some broken nails. Some scratched ears. Frosting in the eye. These highway hooligans are pretty tough. You done good, you guys.
AARON: What would have happened if we stopped?
PM: You don't want to know.
AARON: No, tell us.

PM: I've seen them steal Walgreen's Rewards Cards. They're ruthless. Some people have never recovered.

DOBBINS: That's horrifying.

PM: America's reverting to the Wild West again. The highways are free-for-alls. Federal government's sold out to Russia and highway patrol isn't worth a kopek. Sometimes we just have to rely on the citizenry to keep them safe. And today you did that, you bore arms and defended your rights. Thank God for the second amendment. You're making America great again.

AARON: The right to bear a bunt cake.

PM: Thank you, gentlemen. Thank you.

DOBBINS: Thank you, officer.

PM: Let me snap you. Look like New York actors.

DOBBINS: Everyone say Zabar's.

ALL: Zabar's.

(PM snaps their picture.)

PM: Now I'm going to go check on the Zika Mother and the Zika Baby. (Exits.)

ENDIN: Wow. Did he really say that?

DOBBINS: Make you feel proud?

ENDIN: It does.

AARON: I'm fused, man! That felt good!

DOBBINS: You feel like a Gladiator?

AARON: I feel like the *Road Warrior*. I'm stoked.

DOBBINS: Actors are valuable in that way. They know what to do. They can improvise.

PM: (Entering) She's ok. Poor little fella.

DOBBINS: He's ok?

PM: Sure. He was thrilled. He survived his first highway hooligan attack. That's enough to make even a zika baby's head swell.

ENDIN: I never thought of it that way.

DOBBINS: You see.

AARON: Next. Bunt. Swerve. Next. Bunt. Swerve. We did it. We did it! I'm stoked, man! Call me Mel Gibson. Go on! Call me Mel!

ENDIN: Think appropriate role models, Ary.

AARON: Mel's back! Mel's back! I'm Mel. Mel but gay!

DOBBINS: How far to the next town?

PM: About five miles. You'll see it. Sleepy little place. Place I'm proud to call home. Hollister.

DOBBINS: Hollister? Like the shirts?

PM: (Deadly serious) Don't say that word in Hollister. Ever.

DOBBINS: What word?

PM: Shits with an “r.”

ENDIN: Why not?

PM: Abercrombie and Fitch took our name and put it on their shits with an “r.” They took our name. Imagine being a man without a dick, that’s how we feel when we see a Hollister shit with an “r.”

AARON: You mean Hollisters don’t come from Hollister?

PM: No, they come from Mexico. The Abercrombie and Fitch factories in Mexico.

ENDIN: Doesn’t the wall stop them?

PM: No, they’re clever, very clever. They put ‘em on a plane.

DOBBIN: Shits with an “r.” We’ll remember that.

PM: We tried making our own hollisters. They said no. We can’t put our name on a shit. OK. Here’re some coupons. For Burger King.

DOBBINS: Thanks.

PM: Sure. I own the local franchise. Sort of sideline of mine. Cleanest bathrooms in Hollister are at my Burger Kings.

ENDIN: Wow, that’s great.

PM: Yep. My wife owns a cleaning service. It’s all in the family. Anyone messes up my bathroom, neglects to wipe the rim or shakes off on the floor, I arrest ‘em. It all works out fine.

DOBBINS: Well, that’s great.

PM: It is. That’s how I’m making America great again, one toilet at a time. Well, good night, gentlemen.

(Lights. MAVIS has entered with brochures. She wears a weirdly shaped shirt.)

MAVIS: Welcome Gentlemen. Welcome to Hollister, the fashion capitol of the nation.

ENDIN: But we thought the Hollister shits with an “r” didn’t come from here.

MAVIS: No, they took our name but we tricked ‘em. We took out the “i” and developed our own shits with an “r.” It’s called the holster shit. You see, shaped like a holster.

DOBBINS: Well, good for you!

MAVIS: Yah, that company stole our name but not our soul. Yah-hooooo! Bang-bang. Wahhhhhh!!!

AARON: You’re a fun girl!

MAVIS: Course nobody wants the shits cause they look stupid but... yeehaw!

ENDIN: What do we do around here for entertainment?

MAVIS: Well, there’s the batting cage, the gun club and the sports bar.

DOBBINS: Do you have any theatre?
MAVIS: Sure. We have a fine theatre that shows all the latest Tom Hanks movies. We have the latest Tom Hanks romantic comedy and the latest Tom Hanks uplifting drama with light social commentary and nail biting action sequences.
DOBBINS: What about plays? Musicals?
MAVIS: Musicals?
DOBBINS: You know, where people sing.
MAVIS: I didn't know Tom Hanks could sing. Well, if he makes it, we'll show it.
DOBBINS: I mean live theatre.
MAVIS: Huh? Let me get you guys a map of the city. Skeet shooting's on the edge of town. Out near the School for the Deaf. (He exits.)
DOBBINS: We've found it, gentlemen.
AARON: We've found it?
DOBBINS: The motherload. This is it.
AARON: It is?
DOBBINS: Look at this place. Just look at it. A town that America left behind. No industry, no culture, no hope. They even took its name: Hollister. They took everything and left it with nothing but Burger King and some clean bathrooms.
ENDIN: We're in the middle of nowhere.
DOBBINS: Precisely. We will bring somewhere to nowhere. And I did a Google search. No after school programs. No local theatre. Nothing. They're living on the moon. Our only competition is Tom Hanks and... Tom Hanks. They have nothing live.
AARON: Nothing live.
DOBBINS: This town is dead and we're here to resuscitate it.
ENDIN: Hollister.
DOBBINS: A famous name and nothing to show for it.
AARON: Hollister.
DOBBINS: (Shows them his phone) We're already heroes, gentleman. Look at the Hollister Hogwash.
ENDIN: Is that us?
DOBBINS: Yes. "New York Actors Save the Day!"
ENDIN: That's us?
AARON: Not my best angle.
DOBBINS: Front page, boys.
ENDIN: I'm going to forward this to my Mommy.
AARON: Hollister?
DOBBINS: Hollister.

(Lights. PM hands them a key.)

PM: It's a no-tell motel, gentlemen. Wife cleans it, I own it. You can stay here for free. Our way of thanking you.

DOBBINS: This is great, officer. Thank you.

AARON: It actually says No-Tell Motel.

PM: It's a chain. Yes, ultimately I work for the Japanese but I don't think about that much. (Aside) God Dammit Motherfuckers!!! (Back to them) We've put you down at this end of the complex. Away from the hanky-panky. But if you're interested in some female companionship I have some coupons. (Handing them coupons) They're good until Yom Kippur. Indulge yourself.

ENDIN: Thank you kindly, officer. This is a two for one. How does that work?

PM: You'll have to discuss that with the young lady. They're all very service oriented.

DOBBINS: Well, I always say you can tell a town by its prostitutes.

PM: Sure. We even convinced the local high school to start vocational training for Sophomore girls. I'm the principal.

AARON: Is there much of a gay scene in Hollister?

(Silence.)

PM: There're no homosexuals in Hollister, sir.

AARON: Oh, come on.

PM: No. I'm afraid that's the case. We got nothing against them, we just don't have any. We're lucky that way.

AARON: Lucky?

PM: Well, homosexuality causes a lot of unrest in people, makes people want things. We're lucky here, people don't want that much so we don't have much unrest.

DOBBINS: (To AARON) Ixnay on the aygay.

PM: Why do you ask, sir?

AARON: Well, I'm gay.

(Silence.)

DOBBINS: But he's non-practicing.

PM: Oh, well, that's ok. We have a lot of those. Priests. Day Care staff. In Hollister, that's all we ask. Be whatever you want to be but don't practice it.

DOBBINS: Officer, I think you'll find the only practicing we do is rehearsing. Rest assured.

PM: That's right, you're actors.

DOBBINS: Yes, we are indeed. And we're looking for a theatre. Is there one in town?

PM: There's the Hollister Beaver. Just down the street. A fine edifice. It's got a big furry beaver on the marquis. You'll recognize it. (To AARON) Well, maybe you won't.

DOBBINS: Is it for rent?

PM: Probably. I own it. Come by the station tomorrow and we'll sign a lease. Sure, I'll get you into the beaver. (He leaves.)

AARON: I can't believe it.

DOBBINS: Calm down.

AARON: So I'm back in the closet. After thirty years.

DOBBINS: You're not in the closet. By this time tomorrow everyone in Hollister will know you're gay.

ENDIN: (Looking at phone) They already do. It's in the Hollister Hogwash.

AARON: (Reading) "Gay Celibate Arrives in Town." Gay Celibate!

ENDIN: Celibacy is very hip right now.

AARON: I'm not a celibate. I'm nowhere near being a celibate. I have another thirty years of spunk left in me.

DOBBINS: Of course you do.

AARON: No gays in Hollister! What bullshit.

ENDIN: It's possible.

AARON: No, it is not. Statistically it is not possible.

ENDIN: They have no theatre. It's possible they have no gays.

AARON: You saying theatre makes people gay?

ENDIN: It certainly helps.

DOBBINS: I'm sure when you start teaching you'll make some people gay. Then you can have sex with them.

AARON: You sound like a Republican.

DOBBINS: What man would take an acting class if he didn't have some queer interest?

ENDIN: Yeah. I'm almost half gay myself.

DOBBINS: I've been gay. In the sixties I was super gay. First rehearsal I ever went to I ended up with a dick in my mouth.

ENDIN: Really?

DOBBINS: It was a non-speaking role.

ENDIN: I bet there were a lot of gags though. (They laugh.)

AARON: It's not funny!

DOBBINS: (To ENDIN, taking charge) Get onto the Hollister Hogwash, my boy. Take out an ad: "Acting Classes at the Beaver. Reasonable Rates. Professional Training. You Too Might Be a Star."

(Lights.)

DOBBINS: (To the audience) All right, settle down, settle down, tots. Little tots. Welcome to acting for children. I'm Dobbins Del Rey. But you can call me Uncle Dobby.

CHILDRENS' VOICES: (Loud!) Hi Dobby. Hi Dobby. Hi Dobby.
(Lights. ENDIN and PM.)

ENDIN: (To audience) Welcome to Acting for Teenagers. I'm Endin. Now this is a great alternative to Juvie, guys and the Officer is here to help us stay focused. Say "Hi Officer."

TEENAGE VOICES: Wussup, bitch. Hey, Pig. Fuck you, Popo.

PM: (To someone in the audience) I saw you, Vicente. (Drawing his gun) Put the gun down! Put the gun down! I will shoot you! (To ENDIN) Go ahead.

ENDIN: (Nervous) And every scene or monologue you do in here will count for two months time served. How about that?

(Lights. AARON.)

AARON: (To audience) Welcome to Acting for Adult Addicts. I'm Aaron.

VOICES: Hi Aaron!

AARON: Wow. Now how many of you are divorced?

(Clapping.)

AARON: Well, great. I think you'll find acting is a great way to stay clean and meet people. Because it's true, actors get laid a lot more often.

(Lights. DOBBINS onstage with two children – played by same actors who play all the students.)

BOY: "Are you my fairy princess, my dream come true?"

GIRL: "I am. But right now I'm a toad."

DOBBINS: Good. Good, you two. Ryan. Stand up straight and say your lines loud and proud, like a big six year old.

BOY: "Are you my fairy princess..."

DOBBINS: Louder, Ryan.

BOY: "Are you my fairy..."

DOBBINS: Loud Ryan, fill the theatre!

BOY: (Unbelievably loud) "Are you my fairy princess!!!!"

(PRINCESS giggles. BOY giggles. Lights. In black: ENDIN: "So, we'll start with: 'And what's the big problem, honey? What did I do wrong?'" Lights. Two teenagers and ENDIN.)

TEEN BOY: "Yo, what the fuck's your problem, bitch?"

ENDIN: Um... I don't see the "f" word in my script.

TEEN BOY: No, I added it.

ENDIN: And there's no "b" word.

TEEN BOY: Well, she's a bitch so I added that too.

ENDIN: Ok, Vicente, remember when we talked about making judgments.

TEEN BOY: I'm not making no judgment. We just call 'em bitches and hos cause they're bitches and hos. If she was a guy it would be a judgment to call him bitch."

PM: It's true, Endin. It's just language to them. It doesn't mean anything. There's a lot of meth in his household. It's fine.

ENDIN: Oh, ok, well, go ahead with your line Tabitha: "There's no problem honey. I love you."

TEEN GIRL: "Yo, what's your problem, bitch!"

ENDIN: There's actually no "b" word in the script Tabitha. Why did you add it?

TEEN GIRL: I added it because he's acting like a faggot.

ENDIN: Um, ok.

PM: You can't get offended, Endin. It's just the way they talk. Faggot can be a term of affection.

ENDIN: Really?

PM: Yes, I'll tell you when you should be offended. Go ahead, douche bags.

(Lights. In black: MAN: "I'm sick of your whining." WOMAN: "Well, I'm sick of your cheating." Lights: MAN and WOMAN with AARON.)

MAN: (With script) "I want a divorce."

WOMAN: (With script) "Well at least we agree on something."

(They kiss intensely.)

AARON: Um... I don't think there's a kiss here.

MAN: Yeah, I put that in.

AARON: Uh, ok, but are you ok with that Danielle?

WOMAN: Yeah, sure. (Clearly she is.)

AARON: Ok, but do you think it makes sense in the context of a couple discussing breaking up?

MAN: Yeah, I do.

WOMAN: So do I.

MAN: Remember you talked about playing against the text.

WOMAN: That's what we're doing.

MAN: For complexity.

AARON: Ok, well... class, this is what's called a radical interpretation.

Um... go ahead.

(They smash face again.)

MAN: "I want you to move out."

WOMAN: "I'm calling my attorney."

(They are clawing at each other's clothing. They exit undressing –

DOBBINS and ENDIN meet AARON.)

DOBBINS: I love it. Mine are so adorable.

ENDIN: Mine are so angry.
AARON: Mine are so horny. I've never seen so much tongue in my life.
DOBBINS: Enrollment's up. Everyday we have more students. Endin, your class is the most successful.
ENDIN: It's because they get time served. They've started enrolling before they commit the crimes.
AARON: When are we going to actually act? I'm feeling frustrated. (He munches bunt cake.) I wanna act!
DOBBINS: I think it's time, boys. Now we've got the whole town coming to class we can start putting on the shows.
AARON: Why did we wait?
DOBBINS: Because now we've got them as students we can require them to come to the shows, bring their families, buy tickets, now we'll have an audience.
AARON: How can they afford to buy tickets? They're all broke.
DOBBINS: They can commit crimes for money. Sell meth. We'll accept EBT.
ENDIN: That's great. They'll rob liquor stores for ticket money.
AARON: Crimes for art.
ENDIN: And we can use them in the shows.
DOBBINS: Exactly. You can't do *Music Man* without a chorus.
AARON: Yes. That's right. And I'll need an army for *Henry V*.
DOBBINS: I'll need three armies for *King Lear*.
ENDIN: Whoa, whoa, whoa. Who's playing *Henry V*?
AARON: I am, of course.
ENDIN: You're too old for *Henry V*.
AARON: I'll wear a wig.
ENDIN: And if you're doing *Lear* and you're doing *Henry* what do I get?
DOBBINS: What do you want to play? Tell us. Anything. We're the producers. We can play anything we want.
ENDIN: *Virginia Woolf*. I want to do *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*?
AARON: Oh, my God that's a great idea. I'll be George and you'll be Nick, you can play Stuff.
EDNIN: No, I want to play George. I've always dreamed of George.
AARON: You're too young for George.
ENDIN: You're too old for *Henry V*.
AARON: *Henry V* is Shakespeare. It doesn't matter.
ENDIN: Why doesn't it matter?
AARON: It's an old play. It's fantastical.
ENDIN: *Virginia Woolf* is an old play.
AARON: Edward Albee is a contemporary playwright.

ENDIN: No, he's not, he's dead.

AARON: He *just* died.

ENDIN: What difference does that make?

AARON: Shakespeare's been dead for hundreds of years. His stuff is old, classic. It exists in a mythical space.

ENDIN: Dead is dead.

DOBBINS: Aaron is right, Endin. You'd be better as Nick. *Virginia Woolf* is hyper-realist. You can play Nick and the Dauphin in *Henry V*. And Gloucester in *Lear*.

AARON: No, Gloucester is supposed to be an old man. I'm Gloucester.

ENDIN: But you just said-

AARON: *Lear* is a late Shakespeare. It's a more realistic phase of his career.

ENDIN: Man!

DOBBINS: Aaron.

AARON: What?

DOBBINS: You are kind of hogging the leads.

AARON: Isn't that why we're here, to play what we want?

DOBBINS: Yes, but...

AARON: You can be Martha in *Woolf*. That's a great role.

DOBBINS: I can't be Martha.

AARON: Why not? You'd be great as Martha.

DOBBINS: I would be. I know.

AARON: Then play *Lear* and Martha. They're basically the same character. People would love that.

DOBBINS: They wouldn't love that.

AARON: If you did it on Broadway it would be the sensation of the year. You'd get Two Tony Awards.

DOBBINS: Aaron...

AARON: What?

DOBBINS: We're in Hollister. No one's going to watch me play Martha. Ok?

AARON: Ok... yeah, ok.

DOBBINS: So that's decided. *Lear*, *Henry V* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*?

ENDIN: So I have two supporting roles and I don't even know what in *Lear*.

AARON: Fool. You can be Fool.

ENDIN: Great. Two supporting roles and a retard.

DOBBINS: Fool's not a retard.

AARON: Look, Endin. Dobbsy and I are senior performers. We've earned our chops. You need to do some apprentice work.

ENDIN: Apprentice work? I have an MFA.

AARON: Yeah, that's your problem. You're acting's too theoretical. You need to learn about the nitty-gritty of performing.

ENDIN: Nitty-gritty! The last thing I did was porn!

AARON: Yes and it's a difficult transition from porn to legitimate acting. Jeff Stryker tried it. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

DOBBINS: Endin, let it go. There will be thousands of roles for you. That's what this is all about. The future is bright and unlimited.

AARON: Who will we get for Martha?

DOBBINS: I know just the woman. Mother of one of the kids.
(MAVIS enters as MARTHA enters, a virago.)

MARTHA: "Snap! Snap!"

ENDIN: I remember her. The Welcome Lady.

MARTHA: "It went snap!"

DOBBINS: How's she doing?

AARON: She terrifies me. "Martha."

MARTHA: "Geooooooooorge."

AARON: "Martha."

MARTHA: "Georgy-porgy."

(Blackout. Clapping. Bravos! Some gun shots. Lights.)

ENDIN: Were those gunshots? They shoot off guns during the curtain call?

AARON: Sign of enthusiasm. It's the Wild West.

(PM enters.)

PM: That was terrific, you guys. Loved the show. Loved *Wolf!*

ENDIN: Thanks, Officer.

PM: Even better than *Lear*. Which was great, don't get me wrong, but I could relate to this more. You really captured all the lighter sides of marriage.

ENDIN/AARON: Thanks.

ACTRESS WHO PLAYS MARTHA: (Entering) Oh, my God, that was great. What a rush. (She kisses ENDIN.) My husband loved it. (She kisses him.) I just loved our sex scene tonight. (She kisses him.) You were so right to bring the sex onstage.

ENDIN: Yeah, that was your idea.

ACTRESS: Was it? (Kisses him again.) Come to the bathroom with me. I have something to show you. (She yanks him off stage.)

DOBBINS: I hope her husband approves.

PM: Sure. You're looking at him.

(PM exits to bathroom taping with phone.)

DOBBINS: You make the deposit?

AARON: Yep, another haul. Who knew theatre could make money. I've invested it for us.

DOBBINS: Good call, Ary. Another good call for another big haul.

AARON: And another big hit.

DOBBINS: Yep.

AARON: Wish there was someone around here for me to celebrate with.

(DOBBINS shoves him mischievously.)

AARON: No, I'm serious. It's the only drawback of a place like this.

DOBBINS: Yeah, well, it's a lonely business.

AARON: What about you? Don't you get lonely?

DOBBINS: I've had my share of happiness. This, this is a dream come true. *Lear!* And the audience loves it. Loves it. They're so new to it. They just love the story, the language. In New York, they'd tear us to pieces for the interpretation, the cutting, the concept, here they just eat it up.

AARON: Yep, they do. The other night: it was like they'd never heard "Once more unto the breach" before.

DOBBINS: They probably hadn't.

AARON: And tonight. None of them had seen the movie. It's amazing.

DOBBINS: No one comparing you to Richard Burton.

AARON: (As Burton) "Martha."

DOBBINS: Nope. I told you. It's the motherload.

AARON: It is. It's El Dorado.

DOBBINS: El Dorado. Good name for it.

AARON: Still. It would be nice to have someone to share it with.

DOBBINS: Yes, well... we have each other.

AARON: Not the same.

DOBBINS: No. Drink?

AARON: I have a matinee tomorrow. But I'll keep you company.

(They walk to bar listening to "And I Will Always Love You.")

AARON: So what's your story?

DOBBINS: Oh, typical American. Tried marriage, a couple of times. I have a kid.

AARON: You a have a kid?

DOBBINS: Yep, a son. He's thirty this year.

AARON: Wow. An actor?

DOBBINS: No. Techie. One of those techie millionaires.

AARON: Wow.

DOBBINS: Yep, he created the App App.

AARON: What's that?

DOBBINS: It's an App for Apps. Humans have apps, now apps have apps. It's only fair.

AARON: Amazing.

(They sit at bar table.)

DOBBINS: I take no credit. His mother raised him. We've only been friends, he and I. But I'm happy for that. We like each other. Maybe even love each other. Sure, why not? But we're more buds than relatives. No, I opted out of the whole parenting jag. He understands that. But still... I want to give something back. That's why I love the teaching, love it. I want to help the young people, it's my way,... Well it's my way of thanking someone, maybe even God. Sure, why not? It's my way of thanking God for making my son turn out all right.

AARON: Hmmm. That's nice.

DOBBINS: What about you?

AARON: What about me?

DOBBINS: Isn't there someone?

AARON: Nope.

DOBBINS: There's never been someone?

AARON: I don't want to talk about it.

DOBBINS: Ok.

(Pause.)

DOBBINS: I'm sorry you can't be happy here. I mean, I'm sorry you can't...

AARON: It's not that. I'm just bitter. About life. I thought I'd get somewhere if I was ambitious enough. Gave up a life with someone to spend all my time auditioning, hunkering for roles, chasing dreams. No time for happiness. And look where it got me. Thought I'd be Humphrey Bogart, Gregory Peck. Instead I'm Humphrey No One. Gregory Loser. Another wannabe star washed up on the shore of obscurity. This fucking business. Think you're going to be a celebrity and you wind up fifty-three with no money in the bank and a chafed asshole. It's all right. I'll get revenge somehow, on the world. I don't wanna give back, I wanna get back.

(An awkward apuse.)

DOBBINS: Aaron...

AARON: Nah, I'm ok. Joking. Ha ha. (Looks around. Not bitter) This place. I do feel like Gregory Peck. Like I've stepped back into the fifties.

DOBBINS: Yes, it's nice, isn't it?

AARON: Yes, in a sick way, it is kind of nice. Simple. It's America when it was simpler. Before it discovered Apps and Gaps.

(ENDIN enters, disheveled.)

DOBBINS: Hey, pardner. My God, what happened to you?
ENDIN: She's more demanding than Saffron. An animal! I've never been fucked so hard.
DOBBINS: Oh, boy!
ENDIN: She was on top. Which was fine. But she was so bouncy, like she was on a pogo stick. And she kept bending it, like folding it over. I think it's broken. I asked her not to and she said if she wanted to have boring sex she could do it with her husband. If I'd been on Viagra it would have snapped it off. Jerk. Jerk. Ahhh!!!
DOBBINS: Boy, young people have it rough now.
ENDIN: Sex has gotten so complicated. Ow.
AARON: Man, I'd love to have sex. I wouldn't complain.
ENDIN: Yes, you would. You'd complain about anything.
AARON: Listen, pipsqueak-
DOBBINS: (Putting his arm around him) Aaron, you need a drink.
AARON: I don't need anything.
DOBBINS: Well, I do. And if I do, you must. What'll you have?
AARON: Nothing.
DOBBINS: Come on.
ENDIN: Come on, Arny.
DOBBINS: "Ah, cum ahhhhhn."
AARON: (Smiling) Who's that supposed to be?
DOBBINS: Ruth Gordon in *Rosemary's Baby*.
(AARON laughs.)
DOBBINS/ENDIN: "Ahhh, cummmm ahhhhhn."
AARON: All right, a Shirley Temple. (Deadly serious) You don't wanna see me with a drink in me.
DOBBIN: Very well, Shirley Temples all around. The original mocktail!
PM: (Entering with Shirley Temples on tray) Three STs. I own the bar. (To ENDIN) You done with my wife?
ENDIN: (Presenting it) I have a coupon.
PM: Expired. Joke. Ha ha ha. (He exits.)
DOBBINS: We should do a musical next.
AARON: I can't sing.
DOBBINS: Sure you can. Sing something for me.
ENDIN: Oh, yeah, Aaron, sing something.
DOBBINS/ENDIN: Sing something, sing something, sing something.
(They have a musical piano bar night right here in Hollister.)
AARON: *KISS TODAY GOODBYE*
THE SWEETNESS AND THE SORROW.
ALL: *WE DID WHAT WE HAD TO DO.*

AARON: *AND I WON'T FORGET.
WHAT I DID FOR LOVE,*
ALL: *WHAT I DID FOR LOVE.*
ENDIN: *GONE, LOVE IS NEVER GONE.
AS WE TRAVEL ON.*
ALL: *LOVE'S WHAT WE'LL REMEMBER.*
ENDIN: Dobbysy, big solo, big solo.
DOBBINS: Ok.
*CURTAIN UP,
LIGHT THE LIGHTS,
WE GOT NOTHING TO HIT BUT THE HEIGHTS.
YOU'LL BE GREAT,
YOU'LL BE SWELL.
DARLING, EVERYTHING'S COMIN' UP ROSES!*
AARON: *I WON'T SEND ROSES,*
DOBBINS: *OR HOLD THE DOOR,*
AARON: *I WON'T REMEMBER*
DOBBINS: *WHICH DRESS YOU WORE.*
AARON/DOBBINS: *MY HEART IS TOO MUCH IN CONTROL
THE LACK OF ROMANCE IN MY SOUL
WILL TURN YOU GRAY, KID.
SO STAY AWAY, KID.*
(ENDIN keeps humming.)
DOBBINS: That's what this place needs, a Martuni's.
AARON: Martuni's? Marie's Crisis!
DOBBINS: Marie's Crisis! Girl, you are too young for Marie's Crisis.
AARON: Nah, I knew it when it was in its heyday. Before the tourists discovered it and before Guilliani destroyed New York!
ENDIN: *EVERYTHING WAS BEAUTIFUL
AT THE BALLET.*
AARON: Bitch, you're too young to know all these old songs.
ENDIN: Naaa. Every night my Mommy and Daddy used to come into my room and sing to me.
WELL HELLO DOLLY, WELL HELLO DOLLY...
They'd sit on the edge of the bed and sing right to me. It gave me the sweetest dreams. Then Daddy left and the songs all became sob solos:
EVERYTHING WAS BEAUTIFUL AT THE BALLET.
And I'd have to sing along with my Mommy to keep her from crying.
SHALL WE DANCE, DUM, DUM, DUM,
ALL: *ON A CLEAR CLOUD OF MUSIC SHALL WE FLY, DUM, DUM, DUM.*

ENDIN: And she was never happy again. Until she saw me onstage in high school. And then she never frowned after that.

DOBBINS: Who'd you play?

ENDIN: Sky Masterson

I'VE NEVER BEEN IN LOVE BEFORE.

I THOUGHT MY HEART WAS SAFE.

ALL: *I THOUGHT I KNEW THE SCORE.*

DOBBINS: That is the sweetest story. My wife saw me in a show and she was shaking afterwards. Shaking. She said she'd never sat through anything so horrifying.

AARON: What was the show?

DOBBINS: *I WON'T SEND ROSES,
OR HOLD THE DOOR.*

ALL: *I WONT REMEMBER,
WHAT DRESS YOU WORE.*

AARON: Now why would she be horrified by *Mack and Mabel*?

DOBBINS: Well... I was fucking Mabel.

(They laugh and toast.)

ENDIN: How about you, Aaron?

DOBBINS: Yeah, tell us about your big show.

WHO COAXED THE BLUES RIGHT OUT OF THE WALL?

ALL: *MAME.*

DOBBINS/ENDIN: Tell us, tell us, tell us!

AARON: Nah. That I keep right here. My secret. It fuels me, it fuels my rage.

(Another awkward pause.)

DOBBINS: *WHO COAXED THE BLUES RIGHT OUT OF THE WALL....*

ALL: *MAME*

WHO CHARMED THE HUSK RIGHT OFF OF THE CORN

MAME

(HAMMER, a Highway Hooligan enters. He has a big blob shaped scar on his face.)

HAMMER: Hey.

DOBBINS: Hi.

(He places huge gun on table.)

DOBBINS: Whoa, that's quite a man piece, pardner. You shoot squirrels with that?

HAMMER: No, I shoot faggots with it. You a faggot?

AARON: I am.

(They stand off against one another.)

DOBBINS: Easy. Easy.

HAMMER: I'm not here to tangle with you guys.
DOBBINS: No, course not. (Gives AARON a calm down gesture.) Let me buy you a drink, friend.
HAMMER: Shirley Temple. In a shot glass.
AARON: Who're you here to tangle with?
HAMMER: Little TheAYter company. They're doing pretty good over there. Might be 'bout time for them to pony up some jack, some protection money.
ENDIN: What happened to your face, pardner?
HAMMER: This? Some low life motherfucker hit me with a baby bunt cake. On the Freeway. I ever find him, I'll ram a bunt cake up his ass.
AARON: Oooooo. Sounds hot.
HAMMER: I've got my eye on you.
PM: (Serving drink) Shirley Temple shot.
(HAMMER knocks it back, winces at the sugar sting, picks up his gun and exits.)
PM: Nothing I can do about them.
DOBBINS: Why not?
PM: I'm scared to death of them. Usually they stick to the highways but lately they've been moving into town. They can do what they want now... because they're citizens. Government got rid of all the respectable people, deported them. Left us with the filth. Downright terrifying lot of scumbags. Using expired coupons with the ladies, peeing all over the rim. And they're muscling in on my graft. Used to be I got all the protection money. Now they're under bidding me. (Exits.)
(Lights. They are toasting at bar after another opening.)
ALL: Success!
DOBBINS: Financial report. (AARON hands him a paper.) What happened to our profits?
AARON: Lost in high-risk, high yield, no government FDIC investment.
ENDIN: What did you invest in?
AARON: The No-Tell Motel chain.
ENDIN: What happened?
AARON: Someone told.
ENDIN: Jesus, this country... everyone tells now.
DOBBINS: Dammit. From now on we save cash. Cash only. Under our mattresses.
(HAMMER enters.)
DOBBINS: Hey friend.
HAMMER: Faggots, how you doing? Good show tonight.
ENDIN: You saw it?

HAMMER: Yeah, I shook down some of your audience as they went in then stayed for the show.

AARON: Did you buy a ticket?

HAMMER: Do faggots like titties? No. But I bought a cookie at intermission.

DOBBINS: Good.

HAMMER: It was stale.

DOBBINS: Sorry.

ENDIN: So you liked the show?

HAMMER: Sure. Who doesn't like Shakespeare? Especially the early History plays. Now you...

AARON: Yeah?

HAMMER: You were excellent as Henry. A much heartier delivery than Olivier's without all the bogus soulfulness of Brannagh. Probably the most effective *Henry V* I've ever seen.

AARON: Thank you.

HAMMER: But you're too old. Anyone can pull that role off at your age. Can you get someone to do it at Henry's age? That's the challenge.

ENDIN: I told you.

HAMMER: So here's what I'm thinking. You bring me on as Henry V and I'll donate my services as actor. You don't have to pay me. To act. You'll still have to pay the protection money but we'll turn it into a ticket supplement, fold it into the price of the admission. You'll therefore get a better Henry and you'll save on the back end. Plus, I'm thinking: I owe the county about sixteen years in prison sentence. I can get all that time served.

ENDIN: Do you know how to act?

HAMMER: No, but I have a lot of natural charm and presence.

AARON: Henry V's my role.

HAMMER: You'll still have George. You're a little old for that too but you pass. In dim lighting. Come to think of it I'll take a crack at Nick as well. Always liked that role and your Martha is hot.

ENDIN: Nick's my role.

HAMMER: You'll still have Fool. You're not quite right for that role but it's so insignificant it doesn't really matter.

ENDIN: Jesus.

HAMMER: Think about it. Take your time. Let me know in five minutes. (He exits.)

AARON: Kill him. We have to kill him.

HAMMER: Calm down, Ary.

AARON: I want his blood!

ENDIN: Ary.

(AARON growls ferociously.)

DOBBINS: Jesus.

ENDIN: It's Zabar's.

DOBBINS: What?

ENDIN: We've run out of Zabar's. Our store was depleted when we arrived because of the Bunt Cake ambush. He hasn't had a proper New York Pastry for three weeks.

AARON: It's true. Since I went off hard liquor Zabar's is the only thing that keeps me regular.

DOBBINS: Regular?

ENDIN: His bowels. He's constipated. He's so backed up he-

DOBBINS: Yes, ok, I get the idea.

ENDIN: He's so constipated he-

DOBBINS: Please, please-

AARON: You need to hear this! I'm so backed up I could vomit shit.

DOBBINS: Thank you. That's lovely.

ENDIN: What are we going to do?

AARON: Isn't Zabar's on-line?

ENDIN: It's a Jewish bakery. They refuse to ship.

DOBBINS: Why?

ENDIN: Something to do with Judaic Law and UPS. It's in the Talmud.

AARON: (Jonesing) Bunt cake. Bunt cake. Hamantaschen.

DOBBINS: What are we going to do? He's gone crazy.

ENDIN: You'll just have to go to New York, Ary. Stock up on Zabar's and get back here.

DOBBINS: We'll make a virtue of necessity. Hammer can cover your roles while you're gone.

AARON: Why should I go to New York?

ENDING: Because you're the one jonesing for Zabar's.

AARON: You'll just cast yourselves in the leads while I'm gone. Steal my roles.

DOBBINS: We have to keep producing. That's business.

AARON: (To ENDIN) You go.

ENDIN: Why me?

AARON: Well, I'm not going and I need a New York Bunt Cake.

ENDIN: (To DOBBINS) What about you?

DOBBINS: You going to memorize Lear for the matinee tomorrow?

ENDIN: Man!!

AARON: Bunt Cake! Bunt Cake!

DOBBINS: You gotta go. But remember, not a word to anyone about what we got out here. We don't want any actors muscling in.

ENDIN: Ok, fine. I'll stay at the Y and hit Zabar's tomorrow night. Give me your order.

AARON: 1600 Baby Bunt Cakes, 1400 Hamantaschen.

(Lights. Backstage. We hear HAMMER as Henry V off-stage – very slow.)

HAMMER: "We few... We happy few... We band of brothers;

(Continues SLOOOOWLY as others speak) For he today that shed his blood with me

Shall be my bother; be he ne'er so vile."

DOBBINS: I didn't know an actor could talk this slow.

AARON: He's awful. I'm losing roles and the shows suck.

DOBBINS: We have no choice.

AARON: Our motto is Louder! Faster! Funnier! He's slow, quiet and boring. I hate him.

(Lights. The Y. ENDIN gets in the pool, swims. HARRIBLE enters in bathrobe.)

HARRIBLE: Hey there, Endin, remember me?

ENDIN: Harrible!

HARRIBLE: Oh, don't worry. I've been bitch slapped by bitches badder than you, probably deserved it.

ENDIN: Uh-huh.

HARRIBLE: What you been up to?

ENDIN: Regional work.

HARRIBLE: What region?

ENDIN: A new region. I gotta go.

HARRIBLE: Course you do. Big audition?

ENDIN: Something like that.

HARRIBLE: I saw your resume on-line. You've really got yourself some experience, Endin. Fool. Nick.

ENDIN: Yeah.

HARRIBLE: What are audiences like Out West?

ENDIN: Great. I'm gonna be late.

HARRIBLE: The Hollister Beaver. Never heard of that. Equity house?

ENDIN: See you around.

HARRIBLE: I'll see you next week. Got myself a real job. Booking tours for of big musicals for the Nederlanders. We might just be coming to Hollister.

(Lights. Onstage at The Beaver.)

HAMMER (As Henry V, slowly) "Once more... Unto the breach... dear friends... once more."

(Lights. Backstage.)

DOBBINS: The show's six hours long now.

AARON: He talks any slower he'll be going backwards. He's got a mouth like molasses.

DOBBINS: He takes pauses in the middle of his pauses. He mumbles. He makes Brando sound like Ethel Merman.

AARON: Forty people walked out during the battle of Agincourt. One woman tore up her subscription in the lobby.

DOBBINS: Cookie sales are down.

AARON: Even the sleepers are bored.

DOBBINS: No one can nap that long.

AARON: What are we gonna do?

(HAMMER comes offstage.)

AARON: Hammer, you gotta pick up the pace.

DOBBINS: You gotta speak up, kid.

AARON: Stop mumbling.

HAMMER: Leave me alone! Do you know what it takes to go out there every night? I have horrible stage fright!

DOBBINS: Well, maybe you shouldn't go onstage.

HAMMER: The stage is my calling! It's what I love.

AARON: You're killing the show.

HAMMER: Leave me alone, man. I'm dangerous when I'm angry and you're making me very angry.

DOBBINS: You're killing our business. Don't you care?

HAMMER: No, no, I don't. This is my dream. If my dream kills your business then that's just too bad. Dreams are expensive. Someone has to pay for fantasy. Let me live my fantasy! (Exits to bathroom.)

AARON: What does that mean?

DOBBINS: He's crossed over.

AARON: Crossed over. Crossed over to what?

DOBBINS: Insane actor's syndrome. He's become an insane actor. It happened to Brando, it happened to Deana James, his talent has run away with him and he's gone crazy.

AARON: But he was never talented.

DOBBINS: No, he's skipped that stage. It's called accelerated development.

ENDIN: (Entering with Zabar's bag) Hey, guys.

(AARON grabs Zabar's bag and wolfs the bunt cakes.)

ENDIN: I've got bad news.

DOBBINS: We've got worse.

HAMMER: (Entering) Who bought this cheap talcum powder. I can't act with this talcum powder. How can I do Act II with this crappy talcum powder? I won't go on. (He exits.)

ENDIN: Act II? It's intermission?

DOBBINS: Yes.

ENDIN: But it's midnight.

AARON: Thus the problem.

(Scream offstage.)

ENDIN: Oh, my God. He's become an Insane Actor.

DOBBINS: Yep.

(Scream.)

DOBBINS: So how was New York?

ENDIN: Horrible. There're no more muggers or immigrants. Just naturalized white people. It's very boring. And we've got trouble.

HAMMER: (Entering) Ahhhhh!!!

DOBBINS: Hammer, you've got talcum powder all over your face.

HAMMER: I know, I'm going on like this. I'm going with it. I'll use it.

DOBBINS: Hammer.

HAMMER: Henry as a coke addict!

DOBBINS: Hammer!

HAMMER: You can't stop me, you can't. (Runs onstage.)

ENDIN: Man, that bitch is whack.

AARON: (Shouting onstage after HAMMER) Coke addicts talk fast!

DOBBINS: We've got to stop him.

ENDIN: How?

AARON: We'll shoot him. We'll kill him.

DOBBINS: Aaron.

AARON: No, we will. We'll strangle him. With our bare hands.

ENDIN: Aaron.

AARON: No, we will.

DOBBINS: Aaron, you're still backed up, you're crazy.

AARON: Yes, I've got shit for brains now. Literally. And they're telling me he's insane. If we don't do this he'll ruin us.

DOBBINS: What will we do with the body? How can we get away with it?

AARON: Actors disappear all the time, they change their names, they get a facelift, they go on TV, they evaporate!

ENDIN: No, we can't.

AARON: We have to.

DOBBINS: No!

AARON: Oh my God, my bowels are moving, my bowels are moving. I know this is the right decision! (He runs off to bathroom. We hear an incredible explosion of diarrhea – this sound cur is optional.)

DOBBINS: Ok, yes, ok, he's right.

ENDIN: Dobbsy!

DOBBINS: I believe in the sphincter. I was in a wretched marriage for years then my bowels moved and I got a divorce. The sphincter speaks.

ENDIN: Dobbsy, we're talking about killing a man.

DOBBINS: Hammer's a highway hooligan and a shitty actor, I can rationalize it morally and artistically.

ENDIN: No, no, I draw the line at murder.

AARON: (Entering wiping his hands on towel) Ex-porn star says no to justifiable homicide, I love that.

ENDIN: I'm not an ex-porn star.

AARON: Check out Pornhub, dearest, your dick is viral!

DOBBINS: Gentlemen. Ok, Aaron, when he comes off after the courtship scene you take care of him and then we'll cut up the body and emulsify it with acid.

ENDIN: WHAT??!!

AARON: No, we all do it. All three of us, hands on. If I did it alone you two would have something on me. We all have to do it. All of us hands-on.

(Pause.)

DOBBINS: Ok.

ENDIN: What? No way!

DOBBINS: Endin.

ENDIN: No, fucking way, man.

AARON: And how would your Mommy like a link to your latest anal clips. Would that make her proud of her boy? "Oh, look! I birthed that boner!"

ENDIN: You'd never do that?

AARON: With pleasure. That smug look on your face as you plow poor cranked up Saffron. That's a lesson in acting, conviction, motivation, overcoming obstacles.

ENDIN: Dobbsy.

DOBBINS: I'm sorry, Endin, but I'm with Aaron on this one. Hammy's Evil. He's a bad actor who's seized power. In my world that's the devil incarnate. We'll be doing civilization a favor.

AARON: Reagan tried acting, so did Trump. If we don't do this he'll end up in the White House.

DOBBINS: We can either elect him president or kill him.

AARON: I say kill him.

ENDIN: It's so wrong.

AARON: (With plowing movement, imitating ENDIN's porn shoot)
EVERYTHING WAS BEAUTIFUL AT THE BALLET.
ENDIN: All right. All right.
DOBBINS: The Courtship's finished.
AARON: That's the fastest he's ever played it.
DOBBINS: Everyone, bicycle gloves. (They put them on.)
HAMMER: (Entering) Oh, my God, that was great. I felt the fire. I think it's the talcum powder. What is this?
DOBBINS: Show's closing, Hammy.
AARON: No more extensions.
HAMMER: Are you guys crazy?
DOBBINS: You've got insane actor's syndrome. The only cure is death.
AARON: It cured Brando, it cured James, and now its gonna cure you.
HAMMER: But I'm getting better. I had great pace tonight, I spat the words out, someone in the front row actually woke up.
DOBBINS: Too late, Hammy.
HAMMER: You can't do this. You're not killers.
AARON: I've played plenty of killers in my day.
DOBBINS: Sure.
ENDIN: We can all act like killers.
AARON: The Scottish King.
ENDIN: Othello.
DOBBINS: King Claudius.
ENDIN: Paris.
ALL: Richard III!!!!
HARRIBLE: (Entering) Hello gentlemen.
DOBBINS: Horrible.
AARON: What are you doing here?
ENDIN: He's the bad news I was telling you about.
HARRIBLE: Here's my card, gentlemen.
DOBBINS: The Nederlanders!
HARRIBLE: Yep. I'm with them now. We're booking the third road company of *Hamilton*, starring Donnie and Marie. And I've just discovered a brand new market and a beautiful theatre. The Hollister Beaver.
DOBBINS: Horrible.
ENDIN: You'll kill our monopoly.
AARON: You rat!
HARRIBLE: I had to get out of porn somehow. I was making too many compromises in the talent department. (To ENDIN) The dicks were just getting too small.
(ENDIN gasps.)

HARRIBLE: Anybody got an aspirin? Long bus ride.
AARON: (Throwing him bottle) Use mine. It's extra strength.
HARRIBLE: Excuse me gentleman while I aspirinate.
(He steps into bathroom.)
ENDIN: He followed me. I ran into him in New York and he followed me.
DOBBINS: I said not a word, to anyone.
ENDIN: He was on to us. Found our website, he knew all about it.
AARON: Dammit, dammit.
HAMMER: Looks like you guys are in a pickle. Ha ha ha.
AARON: Shut up.
DOBBINS: You're in it too.
HAMMER: How is that?
DOBBINS: You're still alive. And you're still a member of our company.
AARON: Yeah, we kill him, you'll be an accessory. So you gotta join us.
HAMMER: Kill him?
ENDIN: (Looking at bathroom) Yeah, justifiable homicide. No one calls my dick small! No one!!
DOBBINS: Atta boy, Endy. So how's about it, Hammy?
AARON: Yeah, how's about it, Talcky Face?
HAMMER: I get to keep playing Henry.
AARON: If you can keep up the fucking pace.
DOBBINS: And say your lines loudly and clearly.
ENDIN: But you don't get Nick, no fucking way! Nick's a role for a huge cock!
HAMMER: Ok. Deal.
ALL: (Shaking) Deal.
DOBBINS: One for all and all for one.
AARON: Here're your bicycle gloves.
ENDIN: I'm going to like this.
DOBBINS: Don't like it too much, Endy. We want you warm blooded, not cold blooded.
ENDIN: Call my dick small.
(Toilet flush.)
DOBBINS: Here he comes.
(They're ready for him. Pause.)
DOBBINS: Here he comes.
(They're ready for him. Pause.)
DOBBINS: Here he comes.
(They're ready for him.)
DOBBINS: Here he comes!
(We hear a crash off stage.)

AARON: Horrible? Sweetiepea? You all right?
DOBBINS: Check it out.
AARON: Horrible. Horrible, sweetie I'm coming in. Knock, knock. Knock.
Privacy alert.
(AARON exits. Comes back.)
AARON: He's dead.
DOBBINS: Dead?
AARON: Yeah, dead on the floor. Heart attack or something.
ENDIN: Shit man.
DOBBINS: And I'm all fired up to kill someone. Bummer.
AARON: Well...
ENDIN: Well what?
AARON: There's still Hammy here.
HAMMER: What?
AARON: Yeah, we're all cocked up to kill and you're looking mighty vulnerable right now.
DOBBINS: (To AARON) Take it easy, fella.
AARON: No, I'm remembering all that shit acting I had to listen to. My adrenaline's up and I want some prey. I'm a tiger!
ENDIN: Ary!
AARON: Come on, Hammy! Let's rock!
(AARON grabs HAMMER around neck, ENDIN and DOBBINS try to restrain AARON.)
PM: (Entering) Knock, knock.
ENDIN: Oh, oh, hi, Chief.
(They all act innocent.)
PM: What's going on in here?
AARON: Um...
DOBBINS: Hey.
PM: The audience wants Act Three. We've eaten all the stale cookies.
ENDIN: Yeah, yeah...
PM: What's going on?
AARON: We were just doing a warm-up. "Come on, Hammy! Let's rock!"
ALL: "Come on, Hammy! Let's rock!"
PM: Who's in the bathroom?
ENDIN: The bathroom? What bathroom?
AARON: Let's rock!
PM: What's going on?
DOBBINS: We've had a death, Chief. Haven't we boys?
(Mumbling.)

DOBBINS: A talent scout for the Nederlanders. He just had a heart attack in the bathroom. We're all in shock.

(They all act like they're in shock.)

PM: Well, maybe we can revive him.

DOBBINS: No, he's dead. He had a heart attack and then fell on the sink and got a concussion then hit the floor and broke his back. And his neck. And his... larynx. He was anemic.

PM: Well, drag him out here. I'll try giving him CPR.

(Confusion.)

PM: Drag him out.

DOBBINS: Well... we can't do that.

PM: Why not?

(They can't because it's the same actor playing both roles.)

DOBBINS: Well, it's complicated.

PM: Why? Drag him out here.

ENDIN: It's um... it's impossible.

PM: Drag him out here.

AARON: Please stop saying that.

DOBBINS: You better go in.

ENDIN: Good solution.

(PM exits.)

ENDIN: Oh, oh, dear.

AARON: I say kill Hammy while he's in the bathroom.

ENDIN: Arry, calm down.

AARON: Kill him! Kill him! Kill him!

ENDIN: Arry!

AARON: (Lunging at HAMMER's neck) Ahhhh.....

PM: (Entering) What's going on out here?

AARON: Um... nothing.

PM: Well he's dead as Edward Albee.

DOBBINS: Heart attack?

PM: No, Viagra. He OD'd on Viagra. His penis exploded.

ALL: Ewwwww...

PM: Why are you all wearing bicycle gloves?

ALL: Umm...

DOBBINS: It's for Act III.

AARON: Yeah.

DOBBINS: It's set in a velodrome.

PM: Oh, clever. Well you better get started. It's getting late. I'll send a paramedic. (He exits.)

AARON: Here we go, Hammy, time to rock! (Grabs HAMMER.)

ENDIN: Arry!

SARAH: (Entering) I'm the paramedic. Here to get the body.

(She drags the body out of bathroom.)

ENDIN: Shouldn't you use a stretcher?

SARAH: Why, he's dead? (Exits.)

(They resume the struggle. PM re-enters.)

PM: Forgot my comb. (He gets it from bathroom and leaves.) Got it.

(AARON grabs HAMMER's neck.)

ENDIN: Arry, stop it, stop it!

HAMMER: You're crazy man.

AARON: You're damn right I am. I want blooooood.

ENDIN: Get out there Hammer.

DOBBINS: And keep the pace up.

EDNIN: You've got thirty minutes to do Act III.

HAMMER: Jesus.

(He exits saying a line.)

"Fair Katherine, and most fair,

Will you vouchsafe to teach a soldier terms..."

DOBBINS: Jesus, Arry.

ENDIN: Calm down.

AARON: I tasted salt. I tasted fury. My whole life I've been acting passionate and tonight I tasted it, I tasted it. I felt like Alan in *Equus*. I want to ride forth on Biscuit.

DOBBINS: Nugget.

AARON: I want to ride forth on Nugget and have an orgasm!

EDNIN: Jesus.

DOBBINS: (Handing him a bunt cake) Here, kill this. (AARON kills bunt cake.)

ENDIN: What are we going to do? We're all going crazy. I almost killed a man because he said I had a small dick.

DOBBINS: I'd be angry if I had a small dick.

ENDIN: I don't have a small dick!

DOBBINS: You're right. We're losing it. We've been working in the Beaver too long. Acting in that environment's unhealthy. We're crazy.

EDNIN: On top of that the Nederlanders will send someone else. These people would love to see Donnie Osmond as Hamilton.

DOBBINS: You're right. We've created a market and now the vultures and Osmonds are circling.

AARON: (Crazy) My Daddy never loved me. He didn't. He loved only himself. Himself. He never loved me. He wouldn't coach me in baseball. I

humiliated myself as shortstop. My Mommy never saw me become a star. And now she has dementia.

DOBBINS: He's lost it.

ENDIN: Jesus, this is awful.

DOBBINS: We have to go back. We have to divide up the money and head back to New York. The Wild West is crazy. America's insane. Soon we'll be voting for Trump and urinating on Russian prostitutes. (He holds AARON in his arms, comforting him.) We've done well out here. Very well. We've brought these people culture, we've nurtured their children, we've fostered in them a love of the arts. We've done good work and made a healthy profit and diversified our resumes. It's time to quit while we're ahead. While we still have a semblance of sanity.

AARON: Daddy, Daddy.

DOBBINS: Yes, I'm your Daddy. Daddy's here. (AARON makes to kiss him on the lips.) No, I'm not that kind of daddy. I'm the loving, caring father you never had. (AARON tries to kiss him.) Don't kiss me, don't try to kiss me.

AARON: But I always wanted to suck Daddy's face.

DOBBINS: Well, I'm your Norman Rockwell daddy. I'm wholesome. You try to kiss me, Arry, I'll bite your tongue off. (AARON settles for a cuddle.)

HAMMER: (Entering) I was brilliant! Brilliant! Do you hear the cheers? (They listen.)

ENDIN: No.

HAMMER: What's going on here?

DOBBINS: Insane actor's syndrome. We've all got it. We're leaving. We gotta get back to a major market.

HAMMER: Don't leave me here. Please. I'll just settle back into a life of crime. I'm an adult at risk. You've made me feel whole.

DOBBINS: Ok, you can come with us.

ENDIN: But you can't have any money. None.

AARON: Daddy.

(Blackout: In black: AARON: "Daddy, Daddy Woojums, do you hear me? I love you." Lights. ENDIN is handing out money-bags to the other three.)

HAMMER: I get a cut?

DOBBINS: Those are the props and baby bunt cakes.

ENDIN: This is all of it. Bus leaves at noon.

DOBBINS: No bus. The buses are stalked by hooligans. Planes are no good. They're strip-searching everyone now. They'll find greenbacks even in your intestines.

HAMMER: Rent a car.

AARON: My credit cards are shot.

ENDIN: Mine too.

DOBBINS: We'll walk and hitchhike. There'll be cars. Everyone will assume we're middle class refugees from a financial downturn.

ENDIN: Ok.

DOBBINS: We'll travel together. That way we can protect each other.

AARON: And keep an eye on each other. I don't trust nobody. (To DOBBINS) Not even my Daddy.

(Lights. Their thumbs are out. Sound of cars whizzing by.)

ENDIN: You said there'd be cars. You said we'd get rides.

DOBBINS: (To ENDIN) We need a lure. Usually it's a sexy girl but we'll just have to use you and hope for some gay motorists or horny housewives.

Take off your shirt and work it. Come on gentlemen, let's hide. (They do.)

(ENDIN takes off his shirt, sticks his thumb out, and does a bump and grind. Car whizzes past.)

ENDIN: I'm on Pornhub, loser!

DOBBINS: (From offstage) Work harder.

(He works harder, flashing some red panty. We hear a siren. PM enters. Others come out of hiding.)

PM: We need you to come back. We need you.

DOBBINS: Why?

PM: The little Foster boy. Ryan. He's disturbed. Your drama therapy helped him a lot. Calmed him down. Since you left he's been acting up again. Holding up liquor stores, shooting squirrels and third graders.

DOBBINS: He's six.

PM: He's not on any watch list. He can buy firearms.

DOBBINS: Chief, this is our chance to get away'. We have to do it now or we'll go crazy.

PM: I'm afraid I have to put the safety of my city over my sympathy for my friends. Our liquor stores are the cornerstones of our community.

DOBBINS: I'm sorry, Chief.

PM: If he robs another one I'll have to shoot him.

DOBBINS: Chief.

PM: Or at least have him medically sterilized to prevent propagation.

That's legal now in Hollister.

DOBBINS: Chief, I can't...

(PM fingers his gun.)

DOBBINS: Ok... Listen boys, take my money. It's safer with you. Get it to New York. I'll catch up with you later.

AARON: Thanks.

ENDIN: We'll come back with you.

AARON: No, we won't. We'll get your cash to New York. Don't worry.

(DOBBINS and PM exit. AARON pulls gun.)

AARON: Ok, boys, let's go.

ENDIN: What's with the piece, Arry?

AARON: I don't trust this guy. Not one inch. Pick up Dobbsy's bag.
(HAMMER does.) You touch one dollar of his money or one of my baby
bunt cakes I'll plug ya. Fill ya full of lead.

HAMMER: Ok.

AARON: We're done hitching. I don't trust no one. Keep walking. We'll
stop when we reach the Path Train in Newark
(Lights.)

MRS. FOSTER: Oh, thank you for coming back, Sir.

DOBBINS: Course, Mrs. Foster.

MRS. FOSTER: You're all that stands between Ryan and government
mandated sterilization. I'd hate for him to grow up and miss out on the
joys of parenting.

DOBBINS: Have you enjoyed parenting, ma'am?

MRS. FOSTER: No, no I haven't. It's been fucking awful. In the last two
years I've aborted three babies even though I object to abortion on
religious grounds.

DOBBINS: Then why do you do it?

MRS. FOSTER: I'm a Christian. Which means I'm a hypocrite.

DOBBINS: I see.

MRS. FOSTER: Still I try to be a good mother.

DOBBINS: I know you do.

MRS. FOSTER: Ryan!!! Get your ass in here!

(RYAN enters.)

MRS. FOSTER: I'll leave him in your care. I'm a barfly downtown and I'm
already late. I'll pick him at five or whenever I sober up. (Exits.)

DOBBINS: Ryan, what did we learn in drama therapy?

RYAN: I don't know.

DOBBINS: Transference. We learned to put our inappropriate desires and
thoughts into solo performance.

RYAN: Oh, oh, yeah.

DOBBINS: So let's work on your one-man show and we'll get you a
booking at an open mike. Or maybe we'll get you a big Beaver opening.

RYAN: Ok.

DOBBINS: Then you won't have to rob any more liquor store

RYAN: Ok.

DOBBINS: Do you have a gun in your knapsack?

RYAN: Uh-huh.

DOBBINS: Give it to me.

(RYAN pulls out a huge gun. Lights. They are struggling across the plains. Heat. Sizzling heat. ENDIN stumbles in near collapse. AARON stumbles, pointing gun back at HAMMER who is behind him. AARON collapses. HAMMER goes to help him. AARON pulls his gun on him.)

HAMMER: I'm trying to help you, man.

(AARON passes out. HAMMER hoists him up on his back and carries him. AARON puts gun to HAMMER's head as he carries him. Lights.)

MRS. FOSTER: Thank you. For what you did. Ryan's just a little boy. He didn't rob those liquor stores for money. Just for the booze. He drinks too much for a six year old.

DOBBINS: It's all right, Mrs. Foster.

MRS. FOSTER: You don't remember me.

DOBBINS: Should I?

MRS. FOSTER: I'm the Zika Mom.

DOBBINS: Oh, oh, yes, from the bus. How's the Zika Baby?

MRS. FOSTER: Oh, he's fine. Growing up strong and big and... well, most of him. Ryan is actually a wonderful older brother. He always shared the liquor he stole with Zika Baby. They adore one another.

DOBBINS: I'm glad.

MRS. FOSTER: I guess I haven't made the best decisions in my life.

DOBBINS: What do you mean?

MRS. FOSTER: Marrying that Russian with fecal alcohol syndrome when I was twelve. That was a bad decision.

DOBBINS: I think it's called fetal alcohol syndrome.

MRS. FOSTER: No, he had fecal a. s. His stools were fifty proof and he used to imbibe anally.

DOBBINS: Oh.

MRS. FOSTER: Then I guess it wasn't the wisest decision to leave him and move to that swamp in Brazil last February.

DOBBINS: No, that probably wasn't wise.

MRS. FOSTER: Then to get pregnant the same night I'd been stung by a swarm of Zika virus baring mosquitos.

DOBBINS: No.

MRS. FOSTER: Then to refuse abortion because I'm a Trump supporter and I got confused about his rhetoric. Oh, I love Trump so much but I'm never quite sure what he means.

DOBBINS: Yes, you sound pretty fucking stupid.

MRS. FOSTER: But listen, thank you for saving Ryan from judicial sterilization. Thank you for saving Ryan's privates.

DOBBINS: You're welcome.

MRS. FOSTER: I'd hate for him to miss out on the joys of propagation.

(They suddenly kiss.)

MRS. FOSTER: Oh, God. Just tell me a couple things.

DOBBINS: Ok.

MRS. FOSTER: Do you imbibe anally?

DOBBINS: No.

MRS. FOSTER: Are you Russian?

DOBBINS: Nyet.

MRS. FOSTER: Do you believe in right to life even if it means a child is going to grow up drunk or with a tiny head.

DOBBINS: Yes, yes, and da.

MRS. FOSTER: Then kiss me, you mad fool.

(They kiss. Lights. The others around a campfire. CAMPFIRE played by an actor with red gloves making crackling noises.)

AARON: Thank you for saving me, Hammer. You're not such a bad guy after all.

HAMMER: Neither are you, Aaron.

AARON: Thanks.

ENDIN: What makes you so angry, Aaron? What's the story?

AARON: I don't know, just bitter. I watched all my friends die in the eighties, then I watched my career wither in the nineties, and then I was just... old. It made me bitter. Can't explain it. I lost my faith. This trek, this adventure... It's restored it. I've found Jesus.

HAMMER: Praise the Lord.

ENDIN: Hallelujah.

(They laugh.)

ENDIN: Well, I'm glad. I didn't like it that the villain was a gay man.

AARON: No, no, there's been too much of that in American narratives.

HAMMER: Well, I'm going to turn in.

AARON: Me too.

(They fall asleep. ENDIN looks at his phone.)

AARON: (Friendly) What you doin'?

ENDIN: (Smiling) Oh, oh, just watching somethin.'

AARON: (Snatching it) Gimmie that.

ENDIN: Arry!

AARON: Shit, man, you're watching your porno.

EDNIN: I am. I look good.

AARON: Shit.

EDNIN: Hey, I knew what I was doin,' deep down. And I did it pretty well.

AARON: Shit, you narcissist.

EDNIN: Hey, why not? I have something to narcissitate over, why shouldn't I be proud. Look at that ass!

AARON: Sweet.
ENDIN: And what's on the other side of it.
AARON: Girl! Good thing he had a wide angle lense.
ENDIN: When I think about it, when I'm honest with myself, it's the best acting I've ever done.
AARON: Watching porn, I've rediscovered the wonder I first felt when I saw movies as a child.
ENDIN: Yeah. It's magical that way.
EDNIN: (Taking it back) Hey, hey, let's see if we can find the day you were my butt double.
AARON: No, now...
EDNIN: No, come on. Let's see if we can find it...
AARON: Put that down.
EDNIN: I'll just look under Harrible's name and... shit, look at this, this is disgusting... I didn't know he made stuff like this... Did you know that?
AARON: Know what?
EDNIN: He made kiddie porn.
AARON: So what?
EDNIN: So what?
AARON: None of our business.
EDNIN: This is gross. He... Arry...
AARON: Yeah.
EDNIN: There're some of the Hollister kids here... the ones in our classes.
AARON: Yeah?
ENDIN: What the fuck, Arry?
AARON: Yeah, so...
(Pause.)
ENDIN: You were working with Harrible. You were making this evil kiddy porn for Harrible.
(Pause.)
ENDIN: He didn't come out for the Nederlanders, he came out to shake you down.
AARON: That's enough.
EDNIN: You used those poor children.
AARON: Shut up!
EDNIN: You son of a bitch.
(They fight. AARON has pulled a gun.)
AARON: Ok, get up! Get up!
EDNIN: Those investments. You never made them.
AARON: Yes, I did. I invested.

EDNIN: In kiddie porn. And hush money. And you got lucky Harribly had a heart attack because he'd come West to shake you down.

AARON: I didn't get lucky. That penis explosion was induced. I slipped him some government strength Viagra. I knew you lily-livered's never have the guts to kill him.

HAMMER: (Waking up) What's going on here?

(AARON turns and shoots him quickly – bang bang.)

HAMMER: Shit, I'm dyin' and I don't even know the reason. That blows. (He dies.)

AARON: Now it's your turn.

EDNIN: You don't have the guts.

AARON: The guts. I've been playing you like Grand Theft Auto Five for months. Now I'm not playing. Start walking.

ENDIN: And that heartfelt speech of yours?

AARON: All bullshit. I'm not a bitter queen. I'm not an evil faggot. I'm a typical American. Start walking.

(They exit. A BUZZERD lands on HAMMER and starts eating him. We hear shots off stage, then AARON's maniacal laugh. Lights. PM, DOBBINS and MRS. FOSTER are looking at a phone.)

PM: Yes, seems your friend was using them as actors in porno.

DOBBINS: God, it's awful. Those poor kids.

PM: Don't worry. He was just using them for the acting scenes. He out sourced the actual sex scenes to adult midgets in South East Asia.

DOBBINS: Oh, oh, that's good.

PM: No it's not. It's more jobs lost to Americans. We have perfectly good adult midgets here.

DOBBINS: I never thought of that.

PM: The titles are disgusting: *Pick up in a Nursery. Kindergarten Fuck Fest. Pre-School Pussy Riot. First Grade Festival of Fillatio. Tiny Tots Cum Shots.*

MRS. FOSTER: (Looking at phone) Wow, those midgets are hot.

PM: Don't be disgusting. I won't allow myself be aroused by foreign workers.

DOBBINS: Will you help us? We want to catch up with that money.

PM: Get in the squad car. They only have a two thousand mile lead on us.

(Lights. In black: Siren. Lights. MRS. FOSTER nursing ENDIN. ENDIN holds up a massive volume of Shakespeare.)

ENDIN: *The Complete Works* took the bullet. I had it in my change pocket.

DOBBINS: Shakespeare saves another life. Hammy?

ENDIN: Arry finished him off.

PM: That skunk.

MRS. FOSTER: Here, let me salve you.
ENDIN: You're Zika Mom.
MRS. FOSTER: Yes.
DOBBINS: And now I'm Zika Dad.
ENDIN: You mean...
MRS. FOSTER: Yeah, we're hitched.
ENDIN: But you've been safe?
DOBBINS: No, we're united in the virus.
(They kiss.)
ENDIN/PM: Awwwww.
DOBBINS: Chief gave me a job as principal of the new High School for the Performing Arts. We're already a California Distinguished School.
ENDIN: Congratulations.
DOBBINS: But we gotta catch up with Arry. If he gets to New York he'll turn those poor Hollister kids into Internet sensations and-
ENDIN: And he has all our cash.
(Lights. AARON stumbling with all four bags, gnawing on a baby bunt cake.)
AARON: Baby Bunt Cake, last baby bunt cake, make it last. *I WON'T SEND ROSES. MAME. EVERYTHING WAS BEAUTIFUL...*
VOICES: *AT THE BALLET.* (TRUMP SUPPORTERS enter wearing dirty memorabilia.)
TS 1: Hello stranger.
AARON: Hello. Where am I?
TS 2: The Dakotas.
AARON: Which one?
TS 1: Don't you worry about which one. Where're you headed?
AARON: Newark. Path Train.
TS 2: What you got in those bags?
AARON: Make-up. I'm an actor with acne.
TS 1: Let's look.
AARON: Who are you?
TS 2: We're with the FBI.
AARON: Show me your badges.
TS 1: We don't need no stinkin' badges.
BOTH: We work for Vladimir Putin.
(AARON breaks for it. They grab him and suffocate him with a bunt cake. They then tear open the bags.)
TS 1: What's in that one?
TS 2: Props. Fake knives, false noses and... money!
TS 1: Money!

TS 2: Ten dollar bills. Thousands of them.

TS 1: Those are fake. Hamiltons. Everyone knows Joseph Stalin's on the ten now. Those are just props. (They scatter the tens.) Well, look what's in this one.

TS 2: New York pastries.

TS 1: The motherload.

BOTH: Bunt cakes!

(Lights. ENDIN and DOBBINS enter in the distance. Wind.)

DOBBINS: I see Aaron's body.

ENDIN: And the money!

(They exit. WIND – a character - enters and blows money away. DOBBINS and ENDIN enter.)

DOBBINS: They're gone. All the Hamiltons blown back to New York.

ENDIN: (Forlorn) "Blow us all away..."

(Lights. ENDIN and DOBBINS sit by crackling CAMPFIRE with MRS. FOSTER. ANOTHER BUZZARD consumes AARON stage left.)

ENDIN: Too bad about Hammy.

DOBBINS: Yeah, we'd pretty much reformed him

ENDIN: He had a boy friend in New York.

DOBBINS: Boy friend?

ENDIN: Yeah. He was multi-valenced.

DOBBINS: What are you going to do now?

ENDIN: Well, we're almost at the Path Train. I'll go back to New York. See if I can connect with Hammy's boyfriend. See if I can give him some cold comfort.

DOBBINS: I thought you were straight.

ENDIN: I guess I did so much theatre in Hollister it made me gay. That's ok. I don't have time for labels anymore. I just want to connect. See if I can lay down some roots. Root out some lays. Also, he has rent control.

MRS. FOSTER: (Handing him a huge squash) Well, here's a squash. Take it with you.

ENDIN: It's so big.

DOBBINS: Yeah, Zika Mom's got a way with the protuberances. I'll miss you.

ENDIN: I'll miss you too, Dobbsy. I came West to act and I did. You taught me a lot about myself.

DOBBINS: (Affectionately) Well, I learned nothing from my association with you but that's all right.

ENDIN: Thanks.

MRS. FOSTER: I won't miss you at all.

ENDIN: Thanks.

MRS. FOSTER: Pee on the fire, hon, and come back to bed.

DOBBINS: In a minute, hon.

(She exits. DOBBINS indicates ENDIN should pee on fire. ENDIN stands, starts to unzip. CAMPFIRE realizes what's about to happen and runs off.)

DOBBINS: Will you act?

ENDIN: Yes. I think so.

DOBBINS: The great roles? You're young still.

ENDIN: I am. So I want to extend my porn career a while. Try some more anal, some orgies, college fuck parties, who knows. I liked it. When I'm honest with myself I have to admit, I liked it. And my Mommy will too. I've been selling her short. I suppose we all do that with our parents.

DOBBINS: That's great, Endin. I'm going to raise Ryan and Zika Baby. Hopefully have the relationship with them I never had with my biological son. Zika Baby probably only has two more years. I want them to matter.

ENDINS: You're an inspiring man, Dobsy.

DOBBINS: And you're a terrific porn star. I'm looking forward to the anal. (They hug.)

DOBBINS: Maybe you can come back and do a personal session with me when you're famous.

ENDIN: That's gross, Dobsy.

DOBBINS: Sorry.

ENDIN: We're friends. You're a father now. Don't be gross.

DOBBINS: Sorry.

ENDIN: Sad about Ary.

DOBBINS: Yeah. Well, acting's dangerous, it plays with your brain. It makes you think anything is possible – murder, villainy, greed.

ENDIN: Porn's ok. It's not really acting. You're just playing yourself, in a heightened state.

DOBBINS: You're a good actor, Endin. Maybe you can bring some dignity finally to erotic performance. Ian McKlellan did porn. So did Patrick Stewart.

ENDIN: Did they?

DOBBINS: No, but you can tell people that. People will believe anything.

ENDIN: Good advice.

DOBBINS: Avoid insane actor's syndrome.

ENDIN: You too.

(The song continues with the three of them singing. HAMMER enters as angel and joins them in song. AARON joins them as devil. HARRIBLE is last on with his head in the clouds and his lower body in hell. Big finish. Curtain.)

End of Play