

"RED, WHITE & BLUES"

(A Memory Play)

By Stephen Montagne

CHARACTERS

12 actors (4 white, 8 Black; 5 actors play more than one character)

ETHAN GREY: 25-year-old, devout Mormon from Upstate New York trying to make it as a stand-up comedian in the cutthroat clubs of the Lower East-Side of Manhattan. He has a background in computer science, and is coming-of-age politically. Ethan is the Narrator of this play.

DOROTHY DORCHESTER: 80-year-old half-"culturally" Jewish, half-Irish-American, recovering alcoholic, estranged from her one daughter, and is living in a retirement home in Riverdale in the Bronx. An avowed agnostic, she had a successful career as stand-up comedienne, theater actor, and clarinetist who hung with Sinatra and the Rat Pack back in the day.

***KIMBERLY** (aka: "Susan White"): 30-"ish", strawberry blonde (or red-head), feminist living in the Santa Monica neighborhood of Los Angeles, but is originally from Montgomery Alabama. She's a journalist, a Progressive "Netroots" reporter, and a fierce supporter of presidential candidate Hillary Clinton. She's currently "sexually fluid", (though questioning her sexuality, she primarily sleeps with men), and grapples with "daddy issues."

***EDDIE HAYNES:** 75-year-old, Scots-Irish, former Marine, and Vietnam War veteran nicknamed "The Hell Raiser." Originally from Birmingham Alabama, and a former member of "The Brotherhood" (a White Supremacist/White Nationalist hate group) turned campaigner for candidate Barack Obama while living in Riverside California where he's currently in the hospital recovering from a heart attack.

MILES THOMPSON: Late-20s (possibly 30s; age range and hair style, either shorter hair or dread locks, can vary), former LSU football player turned Progressive local New Orleanian radio personality for New Orleans talk radio station WWWL. He's a soon-to-be father with his girlfriend, and a fierce supporter and advocate for presidential candidate Barack Obama. He's originally from the Lower 9th Ward, but currently resides in the West Bank in Algiers Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina. He spends most of his time visiting his dying "Gramps" at the Touro Infirmary.

JACKSON THOMPSON: 40-something, Black New Orleanian originally from the Lower 9th Ward who relocated to the West Bank in Algiers Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina. He's an unemployed mechanic with both a drinking problem and a gambling addiction. He's somewhat a-political but leans Democratic, and is a divorced father of Miles and--

***SIMONE THOMPSON:** Mid-20s, "homegirl" (her style includes feathered hair and "Daisy Dukes"). She's currently a student at Tulane University, but would rather drop out and work full-time to help her family financially. She leans Obama, but is more focused on supporting her community and caring for her "Gramps"--

TERRENCE THOMPSON: 70-year-old, “old school” (read: homophobic), former member of the U.S. military and lifelong New Orleanian raised in the Lower 9th Ward where he owned and ran an autobody shop. He lost his home because of Hurricane Katrina causing he and his family to relocate to the West Bank in Algiers, which he resents. He recently lost his wife, Selma, and is currently dying of cancer at the Touro Infirmary, and is completely uninterested in the current political campaign.

SHAUNA CARRIÈRE: Late-20s, Creole debutante from a wealthy Uptown New Orleanian family whose mother is white and father Black. She’s a former print model turned elementary school teacher, and she’s currently pregnant with hers and Miles Thompson’s child (she’s showing a little at the beginning of the play, and is about to “pop” by the end). A lifelong Democrat in a family that switched to Republican after 9/11, she’s not as zealous about Barack Obama as Miles who she wishes would propose to her already!

***CARINA THOMPSON:** Mid-20s, Black hipster in both style (eyeglasses, bangs, turtlenecks and cardigans) and personality. Originally from the Garden District of New Orleans currently living in Greenwich Village New York in an apartment her father set her up in, and her on-and-off again boyfriend (a libertarian, conspiracy theorist, stand-up comic, half-Irish, half-“culturally” Jewish atheist from Boston named “Jamie Edelstein”) crashes there along with his shady, drug dealing friends. She dabbles in stand-up comedy, but has no career to speak of. A Tulane drop out, and Ralph Nader supporter who comes from a wealthy Uptown family but, like her cousins Miles and *Simone, fits in more in the “Wards.” She and Ethan are “friends”... and she has a drug problem.

RONALD THOMPSON: 50s, Black, wealthy entrepreneur and financier who lives in the Garden District of New Orleans, but is originally from the 9th Ward. The older brother of Jackson Thompson, Terrence Thompson’s oldest child, and the primary breadwinner of the Thompson clan. He graduated from an Ivy league college, then served in the Navy. He’s the father of Carina Thompson, happily married, and is a staunch fiscal conservative Republican, and fierce supporter of presidential candidate John McCain.

ADDITIONAL CHARACTERS/OFF-STAGE VOICES

*COMEDY CLUB MC (off-stage)

*HECKLERS: (#1, #2 & #3) (off-stage)

(8th Black Actor) *CARLTON/TOMMY/("Hooded Man") TITO: *Jamaican Nurse/*New Orleanian/*Rastafarian

*BARACK OBAMA (same actor who plays Ronald Thompson)

*HILLARY CLINTON (same actor who plays Kimberly)

*JOHN MCCAIN (same actor who plays Eddie Haynes)

*RON PAUL (same actor who plays Eddie Haynes)

*AN ANGEL (same actor who plays Kimberly)

(*) indicates: plays more than one character

Time: The Year 2008

Locations: New York; Southern California; New Orleans; Denver

PRODUCTION NOTES

Notes On Staging

This piece requires some multimedia. Therefore, strategically placed television screens, and a scrim at the back of the stage, serves to illuminate: locations, written words, *video montages, photographs, *media images, and *news reports from the 2008 election. *Audio clips are to be used from political speeches, church sermons and nightly cable news shows.

(*) indicates: may require usage rights from original source material.

The stage should not contain a built set; sets and set pieces should roll in and out as needed. Light cues, and (some) stage direction, are indicated in (parentheses), as well as set pieces entering and exiting to indicate a set change or change of scene.

(Black out.) does not necessarily indicate a change of scene, but rather a transition within the same scene.

Certain scenes jump back and forth from one location to the next, and light cues should correspond accordingly.

Ethan remains on stage observing whenever he is not involved in a scene; a chair should be stationed stage left for Ethan to "observe" (except for when he's not, which will be obvious when it happens).

A 15-minute intermission should occur between Act Two & Act Three.

Notes On Dialogue:

Certain words should be spoken in the regional dialects of the South (example: words such as oil should be pronounced *earl*; that replaced with *dat*, etc.) to reflect the African American patois found in the various wards of New Orleans, 7th, 9th, etc).

Dashes (--) at the end of a line of dialogue indicate an interruption, or a change of thought within a line of dialogue, and dual dialogue is used frequently throughout the piece.

Ellipses (...) indicate "beat"/"pause", active silences, or movement in silence.

Words in italics are for emphasis, or to indicate "yelling", or to indicate a change in vocal pitch, or "air quotes", or dialogue within the dialogue, or a word in a language other than English.

Underlined words indicate raised volume or emphasis!

Prologue

ETHAN, MILES and KIMBERLY are crashed out on a king size bed. Ethan stirs, pushes the covers off. Miles turns over, wraps his arm around Ethan. Kimberly feels around for the covers while, at the same time, Ethan and Miles open their eyes; it takes Ethan and Miles a few beats to figure out that they are engaged in a hug. They spring up--

KIMBERLY

Oh. My. God! This is so not how I intended to spend my time in Denver!

Black Out.

Bed exits. Empty stage. The three dress ...

Lights Up.

Ethan (stage left) observing: Kimberly and Miles pace ...

KIMBERLY

I'm just going to assume y'all roofied me!

MILES

Man, that's some bullshit right there! You invited us over!

KIMBERLY

I'm with women now ... most of the time.

MILES

That ain't the vibe I got last night when your tongue was on my—

KIMBERLY

Ugh, *god!* I'm literally having an out of body experience -- and there're bedbugs crawling all over my skin! Do you see them ... *Miles?! What?! The?! Shit?!*
How'd we even get ... here?

Black Out.

Lights Up.

Ethan (stage left) observing: Miles grips Kimberly's hand coiled in a fist, blocking her punch!

KIMBERLY

Why?! Why would you tell me that?!

MILES

Got a guilty conscience! Got caught up in the moment! I was drunk--

KIMBERLY

So typical! You're all talk, like your boyfriend *Obama*, and every other brotha who cheats on a sista--!

MILES

(fist cocked)

Bitch, ya way outta line! Ya better check ya-self ... *now!*

KIMBERLY

Or you'll what?! Hit me?! I'll have your ass in prison faster than you can say Johnny Cochran, and you'll join a whole host of rappers, football players, and thug *nnniii--*

ETHAN

Freeze!!!

Miles and Kimberly freeze in place.

ETHAN

(to audience:)

Witness this defining moment! For it demonstrates what happens when family DNA rears its ugly head; forever tainting the memory of the most *tragically* ill-conceived threesome the world has ever known!

(to Miles and Kimberly:)

Unfreeze!

Miles and Kimberly "unfreeze." Ethan pulls a flip phone out of his pocket and continues as if the following information is coming directly from his cell--

ETHAN

(to audience:)

This memory play is called: "*Red, White & Blues.*" The name of this town is: Denver, Colorado. We're in a downtown Embassy Suites next to the Convention Center. Latitude ... I don't know what the latitude is and this

(re: cell)

won't help me because it's an Ericsson flip phone I got at a Cricket Wireless in Binghamton New York around 2006. It can't go online. Has absolutely no data service. It might as well be a calculator that dials.

(tosses cell)

ETHAN (cont'd)

So! The day is August 29th, 2008. The time is approximately 10:30 a.m. Mountain Standard Time ... Last night, a political up-and-comer -- who came out of nowhere, *wowed* the body politic and--

KIMBERLY

Stole the primary--

MILES

Bitch, what?! Man, you trippin'!

MILES/(overlap)

Keep talkin' that same ole shit. Crazy white bitch from Alabama, got daddy issues; complainin' the whole damn time 'bout "*Hillary got robbed.*" Can't give a Black man a fair shake--

KIMBERLY/(overlap)

He stole it! C'mon, Miles. You know it was Hillary's turn! She deserved it! All his smooth-talkin' bullshit! Gives one speech at the DNC and everybody starts cummin' in their pants--!

ETHAN

Guys-guys-guys!!! Not in front of, you know
(re: audience)

-- company! And, to be fair, that's no really what this is about. It's not a "*political*" play--

KIMBERLY/(overlap)

What-ever! It's totally political!

MILES/(overlap)

Memory play? Whatever the fuck that is.

ETHAN

No!!! ... It's about, you know
(re: Miles and Kimberly)

... *us!* The three of us. It's about what people really care about ... our relationships ... with our mentors.

KIMBERLY/(overlap)

(sotto)

I mean, I guess. If you want to look at it that way.

MILES/(overlap)

(sotto)

Yeah, you know. Whatever, bruh.

ETHAN

(to audience:)

Let's back up a bit and get to know each other. My name is Ethan. Ethan Grey. And these two -- since last night -- are my "*friends*." Miles--

MILES

(to audience:)

Thompson. From New Orleans, *baby!*

ETHAN

(to audience:)

Right. And this is Kimberly--

KIMBERLY

(to audience:)

Just call me Kimberly. Or, you can call me: "*Susan White*." That's my "*reporter name*." See, I'm what they call a "*Netroots*" reporter.

Miles and Ethan groan, close their eyes, dip their heads down,
snore--

KIMBERLY

(to audience:)

"*Netroots*", as defined by Wikipedia: "*describe(s) political activism organized through blogs and other online media, including wikis and social network services. In the United States, the term is used mainly in left-leaning circles*"

(finger snap)

-- which are the only circles that I roll in, motha-fuck-*uuuhs!!!*

Miles and Ethan wake up—

MILES

Though she really a "*Corporatist*" motha-fuck-*uuuh!!!* Which is basically: Republican-*lite!* "*Centrist*." "*Moderate*." "*Neoliberal*." She *all* up in Wall Street's pocket--

KIMBERLY

Oh, go fuck ya-self! Your boy from Chicago took more money from Wall Street than--

ETHAN

Guys-guys-guys!!! *Ix-nay* on the politics-*ay*. This is about *us!* Remember?!

KIMBERLY

And what about you? What's your story? Ethan. The Mormon. From Salt Lake—

ETHAN

Upstate!!! Okay!!! I'm-from-Upstate!!! Not Salt Lake!!!

KIMBERLY/(overlap)

Okay. We got it. So *sensitive*. We'll give you your alone time.

MILES/(overlap)

It's all good, bruh. You from *Up State*. You do you, baby.

Kimberly and Miles exit. After a beat ...

ETHAN

(to audience:)

Denver was ... "*interesting*." You might say it was a game changer for me. ... Change. Who's not a little sick of hearing that word -- *amirite*, people? ... *Sooo*. My story, huh? ... Well, I moved down to the City from *Upstate!*

(directed off-stage:)

Okay! Up-State!!! ... Anyways, I'm working on my stand-up act in the clubs ... and I'm not very good.

Microphone stand appears (center stage) accompanied by the sounds and "ambience" of a dingy East Village comedy club.

Ethan walks towards the mic stand—

ETHAN

(to audience:)

Let's back up even further: January, 2008. We're in New York City. Latitude ... not important. I'm about to go up at one of those East Village comedy clubs where -- after spending eight hours handing out flyers on a street corner -- you get to die a slow, agonizing death during the 4 p.m. slot frequented by the Bridge and Tunnel crowd. I have a "ritual." Before every set, I read a letter that my mom wrote to me before she ...

(forlorn)

...it's been ten years, and not a day goes by that I don't think about her.

(reads letter to audience:)

"My dearest Ethan. Today is your twenty-fifth birthday ...

(emotional)

...and I bet you're even more handsome now than you were ...

(emotional)

...visiting me at St. Pete's where I am writing you one of many letters to come ..."

A voice bellows out—

COMEDY MC (OFF-STAGE)

You're up next, Grey!

ETHAN

(reads)

"I'm going to share with you a secret you will probably find quite shocking. I spent my entire twenty-fifth year on earth completely inactive from the LDS faith..."

COMEDY MC (OFF-STAGE)

Final call, Grey!

ETHAN

(reads)

"I would never forgive myself if I didn't fully engage in the sins of the flesh ... and sin I did???"

(stops reading)

... What????!!!

(reads)

"During my time in Eden, well, there were very few drugs I didn't try ..."

(stops reading)

Holy *shhh--!!!*

COMEDY MC (OFF-STAGE)

You're on, Grey!

Lights Change.

Ethan, in front of the mic, performs his routine:

ETHAN

Hey. How's ... how's it going? How's everybody feeling tonight? Drunk ... I hope. I don't drink ... Sooo ... Anyways. I'm a Mormon, stand-up comic who's voting for Romney. Or as you big city folks call me: a brain dead idiot--

HECKLER 1 (OFF-STAGE)

You suck!!!

ETHAN

I belong to the Church of Latter-day Saints. Or as the kids call it: the LDS Church. It sure isn't the LSD church. Joseph Smith is a long way from Jimi Hendrix--

HECKLER 2 (OFF-STAGE)

Go back to Utah, bitch!

ETHAN

Lots of girls I know left the Mormon faith. Found it too rigid. Wanted to

ETHAN (cont'd)

experiment. I see them around town. It's like they joined the Church of: "Latter-day Sluts"--

HECKLER 3 (OFF-STAGE)

Mormons are all homos!

ETHAN

My dad only had one wife. Not that he didn't believe in polygamy. He just didn't attract more than one--

HECKLER 1 (OFF-STAGE)

Choke on a cock and die! Loser!

ETHAN

Wow ... Okay. You think you're disappointed? How do you think I feel? This is technically my first time in the outside world--

HECKLERS 1, 2 & 3 (OFF-STAGE)

Whatever!/Fuck off!!!/Homo!!!

Black Out.

Microphone stand is gone.

Lights Up.

Ethan is rejoined by Miles and Kimberly.

MILES

Bruh. That was rough to watch.

KIMBERLY

Yeah. No shit. How do you even recover from that?

ETHAN

Exactly! That's my question: what do we do when the odds seem completely stacked against us? But, I mean, isn't that the same story for the majority of Americans who--?

*SEN. BARACK OBAMA (AUDIO RECORDING)

"For I say to you tonight: there is not a liberal America and a conservative America - there is the United States of America. There is not a Black America and a White America and Latino America and Asian America - there's the United States of America --"

Enter BARACK OBAMA.

BARACK OBAMA

In the end, isn't that what this election is about? Do we participate in a politics of cynicism or do we participate in a politics of hope?

Ethan, Miles and Kimberly stare at him for a long beat, then--

BARACK OBAMA

What? Well ... isn't it?

ETHAN

That's not really what we were talking about.

KIMBERLY

See -- this! This is what I'm talking about! He just interjects himself into the god-damn conversation, and just steals the fucking spotlight!

Miles runs up to shake Barack Obama's hand.

MILES

Hey-hey-hey! Barack, *baby!* Don't listen to these whiny-ass bitches, know what I'm sayin'! You just keep on doin' what you doin', bruh--

BARACK OBAMA

Well thank you, young man. I plan to do just that.

KIMBERLY

And I ... hope you *choke on a chicken bone and die!!!*

Kimberly rushes Barack as Ethan and Miles hold her back--

KIMBERLY

It was Hillary's turn!!! You Chi-Town huckster with those dreamy eyes and that voice dipped in honey!!! I don't know whether to punch you or ride you like a unicorn!!!

BARACK OBAMA

Security!!! Security!!!

Barack Obama runs off stage as Miles and Ethan continue to contain Kimberly--

ETHAN

(to audience:)

Buckle in, folks! 2008 is gonna be a bumpy ride!

Black Out.

Act One

Scene 1

Enter: Dorothy's apartment.

DOROTHY DORCHESTER is seated in her armchair.

ETHAN

(to audience; doing his best "Ira Glass: *This American Life*" impression)
Act one: "The Never-Ending Race." Scene one. Ethan reminisces about his life changing meet and greet with greatness ... It's January 2nd; the night before the Iowa Caucus. We're in Riverdale, New York, aka: the Bronx. Latitude -- I'm kidding! ... Population: over forty-eight thousand bad-asses, and one semi-famous, red-headed, Irish-Jew -- who made her bones in Vegas during the Rat Pack Era -- now spending her sunset years in an apartment inside a retirement complex in Riverdale.

Dorothy examines a plate of runny spaghetti on top of her TV tray table, grimaces, picks up the plate and mimes hurling it at a wall.

ETHAN

(to audience:)

Since my comedy routine was ... lacking direction, to say the least -- I decided to seek the advice of this wise old soul.

DOROTHY

Hey! Who are you calling old?

Enter CARLTON (Dorothy's Jamaican nurse) who pulls out a packet of pills, hands it to Dorothy, then exits. Ethan knocks on her door. Dorothy heads over to greet him.

DOROTHY

My, you're a handsome devil. Little young to be a maintenance man.

ETHAN

Oh, no. I'm not the -- I'm Ethan. Ethan Grey. I wrote you an e-mail--

DOROTHY

Oh, honey. I don't do that e-mail nonsense. Wait. Are you the son of that nice Mormon girl who used to come--?

ETHAN

She was your assistant back in the '70s. I'm her son. Ethan. I do stand-up and--

DOROTHY

Sweet girl. Always liked her. How is she?

ETHAN

She's ...

(forlorn)

...she's gone.

DOROTHY

Gone? Well, I guess that's how she is then. Sorry to hear that ... You on some sort of mission or--?

ETHAN

No. I explained it all in the e-mail. I do stand-up comedy in the City and you said I could come by. You remembered my mom and always liked her ... which is information we already established, like, two seconds ago. ...

DOROTHY

Yeah, well ... okay. Come on in ... I guess.

Ethan enters her apartment.

DOROTHY

There's this thing. It's all over the TV. Going on tomorrow in that Midwestern state with all the corn. What's that called?

ETHAN

Voting.

DOROTHY

Well I know that! There's a name for it. Corking? Caulking--?

ETHAN

Caucusing. The Iowa Caucus.

DOROTHY

That's the one. Bright and handsome. Potent combination. So, who you pulling for? The Black kid, or the spunky broad with the husband who likes Jewish girls?

ETHAN

President Clinton?

DOROTHY

Hey. You're two for two. I like her. She's got chutzpah.

ETHAN

You mean ... Monica Lewinsky?

DOROTHY

No! *Hillary!* Would be nice to see a powerful woman on the TV all the time with some wrinkles, the same tits the good Lord gave her -- and wearing underwear for a change ... So, who's your horse in this race?

ETHAN

I was kind of leaning towards ... umm, Giuliani helped New York after 9/11 and McCain's a war -- I dunno. Probably Romney.

DOROTHY

Romney, eh? The Mormon. So. You're a: Republican, Mormon, stand-up comic. ... You'll fit right in. ...

ETHAN

Umm ... you ... like living here?

DOROTHY

Sure beats flashing my tits for milk money ... *aaand* that's what we call comedy, my boy.

ETHAN

Oh yeah. I knew you were joking. I mean ... come on. ...

DOROTHY

(death stare)

How 'bout a Sprite? Perhaps a bourbon? Bet you're a scotch man.

ETHAN

No. Sorry. Don't drink. Thank you though.

DOROTHY

You are welcome. My, you are adorable, Bambi. It's a dry house. Gave up the sauce years ago. Decided to show the ole liver some mercy. The Good Lord entered my heart. Haven't had a drop of liquor since. Praise Jesus!

ETHAN

Oh, wow! You're a Christian?! Mom didn't mention that in her letters. So, how did you handle, you know: The Lifestyle? I mean I'm just--

DOROTHY

I drank bucket loads of booze. ...

ETHAN

You're not ... really a Christian. That was comedy.

DOROTHY

Hey, you're a quick learn. That's a plus. I'm a stone-cold agnostic -- and a Jew. Well half. Pop's side of the family were all drunken Irish Catholics. Momma Rose kicked his ginger goy ass to the curb when I was still suckling on her teets. Maybe there is a God. Maybe there isn't. What the hell do I know? I still have no idea how to send electronic mail. You think I have the inside track on the existence of God?

ETHAN

I can help you with that.

DOROTHY

Thank you, preacher. But many before you have tried, and even more have failed.

ETHAN

No. I meant: how to send e-mail. I used to do a lot of computer tech work ... that's how I could afford to move down to the City.

DOROTHY

Why, that's a lovely offer. But I don't own a computer. God and computers, both give me indigestion. I figured out the remote control and that, already, was a bridge too far. Why don't you stick to the computer stuff? Gotta be more lucrative than a stand-up act.

ETHAN

All due respect, Ms. Dorchester--

DOROTHY

Stop right there. "*All due respect*" is what all those dirty politicians say. Call me Dorothy.

ETHAN

Okay, Ms. Dorothy. Where's Toto? Here boy! Here boy!

DOROTHY

You must kill in the clubs. There's nothing I can teach you. Go forth and prosper.

ETHAN

Hey. I'm not ... *that* bad! I've been going up almost every day... after handing out the right amount of flyers--

DOROTHY

Oh really? Let me ask you: If Carson were around today, you think he'd invite you over to The Chair?

ETHAN

Well, I'm not sure—

DOROTHY

If you can't answer the questions, kiddo, then I've got some harsh reality for you. You're not only wasting an audience's time and money; you're wasting a lucrative future as a computer technician.

ETHAN

Lady! I think I have what it takes to be a great comic. I believe it to be my mission on this earth. And, as God is my witness, I will not stop until I convince every person I meet: I am worth a fifteen-dollar Jack and Coke and the required two drink minimum!

DOROTHY

Wow. Very convincing. I'll call the Jay Leno people. See if there's an opening for next Wednesday. You should be fine ... How old *are* you, Bambi?

ETHAN

Just turned twenty-five.
(Dorothy looks pained)
You okay?

DOROTHY

I think I just had a stroke. It'll pass. It's like gas with me these days.

ETHAN

Ha! That was funny. I like that one. I should use that. Would be kind of weird, probably, since I'm young and healthy. But, you're, like, really, really old -- and that's hilarious!

(Dorothy's not amused)

I'm kidding! I feel like we know each other now and I can do that with you. I really love spending time with you. Can I come back again?! This has been really, really cool for me!

DOROTHY

On one condition.

ETHAN

Name it.

DOROTHY

There's a Chink restaurant down the street. Be a dear and run to the corner and get me some *god-damn fried food*. *I'm starving already!*

Scene 2

Dorothy's apartment's gone, back to an empty stage.

Ethan approaches Kimberly as she stares at a headshot sized photograph.

ETHAN

Kimberly? ...

KIMBERLY

(places photograph in handbag)

What?! Nothing! I wasn't doing anything.

ETHAN

What was that photo?

KIMBERLY

What photo? Where?

ETHAN

The one you just put ... never mind. If you don't want to show me, I will respect that.

(to audience:)

Scene two. "She's Got An Obama Problem." February 4th. Los Angeles, California.

(directed off-stage:)

Cue the: Hillary "It's Woman's Day" tribute video -- oh, that's not in our budget? How about just the bumper stickers then?

PROJECTED ONTO SCRIM: various BUMPER STICKERS, highlighting political slogans; popular buzz words & catch phrases, etc.

ETHAN

(to audience:)

Tomorrow is: Super Tuesday. Otherwise known as: Super Duper Tuesday. Tsunami Tuesday. Mega Tuesday. The Tuesday of Destiny--

KIMBERLY

Okay!!! We got it!!! They know what fucking day it is! It's not like the entire fucking primary weighs in the god-damn balance or anything!!! ...

Kimberly stares Ethan down; it seems as if he's going to say something, but decides against it, walks (stage left), sits down in a chair, observing:

Cell phone rings inside Kimberly's purse.

KIMBERLY

(to audience:)

I'm not gonna answer that. It's probably my story editor. I've got a deadline for the "Huffington Post". But, I'm a little behind on that story. Been having a bit of trouble *concentrating* of late on ... anything.

(looks over at Ethan)

Fine! If you must know...

(pulls out of her purse an autographed 8x10 of Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton) --

...this! This is the reason I can't fucking concentrate! I am in love ... with a woman! Correction: a *movement!* And, I've been hanging on by a thread to the possibility that the thing I've been dreaming about since I was a little girl growing up in Montgomery, Alabama, is about to come to fruition. That a woman, like myself, will finally become: President of the United States of America!!!

(cell phone rings)

Ahhh, god-damn it!!! Would you get off my dick already?!!! ... Sorry. As I was saying: the story.

STAGE CREW MEMBER quickly enters, hands Kimberly a VOLVO STEERING WHEEL, quickly exits.

KIMBERLY

(driving; to audience:)

As you can see -- I'm "*driving.*" I'm on the 110 Harbor Freeway ... during rush hour. Actually, the technical term is: "*A Clusterfuck.*" I'm heading out to -- Lord Jesus, give me strength -- Riverside. I'm going to interview this old dude that I saw on a YouTube video and thought: "*well, Ms. Susan White, now here's a character who requires further examination.*"

Enter: Eddie's hospital room.

EDDIE HAYNES lies in bed.

KIMBERLY

Apparently, this old timer Vietnam War vet went full blown anti-war and started showing up at Obama rallies. In fact, he's actually campaigning for Obama. Thing is -- used to be a racist. That's right; Aryan Brotherhood and the whole nine yards. And to a Progressive, "*Netroots*" reporter like yours truly ... Well, that's a story right there, folks. But see, that's not the whole story. Truth be told, it's actually *waaay, waaaaay* more complicated than you could possibly imagine, and--

KIMBERLY (cont'd)
 (cell phone rings; she's over it)
Ahhh!!! Okay!!! Jesus-fucking-Christ!! I'm on it!!!
 (to audience:)
 Excuse me. I gotta take this.

Scene 3

Eddie's hooked up to a morphine drip, a respirator is nearby; he flips through television channels, while--

ETHAN
 (to audience:)
 Scene three. "Eddie 'the Hell Raiser' Haynes Rises From the Ash." Place: a Riverside County hospital room. Around 8 p.m. Pacific Standard Time. Eddie channel checks until he lands on C-SPAN: a replay of a speech from 2002 by a then unknown state senator from Illinois.

Ethan heads back to his chair (stage left).

*STATE SEN. BARACK OBAMA (AUDIO RECORDING)
"And I know that in this crowd today, there is no shortage of patriots, or of patriotism. What I am opposed to is a dumb war."

Eddie doses off. Enter Kimberly.

EDDIE
 (opens eyes; re: Kimberly)
 Ya 'bout the best lookin' nurse I've seen since I got here.

Kimberly remains frozen, as if staring at a ghost ...

EDDIE
 Is it casual wear Friday?
 (waits for Kimberly to say something -- anything)
 What's the matter, darlin'? Cat got ya tongue? ...

KIMBERLY
 Uh, no. I'm not -- I'm not a nurse. Sorry to barge in on you like this -- Mr. Haynes. I drove in from Los Angeles, and--

EDDIE
 The City of Hell's Angels! My ole stompin' ground! Hey, how'd ya get in here any--?

KIMBERLY

I told them I was family. They let me in.

EDDIE

Well ... now ya startin' to make me a tad bit nervous. Hope ya not some stalker--

KIMBERLY

No. My name is ... Susan White, and I'm a reporter for--

EDDIE

A reporter, huh? *Weeeell*. I'll be damned. Good for you, darlin'.

KIMBERLY

Thanks. That's ... *sweet*. Anyway. I saw a video of you on YouTube and--

EDDIE

Ah, yes. My infamous fifteen minutes. Everybody wants to get a look at the red-neck cracker who's votin' for the half-breed from Chicago. A real life "American History X" asshole. "*Can ya believe, he's votin' for the nigger candidate?*" ...

KIMBERLY

Yeah. That's about right. Accept I would have left out the "*n*" word characterization.

EDDIE

Awww, hell. Just a word, darlin'. Words don't hurt nobody. Besides, the Blacks all call themselves *nigg*--

KIMBERLY

Yes! Yes they do! Words do hurt people. Know what else hurts people? Bricks. Fire bombs. Whips. Chains. Nooses. Those damn sure hurt people.

EDDIE

So, that's why ya came? To give an old, sick cracker a civics lesson? That's aw'right. Whatever ya wanna spend ya gas money on. And I'm sure ya hybrid Prius--

KIMBERLY

I drive a Volvo!!! ... Sorry. I get a little touchy when I feel I'm being profiled. But, I am a big girl and I am here to do a job. So, do you mind if I ask you a few questions--?

EDDIE

Well, that all depends. Could ya do me a favor first? Pretty please with sugar on top?

KIMBERLY

Sure? I guess--?

EDDIE

Can ya run to the corner store and grab me a pack of Marlboro Reds? I'm jonzin' for a smoke.

KIMBERLY

(Southern cadence)

Oh, Mr. Haynes! Are ya out ya god-damn mind?! No sir! I cannot just run to the corner and grab ya a pack of smokes!

EDDIE

I just want one. One's not gonna hurt, darlin'.

KIMBERLY

Hel-looo! How the hell ya think ya got here in the first place? And, ya can't smoke in a hospital room. There are laws 'gainst that sorta thing.

EDDIE

Oh, ya liberal Californians with all ya damn rules. Used to be ya could smoke everywhere. Now, it's a god-damn crime.

KIMBERLY

Well, where there's the chance of exploding oxygen tanks, I'm gonna have to lean on the side of law enforcement, Hoss. Besides, ya not gettin' away that easy. I got a deadline and a story to write. So, is it okay with you if I--?

EDDIE

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

(hand gestures to a chair)

Pop a squat and stay a while.

Kimberly takes a seat.

EDDIE

Make me feel like some kinda celebrity.

KIMBERLY

Right. Anyway. First question. What, in your own words -- and based on some remarks you made in that *infamous* video -- does: "*fightin' to get the oil cheap*" mean, comin' from a former Marine?

EDDIE

I think it's pretty self-explanatory, ain't it?

KIMBERLY
Not necessarily--

EDDIE
Ms. Hippie Liberal California Transplant -- I do detect the familiar *draaawl* -- thinks ... what? We're fightin' to liberate the Iraqi people? C'mon now. How naïve are we?

KIMBERLY
Again with the profiling. I ain't no hippie, Hoss. One thing I can't stand is being stereotyped as some peacenik liberal. God-damn it. I hate that word.

EDDIE
So, what? Ya some kinda George Bush style conservative--?

KIMBERLY
Mr. Haynes--!!!

EDDIE
Call me Eddie.

KIMBERLY
Fine. Eddie. I prefer the term "*Progressive*", if ya don't mind. And I support our troops in Afghanistan and Iraq that, I feel, were wrongly led into war based on false reports--

EDDIE
Ha! Ya think?! I figured out there were false reports, and I've just been sittin' my lazy ole cracker-ass on a god-damn easy chair in this shit-hole desert town for the last ten years. And, ya do realize ya talkin' to a decorated Marine, young lady.

KIMBERLY
Oh, I know. Believe me. I've done my research. I know you were born during the Great Depression, 1932 to be exact, in a makeshift shantytown on a tobacco farm in a wooden crate that the migrant workers turned into a manger. And I also know that the men of the Scots-Irish Haynes clan fought for America in every war since the Revolutionary--

EDDIE
On the Confederate side during the Civil.

KIMBERLY
Yes. This is true. And I know you served as a captain in Vietnam. Known to your Marine squadron as Eddie "The Hell Raiser" Haynes--

EDDIE

Semper fi! Ooo-rah!

KIMBERLY

And I know that you made damn sure the Freedom Riders got their asses whooped sufficiently when they rode into Alabama ... Should I go on?

EDDIE

Nah. That's pretty good. 'Cept ya left out the part when I performed a tap dance number with Shirley Temple and her Sambo. Boy, I love that story. And, ya better get ya facts straight if ya gonna be exact. I was born in '33. Need every year I can get at this point. Pretty impressive about the wooden manger though. Forgot 'bout that.

KIMBERLY

I often wonder how those migrant workers felt being around all those hillbillies who hated them so much because their skin was just a shade darker, and their language--

EDDIE

Darlin', I was an infant. Didn't know one shade from another at the time. Took me years to fully grasp the importance of racial differentiation. Just real important to us to keep the lineage pure. Stand up for the Anglo Saxon heritage that made this country--

KIMBERLY

Oh, cut the crap with all that White Power bullshit, Eddie!!! I've heard it all before. Lineage pure. Our proud White heritage. Makes me so sick I could puke!

EDDIE

Well, ya in the right place. They got the drugs for what ails ya. I can get ya some if ya'd--

KIMBERLY

(starts her exit)

Ya know, maybe comin' here wasn't such a great idea after all. Thought I could remain professional about all of...

(stops her exit)

Actually, there's somethin' I've been wantin' to say to a man such as yourself since I was a teenager. So, maybe that three hours spent in god-damn downtown L.A. traffic was worth it just so I can look one of you racist, southern red-necks in the eyes and finally say: *"go fuck ya-self!"*

Kimberly continues her exit, until—

EDDIE

Can't say I blame ya. The entirety of the Haynes clan, pretty much a bunch of dumb-ass, cracker, red-necks with our heads so far up our asses we could give ourselves our own colonoscopies. Men. We're no god-damn good. We're liars, cheats, scoundrels, drunks, ignorant fools. We can't see beyond our own foolish ambitions. We create conflicts to profit off of. We beat down other races 'cause we're too afraid to deal with the inherent sickness in our own. We're the god-damned race of Adam; sinful, fallen, ignorant -- and there ain't no white light at the end of the tunnel gonna meet us. Just a hole, six feet deep. Dirt on our rotten corpses. For all the shit we done, there ain't no better endin.' ...

KIMBERLY

I'd like ... I'd like to come back and interview you a few times if that's alright with you? I would also very much like it if you stuck around long enough to let me write about -- all your bat-shit crazy contradictions.

EDDIE

Can't make ya any promises. Some things are slightly outta my control at the moment. But, if I'm still here in a week's time, ya can come back ... Provided ya bring me a *god-damn pack of smokes!!!*

Scene 4

Eddie's hospital room gone, back to an empty stage.

Ethan's wearing Mardi Gras beads and dressed very much like a tourist on Bourbon Street.

ETHAN

(directed off-stage:)

Can we get some Louie Armstrong music ...? No? Terence Blanchard ... maybe? Brass band ...? No, really????!!! How about some video footage--?

PROJECTED ONTO SCRIM: news footage of Hurricane Katrina disaster

Enter Miles.

MILES

Man, what the fuck is you tryin' to do, bruh? Depress the shit outta all these white folks from whatever the fuck suburb they came here from?

ON TELEVISIONS: Video footage of *Rev. Jeremy Wright's speech to his congregation

*REV. JEREMY WRIGHT (ON VIDEO PROJECTION)

"No-no-no! Not God bless America! God damn America! It's in the Bible. For killing innocent people!"

MILES

Awww, damn! This mothafucka again?! ...

(to Ethan)

Dude, what are you wearing?

ETHAN

(to audience:)

Scene four. "Meet the Thompson Family of New Orleans East And The West Bank." March 18th. Around 9 a.m. Central Standard Time. Place: Studio of WWL, 1350 on the A.M. dial.

Enter: radio station.

Miles sits down at the console, puts on headphones, adjusts microphone; Ethan takes off the beads, etc., and returns to his seat (stage left), observing:

MILES

(on call with a listener:)

No, I don't think Barack is on the same page as Rev. Wright. I think Rev. Wright speaks for that old school generation from way, way back in the day when cats like my gramps used to roll 'round the Lower Nine, dodging bullets from coon-asses in pickup trucks. But appreciate the call though.

(hangs up)

Now, we done talked 'bout Rev. Wright to the point where I'm tired of hearin' his name for sure, know what I'm sayin'. But before I say goodbye to y'all today -- if y'all could take a moment and pray to whoever or whatever it is that gets y'all through the night; say a prayer for a proud son of the City That Care Forgot. My rock and my fortress for so many years -- my "Gramps", Terrence Thompson -- is in the Touro right now in full recovery mode, y'all. My fellow true black and gold Saints fan. Who Dat?! know what I'm sayin'. Gramps, we love ya, and we thinkin' 'bout ya, and we hold ya in our thoughts and prayers every minute, and every hour of every blessed day. And godspeed, Barack. Let the Spirit be with ya all the way to the White House, my brotha. Until next time, this a proud son and grandson of the City of New Orleans, Louisiana, Miles Thompson, sayin' peace out and keep the faith, y'all.

Scene 5

PROJECTED ONTO SCRIM: New Orleans second-line funeral procession, followed by PHOTO OF: cemetery and a gravestone that reads: "RIP Selma Thompson, 1935-2007"

Enter: Touro Infirmary hospital room.

TERRENCE THOMPSON lies in bed. Ethan stands at Terrence's bedside as Terrence speaks directly to him ...

TERRENCE

...and I keep askin' over and over to keep that god-damn window closed! ... And fuck that blood-suckin', mothafuckin' insurance man! Steal all my money for so god-damn long! Talkin' 'bout: "*Act of God Clause*." God my Black ass! God ain't got nuthin' to do with all that! Katrina done stole my house! I done paid the note back in '65! ... Made it through Betsy ... Could use a little LBJ right 'bout now, that's for damn sure!

Enter Jackson, Miles and Simone Thompson.

ETHAN

(to audience:)

Scene Five. Place: the Touro Infirmary. Uptown, New Orleans. Terrence Thompson's son, Jackson, arrives first, followed by Jackson's two children. Son: Miles -- who just finished up his radio hosting gig -- and daughter: Simone. They will visit this place ... for as long as it takes. Because that's how they roll.

Ethan goes to his chair (stage left), observing: Terrence, television remote in hand, channel checks.

MILES

(holds out a fist)

How ya feelin', soldier? Show some love.

Terrence ignores Miles' gesture; continues to channel check.

SIMONE

Mornin', Gramps. Miles is holdin' out some love for ya. Ya deprivin' him.

TERRENCE

He know he loved. No need to coddle the boy, shit. I can't find my damn program.

JACKSON

Pops. I told ya before, now. Too early in the mornin'. She come on at three.

MILES

Who he lookin' for?

JACKSON

The blonde lesbian lady.

SIMONE

Ellen? You watch Ellen, Gramps?

JACKSON

He watch the damn show every day. Like he goin' to church.

MILES

The Church of Ellen Degeneres? Ya finally defined God and She a lesbian talk show host?

JACKSON

Say she make him smile. Funky white lady likes to get down.

SIMONE

She from here.

MILES

Serious?

SIMONE

Yeah. Ellen's a home-girl. She from Metairie.

TERRENCE

Is that the truth? Well, I'll be damned. Little white lesbian lady from *Met'ree*. See, all 'bout instincts, children. Gotta know people. Get ya through this world. I know people. She good people ... God-damn insurance man a motha--

JACKSON/(overlap)

Don't get ya-self all upset, frettin' 'bout the insurance man. Can't keep hollerin' 'bout who did what to who--

MILES/(overlap)

That's right, Gramps. Gotta look forward. Keep the eye on the prize. Eye on the prize--

TERRENCE

Will you two "Amos 'N' Andy" niggas shut the fuck up for two god-damn minutes and let me say what I wanna say?! Tell me I can't talk 'bout ... *shiiit!* Back and forth all god-damn day long -- like livin' with a Dr. King reunion tour. Gonna say what's on my mind 'til y'all put me in the vault! ... Knuckle-draggin', mothafuckin' vampires -- talkin' 'bout: "*Act of God Clause*." I done paid the god-damn note back in '65--!

JACKSON/(overlap)

Pop. Ya can't keep goin' on 'bout this. It's in the past, now. Can't keep lookin'--

MILES/(overlap)

Gotta keep lookin' forward, Gramps. Eye on the prize. Know what I'm sayin'--

TERRENCE

(to Miles:)

No, I don't know what the fuck ya sayin'! Come in here every day and just talk-talk 'bout: "*Barack this and Barack that.*" Watchin' my grandson lose his god-damn mind over some skinny, big ear, mulatto from Chicago wannabe Big Chief. Listen close, boy. Two things ain't never gonna happen: Saints ain't never gonna win the Super Bowl, and a black man ain't never gonna be president.

(to Jackson:)

And never play the pick six!

MILES/(overlap)

Wow, okay. That was rough. He ain't even playin'--

JACKSON/(overlap)

I see how it is, now. Gonna hit below the belt. No, he ain't even playin'--

SIMONE

Will you two stop clownin', for real. Granddad. What these two clowns is tryin' to say is: if ya keep gettin' upset 'bout the house, and the insurance money, and all that mess from Katrina, ya can't focus on gettin' better so ya can get on outta here, back to Algiers.

MILES

Yeah, what she said. Besides, here's how it's gonna be, old man. I ain't gonna let ya go nowhere before that skinny, big ear, mulatto boy become Big Chief. So, don't be thinkin' ya gonna just skirt on outta here. Too many niggas workin' too damn hard so y'all's generation of soldiers can experience that glorious day. And when that glorious day finally do arrive, we gonna raise ya up on our shoulders, and march ya all the way down Ramparts right into Armstrong Park. Bawlin' our eyes out the whole way to Congo Square. And that's what I'm sayin', *baby!* ...

TERRENCE

...My Selma ... she gone. Our home ... gone. My business ... What I got left?

Oh Lord, I'm jus-- just holdin' on.

(to Miles:)

Closer, boy. Lemme tell ya somethin'. You a smart, strong, eloquent young Black man.

(to Jackson:)

I'm proud of ya, son; always have been, and I been -- been meanin' to tell ya that. Hey, where Ronald at? Why ya brotha never come visit me, Jacks?

JACKSON

(annoyed)

Ya mean: Mr. Big Time Uptown?

TERRENCE

Yeah, you right. You right.

(to Simone)

Baby girl. Come here, darlin'. Let ya granddad look at ya. So beautiful. Like ya grandma. My love ... she gone. Almost my time--

SIMONE

No, Grandad. Ya got us. We love ya. You ain't goin' nowhere just yet.

MILES

We ain't leavin' ya, Gramps. We gonna be right here all day, every day if need be.

JACKSON

Just hang in there now, Pops. Everything gonna be cool, now. Ya still got a lot of game left in ya, old man. Look, I miss Momma just as much as you do. We all do. But, ya know she would want ya to soldier on like ya always done before, and ya know ya still got some more livin' to do before ya join that second-line up there in the sky.

MILES

Second-line in the sky? What the fuck--?

SIMONE

Miles ... for real?

MILES

Yeah, you right. You right.

JACKSON

Ya oughta say a prayer right now.

MILES

Excuse me?

JACKSON

Ya heard what I said. Don't make me repeat myself. C'mon now. Let's clasp our hands together. Bow ya heads. Let's say a grace.

SIMONE/(overlap)

For real? Ya want us to--?

MILES/(overlap)
Naw. We all good.

MILES
Already sent out a prayer-line over the airwaves today.

JACKSON
Now that's some lazy ass shit. Ya talkin' 'bout: "*sent out a prayer-line over the airwaves.*" Boy, clasp ya damn hands together--
(prayer)
Dear Lord. We ain't much for prayin' in this here family, but we been known to show our love to ya from time to time. Ya been there for us in the rough time -- probably coulda used a little more help back in '05--

MILES
Amen to all that.

SIMONE
Stay on point, Daddy.

JACKSON
Anyway. You a father ... thee Father. So, ya know how it is. My kids' granddad is in a bad way at the moment, and we hopin' ya don't need him which ya any time too soon, and if ya could take extra care of my momma -- who just recently joined y'all -- she a damn good cook ... probably already know that seein' as ya made everything and all--

MILES
Verdict still out on that one--

SIMONE
Miles! Stop clownin'!

JACKSON
Forgive the boy, Lord. He a doubtin' Thomas at times. But we ain't got time for all that now ... do we?

Jackson shoots Miles the death stare.

MILES
(feels stare)
Huh? No, sir. We don't. I'm all good, God.

JACKSON
So in conclusion—

MILES

While ya at it, Lord, please make brotha Barack da prez of dis here U.S. of A in November 'n da Saints Super Bowl champs in February, 'n ya done gots ya-self a true believer. Who Dat?! 'n amen.

JACKSON

Amen.

SIMONE

A-men.

TERRENCE

Praise Jesus ... and Louie Armstrong. Amen.

Miles grabs tv remote, raises the volume--

*SEN BARACK OBAMA (AUDIO RECORDING)

"This is the reality in which Reverend Wright and other African-Americans of his generation grew up. They came of age in the late '50s and early '60s, a time when segregation was still the law of the land and opportunity was systematically constricted. What's remarkable is not how many failed in the face of discrimination, but how many men and women overcame the odds; how many were able to make a way out of no way for those like me who would come after them."

Act Two: Part One

Barack Obama stands alone (on an empty stage).

BARACK OBAMA

I think here there should be one of those video montages of what's been happening in the primary so far. Maybe accompanied by the appropriate music. Some Aretha Franklin ...

Enter Hillary Clinton.

HILLARY CLINTON

I would have chosen something from the Indigo Girls.

BARACK OBAMA

Of course you would.

HILLARY CLINTON

What's that supposed to mean?

BARACK OBAMA

Nothing. But I think the majority of voters would agree with me that Indigo Girls are not who should kick off act two.

HILLARY CLINTON

Oh, why don't you go insult working class people some more--

BARACK OBAMA/(overlap)

That's not true. I never insulted working class people. You know that's a lie--

HILLARY CLINTON/(overlap)

Tell them how they cling to their Bibles and their guns! Or go cruise chicks with your "*homeboy*": John Edwards!

BARACK OBAMA

John Edwards is not my homeboy. Everyone knows *that's* Jay-Z.

Enter Ethan.

ETHAN

Hey!!! What is wrong with you two?! ... The appropriate musical cue is: Talking Heads: "Once In A Lifetime"! But for the last time -- *we ... can't ... afford it!!!*

Barack and Hillary both cross their arms, shake their heads at each other, then exit.

Scene 1

Dorothy's apartment.

Dorothy sits in her armchair...

ETHAN

(to audience:)

Part One of Act Two. "Intersections." Scene One. "Dirty Harriet." Spring, 2008. Ethan returns to Dorothy's apartment to show her his stand-up routine...

Ethan walks in front of Dorothy's chair—

ETHAN

(to Dorothy:)

...I belong to the Church of Latter-day Saints. Or as the kids call it: the LDS Church. Which, trust me, is a lot different than the LSD church. Joseph Smith is a long way from Jimi Hendrix. ...

DOROTHY

So, you decided to lead with your '60s material, eh? Bet the kids just eat up your twenty minutes on Johnson and Vietnam.

ETHAN

It's my Mormon material. I mean, talk about what you know, right?

DOROTHY

Well, that would be useful if you knew something worthy of sharing with an audience.

ETHAN

Wow. You really don't hold back, do you?

DOROTHY

Awww. I'm sorry, bambino. You came here for a sugar-coat and a hand job, didn't you?

ETHAN

What? No. I was ... wow! I just thought ... I'm trying to be topical. I'm sharing some of my experiences that I think have a unique -- I am so confused.

DOROTHY

Clearly.

ETHAN

Please, Dorothy. Just tell me what I need to do to make it better!

DOROTHY

I can't just tell you that. You've got to feel it, in your gut. You have to know it. You have to live it. You can't give an audience a perspective if you haven't lived one ... All you know about life you learned sitting in front of the Boob Tube all damn day.

ETHAN

That's not true! I got life lessons in my childhood from my parents. My dad took me camping -- took me to museums, and Broadway theater, and comedy clubs, and concerts, and we traveled, and my mom ... my mom ... she ... *she* ...

Ethan stares off in the distance, forlorn. ...

DOROTHY

See. This is what I'm talking about.

ETHAN

What?

DOROTHY

Honey, you're soft. You don't have thick enough skin to handle the comedy world today. Have you watched the roasts they do now? Sick, sociopathic, retarded children on that comedy channel. If you can call it that.

ETHAN

Yeah, but you could handle one of those roasts.

DOROTHY

Oh please. There is no way I'm getting up on that dais with those foul-mouthed, trash talkers. Lenny Bruce, George Carlin, Richard Pryor -- even that Bill Hicks fellow -- they had something to say about politics and society. Today? *Bleh!* Steve Allen was right. It's all dumbed down. Now, when Sinatra was around, boy--

ETHAN

(excited)

I know!!! It must have been amazing for you! Up there with Sinatra and his crew -- just nailing it! I can just imagine you up on stage at the Sands. And you were, pardon me for saying so, but you were ... very attractive. ...

DOROTHY

Go on.

ETHAN

No, I mean. For a comic, you were--

DOROTHY

Good opener. Bad closer, kid. I was, as you kids say, "*hot*" -- gifted, beautiful, talented, sexy, smart ... But, terribly humble ... and shy. Except when it came to sex! Then I was ... well, mostly drunk. ...

ETHAN

Wow ... O-kay? I mean ... how could you perform so well if you were always drunk?

DOROTHY

Well, it is a talent. Don't kid yourself. But, it probably has to do with *me dear ole dah's* Irish genes. I don't know if Benny Goodman was Irish or not. But, because I could also play a little clarinet, I was known to the Boys as "*Benny Dorchester*." Which I guess was a step up from Dorrie, or "*Doratie*", as Frank used to call to me.

(Sinatra)

DOROTHY (cont'd)

"Whadda'ya say dere, Doratie?" with his phony Jersey gangster routine. Frank was a complicated guy.

ETHAN

He was a Russian Jew.

DOROTHY

The hell he was! He was a guinea from Hoboken!

ETHAN

No, I meant Benny ... *guinea*? Is that because Sinatra was some kind of pig--?

DOROTHY

(disgusted)

Mormons! A little piece of advice going forward -- and take this from an Irish-Jew who is *actually* funny. You should look British but act Yiddish. Try on some swear words and racial slurs. See how they fit. And, how do you know Goodman was a Russian--?

ETHAN

Wikipedia. I was bored one night -- Googling a bunch of Jazz musicians ... I'm weird like that. ...

DOROTHY

What in the *hell* is a "Wikipedia", and why in the *hell* were you "Googling" anything? Though that does sound like something you'd do to yourself alone at night.

ETHAN

You've never heard ...? I have got to get you a computer. This is insane!

ETHAN/(overlap)

How can you not know what Googling is? Or Wikipedia? I'm going to get you a Mac. They're so easy to use.

DOROTHY(overlap)

Oh, this again! I don't want a damn computer! I'll shoot the damn screen if you bring it in here!

ETHAN

You have a gun?

DOROTHY

No. But the Black kid who brings me my pills can get me one. He lives in Harlem.

ETHAN

Yeah, pretty sure that's racist.

DOROTHY

The hell it is! If I lived in Harlem, I'd be packing heat. They'd call me "Dirty Harriet", 'cause I'd just carry it in a holster in broad day light ...

(Deniro; "Taxi Driver")

"You talkin' to me?"

(imaginary gun)

Now, get your god-damn walkie-talkie thing out of my face before I blow your god-damn knee caps off.

(amused) ...

Would you like some tea, dear? I never asked.

Scene 2

Toro Infirmary.

Terrence lies in bed, asleep. Jackson stands nearby while--

ETHAN

(to audience:)

Scene two. "I Feel You." Meanwhile, in New Orleans--

JACKSON

(to Ethan:)

I feel for you, white boy. I mean, I don't know you. We never did meet. You cool with my boy, and all that. But the momma you lost ... I just lost my moms recently too. And now ... with my Pops ... See, I been tryin' to figure out all this insurance bullshit. You lucky ya didn't have to deal with all of that—

ETHAN

I did, actually. Truth be told: it's *really* how I could afford to move down to the City.

JACKSON

See, that's how it is with white folks like you. I don't mean no disrespect to you and ya people. But the scales always be tippin' in your direction. Even when it come to death, right? Whether it be Medicare or Medicaid, or whatnot. Ya always have a safety net.

ETHAN

None of us have a safety net, Mr. Thompson. Unless you're part of the one percent. Of which I am not—

JACKSON

My bro -- my bro, Ron ... he is. So I guess, at the end of the day, it really ain't 'bout black and white no more, huh? It all about the *green* -- and he got a *lotta* that; that's for damn sure. But, he ain't come 'round here in a minute...

ETHAN/(overlap)

I'm sorry to hear that--

JACKSON

...and my Pops right here -- he one of them old school dudes showed up for work every day. Fed his family. Paid the bills. Kept the lights on. Didn't complain all that much, and never asked nobody for a dime, or so much as a free donut. He showed up. What he did all day, every day. Everybody in the Lower Nine, they see him comin', they tip their lids to this ole cat. My Pops was royalty in that neck of the woods. So, when the Man show up to inspect -- ya know, calculate the damage and what-not -- my Pops said to me and my bro: "*don't fret this, boys. I done paid the insurance on time, every time. This man will do right by me. He will do right by us.*" Well, ya know how the rest of that story go. Not really worth much bein' the hardest workin', most respected man in a cemetery, now is it? So, whatever came from all that health-wise, insurance is the last thing we figure gonna come through. And now all I can do is try and keep my kids on the sunny-side while all them doctors 'round here try and figure all that out. 'Bout all I got left to do now. Ya feelin' me?

ETHAN

Yes, Mr. Thompson. I ... feel ya.

JACKSON

Call me Jackson. You like family -- even though we ain't never met -- and I appreciate ya listenin'. Sometimes all ya need is someone to lend an ear -- even if ya not really here ... It's like we got angels lookin' out for us -- and all around ... You feel me? ...

ETHAN

More than you know.

Scene 3

Riverside County rehabilitation center.

Kimberly sits across from Eddie who's in a wheelchair; she holds a tape recorder and occasionally reads notes from a yellow pad.

ETHAN

(to audience:) Scene three. "Tell Me About the Shooting ..." Place: a Riverside County physical rehabilitation center. Around 12 noon Pacific Standard Time.

Ethan walks to his chair (stage left), observing:

KIMBERLY

So tell me about the shooting, Eddie.

EDDIE

Just sorta jump right into it -- don't'cha, Ms. White?

KIMBERLY

No time like the present, Hoss. Need to get around to this eventually.

EDDIE

Well, whadda'ya wanna know?

KIMBERLY/(overlap)

Ugh! Jesus Christ, Eddie! You do this every time I come here. What the hell do you think I wanna know?

EDDIE/(overlap)

Okay-okay-okay. Lord have mercy. Don't get ya thong all in a bunch.

KIMBERLY

Okay, ewww. And, thongs don't bunch. That's the whole point. Continue. Please.

EDDIE

Had a disagreement with some young'ns. ...

KIMBERLY

And that's it? A "*disagreement?*"

EDDIE

Slight disagreement.

KIMBERLY

Says here you

(reads:)

stabbed the young man in the throat with the sharp edge of a broken Southern Comfort bottle.

EDDIE

Hell no! ... It was a bottle of Jack. I'd only use the hard stuff in a situation like that. Besides, the Southern is comfort food to us Scots-Irish folk.

KIMBERLY

Thank you for that useful piece of cultural information. Duly noted. Now, was it

KIMBERLY (cont'd)

just a coincidence that the young'ns in question were of Black African descent?

EDDIE

That what they were? Hadn't noticed.

KIMBERLY

I'm sure. I'm sure the race of the young'ns was just a side note--

EDDIE

Maybe ya oughta watch a little more Fox News where they're fair and balanced. If ya gonna be a reporter, ya need to ask the question and leave the commentary on the sidelines. Just a suggestion. But, whadda I know? I'm just an ole cracker in a wheelchair jonzin' real bad for a cigarette.

KIMBERLY

You are right. I need to let you tell your story the way you want to tell your story. From now on, I will remain an impartial eyewitness to history.

EDDIE

History, eh? Well, when ya put it that way. I'd come out of a little dive bar down near that college for spoiled little rich kids. USC--

KIMBERLY

I went to USC for grad school!!!

EDDIE

Anyway. There was this place where they actually played red-neck music, even though it bordered the colored neighborhood where they had that riot a few years back--

KIMBERLY

The WATTS Riots--!!!

EDDIE

Ya gonna let me finish the *god-damn* story?!

KIMBERLY

Sorry. Continue. Please. ...

EDDIE

I always thought it was kinda ballsy to hang the ole Stars and Bars in the hood. And, the joint reminded me of 'Bammy. So, I took a bunch of good ole boys from the Skynyrd road crew down to this little joint for some hell-raisin', Eddie Haynes style--

KIMBERLY

I'm sorry to interrupt. But, were you still a roadie for--?

EDDIE

No-no. I *transitioned* by this time. Spent most of my time in studio, sound engineering. But, this night, I went to see Skynyrd play the Amphitheater since I helped record 'em, and pretty much every good ole boy band of the era--

KIMBERLY

Damn. You're kind of a bad-ass, huh?

EDDIE

Well, you ain't too shabby yourself, darlin'. If only I were twenty years younger--

KIMBERLY

(jumps up)

Okay! *Ewww!!!* That's enough for today!

EDDIE

What? What'd I say?

KIMBERLY

Dirty old man ...

Kimberly exits (muttering to herself).

EDDIE

(to Ethan:)

What'd I say? ... Women. *Amirite?*

Scene 4

Toro Infirmary.

Jackson, Miles and Shauna Carrière attend to Terrence.

ETHAN

(to audience:)

Scene four ... what is that ...? Is that French?

(squints -- as if reading off a cue card somewhere in the audience -- trying to pronounce:)

"Lah-zea-lazer-bon-temp ... bon-tempee ...?"

The three are amused by his attempt to pronounce the popular Cajun catch-phrase.

ETHAN

Oh, forget that! ... We're back in New Orleans, whereupon Miles is in the hot-seat with his two-month pregnant *fiancé*: Shauna *Car ... ay ... Care-ee-air ... Carr--*

SHAUNA

(to Ethan:)

It's pronounced: *Care-ee-aaay*. It's French Creole. Like everyone else in this fair city. And I am not Miles's girlfriend--

MILES

Yeah, bruh. She ain't my wife. She my girl -- common-law sorta thing. Don't need all those papers to show our love, know what I'm sayin'?

ETHAN

I really don't want to get involved. ...

Ethan quickly heads to his chair (stage left), observing ...

SHAUNA

Yes, well. Just because I am pregnant -- how foolish it would be to think he'd actually need to put a ring on my finger. ...

Shauna shoots Miles the death stare.

JACKSON

(amused; hugs Shauna)

I'm just glad my grand-baby's beautiful momma graced us with her presence today. And, I'm sure Pops is as well.

How ya been feelin', darlin'?

SHAUNA

(Shauna attends to Terrence)

Oh, you know. Just waiting for the weight to come on. Good thing my modeling days are long behind me.

JACKSON

You still could give Tyra a run for her money, girl.

MILES

Hey, Pops. Gramps been roused at all today?

JACKSON

Nah. He asleep all afternoon. Still breathin' though. So, that's a plus.

MILES

True dat. Wish we could walk him 'round a bit in the fresh air.

JACKSON

Where ya been at?

MILES

Shoot. Fooled 'round in da Quarters and ate up all my money. Shit's expensive when ya don't got it, know what I'm sayin'.

JACKSON

I understand all 'bout that. That's why I been talkin' to all them doctors 'bout insurance, and how much we in for, and how we gonna pay for this here stay at the Taj Mah Touro.

MILES

For real. Say Pops. Ya listen to my show today?

SHAUNA

Miles, don't harass your poor daddy. He has enough on his plate to contend with. Sorry, Mr. Thompson. Miles gets a little over-zealous at times about his work.

JACKSON

Ya know ya can call me Jackson, c'mon now. You already family, shit.

(amused)

I'm just wonderin' how an Uptown gal such as ya-self -- from the kinda family you come from -- feels 'bout all my boy's Obama-mania?

SHAUNA

Well, I am a registered Democrat. My entire family used to be Democrats back in the day. During the Clinton administration it was all

(looks over at Ethan; pronounces it in flawless Cajun:)

"laissez les bons temps rouler." ... But then 9/11 happened. Momma decided to switch parties, and now she can't seem to stop going on and on about how strong a leader George W. Bush is--

JACKSON

Damn, even after Katrina?

MILES

Seriously.

SHAUNA

(death stare)

It's still my momma I am talking about

MILES

(to Jackson:)

She the white one--

SHAUNA

Miles!

(death stare)

Anyway, I'm just wondering what that nice doctor, you know the one I'm talking about? The one from Houma that I like the most--?

MILES

Ya mean: Dr. Holcombe? He from Houma?

JACKSON

Ya got cousins down in Houma.

MILES

Yeah, true dat. Haven't seen them niggas in a minute now, and they only down the road. They the religious ones though. We talkin' them "*End of Days*" niggas, know I'm--

SHAUNA

Anyway!!! What does Dr. Holcombe have to say about Granddad's condition?

JACKSON

Oh, ya know ya can't get a straight answer outta any of these mothafuckas ... Sorry, my language--

MILES

More like a daddy-fucka--

SHAUNA

Miles!!! Jesus Christ!

(death stare)

Well, I'd love to stay and continue this ... stimulating conversation. But I have a date with some stirrups and a stethoscope, and then I'm off to teach a classroom full of students that remind me every day how ... *wonderful* this journey is I'm about to embark on. ... Do not overwhelm your daddy with all your Obama-mania. ...

More death glares at Miles as she exits. After a few beats ...

TERRENCE

(opens eyes)

A homo from Houma. Ain't that a thing.

Dorothy's apartment.

DOROTHY

I know exactly what he means!

Ethan now sits on Dorothy's couch.

DOROTHY

It seems everyone is at least half a gay these days. Every time I turn on the TV, Christ. You can't be a talk show host, or female comic, if you're not batting on the same stick ball team ... without the stick. Not exactly Mormon friendly prime-time TV these days. Gay-gay-gay. Everybody's gay. And don't get me started on that Ellen. ...

Touro Infirmary.

MILES

C'mon, Gramps. You gonna tell me the man can't be a real doctor 'cause he ain't never been inside -- what'd ya call it?

TERRENCE

'Cause he ain't never been inside no flower pot. 'Specially that Houma homo. That's what I said, and I'm stickin' to it.

Ethan moves back over to his chair (stage left), observing:

JACKSON

Hey now, Pops. We don't know if that good doc don't dig no flower pots. We're just makin' 'sumptions 'bout the man. Besides, Ellen's gay and--

TERRENCE

He fay. Okay? Man's queerer than a three-dollar bill, and I just hope his hands are clean when he come on up in here--

MILES

Whoa!!! You actin' like Denzel when he shook hands with Hanks in "Philadelphia." The man's a pro-fessional. Ya think everybody that don't dig flower pots has the Virus?

TERRENCE

It ain't natural. Good Book say it's an abomination.

JACKSON/(overlap)

Aw. There it is, now.

MILES(overlap)

Oh, you gots to be--

MILES

--You an expert on the Good Book all-of-a-sudden? ... Say, Gramps. What's ya favorite gumbo and Po'-Boy?

TERRENCE

What you mean? My favorite -- crawfish. Boy, everybody know that. Why? Ya gonna go get me some?

MILES

Nah. Can't do it. It's a shellfish. That would be an abomination.

TERRENCE

The hell it is. Boy, ya ass was practically raised on crawfish.

MILES

Guess that must mean I'm gay. 'Cause if ya actually ever cracked open the Good Book, it say that eatin' shellfish be an abomination.

TERRENCE

Where it say that?

MILES

Right next door to man lyin' down *with* man. Ever wore a linen suit *with* a cotton shirt?

TERRENCE

Boy, don't play with me now.

MILES

I don't know, Gramps. Mixin' fabrics be an abomination as well. Seems like ya committed a few sins 'gainst the Lord. Breakin' ten'll get ya an eternity in hell for them crimes.

TERRENCE

Ya obstinate lil' mothafucka--

JACKSON

Whoa, Pops! Ease up on the boy. He just playin' now--

TERRENCE

Don't none of y'all's generation tell me 'bout the Bible or 'bout what's the natural order of things!!! I had my share of pussy my whole life, and God approved all that shit! I served my country, got married, raised all ya all damn kids, and the flag in the front yard every Memorial Day and Fourth-O-July! So, don't go tellin' me what is and ain't normal! Some things don't need to change, and men lyin' down with men ain't what the Good Lord intended! Boy, I'll still bust ya upside that nappy head of yours! ...

MILES

Granddad, I know ya not feelin' right, and ya hurtin' real, real bad. But, for what our people have gone through -- I mean, with all the shit we had to put up over the years -- if we can't see how much we discriminatin' 'gainst a bunch of folks never done nothin' bad to nobody, and simply wanna be accept for who they are, and what they wanna do in the privacy of their own bedroom--

JACKSON/(overlap)

Miles. This shit ain't helpin'--!

MILES/(overlap)

--Then we ain't no better then all them

MILES

--cracker, coon-asses, and red-necks done hung, fire bombed, burned a cross, threw a brick, or strung up any nigga since day one, and to use the Bible as some sort of excuse ...! Nah! That shit ain't right, Granddad! It just ain't right!

Miles storms out as Jackson follows after him. After a long beat ...

TERRENCE

All that ain't got nothin' to do with no crawfish.

Scene 5

Riverside rehabilitation center.

Eddie's still in the wheelchair while Kimberly reads a transcript.

ETHAN

(to audience:)

Scene five. "Instant Karma For Damn Sure." We're back in Riverside -- where the weather is lovely this time of year. Kimberly is reading a trial summary, whereupon it was conveyed that Eddie Haynes ...

Ethan returns to his seat (stage left), observing:

KIMBERLY

Ah, there it is

(reads:)

"proceeded to stab the jagged end of a Jack Daniel's bottle into the younger of the two assailants' throat, killing him instantly ... After a highly publicized trial, a jury found: Edward Rutherford Haynes III guilty of inciting a racial incident that led to the justifiable homicide of a seventeen year old boy"-- blah-blah-blah -- "sentenced to three years at Chino State Prison--" blah-blah-blah -- "released after two for good behavior..."

KIMBERLY (cont'd)
(end reading)

...and because yet another white man reformed his wicked, wicked ways by finding God -- again -- repented for his past racial intolerance and, of course, all is forgiven in the eyes of the Lord.

EDDIE
If ya believe that sorta thing.

KIMBERLY
In general: I do not. It really never dawned upon you that screaming the "n" word at the top of your lungs in a Black neighborhood might have caused an "issue"?

EDDIE
All the homies in the hood could throw it back at ya, trust me. On the walk down to the place, they was always hollerin' "go home, honky!" from their rolled down Caddies -- which were probably stolen, by the way. Ya think it was just a one-way conversation I was havin'? Just a bunch of innocent colored folks mindin' their own business?

KIMBERLY
They were screaming racial slurs at you while you were heading to the bar?

EDDIE
All the time, every time. I frequented this joint a lot and got into shoutin' matches a lot. Just never ended up with a bleedin' gut and a dead body at the jagged end of a J.D. bottle.

KIMBERLY
Huh?

EDDIE
Yeah. It ain't that black and white, now is it? Kinda shatters ya whole bleedin' heart liberal narrative you got goin' on', now don't it? Poor innocent Black folk. Don't mean nobody no harm. Just mindin' their own business. Kumbaya and the whole nine yards.

KIMBERLY
Or maybe: karma's a bitch? ...

EDDIE
Now you are one bitter little pill, ain't ya, darlin'? ... Ah, hell. Karma, eh? Wouldn't surprise me all that much -- the Good Lord workin' in mysterious ways and whatnot. Shame a young'n had to die. ...

Eddie grows forlorn. Kimberly turns sympathetic.

KIMBERLY

Wanna take a break?

EDDIE

Back in '61, when the Freedom Riders rolled into Birmingham, I had an anger inside of me I believed to be completely justified 'bout them freeloaders on the gov'nment dime straight from the jungle that Pappy said was gonna *(imitates "Pappy")*

"ruin this great country if they ever got control of it, boy!" Besides, no one I knew in those segregation days ever killed anybody--

KIMBERLY

That you saw first-hand.

EDDIE

I saw a lotta bad shit in my day, girl! Watched all them young soldiers die 'cause we had to claim some damn hill or secure some paddy field. Didn't matter what color they were or where they came from, they was just more fodder for The Machine ... Wasn't 'til I came back stateside did all them colors really start to mean somethin'. Within the Brotherhood, it all seemed to make sense again ... 'Til it didn't.

KIMBERLY

So, why did you join The Brotherhood in the first place?

EDDIE

You weren't 'round to see all them cities burnin'. Witness all them riots while all them limousine liberal types in Washington kept makin' more and more programs -- like if ya taxed us enough the problems would just simply go away ... But hell, nowadays, all the folks I used to vote for just wanna make endless wars for more young'ns to die and billionaires to profit off their corpses ... all for god-damn oil!

KIMBERLY

So, ya think Obama would prove Pappy right ... or prove him wrong?

EDDIE

Probably both, darlin'. Probably both. But, it sure seems like it could be a fun ride though -- and some mighty fine karma. "Instant Karma" damn sure gonna get ya one way or another. That's for damn sure. That's for damn sure.

Act Two: Part Two

Scene 1

Empty stage.

ETHAN

(to audience:)

Pretty sure you can guess which song I'd choose if we had some kind of history of race relations in America video montage. ... Part two of act two: "Cha-Cha-Cha-Cha-Changes." Summer, 2008. It's around this time I start considering a potential third-party candidate named--

Enter Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton.

HILLARY CLINTON

Don't do it—

BARACK OBAMA

You'll throw your vote away--

Enter John McCain.

JOHN MCCAIN

That nut-job doesn't stand a chance--

ETHAN

Ron Paul.

(to Primary Candidates:)

Be gone, Spirits!

All three Primary Candidates fold their arms, glare at each other, then exit.

ETHAN

(directed off-stage:)

And doth not darken my doorstep again!!! (to audience:) As I was saying--

Sounds and "ambience" of a dingy East Village comedy club.

Enter Carina Thompson.

CARINA

Fuck Ron Paul!

ETHAN

(to audience:)

Is she not *amazing*?!

CARINA

That *nigga* ... Sorry -- your sensitive Mormon ears. That Irish-Jew asshole of mine been talkin' your ear off 'bout Ron Paul, hasn't he? He just won't shut the fuck up 'bout him.

Enter: East Village apartment.

The place is trashed; black trash bags are strewn among the rubble and Chinese takeout cartons; a giant bong sits on top of a coffee table.

ETHAN

(to audience:)

And she has a *"boyfriend."*

Carina sits on the couch, takes a bong hit, grabs a joystick for a 2008 version of PlayStation, and goes to town!

ETHAN

(to audience:)

Carina Thompson, from New Orleans, and her *"boyfriend"* -- Jamie Edelstein from

(Boston accent)

Bahston -- are two of the *"friends"* I met gigging at the club ... with the flyers. Sometimes, we'd spend all night club hopping and end up back at her apartment -- funded by her father: Ronald Thompson, of the New Orleans Thompsons -- in the wee hours of the morning.

Ethan sits next to Carina and grabs a joystick ...

ETHAN

(to audience:)

Some nights, she and her *"boyfriend"* -- the *"asshole"* -- would invite all the other comics over to her place to drink excessively, smoke copious amounts of weed, and listen to Jamie talk non-stop about: conspiracy theories, religion -- he's an *atheist*, fyi -- a documentary he memorized called *"Zeitgeist: the Movie"*, the collective writings of Ayn Rand, Ron Paul and the Libertarian *Revolution!* But, on a night like this one, when Jamie is either too drunk or too stoned -- or a combination of both -- passed out somewhere, it's just me and Carina ... alone.

CARINA

But, who the hell would wanna stick around with all his blah-blah-blahin' all god-damn night long 'bout his bat-shit, libertarian, Ayn Rand propaganda he just can't help himself from blah-blah-blahin' about??? ... *Damn!!!*

ETHAN

Well, I think he's--

CARINA

Talkin' 'bout *"sports is the opiate of the masses"* whenever anybody come over wearin' a *"Skankes"* hat. But ya best know that mothafucka won't shut the fuck

CARINA (cont'd)
up 'bout the god-damn Red Socks! *Red Sucks -- okay?!*

ETHAN
Sure. Not really a baseball fan--

CARINA
He just never shuts up! It's like four o'clock in the mornin', and he--

ETHAN
Three o'clock. ...

CARINA
Huh?

ETHAN
It's three o'clock ... technically speaking. ...

CARINA
Three o'clock in the mornin', and he spends the whole damn day drinkin', and practically smokes an entire bag of weed -- by his-self -- and he never shares any with me.
(huge bong hit; blows out a healthy stream)
So, I buy my own.

Carina offers to Ethan.

ETHAN
Oh, no. Thank you. I don't smoke.

CARINA
Ya never...? Damn, son. You for real 'bout this Mormon shit, ain't ya?
(bong hit)
And ya ain't never ... ya know...
(indicates "fucking")

ETHAN
What? No. I mean--

CARINA
It's okay, baby ... But *daaamn!!!* I thought those girls at the bar tonight was gonna jump ya bones right there ... Oh, sorry, baby. I don't mean to get all personal and shit.
(bong hit)
But seriously. Ya got a girl or what? 'Cause I ain't ever seen ya with nobody.

ETHAN
It's ... complicated.

CARINA
Awww, ya gettin' all Facebook and shit.

ETHAN
I'm not on Facebook, or MySpace, or Match-Dot-Com. Although, everybody keeps telling me I have to go on it.

CARINA
Nah! That shit is whack!

ETHAN
I know.
(comedy routine:)
"I have a friend who has a friend who has a cousin who met someone on Match and they're married now. If I had a dollar for every--"

CARINA
Yeah, I heard ya set. That shit is funny!

ETHAN
Really?! You think so? I mean--

CARINA
Yeah, you funny! Ya need to do more of that -- just let that shit out! Expand ya horizons. ... I see you. I see what you have inside of you ...

They stare at each other for a long beat ...

CARINA
You hungry?

ETHAN
You have no idea.

CARINA
I just mean ... I got some brownies in the kitchen, and—

ETHAN
I would love to taste your chocolate.

CARINA
Daaamn! Is that, like ... ya first dirty joke?

ETHAN
I dunno--

CARINA
Proud of ya, son.

ETHAN
Full disclosure: I actually tried one of your brownies already. Sorry, I should have asked--

CARINA
Wait ... which ones? On the stove or in the fridge?

ETHAN
On the stove. Why?

CARINA
Uuuhhh ... Oh shit. How are you ... feelin' right now?

ETHAN
How am I ... I'm hot ... and cold in a weird way. And, now I can tell you: those brownies ... they tasted ... not great. Sorry, they kinda tasted like ... like--

CARINA
Like shit? Literally? Kinda like ... *mushroom-y?*

ETHAN
I mean, yeah. I didn't want to say anything, but--

CARINA
Okay, what we gonna do is, we gonna just sit here and chill, baby -- for 'bout three, maybe four, hours tops, and ya might experience some *strange* feelings. ...

Light Change: reds, blues, lava lamp effects, etc.

PROJECTED ONTO SCRIM: PSYCHEDELIC IMAGERY

Ethan looks around the room ... at his hands that he waves back and forth in front of his face; he stands and—

ETHAN
(to audience:)
Up until this moment, I'd never realized colors could be this *amazing!* It's like the walls are breathing ... and the sound of sitar for some reason--

Sounds of SITAR MUSIC.

ETHAN
 (to audience:)
 --that we can afford.

CARINA
 Maybe we should order some pizza. We gonna be here a while.

Scene 2

Carina's bedroom.

The two lay in bed eating slices; Ethan lies across Carina's lap examining a tiny ball (a "toss" from a Mardi Gras float) that lights up and changes colors; he occasionally throws it up in the air ...

CARINA
 (mile a minute)
 Jamie keeps sayin'
 (Boston accent)
"they been lyin' to you your whole life. Religion, I mean all religions, total bullshit. The Church in Rome's been controllin' the masses of Catholics everywhere -- like the Mob."
 (paranoid; emotional)
 I don't wanna sound paranoid, but I think ... I think Jamie's: *connected!!!*

ETHAN
 No *waaay!* *Reeeally?!*

CARINA
 (emotional; scared)
 Lately, all these weird white dudes with Irish and Italian and Jewish names -- and one Rastafarian dude named "*Tito*" for some reason -- keep showin' up ... they always comin' in and outta here!!!

ETHAN
 Maybe stand-up comedy is just Jamie's front! Maybe he's an: Irish mafia kingpin!

Ethan and Carina sit in freaked out silence for a long beat ... until, Carina takes another long bong hit ...

CARINA
 (exhales)
 Jamie always goin' on and on 'bout religion is all a bunch of corrupt brainwashin' of the masses. 'Cause even if Jesus was for real, the Church of Rome don't have nothin' to do with all that 'cause they was all pagans who worshipped multiple mothafuckin' gods and shit, partied like rock stars, had mad orgies, smoked mad

CARINA (cont'd)

herb ... They was a corrupt Republic, just like we is today, and all them rich mothafuckas controlled everythin', and everybody was eatin' dirt and fuckin', like, everythin' with two legs -- or four sometimes.

(bong hit)

Just fuckin' everythin' that moved.

ETHAN

Woow! That's soooo crazy! I never thought about that--

CARINA

So, they nail Jesus's ass on some bullshit misdemeanor -- 'cause ya know Jesus was black. Ya know that, right?

(bong hit)

Then, he raises from the dead like a zombie. Kinda like all these Obama worshipping' mothafuckas in every Starbucks in this town: "yes we can! Yes we can! Yes we--!"

ETHAN

I know! They're *everywhere*--!

CARINA

Then, Black Jesus, he turns into a zombie and walks the earth—

ETHAN

(*sits up*)

He actually came back to America!!! He returned to Upstate New York -- that's where I'm from: *I'm not from Salt Lake!!! I'm from Upstate!!! Okay ... Jamie?! You stupid "Bahston" Irish-Jew ... mafia boss--!!!*

CARINA

Okay, baby. Chill--

ETHAN

And, the Holy Prophet -- Joseph Smith -- he found these tablets that, like, nobody else could find, and then an angel came down from heaven and helped him translate the "Book of Mormon"! ... Huh? When I say it out loud like that it sounds kinda crazy--

CARINA

So, the Romans, they was all pagans 'til this cat named Constantine becomes Emperor, and had this epiphany, or whatever, and sees this cross in the sky, and he's all (*Italian accent:*) "everybody gotta be Christian now or we gonna cut ya balls off and no more fuckin'", and these Romans, bruh, they love to fuck -- 'specially young boys. So poof: instant Christians -- just add holy water...

(bong hit)

CARINA (cont'd)

...then they brought in all their pagan symbolism, but kept fuckin' all them young boys...

(bong hit)...

...and that's how the Catholic Church was born...

(bong hit)

Aaand then came Henry The Eighth, and Luther ...

Ethan gets off the bed, walks to (front of the stage).

ETHAN

(to audience:)

My mind is officially blown wide open ... and I am officially in love!

Scene 3

Sunrise.

Ethan's curled up in the fetal position in her lap on the floor.

She eat a slice.

ETHAN

Caaaah-reeen-aaah?

CARINA

Yes, baby.

ETHAN

Am I gonna die?

CARINA

One day, yeah. But not this mornin'.

ETHAN

Okay. Dying wouldn't be so bad though. I'd get to see my mom.

Ethan weeps.

CARINA

Don't cry. I'm sure ya momma wants ya to live a long, full life, baby. Shhh-shhh-shhh.

ETHAN

She was so beautiful ...

(high-pitched sobs)

I-miss-her-so-much—

CARINA

I know, baby. I know. *Shhh.* ...

After a long beat -- they move in on each other; their lips lock as they aggressively make out, tear each other's clothes off, roll around on the ground ...

Scene 4

The two are in bed, half-naked, going at it, until: loud BANG!
CRASH!

Carina jumps out of bed, runs around the room, throws her clothes on--

CARINA

He's back!

ETHAN

What?! Who?!

CARINA

Jamie! He and his homies -- and that nigga *Tito!* Didn't ya hear that?!

BANG, CRASH -- loud noises; a cacophony of sounds!!!

Enter Ron Paul (but only Ethan can see him).

Carina paces back and forth, panicked.

LOUD NOISES continue!!!

ETHAN

Ron Paul?

RON PAUL

Hello. I'm here to remind you that your girlfriend...

ETHAN/(overlap)

Oh, she's not my girlfriend--

RON PAUL

...forgot to mention: all our wars, since Vietnam, have been completely coordinated, operated, and executed by a cabal of wealthy, politically connected, morally bankrupt businessmen whose one desire is total and absolute domination. One world government.

CARINA

They gonna come in here, guns blazin'! Kill me! Kill you!

ETHAN
What?! Kill us?!

Enter Barack Obama.

BARACK OBAMA
You both have a choice to make: either go with this out of touch conspiracy theorist, or join the Obama Train to freedom.

RON PAUL
(re: wristwatch)
Oh, look. In Illinois it's 4:20 right now. But you don't want to legalize marijuana, do you?

ETHAN
(to Paul:)
You want to legalize marijuana, Dr. Paul?

RON PAUL
Of course we should legalize it. Personal freedom and limited government are the corner stones of my governing philosophy--

BARACK OBAMA
I understand why young people like yourselves would want the marijuana legal. I inhaled; that was the whole point--

CARINA
Ya ass always talkin' 'bout how ya hate my boy Ralph Nader 'cause he a socialist. What ya ass know 'bout socialism, huh?! Tell me, when ya sorry ass ever live in a socialist country? Last time I checked Massachusetts is still part of the U.S. ...

RON PAUL
Obama's a socialist. He'll give your money away to the same welfare state as Nader.

BARACK OBAMA
Not true. The majority of my money comes from the private sector and Wall Street.

CARINA
Ya ass talkin' 'bout "*welfare*" while ya smoke all my weed, use all my shit, and crash in my bed?! Ya best thank the Bank of Ronald Thompson for ya welfare check, and spare me all ya bullshit diatribes 'bout socialism ... and get a god-damn real job!!!

ETHAN

Carina! Who are you talking to?! And, why are Ron Paul and Barack Obama arguing in your bedroom?

CARINA

What the fuck you just say?!

Multicolored Lights saturate the stage; LOUD NOISES -- that have been building and building -- reach a crescendo with an explosion of ORCHESTRAL SOUNDS--

Carina, Ron Paul and Barack Obama freeze, while--

AN ANGEL (bursts out onto the stage, wings flapping; BRIGHT WHITE LIGHT reaches peak intensity!!!

AN ANGEL

Greetings, Faithful Follower! The Holy Prophet hath sent me! The great work---

ETHAN

No-no-no-no-noooooo!!! No!!! You're in the wrong play!!! Go on! Get outta here! Get!

AN ANGEL

(confused)

I am so, so sorry. This is sooo embarrassing. I'll just ...

The Angel exits backwards.

ETHAN

(to Presidential Hopefuls:)

And that goes for you too!!!

The Presidential Hopefuls look at each other, shake their heads, then exit. After a beat ...

CARINA

So ... how ya feelin' now, *baby*?

ETHAN

Those were the greatest *god-damn* brownies -- *ever!!!*

Black out.

INTERMISSION

Act Three

Scene 1

Enter Ethan, wearing a Rastafarian hat and a Bob Marley t-shirt, smoking a fat blunt.

ETHAN

(sings to audience:)

"LEGALIZE IT. YEAH-YEAH. AND I WILL ADVERTISE IT ..." (*takes a hit; bad Jamaican accent*) Me no care we no have the rights or not ... *mon* ... Where were we? Act ... three. Scene--

Ethan quickly exits (stage left) as Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton enter, glare at each other for a long beat ...

HILLARY CLINTON

So ... *Barack*. I guess -- you won. ...

BARACK OBAMA

Awkward. But, as we stand here together in Unity, New Hampshire--

HILLARY CLINTON

Don't -- just, don't. With all the speeches and the "*yes we can!*" bullshit. None of my ladies wanna hear it right now.

BARACK OBAMA

Now is the time to unify. It's time we come together and--

HILLARY CLINTON

Oh you think so, do you--?!

Ethan's enters, his "Rastafarian" get up now gone--

ETHAN

Guys-guys-*guuuys!!!*

Ethan gestures stage left. The two Presidential hopefuls cross their arms, glare at each other, then exit (stage left).

ETHAN

(to audience:)

End of summer, 2008. Barack Obama clinched one of the most contentious primaries in Democratic Party history: a Black man vs a white woman.

Enter John McCain...

ETHAN

Republican presidential contender, John McCain, clinched his party's nomination...

...who gives two thumbs up to the audience, then quickly exits.

ETHAN

Libertarian Republican, Ron Paul, plans for an "*alternative*" convention to take place in Minneapolis, while the actual Republican convention is in St. Paul.

Enter: Touro Infirmary.

Terrence lies in bed.

ETHAN

The Democrats start planning for: Denver ... *Aaaah*, lovely downtown Denver. Presidential running mates have yet to be announced.

Ethan walks over to Terrence's bedside ...

ETHAN

Meanwhile, an old man remains bedridden in one of heaven's more *colorful* of waiting rooms: The City of New Orleans.

TERRENCE

(to Ethan:)

Ya see my boy yet -- my boy, Ronald? Mr. Big Time Uptown. He done well for his-self, that's for damn sure. Big ole house over there on Saint Charles.

ETHAN

None of us have met Ronald yet, Mr. Thompson.

TERRENCE

Ha-ha! Yeah you right! Ya met Jackson though, yeah ... He got the worst luck of any nigga I know. But, he real good with tools though. Boy can fix damn near any vehicle ya drive ... Had me a Lincoln for a while.

ETHAN

Is that right?

TERRENCE

Yeah, since I had me a *mafioso* ride, they took to callin' me the: "*Godfather of the Ninth Ward.*" But them gas prices -- *ooo-weeee*. Figure it oughta be dirt cheap seein' as all that *oil (**pronounced: "earl"*) come from here. Did ya know that?

ETHAN

That there's ... "*earl*" in New Orleans? I've never actually been to New Orleans.

TERRENCE

Ya never ...

(sotto)

...why don't that surprise me?

Everybody makin' money off of *Lou-si-ana*, none of us see a god-damn cent, and the President -- he don't give a shit, do he?!

ETHAN

He doesn't seem to care about a lot of things.

TERRENCE

Come to think of it, neither do that Obama boy my grandson is so in love with. Where was he after ... rip up the god-damn coast, destroy the wetlands, damn near drown us, and for what? Crooked politicians always linin' there damn pockets -- *just like all them insurance mothafuckas!!!*

Scene 2

Enter: Riverside physical rehabilitation center.

Eddie, still in a wheelchair, comforts Kimberly as she sobs in his arms.

EDDIE

There-there, darlin'. Everything's gonna be *aalright*. ...

Eddie gives Ethan a thumbs up as he walks past (to center stage) while Kimberly continues to sob, loudly!

ETHAN

(to audience:)

Scene two ... Some Democratic voters did not take the loss of Hillary Clinton ... in stride. *Some* even vowed they would never vote for him—

EDDIE

(to Kimberly:)

Sure. Throw ya vote away. Wise choice.

KIMBERLY

(pushes him away)

Maybe some of us like to vote our conscience for a change! Ever think of that? No, ya probably didn't!

EDDIE

This whole jilted lover routine only works if ya can write country-western songs 'bout it. Trust me, darlin'.

KIMBERLY

Trust you? Why? 'Cause ya saw the light ... or whatever? I'm not completely sold on this whole Obama lover routine.

EDDIE

I'm way too old to be bullshittin' anybody. Whether ya buyin' what I'm sellin' or not, the colored kid's got my vote ... and I suggest ya get over ya girl crush and fall in line or we're gonna get four more years of the "Clown Show".

KIMBERLY

But-but-but ... McCain's a decorated war--

EDDIE

He's a trigger-happy, hot-head, son-of-a-bitch just like all my fellow ancient, ornery, *semper fi* brethren. No disrespect to his brave sacrifice for the country ... blah-blah-blah. But his first day in office we'll be at war with North, south, east *and* west Korea by sundown ... and I already been there ... *and I hated the food!*

Scene 3

Enter: Dorothy's apartment.

Ethan leans behind Dorothy who sits at her desk staring at a used Apple G3 desktop; she slowly moves the mouse around the mouse pad.

ETHAN

(to audience:)

Scene -- whatever! I lost track. After months of protest, I finally bring my mentor, "Benny", a used Macintosh from 2002. Because nothing says: "thank you" like a used iMac G3. (to Dorothy:) Now that you've mastered moving the mouse around the pad for the past twenty minutes, you maybe wanna try opening up a program?

DOROTHY

Don't rush me. I'm still trying to figure out what the hell all these pictures are at the bottom of the screen.

ETHAN

Those are called icons.

DOROTHY

Honey, I'm called an icon in certain circles. These things are god-damn hieroglyphics. Oh, look. They rise up and down when you move over them.

ETHAN

Yep. And when you click on them, they open up so we can get started—

DOROTHY

Slow down. Slow down. How the hell do I do that?

ETHAN

You just point the arrow at them and double click the mouse. ...

Dorothy lifts the mouse off the table, points it at the screen, and clicks it like a television remote control ...

ETHAN

What are you doing?

DOROTHY

Well, you told me to point and click.

ETHAN

Nooo!!! ... No. Sorry. Okay. You keep the mouse on the table and you move the arrow over the icon and then you click.

DOROTHY

Well, why the hell did they call it a *mouse* and not a god-damn point-n-clicker?! Point-click, point-click, point -- oh! ... Well, would you look at that! There's your *Google* thing ... Well, what the hell does it do?

ETHAN

It's a search engine. You search for things on the Internet and it takes you to web-- Google yourself.

She looks up at him, confused, then does what he says.

DOROTHY

Well, I'll be damned (*reads*) "*mildly amusing Dorothy Dorchester ... all but washed up and forgotten after her one-woman show Off-Broadway bombed ...*" Oh, go fuck yourself!

Dorothy storms away from her desk!

ETHAN

(to audience:)

ETHAN (cont'd)

That's what's known as an: "*Epic Fail*."

Ethan quickly runs away from Dorothy's apartment and ...

... right into Jackson, practically knocking each other over.

ETHAN

Sorry, Mr. Thompson? ...

Jackson's clearly inebriated -- after a few beats, Ethan heads to his chair (stage left), observing:

Enter TOMMMY (Ronald Thompson's assistant) examining paper work. Jackson stumbles over to him.

TOMMY

Mr. Thompson?

JACKSON

Hey ...? ...

TOMMY

Tommy.

JACKSON

Riiight ... Where ya at ... Tommy? How ya mom 'n 'em?

TOMMY

Mr. Thompson isn't in the office right now.

JACKSON

That's funny 'cause I'm Mr. Thompson, and I'm standin' right here.

Tommy stares for a few beats ...

JACKSON

I'm just messin' which ya, young blood.

TOMMY

Are you feeling okay, Mr. Thompson?

JACKSON

Me. Yeah-yeah. Never better. I just came by to see how my bro's doin'. Haven't seen him-- well, he ain't come by for a visit with our old man lately. See, he real sick--

TOMMY

I know. My condolences to you and your people.

JACKSON

Appreciate ya. Would be nice if ya passed some of that generosity of spirit along to my--

TOMMY

He's been *very* busy lately. They're closing a big deal with a few of the partners in our San Francisco office--

JACKSON

Oh yeah? Big San Fran deal, huh? Nothin' happenin' in New Orleans, right? Gotta go out west. "*Go West, Black Man.*" Black man still diggin' for gold out--

TOMMY

I've told him that you've called. Every. Single. Day. I'm sorry to cut you off. I'm running late for a meeting and--

JACKSON

It's just that: all them mothafuckas at the hospital never give ya a straight answer, and I been tryin' to get them insurance mothafuckas on da damn phone for a minute now--

TOMMY

Mr. Thompson! Please! I really have to go!

JACKSON

Oh yeah ... I don't wanna hold ya up. Ya got important business to attend to, and all that--

TOMMY

It was ... nice seeing you.

Tommy quickly exits.

Jackson begins his exit ...

JACKSON

Yeah-yeah. We cool-we cool. I'll just walk on out the same way I came in ... I got all this under control. I can take care of family biz'ness!

Jackson stops when he sees Miles and Shauna walking hand-in-hand; a beat as he makes an apologetic gesture towards them. Utterly embarrassed, Jackson staggers (off-stage).

Park bench (center stage).

Miles and Shauna sit down.

MILES

I got fired from the radio gig, okay? And that's the honest to God truth. For real.

SHAUNA

What happened?

MILES

Sold the shit. Turned the entire format into an ESPN network just like that, know what I'm sayin'. Bye!

SHAUNA

Are you serious? ... Hold on, baby. That's actually good news. You can talk about sports instead of Obama and actually have a career beyond this--

MILES

Nah, shit ain't like that! Didn't wanna hire me on. Cut my ass just like that.

SHAUNA

Did you even try?

MILES

Said I didn't have the right "tone." Don't matter that I know just as much as all the other mothafuckas up in there!

SHAUNA

And, did you present your argument exactly like that? ...

MILES

Same old shit, huh? Always gotta get on me 'bout the way I ... express myself.

(imitates Shauna:)

"You always sound so country, Miles. You always sound so gangsta, Miles. You have a college education, Miles--"

SHAUNA

Well, it's true! You always do sound so country, and so gangsta when you are angry, or tired, or excited, or nervous, or when you open your damn fool mouth! I can't help wishing you'd use that LSU education and choose to conjugate a verb without dropping your "gees"! ...

MILES

Look, if you ain't happy with the way I talk, or the things I love, or 'cause I ain't some bougie, up-tight, Uptown, rich, white, Republican like ya momma--

SHAUNA

That's all it's ever about with you, Miles! Always thinking you're not good enough for anyone or anything! But look at this--

(re: stomach)

--you think I would carry what we made together for nine *agonizing* long months if I didn't think you were good enough?!

Shauna stares at an emasculated Miles for a beat ...

MILES

(sotto)

Yeah, you know ... Whatever--

SHAUNA

Listen here, "*bruh*." Unless you get *ya* shit correct -- what's growin' inside of me ain't gonna make everything one hundred between us ... "*know what I'm sayin'?*"

MILES

Damn, baby! Where'd this bad bitch come from--?

SHAUNA

Hear me, nigga!!!

(Miles, stunned, freezes in his tracks!)

If you think Obama actually pulling this shit off is gonna miraculously fix everything in your life you feel is busted up -- well you gotta 'nutha thing comin'!

... Now, I'm gonna ask you this one time and one time only ...

(vulnerable)

... do you love me more than Barack Obama?

Miles remains speechless for a few beats, until--

SHAUNA

Oh. My. God ... Figure all that out and get back to me!

Shauna storms (off-stage).

MILES

(directed off-stage)

Wait! Shauna! Of course I do!

(to Ethan:)

Damn, bruh! Women are so damn crazy! ... How 'bout you? Ya good?

ETHAN

I've actually got some unfinished business to attend to.

Miles exits as Ethan enters--

Dorothy's apartment.

ETHAN/(overlap)

I'm sorry, Dorothy. I should have listened to you. I can sell it on Ebay.

DOROTHY/(overlap)

I told you I didn't want that damn computer!

DOROTHY

Mindless, shallow generation! At least my act had dignity! All the crap they put out now with those whorish, rotten, reality TV debutantes that are famous just for being famous! No one in the Business seems to know the difference between quality and--

ETHAN

So, what? You just decided at some point to cash in your chips and retreat to a sterile shell? Is that it? ...

DOROTHY

Who the hell are you to pass judgment on me?! What about my life do you know except what you read about on that damn computer?! You don't know a *god-damn* thing about me! Yes, I said *god-damn!* Deal with it, Donnie Osmond.

ETHAN

Fine, I'll deal with the fact you probably take pity on me and that I make you feel less lonely in your ivory tower--

DOROTHY/(overlap)

Oh, that's nonsense--

ETHAN/(overlap)

--and that my entire generation is completely screwed up and shallow.

ETHAN

I'll deal with the fact that -- even though you probably have one or two great shows left in you -- you've decided to hide out in this-this-this -- what'd you call it?

DOROTHY

The Holocaust Survivor's Waiting Room?

ETHAN

Yeah that ... You need to branch!

DOROTHY

I'm old, kiddo. Nobody wants a "*washed up, mildly amusing*" broad like me. They want young, and fun, and sexy.

ETHAN
That's totally you!

DOROTHY
Ha! Funny. ... I had my time. Did my West End gig. Told my story Off-Broadway. ... But, out there, it's all computers and cell phones ... and fat people trying to lose weight on cable TV. ... I'm one foot in the grave.

ETHAN
Please don't say that.

Dorothy moves to her couch and stares off into space.

ETHAN
Dorothy? ... *Beeennnyyy*. ...

DOROTHY
I'm tired, dear. It's been a long ... life.

Dorothy's apartment exits; Ethan walks center stage.

ETHAN
(to audience:)
There isn't much I can do for my friend, *Benny*, when she falls into one of her infamous funks.

Enter: Carina's apartment.

ETHAN
All I can do is hope for the best ... and prepare for the worst. In the meantime--

Ethan enters Carina's apartment; Carina paces back and forth ...

ETHAN
(to audience:)
--I've now fully made the transition to full blown Obama supporter. Much to Carina's disapproval.

CARINA
Why the hell ya supportin' that Wall Street house *nigga*? Haven't we taught ya anything?

ETHAN
Haven't *we*? We? You think I listen to anything your stupid boyfriend has to say? Him and his stupid girl name--

CARINA

He ain't my boyfriend no more! ...

ETHAN

(elated)

He's not? Then, why is his stuff still here?

CARINA

'Cause I can't get rid of his ass! They won't leave!

ETHAN

They? Who are--?

CARINA

They keep comin' over, tellin' me they know my daddy's rich!

ETHAN

You mean, those thug white boys from Boston, and... *Tito*? Are they ... threatening you?

Carina grabs Ethan tight, breaks into sobbing tears.

ETHAN

(to audience:)

Up until this point, I viewed her royal *high*-ness -- Princess Carina from the Krewe of Thompson -- as unflappable, fearless, fierce. But, crumbled in my arms like this, I realize: *shit's* about to get real!

Scene 4

Riverside physical rehabilitation center.

Eddie's still in his wheelchair; Kimberly stands, back turned away from him, contemplative...

EDDIE

... so I went back to 'Bammy to start life all over again. An overpaid shrink diagnosed me with "*pent up aggression*." Said my drinkin' was on account I was suppressin' some rage 'cause my pappy never hugged me as a child--

KIMBERLY

(faces him)

Oh, Jesus Christ!!! Ya givin' me a headache with all ya bullshit! You had PTSD. It's so obvious.

EDDIE

Oh, was that what ya got a *fancy* degree in at that liberal California school—

KIMBERLY

My undergrad was in sociology at Tulane. I was a journalism grad student at that "*School for Spoiled Children*". It doesn't take a shrink to figure out that Segregation, Vietnam, the White Power assholes, the young'n you killed--

EDDIE

And Hunter S. Thompson.

KIMBERLY

What the hell does Hunter S. Thompson have to do with--?

EDDIE

He was a drinkin' buddy of mine for a while. The first to introduce me to all them rock 'n rollers. He wrote that book 'bout the Hell's Angels--

KIMBERLY

I know! Jesus Christ, who haven't you gotten high with? You're like a walking encyclopedia of screw-ups and Southern Rock. I could kill momma for never introducing me to you. ...

EDDIE

... I'm sorry? Come again? ...

KIMBERLY

You know I submitted my article to the "Huffington Post", like, months ago. You know that, right?

EDDIE

No ... I didn't--

KIMBERLY

But still, I come to visit you anyway. You ever wonder why? ...

EDDIE

The *stimulating* conversation--?

KIMBERLY

This great career you think I have ... Oh sure, I have mad cred in the left-wing "*Blogosphere*." But, I'm 30... ish. Single. Sexually *fluid* ... at the moment. My closest friend is a Shih Tsu named Carmel that likes to chew up every god-damn thing she can sink her teeth into--

EDDIE

You have a dog, darlin'? You should have brought—

KIMBERLY

Don't-darlin'-me!!! ...

EDDIE

Term of endearment. I honestly don't mean anything by--

KIMBERLY

On dating sites, here's how the "*profile*" probably comes across: bitter, slutty, white southern gal from a Conservative, Christian, racist, red states family -- with *major* daddy issues! ... You know I called my momma after Hillary-- she said she isn't gonna vote for that-- word you love to use so much. I said to her: "*you sure did go from a cougar to a P.U.M.A overnight, didn't you?*"

EDDIE

A puma--?

KIMBERLY

I can understand the regret you must feel from all the pain you caused due to your life choices. I can empathize with how difficult it must have been for you. Returning home from war to a changed country. Confused about your place in this ever-evolving culture. So, you sought comfort in the love of a woman -- a younger woman --

(walks closer and closer to him)

--hair all fiery red and fire in them hazel eyes. But it's wrong, right? She's your brother's gal -- and he's gone off on some mission to save souls in South America because of his *stupid* fucking religious conversion. ...

Eddie coughs, shakes, clutches at his heart, gasps for breath.

KIMBERLY

This Alabama flower: Leanne. Remember her, Eddie? Your "*darlin'.*" You just couldn't resist her, could you?

Eddie convulses (if you didn't know any better, you'd swear he's having a heart attack... or a stroke!)

KIMBERLY

(two hands on his chair handles)

So you took her, and you had your way with her, and then -- being the good Christian girl from Alabama she was -- she had a little girl that y'all named ... Kimberly ... Kimberly Haynes ... of Montgomery, Alabama -- who'd grow up to be this hot-shit "*Netroots*" reporter! ... It really is amazing the things you can find on YouTube, ain't it?

Eddie's convulsions turn into a full-blown stroke; Kimberly finally realizes the seriousness of his condition--

KIMBERLY

Oh. My. God! Hey!!! Can somebody help me in here????!!! My daddy's having a stroke!!!

Scene 5

Touro Infirmary.

Miles, on one knee in front of Shauna, holds a ring box in his hands; Terrence remains asleep –

MILES

Because I love ya more than red beans on Monday. More than Saints games on Sunday--

SHAUNA

Damn. That's gotta hurt--

MILES

--baby. I'm on a roll here--

SHAUNA

--Sorry. Continue, please--

MILES

--more than MLK, Malcolm, Denzel, Jay-Z, Kermit Ruffins, Rebirth, The Meters, Chris Paul, Drew Brees, and yes even brotha Barack combined
(re: ring box)
I am offering you this, which belonged to my grand-momma--

SHAUNA

--Awww. Baby--

MILES

--as an engagement ring.

They passionately make out.

Enter RONALD THOMPSON, on his cell phone, holding a long crawfish Po' Boy wrapped in white deli paper.

RONALD

Make sure to leave the paperwork on my desk and have a car waiting for me in the morning. (*hangs up*) Excuse me, I didn't mean to interrupt such a scene of

RONALD (cont'd)

passionate young love. I was just hoping to find my father. And, you two do realize this is a hospital, right?

(re: Terrence)

Here's my old man. How you feeling today, old soldier?

Terrence opens his eyes, holds out his hand.

RONALD

Don't feel like talking? I understand. Save your strength. I just came by to check in, see how my old man's holding up.

TERRENCE

My boy. ... My boy. ...

SHAUNA

Oh, look at that. He's so happy to see you. How are you feeling, Granddad? You got some love for me?

Shauna heads over to Terrence.

RONALD

Aren't you a vision? Something good is cooking in that oven.

SHAUNA

You know it. And, well, I guess you will be the first to know.

Shauna show's Ronald the ring.

RONALD

I'll be damned. So, the young *revolutionary* has decided to settle down and make an honest woman out of you after all--

RONALD/(overlap)

--I know your parents will be happy to see that.

MILES/(overlap)

Hey, Uncle Ron. Where ya at?

SHAUNA

And that's exactly where we're heading now -- with some *big* news to tell them!

MILES

Yeah, that's exactly where we goin'. You got this under control. ...

SHAUNA/(overlap)

(sotto)

Hey. Talk to him. Don't be prideful. Ask him.

MILES/(overlap)

(sotto)

I know, baby. Baby, I know. I hear you.

RONALD

You all want to share with me what you're conspiring about?

MILES

Uncle Ronnie "Reagan" Thompson. How ya feelin', soldier?

RONALD

Like a million dollars.

MILES

Well, when ya got it like that.

RONALD

And then some.

MILES

That's why ya roll with the *Rethuglicans*.

RONALD

Ah, okay. I see where this is going. I am so sorry to hear about your radio show. Damn shame about that ESPN take over. Guess that's why you roll with the *Lameacrats*.

MILES

Uh, yeah ... see--

SHAUNA

Miles was just wondering if maybe you had any opportunities for him ... in your office, perhaps?

MILES

Office, what?!

RONALD

Oh, you're not going to move to Washington and hop on your boy 'Bama's freedom train to socialism?

MILES

I was actually thinkin' 'bout applyin' to work in W's administration seein' as they did such a hell'uva job after Katrina ... Brownie.

SHAUNA

Miles!

RONALD

Well, say goodbye to ya boy Ray-Ray Naggin on your way up north, and make sure the same door hits him squarely in the--

SHAUNA

Uncle Ron!

MILES

Aw, baby. Ya know he just playin' 'round. He keeps it real in the *hiz-ouse*, don't'cha, Uncle Ron? Just like all them Uncle Toms in da Rich Old White Man Party, know what I'm sayin'.

RONALD

Well, when you finally decide to leave the Demo-Rat Party's Plantation -- where they've been keeping smart, well-educate, capable young Black men like yourself enslaved for generations. Maybe I will find you a paying job--!

SHAUNA

Alright! Jesus Christ! Two grown ass men arguing party politics like middle schoolers throwing down *ya momma* jokes! Y'all are worse than my students! *Damn! ...*

RONALD

All kidding aside, Miles. You two have a child on the way, and now you're engaged. So, it is about time you got serious about this whole being a father routine. If you need a job ... I'm sure I can find you something.

SHAUNA

See Miles. I told you all you had to do was ask--

RONALD

I'm sure the Republican National Convention in Minnesota could use a good organizer.

MILES

Yeeeeaaah. Okay. We gonna go see Shauna's momma right now. You enjoy the time you *never* spend with Granddad--

SHAUNA
Miles--!!!

MILES
 --and I'll catch you later, *bruh*.

Miles exits.

SHAUNA
 I'll talk to him.

Scene 6

Touro Infirmary hallway.

JACKSON
 (on cell phone)
 I just said ... didn't I just say? I just said I don't have the money at the current time, and I'm currently in between jobs and I got a parent in the ... I understand what the contract states ... If ya could just give me a week ... Ya only gave me the one extension ... Fine, y'all do what ya gotta do. I'm sure I'll hear from ya again -- y'all call every *god-damn day!!!* (hangs up cell)

RONALD
 Stand down, soldier. Anybody around here realize this is still a hospital?

JACKSON
 Hey, *bruh*. Ya heard all that, huh? Yeah. Got a little issue with the bank. But, ya know, workin' it out. Nothin' to stress 'bout.

RONALD
 Do you see me stressing? That is the difference between those that keep their head above water ... and those that drown.

JACKSON
 But, ya know it's all 'bout our family situation, right?

RONALD
 Is it though? I think what you should be more concerned with is *payin' ya bills* on time, *bro-tha*, and spendin' less time at the track.

JACKSON
 Oh, ya gonna finally show up and give me that whole tough love, pull ya-self up by ya bootstraps bullshit, Ron?

RONALD
 I'm saying there comes a point where you have to own up to your personal

RONALD (cont'd)

responsibilities, little brother. Being in debt is like a cancer that only grows and grows if you don't--

JACKSON

Not really in the mood to talk 'bout cancer right 'bout now, Big Chief. Can't you see how damn hard I'm tryin' to keep the ole man in the Infirmary?!

RONALD

I understand. I've gotten all of your phone calls, and heard about you *dropping* by the office.

JACKSON

Yeah, I'm sure you did.

RONALD

Don't you get it by now? You don't have to worry about this.

JACKSON

What do you mean *this*?

RONALD

I'm the one keeping daddy here. You understand me? *I'm* fitting the bills. *I'm* covering this whole stay.

JACKSON

You? But I thought the insurance--

RONALD

How reliable has government insurance been in these parts, Jacks? We don't need some government hand-out. As usual, I'm helping kin when they can't help themselves. If only I were a fisherman. Maybe I should start offering fishing lessons. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have an appointment with Dr. Holcombe to get an assessment of our father's *condition*.

Ronald walks by Jackson--

JACKSON

Good seein' ya again ... bruh.

RONALD

Likewise.

Scene 7

Carina's apartment.

Carina's frantically cleaning (vacuuming), tidying up like a speed freak; Ethan remains on the couch, smoking a blunt. After a few beats ...

ETHAN

(to audience:)

Sooo ... I'm a total pothead now. Well, not a total pothead like Jamie ... *asshole!* But I've been thoroughly enjoying "*my time in Eden*"... right, momma? Though, Carina seems to have moved to a place that's way beyond her bong consumption.

CARINA

Tell me I can't take care of myself without my daddy's help! What the fuck ya know 'bout me anyway?! I can take care of all of it on my own!

ETHAN

Carina? Who are you talking to?

CARINA

Would ya get off that damn couch and help me clean for once! I got ... I got ... I got things I gotta take care of!

Carina breaks down, sobbing. Ethan heads over, hugs her.

ETHAN

Hey-hey-hey. What's wrong? You okay?

CARINA

I just got ... I gotta take care of things. I got ... things I've gotta take care of or I'm gonna ... I just need to. ...

ETHAN

What? What do you need to do? Tell me.

CARINA

I don't wanna get you all involved in this now.

ETHAN

Involved in what?

CARINA

Just ... these things I need to take care of--

ETHAN

Listen to me. I think I need to get you out of here. You've been spending way too much time in here ... *cleaning* -- and I don't know what you've been up to lately ... But I'm starting to worry about you. I think you should come with me--

CARINA

What? Come with you ... Come with you where?

ETHAN

Denver. ...

CARINA

Mothafucka, have ya lost ya god damn mind? I ain't goin' to -- *who the fuck goes to Denver????!!*

ETHAN

I'm going! I'm going to Denver! I want to be there! It's all happening! ... "Yes we can!!!"

Carina grabs her cell phone.

ETHAN

Who are you calling?

CARINA

Gonna call my cousin, Miles. If ya gonna be up in all that noise, ya gonna need a chaperone.

Park bench, New Orleans.

MILES

(on cell phone)

Yeah, okay. Sounds cool. We'll see ya soon, baby girl.

SHAUNA

Little Miss Weed Head finally ready to do the right thing and come home to see her granddad before--?

MILES

Whoa. Ease up on Carina, professor.

SHAUNA

Now you're defending Uncle Ronald's family? She must be voting for Obama.

MILES

It ain't like that. Truth be told ... she's -- she's got a friend who she wants me to kinda -- I guess ... chaperone ... in ... ummm ... in--

SHAUNA

Denver? You're still thinking of going to Denver? You don't even have a ticket.

MILES

I know all that. But I can get one—

SHAUNA

Oh please. ... What if something happens to Granddad? And what am I supposed to do while you're gone?

MILES

Ain't nothin' gonna happen to the ole man. He ain't goin' nowhere before November. Before our lil' soldier in there finally shows up, and when he -- or she, or she -- finally do get here, I'm gonna be 'round twenty-four seven--

MILES/(overlap)

--but in the meantime—

SHAUNA/(overlap)

--Ah, please--

MILES

I'm just askin' to go to the Mile High for like one night, baby. I'll be back in ya bed twenty-four hours later and—

SHAUNA

Okay.

MILES

Baby, please! ... Wait? What?

SHAUNA

I said: okay. You sold me. Besides, I don't want to be *that girl*, holding you back from doing something you will regret not doing. Take a video camera and we'll show it to Granddad when you get back.

Miles hugs and kisses Shauna ...

Carina's apartment.

Ethan and Carina are rolling around on the ground desperately making out, practically ripping each other's clothes off!

Black out.

Scene 8

PROJECTED ONTO SCRIM: "YES WE CAN" VIDEO

Street Mall, Downtown Denver.

Enter Miles and Ethan toting backpacks.

ETHAN

(to audience:)

Sooo ... we're finally back in Denver!

MILES

You still talkin' to all them folks?

ETHAN

Yeah.

MILES

Huh?

(walks slowly across stage; stares out at the audience:)

I see white people -- know what I'm sayin'!

Miles and Ethan laugh as Miles pushes Ethan along; they stop and take selfies.

Miles takes pictures while--

ETHAN

(to audience:)

Downtown Denver! The feeling in the air is electric! People from all over the country are here to witness this monumental event. Even if they don't have tickets to Invesco, they still came just to be here to watch--

PROJECTED ONTO SCRIM/ON TELEVISIONS: VIDEO FOOTAGE

*SENATOR BARACK OBAMA (ON VIDEO SCREENS)

"That, in America, our destiny is inextricably linked, that together our dreams can be one. 'We cannot walk alone,' the preacher cried. 'And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back.' America, we cannot turn back."

Scene 9

Bar, Downtown Denver.

Miles and Ethan sit on bar stools.

ETHAN

(to audience:)

So we came here after the big event. Miles was a little surprised I never had a drink.

ETHAN (cont'd)
(turns to Miles)
I know. I'm messed up, right?

MILES
Naw, it's all good, bruh. How 'bout we share ya first beer together, like proper gents?

ETHAN
(to audience:)
That's pretty much where it all started--

Enter Kimberly--

ETHAN
--and that's when she walked into our lives.

KIMBERLY
(sits between Miles and Ethan)
I'm from L.A. Well, I'm from Montgomery--

MILES
Uh-oh.

KIMBERLY
Yeah. Funny. But I went to Tulane. So--

MILES
No shit. Well, aw'right. That's what I'm talkin' 'bout. My sista and my ... ummm
-- my cousin -- she a girl cousin -- she went to Tulane--

ETHAN/(overlap)
She never told me that--

MILES/(overlap)
--aw'right, first round's on me!

MILES
I'm Miles. Miles Thompson, and this here is my boy, Ethan. Ethan--

ETHAN
Grey.

KIMBERLY
Hello, Ethan. Miles. I'm Kimberly. Kimberly Haynes. What brings you boys to the Mile High from the Crescent City?

MILES
Seriously?

ETHAN
(chants)
"O-bam-a! O-bam-a! We want change! We want change! Yes we can! Sí, se puede!"

MILES
Yeah, and he ain't even had a drink yet.

KIMBERLY
He's funny.

ETHAN
Well, I am a comedian. I do stand-up in New York.

KIMBERLY
(exaggerated Southern accent)
"Say somethin' funny, comedian."

ETHAN
I thought I just did.

KIMBERLY
God, you're adorable. And Miles, looks like you played a little ball.

MILES
That's right. Ya pretty smart ... for and Alabama girl--

KIMBERLY
Hey now--!

MILES
I played varsity at LSU. Then, I got into radio. ...

KIMBERLY
How'd that work out for ya?

MILES
Well, I'm currently unemployed. That's how that worked out for me. But, up until June, I had a gig on WWW--

KIMBERLY
WWWL! You're that Miles Thompson?! No way!

ETHAN

Yeah, you're that Miles Thompson?

MILES

I guess so. Didn't know anybody outside of New Orleans--

KIMBERLY

I'm a "*Netroots*" reporter. I'm heavily entrenched in the Progressive world. It's kind of my job to be up on who's-who -- damn, that's totally lame what they did to you guys.

MILES

Yeah. No shit.

(sullen)

...I need a Guinness.

KIMBERLY

(to bartender:)

And three shots of Jäger.

ETHAN

(to audience:)

And now it begins.

PROJECTED ONTO SCRIM: "ONE HOUR LATER -- AND MANY, MANY JÄGER SHOTS LATER..."

Embassy Suites Hotel enters during the following.

KIMBERLY

(drunk)

So, y'all got hosed from tickets and a place to crash tonight? Dudes, that *suuucks*.

MILES

(drunk)

Yes it does.

ETHAN

(very drunk)

"*YES WE CAN!!!!*"

MILES

Okay, Ethan. We got it, bruh.

KIMBERLY

So, what? Y'all are sleepin' on the street?

MILES

All the rooms are booked up.

KIMBERLY

Nooo!!! Ya can't sleep on the street. I'm staying in a suite tonight. You guys can crash in my room!

Ethan turns to audience: a wink, a thumbs up, and a toast!

Scene 10

They undress, move into the king size bed -- in dim light and silhouette -- they maneuver together through a series of sexual positions *choreographed as a DANCE.

Sunrise.

(Repeat action from **Prologue**).

KIMBERLY

Oh. My. God! This is so not how I intended to spend my time in Denver.

PROJECTED ONTO SCRIM: "ONE HOUR LATER..."

Miles stands in front of Kimberly who is still in the bed.

MILES

I got this
(re: inner-thigh tattoo)
drunk one night on a bet.

KIMBERLY

I can't really see it. Come closer.

Miles crawls on the bed, and the two get busy ...

ETHAN

(grabs backpack; to audience:)
This is where you all came in. Moments like these ... they impact your life in such a way that you are irrevocably changed -- forever. I'd like to think that my momma would be proud that I explored so much during my time in Eden. Well, I hope she -- she -- she ... excuse me, I have to find a ...

Ethan runs (off-stage) ... and vomits!

PROJECTED ONTO SCRIM: "THE LAST CUT IS ALWAYS THE DEEPEST"

Kimberly throws items from her handbag at Miles as he puts his pants back on, collects his clothes, crams them into his backpack--

KIMBERLY

Son-of-a-bitch!!! You have a girlfriend?! And you're engaged?! And she's pregnant?!

Kimberly runs at Miles, fists clenched; Miles grips Kimberly's hand to block her punch--!

KIMBERLY

Why?! Why would you tell me that?!

MILES

Got a guilty conscience! Got caught up in the moment! I was drunk--

KIMBERLY

So typical! You're all talk, like your boyfriend *Obama*, and every other brotha who cheats on a sista--!

MILES

(fist cocked)

Bitch, ya way outta line! Ya better check ya-self -- *now!!!*

KIMBERLY

Or you'll what?! Hit me?! I'll have your ass in prison faster than you can say Johnny Cochran, and you'll join a whole host of rappers, football players, and thug *nnniii-- assholes!!!*

MILES

Ha-haaa!!! There it is!!! You was gonna say it! Go on -- say it! Show them true colors!

Kimberly places her hands over her mouth.

MILES

C'mon, ya know ya just can't wait to say it!

Kimberly crumbles to her knees, hyperventilating; face down on the ground, she releases a deep, primordial groan straight from her diaphragm; a guttural cry for help!

MILES

Yeah, I seen this shit a hundred times before. At LSU, all them crazy white bitches, just like you.

(imitates Kimberly)

"I'm so liberal. I love to fuck with Black guys." But, I ain't nothin' but another nigga, huh? Usin' me to get back at ya daddy, or ya boyfriend, or whatever other mothafuckin' bullshit ya got goin' on!

Miles grabs his backpack, makes his exit ...

KIMBERLY

No, Miles. That's not true. I was just upset. I'm really having a hard time lately. I'm having a break down--!

MILES (OFF-STAGE)

(exiting line)

Bitch, I don't need to know ya life!

PROJECTED ONTO SCRIM/ON TELEVISIONS: VIDEO FOOTAGE OF JOHN MCCAIN MAKING A BIG ANNOUNCEMENT

Kimberly, on her cell phone, remains in the Embassy Suites; Miles stands alone (center stage) on his cell phone; Ethan sits on a bar stool (in a bar somewhere) watching CNN.

KIMBERLY/(overlap)

I need help, Momma. I may need to come home for a while. ... Turn on the TV? Why? ... What's happening? Hold on. (*turns on TV*) ... It's comin' on right now. Okay, I see it. Wait? ...

MILES/(overlap)

Yeah, baby. Everything's fine. Yeah, last night was somethin' else. How's he doin'? ... Couldn't get him to watch it, huh? He's about to announce it? I'm not near a TV. ... Say that again. ...

Miles's and Kimberly's jaws drop, then--

KIMBERLY/(overlap)

Who the fuck is Sarah Palin????!!

MILES /(overlap)

Who the fuck is Sarah Palin????!!

ETHAN

Ho-ly *shiiit!!!*

Scene 11

PROJECTED ONTO SCRIM/ON TELEVISIONS: VIDEO FOOTAGE OF SARAH PALIN: "BARACK OBAMA PALS AROUND WITH TERRORISTS"

Touro Infirmary.

Miles kneels in front of Terrence's bed, where Terrence lies asleep, with his hands cupped in prayer.

MILES

Dear Lord, not really sure if ya up there or not -- or if ya even fo' real. I guess it really don't matter anyway 'cause half the act of prayin' is just sayin' shit out loud -- shit, sorry! Anyway ... I cheated on the mother of my child ... I don't know if that a forgivable offense or not. But if it's any consolation, Lord: I been humbled. Humbled by the idea of change finally arrivin' in my lifetime, and it's all 'cause of an older generation of soldiers like this one right here who paved the way. So, if ya could help him -- help him hang on just a little bit longer, Lord, I promise ya I will never, ever, ever again ... spend the night with a crazy, Hillary lovin', racist white woman in a hotel room in Denver. I promise ya that. ...

TERRENCE

(opens eyes)

...Ain't nuthin' more important in life than a woman who loves you ... Ya messed up! Ya heard me?! Now make this shit right. Every day of ya life. Make it right.

Terrence slips back out of consciousness ...

MILES

Amen.

Lights Dim To Black on Miles ...

COMEDY MC (OFF-STAGE)

You're on, Grey!

Ethan (center stage) stands in front of a microphone stand and does his routine to the audience.

ETHAN

Any Jews in the house? ... Catholics? ... Protestants? ... Mormons. ... I'm the only one, huh? My fourteen wives would be clapping, but they're outside watching my bike. That's total b.s. ... I have, like, three at best. I'm the one who crashed Match.Com. ... Dating. Fucking nightmare, *amirite?* Problem is: there's just too many people. I just had my first threesome, and that was two too many for me. Used to be just me, my penis, and the Lord ... watching. Always watching. ... But, when you look at all the problems facing the world today:

ETHAN (cont'd)

climate change, war, over population, poverty, famine ... I know, I'm fun at parties, right? I think we need to come up with practical solutions, but also think outside the box. Take renewable energy. Solution: people. Find a way to turn us all into fuel. "*Awww, we lost Grandma. But our gas bill was so low this month.*" Or that one yoga teacher who, let's be honest, we could all do without. I mean, who needs her with all her--

(namaste hands; ooommm chant)

"It was her spiritual energy -- that filled up my gas tank. She was sooo positive. Namaste." And while we're on the subject: fuck the holidays? They make no fucking sense. How un-American is it that we celebrate our independence from England with explosives imported from China? People don't work on Labor Day. No one ever remembers: "*when's Memorial Day again?*" Because, we're stupid, *amirite* people? And some of you are going to vote again soon. Leave it to all you tourists to decide our next president? You can't even figure out how to enter a subway correctly! You wait for the people to get off *before* you-- *it's just common sense!!!* ... Anyway, the point is: fuck dating, *amirite?* That's my time. Thanks for coming out at 3 p.m. on a Tuesday. All three of you have been a great audience. Enjoy your fifteen-dollar Jack and Coke. Both of them. Goodnight!

Black out.

Scene 12

(PROJECTED ONTO SCRIM/ON TELEVISIONS: Video footage of *President George W. Bush addressing the nation)

*PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH (ON VIDEO SCREENS)

"Good evening. -- This is an extraordinary period for America's economy. -- We're in the midst of a serious financial crisis. -- As a result, our entire economy is in danger."

Dorothy's apartment.

Dorothy sits in her armchair, drinking from a flask -- sufficiently buzzed. Enter Carlton.

CARLTON

Ms. Doratie. Now where did that come from? You know I can't bring you no pills, dear, you keep sippin' from your sippy cup.

DOROTHY

Then just bring in a drip and I'll shoot it into my vein.

CARLTON
(approaches Dorothy)
I can't let you kill yourself.

DOROTHY
Don't come any closer! If I'm going out, then I'm going out on my own terms; as drunk as an Irish sailor, frowsy with whisky breath. And that is exactly how I built my empire ... that you see before you.

CARLTON
I'll come back when you're in better spirits, dear.

DOROTHY
Well then -- it was nice knowing you!
(toasts)
Give my regards to the Apollo!

Carlton exits. Ethan enters.

ETHAN
Hey, Benny. Sorry I haven't been around in a while. I've been ... in a transitional phase.

DOROTHY
That makes two of us, kiddo.

ETHAN
So, I see. Decided to climb down off the wagon again, huh?

DOROTHY
If you've come by to save souls, preacher, you can head back out the same way you came.

ETHAN
Nope. Hell, I may even join you. What you working on there?

DOROTHY
My financial contingency plan. *"It's time to take the bitter with the sour,"* as Billy Wilder once said.

ETHAN
Going through a bit of rough patch, eh?

DOROTHY
Is this the Mormon version of bedside manner? I'm sure the LDS Church is impervious to economic downturns. Maybe I should convert. Did you bring a brochure?

ETHAN

I didn't come by to make you upset. I just wanted to see how you're holding up.

DOROTHY

How am I holding up? Fan-fucking-tastic! Couldn't be better. I'm over 80 and I'm broke. Which is terrific, because I was really looking forward to spending my golden years starting over from scratch and taking the act back on the road.

ETHAN

My God, is it really that bad?

DOROTHY

Bad? I wouldn't say bad. Bad is -- how should I put this? It's a: colossal-fucking-disaster! I was fortunate enough to be born during the Great Depression. Now, I get to die during the next one. And to think I doubted the existence of a God. Ha! Well, take a good look, kiddo. It is I: your Ghost of Christmas Future. Last chance to become a computer genius. I suggest you take it. ...

ETHAN

Nah, fuck that. ...

DOROTHY

...I'm sorry? What did I hear you just say?

ETHAN

I'm not gonna do that. I'm gonna stick with this comedy thing. Because, I just really want to make people laugh. To help them heal from their pain ... like I've been trying to do. Why isn't that something worthy of pursuing? You did.

DOROTHY

Because laughter is not the cure, it's just the god-damned coping mechanism!

(re: flask)

Here! This is the god-damn cure, right here! This makes the pain go bye-bye. Laughter only reminds us that there is pain. Because on the other side of that laughter is loss, and doubt, and fear, and self-loathing, and death. That's why the Man said, "*dying is easy. Comedy is hard.*"

(takes a swig)

If it weren't for me ...

(takes a swig)

What kind of payoff is this, huh? What kind of gratitude? Do they even mention me? Remember me? ... We-we-we paved the way for the rest of them! Me and Lucy and-and Phyllis *and-and-and* Joanie god-damn Rivers! All due respect: fuck the World Wide Web! And while we're on the subject -- fuck: Ronald Reagan, both George Bush-es, Goldman Sachs, AIG -- and my asshole broker!!!

...

ETHAN

That feel better to get off your chest?

DOROTHY

Wonderful. I feel thirty years younger. ...

ETHAN

You're my hero, Bennie from the Bronx. I want to be you when I grow up. And, you're right: fuck the Internets!

DOROTHY

Well, now I'll have to change my tombstone inscription. ... Go on. Get out of here before you make me -- emote in some hideous way.

They embrace. Ethan exits. Dorothy breaks down in tears.

Scene 13

Touro Infirmary.

Ronald Thompson sits on a plastic chair next to Terrence's bed.
Enter Jackson.

JACKSON

Say, bruh? What ya doin' down this way? I thought you was goin' to San Fran to finish up on some big-time business deal? ... Ron. You a'ight, bruh?

RONALD

You watch the news lately, Jacks?

JACKSON

Yeah. I seen it. Shit's kinda fucked up in ya biz right 'bout now, huh?

RONALD

Just in my business you think? Not because of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac? Not because poor folks took on mortgages they couldn't afford? Not because of years of waste at the Federal level? Just in my business, huh? Brother, you have no idea.

JACKSON

Well, I do know somethin' 'bout gamblin', bruh. And I know there a ton of rich mothafuckas up in New York did a lotta gamblin' with other people's money. Ya can blame all that shit on poor people buyin' houses they can't afford just to have a roof over their head all ya want. But I know a gamblin' problem when I see one. Trust me on that one.

RONALD

And, this comes from your extensive knowledge of how the financial markets of the world operate? Suddenly, you're some grand economist?

JACKSON

Nah, bruh. Comes from livin' in the real world, and watchin' everything we own float the fuck 'way while all them with money coastin' along. Not realizin' that the rest of us been fuckin' drownin' out here the whole damn time. Maybe it's time ya joined the rest of us down here in the hood.

RONALD

Perhaps your wish may be coming true. ... I have lost a considerable amount of equity. A lot of people's trust. For the first time in a long time, I do not know if my world-view ... I am not a Republican because God or Rush Limbaugh told me to be, or because I am fighting some righteous culture war. I am a Republican because I believe, at the very core of my being, that this great country will be better off the less the Federal government meddles in the affairs of the financial sector to allow smart, capable folks to provide for their families.

JACKSON

I feel ya, bruh. I know ya ain't no Bible thumpin' mothafucka. Tho ya are a little bougie sometimes -- always have been. But, ya always helped us out when we needed ya. Now, we gonna help you out. Family takin' care of family.

RONALD

You gonna take care of me? ... I don't know, Jacks. I just -- I just don't know.

Scene 14

PROJECTED ONTO SCRIM/ON TELEVISIONS: Video footage of Barack Obama's speech after the death of his grandmother

Eddie Haynes' living room.

Eddie, wrapped in a wool blanket, is asleep in his wheelchair.

Enter Kimberly who makes her way over to his wheelchair, kneels down in front of Eddie as he opens his eyes, stares at her in silence

...

KIMBERLY

What's the matter? Cat got ya tongue?

Eddie can't speak.

KIMBERLY

Now, don't be doin' that. Ya gonna make me cry. I've already cried enough for the both of us.

Eddie grabs a piece of paper, writes frantically ... shows her.

KIMBERLY

Yeah, I know ya missed me. I'm gonna level with ya -- I actually missed ya too.

Eddie writes some more ... shows her.

KIMBERLY

I talked to her. But, ya know Momma. Somehow, it's all about her. What else is new?

Eddie writes some more.

KIMBERLY

I can't do this--

Eddie writes some more ... shows her.

KIMBERLY

I've been tryin' to forgive. It's just -- it may take a while.

Eddie writes -- she stops him.

KIMBERLY

Listen to me. I need to tell you this. Now, I know you want me to forgive you for not being there. I think I understand that you did what you thought was best for me and Momma in the long run. I think I'm willing to forgive you for that. But, it's about -- something more complicated now--

Eddie pulls the pad away, writes some more ... shows her.

KIMBERLY

(reads)

Oh no! The nurse didn't mail in the ballot for you? Well, I could bring you to the--

Eddie writes furiously ... hands her a note. She reads; the impact of what he wrote is too much for her to bear as she breaks down in sobbing tears, hugs him, starts her exit, then stops, turns to Eddie--

KIMBERLY

Goodbye ... Daddy.

Scene 15

Carina's apartment.

Moving boxes are sprawled out everywhere where Carina frantically packs her belongings.

CARINA

Not my mothafuckin' fault shit crashed! You were the one told me
(Ronald Thompson)

"New York's prime-time real estate, baby girl. Mighty fine investment opportunity up there." I didn't twist ya god-damn arm!

Enter Ethan, toting a backpack; he immediately tries to hug and kiss Carina who pushes him away--

CARINA

Grab some tape!

ETHAN

What -- what's going on? What's with all the box--?

CARINA

The fuck's it look like?! I gotta get the fuck out!

ETHAN

Why?

CARINA

Don't you watch the news -- or it just all 'bout *"yes we can!"* with you?! The shit crashed! I ain't got no place to go!

ETHAN

Your father's kicking you out?

CARINA

Told me

(imitates Ronald Thompson:)

"now would be as good a time as any to backpack around Europe -- like white folks do."

ETHAN

So, you're ... backpacking around Europe? ...

CARINA

Is you for real right now?! *No!!!* I'm not backpackin' shit! I'm -- I'm ...

Carina crumbles to her knees, sobbing tears.

ETHAN

(to audience:)

In a moment like this, it's very important to say *exactly* the right thing ...

(to Carina:)

I hear Prague is lovely this time of year. ...

Carina grabs packing tape and throws it at him!

ETHAN

Fine. We'll come up with another plan. It'll all work out.

CARINA

I already ... got a plan.

ETHAN

What? ... What's your plan, Carina? ...

Carina points at a nearby duffle bag. After a beat, Ethan walks to the bag, slowly zips it open, looks inside--

ETHAN

There is -- a lot in here. Like you could buy thousands of Jack and Cokes. Where did you get this?

CARINA

Where you think? ...

ETHAN

Carina. Listen to me *very* carefully. You cannot do what I think you're planning to do.

CARINA

They left the shit. Mothafuckas comin' in and outta here like they owned the place--

ETHAN

This does not belong to you.

CARINA

No shit! So ... I got somebody who can give it a proper home.

ETHAN

You're gonna ... move product now?

CARINA

Not me! ... This nigga I know. It's all under control. I got this.

ETHAN

Carina ... you can't!

CARINA

Oh ... I can.

ETHAN

No, you can't!

CARINA

(chants)

Yes-I-Can! ... Gotta admit: that shit was funny.

ETHAN

You still can't do this.

CARINA

I have to do it, Ethan! I don't have a choice--

ETHAN

Because, I will. ...

CARINA

Nigga, what? You will what?

ETHAN

Whoever you're going to give this to -- don't. I'll take care of it.

CARINA

Baby, you can't do this!

ETHAN

I'm not asking you. I'm telling you. Look, this way you won't have anything to do with it. If anyone comes asking, you say you got robbed, or (*imitates Carina*) "*bag? What bag? I don't see no bag ... o-kay?!*"

Carina grabs Ethan, kisses him passionately for a long beat.

CARINA

Before I met you, I said: *love* ... Fuck love! Love don't mean shit. Just gets a bitch hurt. But then, I met you--

ETHAN

I understand. You don't have to—

CARINA

Mothafucka, let me say this!!! ... Ya get ya heartbroken so many times by so many fools and so many... broken dreams and broken promises, ya don't think it ever gonna come back together. But then I met you ... and my heart ... it came back together ... whole. So, promise me ya won't do this--

ETHAN

Listen to me! It's gonna be fine! I'll take care of this and we'll use all the money to go to Europe!

CARINA

No. Ethan. You can't do this!

ETHAN

Everything's gonna be fine. Trust me!

Ethan grabs the duffle bag. Carina tries to stop him. Ethan pushes past her and quickly exits. Carina, panicked, crumbles to the floor in sobbing tears.

Scene 16

Dorothy's apartment.

Carlton cleans. Enter Ethan, toting backpack and carrying Carina's duffle bag.

ETHAN

Benny?

(notices Carlton)

Oh, sorry. Is ... Dorothy here?

CARLTON

You must be that computer genius boy. Good to finally meet you, *mon*.

ETHAN

And you must be her man from Harlem who always brings the good stuff. But you don't sound like you're from Harlem.

CARLTON

Oh no? Well, what does Harlem sound like, *mon*? Should I be *gettin' jiggy wid it?* You want me to rap for you, *mon*? Maybe pull out a glock and pop a cap?

ETHAN

Point taken. Is she in the bathroom?

CARLTON

What is your name?

ETHAN

My name is Ethan. What is your name?

CARLTON

Carlton, *mon*. Now that we know each other properly, I regret to inform you that ... Ms. Doratie has passed. ...

Ethan absorbs the impact.

CARLTON

I thought you might come back to harass her about her drinkin' problem. ...

Ethan drops the duffle bag, and collapses onto the couch.

CARLTON

Now, I'm going to tell you something, and then you should be on your way. I know you think Ms. Doratie had the answers to what you are lookin' for. But the only answer you need to answer is: who is this young *mon* Ethan, and what is his truth? And, do he want to live that truth ... or someone else's? My grandmother used to say to me: "*let the dead bury their dead. Let the livin' get on with livin'.*"

Ethan grabs the duffle bag and starts his exit, then stops, turns to Carlton, shakes his hand.

ETHAN

Thank you, Carlton. You're a good "*mon*."

Scene 17

Central Park at night.

Ethan -- still toting backpack, still carrying Carina's duffle bag -- stands (center stage) in front of a trash can with fire burning inside; he pulls out a pack of letters from his pocket.

ETHAN

I wish you were here to feel the excitement in the air, Momma. There's a feeling in this city, among a younger generation, that anything is possible. That no matter what our country goes through, there is still reason to hope -- hope that

ETHAN (cont'd)

things can always change. That no matter what it is that divides us -- whatever challenges we face -- we will overcome them. That this country, that you loved so much, will long endure.

Enter Miles, holding hands with Shauna -- nine months pregnant (stage left).

Enter Kimberly (stage right).

ETHAN

Today is November 4th, 2008, and here is another letter from you. I have a letter from you for every event you thought I would go through that you had gone through in your short time on earth. But that was your journey, Momma. That was your experience. That was your unique experiment with democracy, and with your faith. I guess I finally realize what you've been trying to accomplish with your letters -- you've been trying to set me free. So, it's time for me to say: good-bye. It's time for me to starting living my American dream.

Ethan tears up the letters, and throws them into the fire; he picks up the duffle bag, holds it over the fire, starts to open the zipper ...

Enter a HOODED MAN.

HOODED MAN

Hey! Salt Lake City!

ETHAN

(drops duffle bag)

For the last *god-damn* time! I'm from--

Hooded Man takes off his hoodie revealing Rastafarian dreadlocks; this Rasta, holding a gun in his hand, is:

TITO

Jamie Edelstein sends his regards!!!

BANG!

A bullet lodges in Ethan's heart; Ethan drops to the ground. Tito quickly exits with the duffle bag.

Kimberly (unaware of what just happened to Ethan) pulls from her pocket the last note Eddie wrote to her (written in the handwriting of a stroke victim):

PROJECTED ONTO SCRIM: "Vote... Obama... For... Me!"

FROM UP ABOVE: three voting booths DESCEND DOWN onto stage, arrayed with SPECTACULAR BRIGHT LIGHTS; accompanied by a COCOPHONY OF DRAMATIC MUSIC!

Stage TRANSFORMS INTO: A VOTING STATION -- complete with long tables, American flags on polls, etc.; STAGE CREW MEMBERS perform the tasks of polling administrators.

One by one: Miles, Shauna, Jackson, Ronald and Carlton head into a voting booth to cast their vote.

Enter Carina -- running in, screaming, over to Ethan, falls to the ground, embraces him; she opens up his backpack, pulls out a small notebook, flips through the pages -- after a few beats, Carina rises as--

Light Change: "mood" shifts.

Ethan stands, walks over, takes Carina's hand, they sit down (center stage); Ethan lies in Carina's arms (all activity around them freezes).

ETHAN

I've been writing a story about this year. This election. About my mom. And ...

CARINA

What?

ETHAN

You'll think it's stupid.

CARINA

Tell me.

ETHAN

About ... angels -- among us, and all around. Sometimes I feel them. Well ... one in particular. I know she's watching over me. Guiding me. Protecting me.

CARINA

That's really sweet. Ya know, I feel the same way about you.

ETHAN

What?

CARINA

That you an angel ... sent from above. Come down here to Earth to protect me.
To teach me ... how to love again.

Carina and Ethan kiss.

Lights Slowly Dim...

Voting station, voting booths, Stage Crew Members exit...

Coda

ON TELEVISIONS: VIDEO FOOTAGE OF ELECTION DAY HIGHLIGHTS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY, ETC.

Touro Infirmary.

Miles paces watching election results on TV while he monitors
Terrence's condition (which has taken a dramatically drastic turn);
Ronald sits on a chair next to Terrence's bed.

MILES

I can't take this! I thought LSU 'gainst the Gators last year was gonna kill me.
Ain't nothin' compared to this, for real.

Enter Jackson.

JACKSON

Thought I was gonna grow old in that damn line. Damn near starved to death.
Had to pay a kid to run and grab me a muffuletta. He win yet?

PROJECTED ONTO SCRIM: VIDEO FOOTAGE OF OHIO CALLED FOR OBAMA

MILES

What????!!! He just won Ohio!!! Hell-motha-fuckin'-yeah! God bless ya,
Buckeyes!

Enter Simone.

SIMONE

(chanting)

"O-Hi-O! O-Hi-O! O-Hi-O!"

JACKSON

Hey, baby girl. Makes up for last time 'round, huh?

SIMONE

Hell yeah. And Florida too!

TERRENCE

Selma!!! I can't do this by myself!!! Ya gotta come get me, girl!!! Please!!!

Enter Shauna, who moves directly to Terrence's bedside, comforting him.

SHAUNA

Shhh-shhh-shhh. It's okay, baby. We're here for you.

TERRENCE

It's my house!!! I live there!!! I'm goin' back home!!!

PROJECTED ONTO SCRIM: VIDEO FOOTAGE OF VIRGINIA CALLED FOR OBAMA

SHAUNA

He just won Virginia!!!

Thompson Family back to watching the TV.

Ronald's not having any of it!

PROJECTED ONTO SCRIM: VITAL SIGNS FLATLINE

Terrence Thompson passes away.

PROJECTED ONTO SCRIM: VIDEO FOOTAGE OF CALIFORNIA CALLED FOR OBAMA

MILES

What????!!!

RONALD

Damn. He actually mothafuckin' pulled it off.

PROJECTED ONTO SCRIM/on televisions: VIDEO FOOTAGE announcing Barack Obama President of the United States; followed by crowd reactions all over the U.S.

MILES

Hey Gramps!!! He did it!!! We made it, Gramps!!! ... Gramps? ... Gramps?! ...

JACKSON

What's wrong?! Hey Pops?! (*shakes Terrence*) ... Pops?!?!?

The Thompson family react to the death of their patriarch.

*BRIAN WILLIAMS (AUDIO RECORDING)

"Eleven p.m. on the East Coast. We're back on the air and we have news. There will be young children in the White House for the first time since the Kennedy generation. An African American has broken the barrier as old as the Republic. An astonishing candidate. An astonishing campaign. A seismic shift in American politics. You are looking at the 44th President of the United States. The celebrations begin."

PROJECTED ONTO SCRIM/ON TELEVISIONS: VIDEO FOOTAGE OF

***President Elect Obama's acceptance speech from Grant Park, Chicago**

*PRESIDENT ELECT OBAMA (ON VIDEO SCREENS)

"It's been a long time coming. But tonight, because of what we did on this date, in this election, at this defining moment ... change has come to America!"

Black Out.

End Of Play.