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Falls for Jodie

Eric Holmes

University of Iowa

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FALLS FOR JODIE

by

Eric Holmes

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Master of
Fine Arts degree in Theatre Arts (Playwriting)
in the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

May 2016

Thesis Supervisor: Associate Professor Art Borreca

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Graduate College
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

MASTER'S THESIS

This is to certify that the Master's thesis of

Eric Holmes

has been approved by the Examining Committee for
the thesis requirement for the Master of Fine Arts degree
in Theatre Arts (Playwriting) at the May 2016 graduation.

Thesis Committee:

Art Borreca

Dare Clubb

Lisa Schlesinger

To White House Press Secretary James Scott Brady, his wife, Sarah Brady, and everyone
who helped enact the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act

Eric Holmes
FALLS FOR JODIE

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PUBLIC ABSTRACT

In the autumn before the assassination attempt on Ronald Reagan, John Hinckley pays a visit to the Yale campus with a plan to woo his celebrity crush. When Eddie, a charismatic concierge, helps him find her in exchange for an investment, paranoia, racial politics, and friendship clash with violent consequences.

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PREFACE

I guess it all started with his face.

Or it started before that, when I was introduced to Justin Comer, who, in the Winter of 2013, was finishing up his MFA in composition. We met at a Playwright/Composers Lab hosted by our respective departments—a sort of speed dating event to get us all mingling and possibly creating together. We were given the task of co-writing an aria. After we bandied around ideas for a subject, Justin revealed that he was reading a biography of John Wilkes Booth. My interest was piqued.

It wasn't so much Booth as a character who interested me, but the idea of an aria from the perspective of an assassin—a wayward and tragic hero who makes the grotesque but ambitious choice to kill the most powerful person in the world. The violence counterpoised with the lofty drama of an aria felt ironic in its eerie disjunction. A sort of first-person-shooter opera. Justin and I agreed to research assassinations and attempted assassinations of U.S. presidents to see if there was anything that struck us. And that's when I saw his face.

There was something...soft? Innocent? Handsome about it, beneath which was a placard he held against his chest, posing for a mug shot: "John Hinckley Jr: Warnock; WFO 3-30-81."

I looked deeper into the image and more pixilated portrait came into view. There were those eyes to contend with: dark, inert, abstract. His face became more difficult to read the more I looked at it. He reminded me of a small group of geeky, trench-coated outcasts I grew up with in the Columbine era who loitered around the soda machines and

avoided, through either exclusion or self-exile, the day-to-day melodramas of high school life. Like them, Hinckley seemed exotic in his illegibility: blank but sensitive, indifferent but oblivious, there but not there.

His mug shot awakened two irreconcilable thoughts: “I know this guy / I could never know this guy.” The harsh discordance of the known and the unknown, clashing and vibrating together, generated the energy I would use to write with. My excitement built the more I learned about the details leading up to March 30th, 1981, when Hinckley shot Ronald Reagan outside the Washington Hilton Hotel and critically wounded Press Secretary James Brady. Words leapt off the screen: ‘Jodie Foster,’ ‘Taxi Driver,’ ‘Yale.’ We had it. We had our aria.

That is until Justin said, “Let’s Google it and see if it’s been done before.” And with that, our Hinckley aria died in the womb.

But such miscarriages of ideas can be blessings in disguise. We quickly moved on from Hinckley and were lead to an equally compelling figure in the form of Mark David Chapman, the evangelist who shot John Lennon in New York in December, 1980—a sort of prequel to Hinckley’s assassination attempt some four months later. What struck me about the days leading up to Lennon’s murder was the testimony of Chapman’s wife. She stated that her husband had confessed his obsession with wanting to kill John Lennon three months before he did, but was dissuaded from doing it after watching the movie “Ordinary People.”

That footnote was the snag that allowed me to unravel the fabric of an assassin’s decisions. We wrote an aria about that conversation with his wife which possessed all the

features I would end up drawing upon for my portrait of Hinckley in “Falls For Jodie:” celebrity, obsession, film, and the fleeting moments of profound self-awareness that makes such acts of destruction and self-destruction more tragic.

In short, it could’ve been stopped.

That notion, that ‘things could’ve gone a better way,’ is a highly theatrical notion. There are few greater feelings in the theater than when we’re confined to our seats and have to watch two trains barreling toward each other on the same track. We can see where the mistake was made, back there, when the conductor adjusted the brim of his hat and missed the turn-signal. It was so avoidable, so small a gesture, and yet there’s nothing we can do but watch its consequences unfold. This is how I tried to convey events in “Falls For Jodie,” and all the plays I wrote afterward that drew on historical source material; catastrophic events can teeter on the slightest winds of influence, by things as small as whether or not Mark David Chapman saw “Ordinary People,” or John Hinckley saw “Taxi Driver.”

I don’t have time to conclude this preface because I’m busy making another play. I recommend you just read the script. I’ve included below for your convenience

PLAY HISTORY

The first draft of FALLS FOR JODIE received a reading as part of The University of Iowa's New Play Festival in Spring 2014.

JOHN	Andrew Wilkes
EDDIE	Felipe Carrasco

The second draft of FALLS FOR JODIE was produced as a workshop at LaGuardia Performing Arts Center in New York City in May 2014.

DIRECTOR	Isaac Klein
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JOHN	Ted Schneider
EDDIE	Trevor Vaughn

The next draft of FALLS FOR JODIE was read at Greenhouse Theatre Center in Chicago, IL in October, 2014.

DIRECTOR	Marti Lyons
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JOHN	Nate Wheldon
EDDIE	Andrew Goetten

The final draft of FALLS FOR JODIE was produced as part of the University of Iowa's Workshop series in January 2015.

DIRECTOR	Ariel Francour
DRAMATURG	Madison Colquette

JOHN	Frankie Rose
EDDIE	Felipe Carrasco

SETTING AND CHARACTERS

Characters:

JOHN 25. White. Based on the man who attempted to assassinate
 Ronald Reagan on March 30th, 1981. Chubby.

EDDIE 20's. A concierge.

Setting:

All the action takes place in a hotel room near the Yale campus in New Haven, CT.

The song John sings in Scene 3 is "Working Class Hero" by John Lennon off the album "John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band" from 1971.

1.

November 1st, 1980. Night.

A hotel room in New Haven near the Yale campus.

JOHN holds a guitar case.

He wears a white shirt with 'NEW YORK CITY' in black letters across the front under a denim jacket.

EDDIE is the concierge.

EDDIE

So what do you think, Mr. Krinkle?

JOHN

It's nice I guess.

EDDIE

I upgraded you. To the highest category we offer.

JOHN

Thanks.

EDDIE

No extra charge. Your window faces East so you can see clear out to the Green. That's Haven Green. And that's Harkness Tower. With the...uh. The tower?

JOHN crosses to the window.

Looks out.

So. Where you comin from?

JOHN

Nashville.

EDDIE

Tennessee's nice.

JOHN

I drove through Tennessee.

EDDIE

From where?

JOHN

Texas.

EDDIE

You're from Texas, huh?

JOHN

Colorado.

EDDIE

Spent the night in Provo once.

JOHN

That's in Utah.

EDDIE

Yup.

They look at each other.

Nodding.

So we got this policy, Mr. Krinkle. About mail? We don't accept mail for customers who haven't checked-in yet. So when this came in I kept it in my own private locker. It's for

you. I noticed the return address. Vanderbilt Petroleum Company? Looks important. Wouldn't want it going back to the post office—they'd just lose it like they lose everything.

(...)

Is there anything I else I can do? For you.

JOHN

Oh, uh. Sorry? I...

JOHN opens the envelope.

Removes some cash.

You got any change? All I have are 20's. You wanna 20?

EDDIE

That's too much.

JOHN

Take the 20.

EDDIE

I can't.

JOHN

It's okay; I got lotsa them.

EDDIE

Well...thank you, Mr. Krinkle.

(takes the 20)

Welcome to New Haven. It's a great town. You know the one and only Freddy Prinze *(crosses his heart)* stayed in this very room the day I started working here. Can you believe it? Tipped me 10 bucks. I kept it in my wallet for a year before I spent it.

(...)

You an agitator?

(waits)

Saw your costume and pegged you for an agitator. I dig it.

JOHN

What costume.

EDDIE

I dig this whole John Lennon thing you got goin on.

JOHN

Halloween was yesterday.

EDDIE

Well...I dig it anyway. With the election next week we're getting lotsa political agitation.

JOHN

What election?

EDDIE

The election. For president.

JOHN

Of what.

EDDIE

The United States.

...

...

JOHN

So I'll see you around then...uh...?

EDDIE

Eddie. Concierge Desk. If you need anything, do not hesitate. My replacement gets in at 7AM. He's a fascist so don't ask him for anything. Wanna party? Just leave a message in

my box. Need place to meet girls? Just—

JOHN

Message in the box. Got it.

EDDIE

Unless you're queer. You queer?

JOHN

No.

EDDIE

Really?

JOHN

I'm not—no, I'm not queer.

EDDIE

Shoulda been here last night. Giamotti shut down Hill House Avenue for the Halloween parade. It was far out, man. Like Queer Christmas. At least queers pay on time, know what I mean?

JOHN

Yeah.

(...)

Pay for what.

EDDIE

Stuff.

JOHN

Mm.

EDDIE

Stuff. I get. From Bridgeport. Anytime, anywhere.

JOHN

Anything?

EDDIE

Anything, anytime, anywhere. You interested?

JOHN

IñI don't think / I understand.

EDDIE

I'm an entrepreneur, Mr. Krinkle. The hotel's just my side gig cuz I can't sleep at night.

JOHN

Me neither.

EDDIE

You want somethin for that?

JOHN

No thanks.

EDDIE

If you do? Anything, anytime, anywhere.

(...)

Well...Good night, sir. I'll see you tomorrow.

JOHN

G'night.

EDDIE lingers, then starts for the exit.

Hey, I was, uh....

EDDIE

(stops)

What.

JOHN

Nothing.

EDDIE

What were you gonna say.

JOHN

No, I was just. Uh. Wondering?

EDDIE

Uh-huhn.

JOHN

Hoping? I know your hotel isn't affiliated with the college but I was hoping you kept a campus directory. Maybe at your / counter there?

EDDIE

Say no more, Mr. Krinkle. Who is she? Teacher? Student?

JOHN

I'm not looking for anyone.

EDDIE

You asked for a directory.

JOHN

I'm just trying to *find* someone.

EDDIE

Right.

JOHN

See?

EDDIE

Yeah. Who.

JOHN

(...)

A student.

EDDIE

Uh-huhn.

JOHN

I'm supposed to meet her tomorrow. To record a demo tape. My agent said to look her up; so I went to the Registrar's Office.

EDDIE

You know her name?

JOHN

No. I mean...of course I know her *name* but they can't release a student's personal information, so...

EDDIE

D'you check with the music department.

JOHN

She's in the Drama Department

EDDIE

Acting huh.

JOHN

She acts too.

EDDIE

Yale's gotta pretty good acting program. Thought I'd sign up one day; but they wouldn't let me in cuz it's run by fascists. They don't appreciate raw instinct. I go off *raw* instinct, Mr. Krinkle. Never lets me down. And my instinct tells me you're good people and good people gotta look out for each other. Cuz let me tell you something, man. New Haven—now his is just one man's opinion—is kind of a shit hole. It's a shit hole and it's dangerous so avoid Park street and everything surrounding Union station. When's your birthday.

JOHN

Union Station. Got it—Huh?

EDDIE

I'm an Aeries.

JOHN

May 29th.

EDDIE

Scorpio. I dig Scorpios.

JOHN

I'm a Gemini.

EDDIE

Even better.

JOHN

What's that mean.

EDDIE

I think it means I can help you.

JOHN

How.

EDDIE

Depends.

(...)

Have you rubbed the foot yet.

JOHN

Pardon?

EDDIE

The foot.

JOHN

(...?)

EDDIE

It's just a question.

JOHN

I thought you said you can help me.

EDDIE

Some president of Yale from the 17-whatevers' got a statue in the Old Campus. Tourists like to rub his foot for good luck. That's why it's gold. You should / check it out.

JOHN

Thanks for your help, / but I...

EDDIE

It's actually bronze. But all the rubbing / makes it, uh...

JOHN

I'm tired I need to got bed now.

EDDIE

Wait, wait, wait....listen: A little luck never hurt anybody is all I'm saying. Okay? You need some luck. And a facebook. It's this book everyone gets when they enroll. The facebook's got every student's picture and their dorm room number. But you gotta be a freshman or know a freshman who's got one.

JOHN

Do you?

EDDIE

No.

JOHN

(...)

So...where do I get one.

EDDIE

I know the groundskeeper.

Does maintenance at the Old Campus where the freshman dorms are. Nice guy. I mean, he's a shell shocked pervert but he's got shrapnel in his head from Korea. What's he gonna do but clean bird shit off the gold foot and memorize the facebook Which he does. So if she's a freshman he'll know where she is. I'll give him a call.

JOHN

That's...that'll be great.

EDDIE

But I need a name.

JOHN

(...)

It's...uh...Lyn. Lyn Collins.

EDDIE

Consider it done

JOHN

(getting his wallet)

Here let me get you a...

EDDIE

No, no, no...This one's on me.

JOHN

But I want to—

EDDIE

Mr. Krinkle?

JOHN

Huh.

EDDIE

This one's on me.

JOHN

Why are you so nice to me?

EDDIE

Because. I don't know. Cuz you're not a fascist. That's why. And because I like your guitar. And you're cool.

(...)

Sleep tight, man. We're gonna find this bird if it's the last thing we do.

JOHN

What bird?

EDDIE

Your girl. You know...a bird.

JOHN

Right.

EDDIE

Oh. And one more thing: remember what I'm about to say cuz it's the most important thing you'll ever hear. You ready? Don't let no one—*ever*—take away your raw instincts.

EDDIE puts a fist in the air.

Exits.

2.

The next day.

November 2nd.

Afternoon.

JOHN enters wearing his red sport coat, khaki's, and brown boots.

Sweating. Out of breath.

He carries a bouquet of irises under his arm.

Drops the irises to the ground.

Dials the phone.

Mom?

It's John.

How do I get rid of stains?

They're khakis.

Well I'm at a hotel, mother, so I don't have any baking soda. Do you have some?

Can I come home then?

Why?! Wait! Don't go! Has Dad said anything about my stock?

Why not?

Well why do I have to talk to him about it? It's my money.

It's just stock he invested. It's not his.

So how come Scott and Diane got theirs and I didn't get—

Nothing? What do you mean I'm doing n—he *says* that?

I've got six record companies bidding for my new album. I'm recording a demo and taking writing classes. At Yale, mother. It's an Ivy League! That's more than nothing.

Can you just.. Just let me come back to Colorado? Please?

But I told you I didn't take his stupid coins! I swear! What would I do with a coin collection?!

What message?

EDDIE enters from the bathroom.

He's wearing casual clothes.

And a white glove on one hand.

EDDIE

Why hello, Mr. Krinkle?

JOHN

(hangs up)

EDDIE

Something wrong?

JOHN

I'm—no—what are you doing in here?

EDDIE

Q.C

JOHN

What?

EDDIE

Inspection. Quality control. Confirming your room was serviced correctly.

JOHN

Would you let me know before you—

EDDIE

You didn't see the "Service" sign on your door knob?

JOHN

No, I....

EDDIE

With the recession we've lost some housekeepers so we're all pulling our weight.

D'you rub the foot?

JOHN

I don't appreciate you coming into my room; and why are you dressed like that?

EDDIE

It's my day off.

JOHN

So why are you here.

EDDIE

I'm pulling my weight.

JOHN

That's great, can you get out please.

EDDIE

I was just on my way.

(re: the flowers on the floor)

I'll have my girl come up and take care of this planting material.

JOHN

Thank you. Good bye.

EDDIE

Oh, and I wanted to adhere your attention to a certain matter of interest.

(...)

We received no mail for you today.

JOHN

Sorry?

EDDIE

We received no mail. Addressed. To you.

JOHN

You're telling me there's nothing to tell me?

EDDIE

I just know / that you—

JOHN

Thank you but if any more mail comes, reject it. I'm leaving.

EDDIE

She wasn't at the Old Campus?

JOHN

These are personal matters. All you should know is that your creepy groundskeeper wouldn't even let me in.

EDDIE

I told him who you were looking for. You want me to call him and—

JOHN

No! I want the police to do something about the thugs on Park street who whistled at me. I dropped her flowers in a puddle and now my pants are ruined.

EDDIE

I told you to avoid Park street.

JOHN

They're khakis!

EDDIE

Where are you going?

JOHN

I'm going home before they stain.

EDDIE

I don't think you wanna do that.

JOHN

Thanks for your concern but I don't think it's any of your business.

EDDIE

Suit yourself, Mr. Hinckley. But no sooner do you hit the South bound I-95 will someone else take off with your girlfriend. Have a good day.

JOHN

What did you just...?

EDDIE

(exiting)

I said have a good day.

JOHN

You called me 'Hinckley.' Where are you going?

EDDIE

I gotta finish my Q.C. check.

JOHN

You said "Suit yourself, Mr. Hinckley." Why would you say that?

EDDIE

What do you care I thought you were checking out.

JOHN

Answer me!

EDDIE

So maybe I called you 'Hinckley.' I'm sorry, Krinkle. I got lotsa names to remember.

You're not my only client at this hotel you know.

JOHN

Tell me!

EDDIE

Maybe...I don't know...maybe it's cuz you accepted a letter yesterday addressed to 'John Hinckley.' Or maybe cuz your mom left you a message today asking for 'John Hinckley.'

Hands him a message.

She didn't leave a number. Figgered you'd know it.

Should see my log book. Since the Fall term we've had a Robert Bickle, a Travis DeNiro... all kindsa variations. Harvey Scorceese. Martin Keitel. But your name. Krinkle? That's when I knew you were special. That's the name Deniro's character gave, right? To the Secret Service? The scene at the rally. Henry Krinkle.

Saw "Taxi Driver" a dozen times when it came out. Great film. Deniro? Now there's an

actor, man. Raw instinct. Your girl too. What's her name? Iris? Is that why you got her those irises?

I get the attraction. I do. She had those shorts on, remember? Of course you remember those shorts and the red heels with the wedge? I know she was only 13 but it's one of those situations where you're thinking "I shouldn't be? But I am?" Know what I mean?

JOHN

Get out of my room, please.

EDDIE

She's all grown up.

JOHN

I said get out.

EDDIE

I'm trying to help you, man!

JOHN

Are there others?

EDDIE

What others.

JOHN

Men. You said she's gonna leave with someone else. Who else is looking for her?

EDDIE

Creeps. Don't worry about them.

JOHN

Why not.

EDDIE

I said don't worry about em. A lot of Robert Deniro wannabees. Thinking they can come up here and save her from a pimp; like they're in a goddamn movie.

JOHN rubs his throat.

What's wrong?

JOHN

My throat hurts.

EDDIE

What's wrong with your throat?

JOHN

I have throat cancer and I don't have insurance because my father—CUT ME OFF!

EDDIE

Why'd he cut you off?

JOHN

Cuz he thinks I stole his coin collection. What would I do with a stupid coin collection?!

EDDIE

You're just upset.

JOHN

And you just want money.

EDDIE

That's not true.

JOHN

Tips. All you care about is money.

EDDIE

That's not completely true.

JOHN

Completely?

EDDIE

No, not entirely. Not as a complete...uh, you know. Fact? But, John, it is *kinda* true. So let's cut the horseshit and get to the point.

JOHN

What's the point.

EDDIE

The point is you're in the ivy leagues now.

JOHN

What's that mean?

EDDIE

It means the people? Here. In this town? Listen to me: They. Are. The World, man. They *run* everything because they *buy* everything so you gotta come strong, my friend. If you wanna get on the other side of those gates you gotta come strong or don't come at all.

JOHN

I wanna go home.

EDDIE

Go home and you'll be turning your back.

JOHN

On what? A girl I can't find? Thugs chasing me down the street in the middle of the day?!

EDDIE

Turning your back on an opportunity.

JOHN

The way that groundskeeper talked to me. Like I wasn't even. Like I was just some, Some—

EDDIE

Concierge?

They're not like you and me, John. These blue bloods. These Silver Spoons with their rich daddies and clove cigarettes and trips to Europe. But their days are numbered, John, and let me tell you why:

Ronald. Wilson. Reagan.

On Tuesday, Governor Reagan is gonna win the election and America will turn a new page. A page of industry, of equality, a page of free market enterprise and opportunity. Reagan's gonna clean up Carter's mess so men who work for a living. Real men like us, like you, can win a movie star.

JOHN

...I don't know...

EDDIE

You don't think I know Jodie Foster?!

(...)

You don't think I sell her roommate on the crew team nitrates and hash? Huh? You don't think I know what she's looking for? Why d'you think I told the groundskeeper not to let you in?

JOHN

What?

EDDIE

Why do you think I told the groundskeeper. Not. To let you. In.

JOHN

(...?)

EDDIE

Cuz you're not ready, dude! Wake up, John. This is why I'm here! I wanna talk business!

Let's talk business!

...

...

JOHN

So what's the opportunity?

EDDIE

You wanna drink first?

JOHN

No.

EDDIE

Crank, nitrates, poppers. Queers love poppers.

JOHN

I'm not queer! I want you to hurry up and tell me what you wanna tell me.

EDDIE

But I need to know if I can trust you. Can I?

JOHN

(...)

Sure.

EDDIE

Good. I'm coming to you first because you're a Libra and we have a lot in common. I mentioned yesterday that I'm an entrepreneur. Remember? I'm kickstarting a new company. The funds are all lined up and we're set to kick ass on this thing.

JOHN

Uh-huhn.

EDDIE

But I need equity, John. Start up equity. To get things going.

JOHN

So you want money?

EDDIE

I need equity.

JOHN

That's what equity is.

EDDIE

It's whatever you want it to be.

JOHN

I'm not paying you to find Jodie.

EDDIE

This isn't about—John, I want you to *make* money. I want you to *invest*. In your future. In you and Jodie's future. I'm backed up on orders I can't fill. We just need start-up equity.

JOHN

What are you selling?

EDDIE

That's an excellent question.

...

...

JOHN

So?

EDDIE

What.

JOHN

What are you selling.

EDDIE

Lists.

JOHN

Lists?

EDDIE

We're selling lists.

JOHN

Lists of what.

EDDIE

Products. I'm in publishing.

JOHN

Mail order?

EDDIE

Exactly.

JOHN

So why don't you just say "mail order"?

EDDIE

Cuz we're boutique.

JOHN

What kinda products.

EDDIE

Products people want to buy. They mail in their orders and we send it to them.

JOHN

Where's your warehouse ?

EDDIE

We don't fulfill the orders, John. That's the thing.

JOHN

Who does?

EDDIE

My associate runs manufacturing.

JOHN

Well I don't have any money.

EDDIE

I'm glad to hear you say you that, John, cuz no one does. We gotta *raise* the money. Fundraising is key.

JOHN

How do you do that?

EDDIE

Language. It's all about language. Read a whole book on it. I had to. I'm not an artist like you are. You've got this way—and I've been meaning to tell you this—but the way you. Talk? I'm like, "Whoa, man, this guy knows language." You're a poet, man. And money, the way it works, it moves like a kind of poetry. When you understand language you can pick a name out of a phone book and pitch any idea to a perfect stranger.

JOHN

You want me to call strangers?

EDDIE

Waste of time. I say, call up someone who we know has got capital. Pitch em this idea. Now I say we start with corporations. Take a company like, say, Vanderbilt for example. Vanderbilt Petroleum Company? Now they're big oil. If we could / get a contact or...

JOHN

Forget it.

EDDIE

Forget what, John, just hear me out.

JOHN

I don't know anyone at Vanderbilt except for my Dad.

EDDIE

Okay.

JOHN

So no.

EDDIE

But maybe—I'm just putting this out there. Brainstorming?

JOHN

We're just brainstorming.

EDDIE

That's right. Maybe...? That's where you start?

JOHN

(...)

Do you have a copy?

EDDIE

Of what.

JOHN

The catalogue.

EDDIE

Of course.

JOHN

Can I see it?

EDDIE

Of course you can see it. Want some gum?

JOHN

Huh?

EDDIE

Gum.

JOHN

I don't want gum, I want to see the catalogue.

EDDIE

Okay.

EDDIE puts gum in his mouth.

What. Now?

JOHN

Yes now.

EDDIE

I don't have it on me right now.

JOHN

Why not.

EDDIE

My associate's got it.

JOHN

I thought it was ready.

EDDIE

He needs help! That's why we need equity.

JOHN

Me and my dad we. We don't get along too well.

EDDIE

Why not?

JOHN

He just—he doesn't understand me and I don't understand him and that's all I wanna say about the subject.

EDDIE

What about your mom?

JOHN

What about her.

EDDIE

So maybe we talk to your mom? Mom talks to Dad, Dad talks to Vanderbilt.

JOHN

Dad *is* Vanderbilt.

EDDIE

So what's the problem.

JOHN

He doesn't appreciate my music.

EDDIE

But this is your future, John.

JOHN

All I wanna do is make music.

EDDIE

You and Jodie's future.

JOHN

I wanna make music for Jodie.

EDDIE

I know you do.

JOHN

She's got this power over me. I can't sleep anymore.

EDDIE

This is a new chapter.

JOHN

I want to have things. I want her to have them. I want to share everything, give everything to her and I can't because of this, this pain and...

Eddie takes the gum out of his mouth.

Sticks it to the door.

What are you doing?

Eddie slams his flat hand over the gum.

Removes his hand to reveal a slip of paper stuck to the door.

EDDIE

Call her.

...

...

JOHN

My throat hurts.

EDDIE

This is / an opportunity.

JOHN

(packing his things)

I'm not calling her.

EDDIE

I'm trying to help you.

JOHN

And I'm not spending my inheritance on a business that sells mail order catalogues.

EDDIE

You gotta trust me.

JOHN

It's not that I don't trust you.

EDDIE

So what the problem?

JOHN

I just don't think you're always telling the truth. Thank you for trying to help me but I don't like New Haven. I'm going home. Without Jodie. And that's that.

EDDIE

There's nothing I can say to change your mind?

JOHN

No.

(...)

Good bye, Eddie.

EDDIE

(sighs)

(frowns)

(resigns)

Good bye, John.

3.

November 5th.

Two days later.

John, on the phone.

JOHN

I hope you don't mind me calling you like this, Jodie, but—

John. John Hinckley. I've sent you letters to your agent's address. I know you're busy, Jodie, so I'll get to the point. It seems that I've come into some very...good news. I'm president!

That's right.

I'm the president of my own company. I have a partner but *I'm* the president. I'm in the mail order catalogue business—and I'm not calling to sell you anything. I just thought maybe I could treat you to lunch tomorrow. You can order anything you want.

Oh...sure, sure...

Of course I understand. For what play?

Why do you have to audition? You wouldn't have to audition for me. I'd just give you whatever part you wanted. I love the theatre. Maybe we can go some—

What, did I say something funny? Is that your roommate?

Before you go can I just say that I love you. That's all. I love you very much and I think we'd be really good together.

Is that your roommate again?

While you think about it would you like to hear a song? I'm a musician. I mentioned it in my letters. One sec.

Straps on his guitar.

And sings into the receiver.

Am G Am
As soon as you're born they make you feel small

 G Am
By giving you no time instead of it all

 G Am
Till the pain is so big you feel nothing at all

 Am (D) G Am
A working class hero is something to be

Am (D) G Am

A working class hero is something to be

There's room at the top they are telling you still
But first you must learn how to smile as you kill
If you want to be like the folks on the hill

A working class hero is something to be
A working class hero is something to be

If you want to be a hero well just follow me
If you want to be a hero well just follow me

Puts the guitar down.

Crosses to the phone.

What' do you think? It's a song about how cruel the world is—which is why we can't get through it alone. Everyone needs someone. Don't you think? Hello?

He hangs up.

...

...

...

EDDIE softly enters.

He's wearing a suit.

Carries a briefcase.

EDDIE

I was about to come in when I... I heard you. I heard your voice. Through the door? And

Ĩ I just stopped. I'm sorry but I stopped and I listened and it was...wow...I can't describe it. It was far out, man! When Jodie hears you sing, and that man you've been hiding from the world comes out of your mouth and blows her away, she's gonna...blow away, dude! What I tell ya, John? Reagan gets elected and now everything's changed. Check it out.

Hands JOHN a catalogue from his briefcase.

It's a prototype but it'll give you the general idea. I told you my associate would come through.

(...)

What d'ya think?

JOHN

Neat.

EDDIE

And check out the tie. Paris, France. My dad got it in the war. Before he died he tied it for me. See that? Double Windsor. I'll never untie it. I wear it on special occasions. Like today.

(hands him a letter)

Special delivery, Mr. Hinckley.

JOHN

Is this it?

EDDIE

What else could it be?

JOHN

Nothing.

EDDIE

Or everything. Open it.

JOHN opens it.

Is it all there?

JOHN

Thirty...six. Yes. Thirty-six hundred. They made it out in two checks.

EDDIE

Congratulations, Mr. President.

JOHN

Three thousand six hundred dollars.

EDDIE

May I?

JOHN gives EDDIE the checks.

Would you excuse me.

EDDIE dials the phone.

EDDIE

Hey, Carl. It's Eddie. I'm not coming into work today

Why? I don't know. Cuz I'm sick. And you're a fascist. And I'll see you around, dude. I quit.

Hangs up.

It's official. I wanted you to hear that. I wanted you to see that I'm all in. See that I...we cannot afford to tread lightly here, man. If Reagan's election has taught us anything it's that we cannot be timid. We have to *do*. We have to act and act now if this country is

gonna rise out of the gutter.

JOHN

Yeah...

EDDIE

I'm not gonna lie. The first time you walked into the lobby I pegged you for a mark: A nice guy with little cash-flow that could help me get out this bullshit hotel.

JOHN

I know.

EDDIE

But the way you walked up to my podium that night and were like. "I'm in." You said it just like that, man. "I'm *in*." No bullshit. I really dug that and it got me thinkin.' About business. About how it's about more than making money.

(earnestly)

When you committed to the business you committed to me. As a person. You're not just my investor. You're my partner. So I'm saying, if we're gonna do this thing let's *do* it. Let's invest all of it.

JOHN

All of it?

EDDIE

Not *all* of it. We invest decisively but smartly. See?

JOHN

(...)

EDDIE

Cuz I've kept my clients waiting too long for just a couple shekels. You agree?

JOHN

(...)

EDDIE

John?

JOHN

Huh?

EDDIE

Are you...? Sometimes you go to this place like. In your head?

JOHN

I'm thinking.

EDDIE

You're the president of a company now. We gotta agree / on everything.

JOHN

I want it registered first.

EDDIE

(...)

What registered.

JOHN

The name of the company.

EDDIE

With the city? But that could take 10 weeks, John.

JOHN

It's my money and I want to the name registered.

EDDIE

Okay.

(...)

So?

(...)

What's the name?

JOHN

I wanted a name with some pizzazz. That tells people we mean business. And when I think real hard about it only one name comes to mind.

(...)

Listalot.

EDDIE

Listalot?

JOHN

Because we sell catalogues that have lists. See? A *lot* of them.

EDDIE

...far out...

JOHN

Came to me in a dream.

EDDIE

I dig it but we can't afford to tread / lightly here.

JOHN

I want something to show to people. To me. To my mom, my girlfriend, my friends, and—

EDDIE

Girlfriend?

JOHN

...fellow musicians, my agent.

EDDIE

John?

JOHN

Yeah?

EDDIE

(...)

Nothing.

JOHN

When you register a company the city gives you a certificate. I want the paper with my name on it next to the company. I want it embossed on paper with a border.

EDDIE

I just...I didn't know you had a girlfriend.

JOHN

We've been sending each other letters for over a year now. Tomorrow I'm going to her audition.

JOHN

Why.

JOHN

I think she'll be more comfortable performing if she knows I'm watching her.

EDDIE

So you're just gonna like what. *Walk* into her audition?

JOHN

Why not?

EDDIE

I don't think it works like that.

JOHN

But I'm with Jodie.

EDDIE

You don't know how these people are, John.

JOHN

I'm there to look after her. See?

EDDIE

Right.

JOHN

I'm not just some creep.

EDDIE

Okay but...

JOHN

But what.

EDDIE

Nothing, I just...

Pause.

JOHN frowns and plucks the checks from Eddie hands.

Crosses to the window.

Looks out.

Silence

JOHN might, very faintly, mutter to himself

Finally:

EDDIE

John?

(...)

Maybe you should...I don't know...bring your guitar?

JOHN turns around.

It's an audition, right? There's gonna be producers and, and...uh...

JOHN

(back to the window)

(sighs)

I don't think it works like that.

EDDIE

Anything can happen.

(...)

Just yesterday, uh.... Jimmy Carter was running the country into the dirt. And today?

Today we got two new presidents. See? One for the country and one for...uh...

JOHN

Listalot?

EDDIE

For Listalot. Anything can happen.

JOHN

(facing him)

3,600 is a lotta money. We'll do half. That should get us going.

EDDIE

Okay. Good. Half.

JOHN

And we'll put the other check on the wall. We have 60 days.

JOHN pins the check to the wall.

Well?

JOHN

What.

EDDIE

Don't be rude, John.

JOHN

(...?)

EDDIE

Where's your goddamn manners, man?! You're my new business partner and we're not even gonna toast?

Pulls out a flask.

Let's toast. It's whiskey. You got champagne glasses?

Locates some coffee mugs.

EDDIE

These'll do.

Gives him a mug.

Pours the whiskey.

An associate of mine distills his own whiskey. The barrels are key. He gets these oak barrels imported from Nova Scotia which give it that smoke. Smell that? 80 a bottle. I get it free.

JOHN

So what should we toast to?

EDDIE

You're president now.

JOHN

To...uh...how bout to Listalot.

EDDIE

To Listalot! And your father. Without whom Listalot would be..list-less.

They cheer.

Drink.

John coughs.

That's the smoke.

This is it, John. My last drink. After this whiskey I'm going clean, man. No more alcohol. No more selling drugs, no more taking drugs. Total organization. You too.

JOHN

Me?

EDDIE

Yes you. Drink up.

They do.

John? Are you better off than you were four years ago?

JOHN

I don't know.

EDDIE

Four years ago, were you better off?

JOHN

I guess I can't say.

EDDIE

Reagan asked the country and the country said "No."

Guess what I was four years ago. A line cook. That's right. In the Yale dining hall. Old goddamn building so all the scrap from upstairs would back up the pipes. All that gristle, potato peels, gravy, half-chewed chicken marsala, all of it would back up the slop sink and overflow the basement. I couldn't take it any more so I quit.

So I'm outside smoking, right, crap all over my apron, and this real pretty bird comes up and asks me for a drag. Her parents were eating inside. They were helping her look for an apartment cuz she was gonna study—was it English? Politics? I don't remember but I'd pick her up here every night. She was staying with her folks at this hotel, probably this very room, and she'd sneak out and we'd walk up to the botanic gardens and talk.

Then I came here one night to pick her up and she and her parents were gone.

So I filled out an application.

You know what I learned from that experience, John? There are two kindsa people in this world: those who eat and those who serve. Fours years later and I'm not serving anymore.

JOHN

Maybe I will bring my guitar.

EDDIE

Yeah...

(takes a sip: then)

What?

JOHN

I'll bring my guitar and maybe Jodie'll ask me to sing. On stage. In front of all those directors and casting agents.

We'll sing.

And then we'll begin our lives together.

Pause.

Awkward.

They drink.

Fade to black.

4.

The next day.

In the darkness, JOHN bashes his guitar to rubble.

5.

Lights up.

JOHN's broken guitar is strewn across the floor.

EDDIE

So?

(...)

So hat do you want him to do?

JOHN

I'm thinking

...

...

My throat hurts. I think I have cancer.

EDDIE

You don't have cancer.

JOHN

I have throat cancer and I'm gonna die.

EDDIE

Every time you get upset you think you're getting throat cancer.

JOHN

That's why I want this done quickly. Can he do it quickly?

EDDIE

What do you want him to do?

JOHN

I said I'm thinking.

(thinks)

Well...for one thing: I don't want him to hurt her. She's fragile

EDDIE

I can tell him that but—

JOHN

She's fragile and I'd never do anything to hurt her.

EDDIE

He'll have to restrain her.

JOHN

Why?!

EDDIE

Because he's gonna throw her in the trunk of a car. I said you don't wanna do this.

JOHN

Why the trunk?

EDDIE

So if she screams—

JOHN

Oh, god...

EDDIE

If she screams we got witnesses to deal with. He's gonna have to restrain her and that means a gag or tape or—

JOHN

I said I don't want him to hurt her.

EDDIE

It's just business, John.

JOHN

I know it's business. I'm paying him, aren't I.

EDDIE

If she alerts attention, it's her or us. And my associate? He's a professional. He's not gonna take any chances and he's gonna drain our Listalot funds in the process. Think about the business!

JOHN

You wanna talk about business? Fine. Without me there is no business. Without me, you'd be on the street selling poppers and picking names outta the phone book! So when you talk to your associate tell him: "No rough stuff." Got it?

EDDIE

(...)

JOHN

Got it?!

EDDIE

Got it...Jesus—

JOHN

And no physical stuff. If I find out he, he touched her or, or...

EDDIE

John, he's a professional. He's not gonna touch her, he's just gonna restrain her. Then he'll bring her *here*. To you. So you can—so you can do what exactly?

JOHN

Those are personal matters that don't concern any one else but me and Jodie. I just want to talk to her, okay. Face to face. That's all I'm gonna say about it. We're just gonna talk and if she still doesn't share my feelings that's fine. But I deserve some answers.

EDDIE

What happened at the audition?

JOHN

Just call your guy and tell him I'll pay whatever it takes to *correct* this situation. Money is

no object. A man should never see the woman he loves on stage like that.

EDDIE

What did she look like?

JOHN

Taller.

EDDIE

Taller?

JOHN

Yeah she was—What are you still doing here? Call your guy!

EDDIE

John...

JOHN

But not from here. Use a pay phone. You need a dime?

EDDIE

John?

JOHN

What!

EDDIE

(sensitive)

"Taxi Driver" came out 5 years ago.

(...)

She grew up.

JOHN

She wore sweat pants. They were baggy and her sweater was baggy and it had holes in it.

But still she was—she was beautiful, I guess. Strange but beautiful and, and fragile.

And then the *scene* started.

It was a scene where this—*man* puts his hands on her. All over her body and that stupid director kept making her do it over and over again. And in between each take this actor would *talk* to her. They would talk, Eddie, and they would laugh. Then they'd kiss and talk again and / laugh some more.

EDDIE

It's just a play, John.

JOHN

So why'd they walk home together?! I followed them. Across the Green and they were talking and laughing the whole time.

EDDIE

Maybe they're friends.

JOHN

Friends don't talk and laugh like that!

EDDIE

But you didn't see anything.

JOHN

I saw enough.

EDDIE

How can you be certain.

JOHN

Instinct.

EDDIE

And what's that have to do with anything?

JOHN

That actor is *fucking* her, Eddie! How can he *fuck* her?! Don't you understand?

He's *Black!*

Don't Blacks have their own women. Why do Blacks need to have *everything!* What's next, huh? Women fucking horses, dogs, pigs? It's sick! It's, it's, it's venal! He's probably the same guy who chased me down Park street when I first got here. Him and his *gang*. Now they have her acting in a play about—I didn't mention the best part—she's in a play about a prostitute. *My Jodie!* She's playing a prostitute just like she did in "Taxi Driver." And that guy is her pimp. Is this some kinda message? Huh? It's like they're flaunting it in my face, begging me to do something about it. But IÑ I didn't I just. Sat there. And watched.

They didn't even ask me to play my guitar.

...

...

EDDIE

What do you want me to do?

JOHN

Call him.

EDDIE

I'm not calling him, John.

JOHN

Then give me his number.

EDDIE

I cant do that.

JOHN

Why?

EDDIE

I can't disclose my classified contacts.

JOHN

Why not.

EDDIE

Because they're classified.

...

...

JOHN

I'm getting a funny feeling about you, Eddie .

EDDIE

What.

JOHN

I don't know I just. Sometimes I get a funny feeling about you is all.

EDDIE

And what's that supposed to mean.

JOHN

It means I don't think you always tell me the truth.

EDDIE

The only reason I entertained this ludicrous proposition is because you're my / business partner.

JOHN

Because you quit your job and have no other choice.

EDDIE

You're not my boss you're my *partner*. That's a sacred bond. Between men. I only do business with men I can trust. With my life. So if you're getting queer on me then maybe I should reconsider—

JOHN

Give me my stock back.

EDDIE

It's on the wall right where you left it.

JOHN

I'm talking about the certificate from yesterday. I want that money back.

EDDIE

Look, John, I know you're upset—

JOHN

This associate you keep talking about? He's very multitalented. He's in the mail order business, the drug business, the kidnapping business. And I think that's really funny.

EDDIE

You're the one who asked for this. You're the one who wants the easy way out. Instead of putting the work in.

I talk to housekeeping; I know they empty a half dozen cartons of ice cream from your trash every morning. I review the complaint book, I know your neighbors can't sleep cuz you *cry* all night. Pull yourself together, man, we're partners! Total organization is the only way you'll get Jodie back. But until you learn that? Until you learn to stick up for yourself then maybe I should find someone else to do business with.

I don't want your daddy's money.

EDDIE removes the check from the door.

Crumples it. Throws it to the ground.

Starts to exit.

JOHN

Call it off.

EDDIE

(...)

JOHN

Don't call him.

EDDIE

Really?

JOHN

You're right.

EDDIE

Thank Christ...I was getting worried, man.

EDDIE picks up the check from the floor.

Uncrumples it.

JOHN

I don't know what I was thinking.

EDDIE

You fell for Jodie; you weren't thinking at all.

Pins the check back on the wall.

What you need is a distraction. You need to come with me to Alburtus Magnus.

JOHN

What's that?

EDDIE

Albertus Magnus Community College, my friend. You need a community college girl. It's up the hill but it's low hanging fruit. We call it Albertus *Mattress*. These Ivy league birds? I mean—do you *really* wanna drop 50 bucks on a steak dinner? Just so you can listen to some actress talk about her "study abroad experience?"

(sotto)

Gives me a headache just / thinking about it.

JOHN

I think we should cash the other half of the stock.

EDDIE

Huh?

JOHN

Like you said yesterday. We should cash it now. The second half. We're gonna need more funds.

EDDIE

Why.

JOHN

You said I should put the work in so I'm putting the work in.

EDDIE

I don't know, John. You've had a long day.

JOHN

I thought you wanted this.

EDDIE

Yeah but it's important we tread lightly here, man.

JOHN

There's a momentum working, Eddie. Forces that will tear us apart if we don't...if we don't

act. If we don't *do* something. So let's...let's do something.

EDDIE

John, please, let's just—for *now* is all I'm saying—let's just...tread lightly.

...

...

JOHN

Okay.

We'll tread lightly.

6.

Two weeks later.

EDDIE enters wheeling a stack of catalogues.

Starts unloading them.

Taking inventory.

He's in his zone.

Enter JOHN with a black trumpet case.

EDDIE

It's Fall, John!

JOHN

Hey, Eddie.

EDDIE

Leaves fall, money falls. Like leaves.

JOHN

How's your day?

EDDIE

Took the bus all the way out to Weight street and walked down the river.

JOHN

Weight street?

EDDIE

The trees, man. Like someone set em on fire. Made 68 bucks today. That shatters our weekly goal. See what happens? Huh? When you put your mind to something.

JOHN

Uh-huh.

EDDIE

See what happens?

JOHN

Yeah.

EDDIE

Positive thinking, strategy, organization. Pays off in ways you never expected. Take today for example: So I'm walking though campus and guess who IÑ

(re: the trumpet case)

What's that?

JOHN

A trumpet.

EDDIE

Right on.

JOHN

I was gonna get a guitar at the pawn shop but then I saw this trumpet.

EDDIE

It's good to see you're making music again.

JOHN

I'm trying something new.

EDDIE

That's what I like to here. It's all about change. *Momentum*.

JOHN

Cuz I tried ordering a guitar from our catalogue but—

EDDIE stops moving the catalogues.

EDDIE

But what.

JOHN

Dan's Music and Vacuum Repair?

EDDIE

Yeah?

JOHN

An old lady picked up and she never heard of Dan's Music and / Vacuum repair.

EDDIE

I thought we confirmed those guys?

JOHN

Your *associate* confirmed.

EDDIE

I'm beginning to think that sonofabitch is dicking us around.

JOHN

Yeah.

EDDIE

I'm going through these line items one by one to confirm.

JOHN

Most of em work.

EDDIE

That's not enough, John. Listalot is gotta be legit. Things are on the up and up. I believe in signs, man. Connections. Ever hear about butterfly theory?

JOHN

Huh?

EDDIE

Butterflies, dude. It's a theory. So there's this butterfly who flaps his wings, right. And next thing you know there's this hurricane like. On the other side of the world? How'd that happen? Connections. See? So I'm walking down Weight street, passed the country club, and I run into Joan.

JOHN

Jo—?

(...)

Who?

EDDIE

Haven't seen her in 4 years. Met her when I was line cook. I tell you about her?

JOHN

Is she the butterfly?

EDDIE

You're the butterfly. You check into the hotel. See?

JOHN

I don't wanna be a butterfly.

EDDIE

You were like this sign of cosmic uh. Significance? And all of this stuff happened. Cause and effect. And here we are, a month later, and I run into Joan.

JOHN

So she's the hurricane.

EDDIE

She's a foxy hurricane. And she volunteers for some group that has something to do with global uh. Outreach? Divestment? Something. She asked me out for drinks tomorrow night. To talk. So we're talking.

JOHN

About what.

EDDIE

About art and life and fundraising and, and. You know? Intellectual-shit.

JOHN

Did she ask you out *after* you told her about our new business?

EDDIE

We're just talking, John. We're gonna talk then go to the movies. They're playing "Rocky" at Woolsey Hall.

JOHN

(sighs)

EDDIE

What.

JOHN

I worry about you, Eddie.

(looks out the window)

When Reagan talked about a Shining City he wasn't talking about New Haven.

Haven...a haven for who?

I look at these kids, smoking cloves and wearing turtle necks, and they're floating in and

out of this perfect little palace someone built for them a long time ago. And look. Look what surrounds them. Scum. Scum and filth and horror. Any day now when they're not expecting it, all they know will come crashing down and they're not even prepared.

EDDIE

What does this have / to do with—

JOHN

I worry about you, Eddie. I want you to be prepared.

EDDIE

For what?

JOHN

You're going door to door.

EDDIE

So.

JOHN

Door to door in *New Haven*. Hauling around cash and expensive merch. At the pawn shop today, overheard this kid—couldn't be more than 13 years old—brings in a brand new microwave he lifted off the back of a Sears truck. Wants to pawn it for a .38.

(...)

That's a .38 revolver, Eddie.

EDDIE

I know what a .38 is. You don't think I fenced my share of contraband when I was 13? C'mon. Who was behind the counter today? Mitch?

JOHN

So you know what a .38 could do to your face?

EDDIE

What does this have to do with my date tomorrow night?

JOHN

It's a date now? I thought it was a meeting.

EDDIE

We're just talking.

JOHN

We should protect our investments, Eddie. *By any means necessary.*

EDDIE

Can I remind you that I grew up in this shit hole—and I'm not sayin New Haven's not a shit hole. I'm just sayin you watch too many movies.

JOHN puts a .38 pistol on the table.

JOHN

Ever shot a gun before?

EDDIE

Yeah.

JOHN

(...?)

EDDIE

I have. Why? Have you?

JOHN

I grew up in Texas, Eddie. I kept a gun on my shelf next to my basketball trophies. Go ahead. Hold it.

EDDIE picks it up.

Gotta girl? You gotta have protection.

EDDIE puts it down.

EDDIE

How'd you pay for this anyway? Not with our Listalot Funds.

JOHN

Of course not.

EDDIE

So how'd you pay for it.

JOHN

I pawned my coin collection.

EDDIE

(...)

We'll take it back.

JOHN

Why.

EDDIE

So you can get a guitar.

JOHN

I gotta trumpet.

EDDIE

So you'll have a guitar and a trumpet, just take it back. I thought we moved on. I thought you and I, we—we came to an understanding. How many times I gotta say it: she's no good for you.

JOHN

I'm not sayings she is.

EDDIE

She's no good for *us*. We talked about this.

JOHN

She's bad for me, Eddie.

EDDIE

Yes.

JOHN

Bad for my body.

EDDIE

Yup.

JOHN

My mind.

EDDIE

Sing it!

JOHN

My spirit.

EDDIE

Amen.

(...)

You're gonna pawn the gun, get some money back, come out with me and Joan tomorrow. If Mitch won't take it, I'll give it to my guy in Bridgeport. You're president of a company now, man. Don't fuck it up.

JOHN

(...)

Okay.

EDDIE

Now...Dan's Music and Vacuum. I say we call these guys and tell em what's what. It's

important that we—

JOHN

Do you think Jodie's a virgin?

...

...

It doesn't matter. It's just something I think about. Sometimes. And maybe I could move on if I knew. For sure. And since you know people who know people I figgerd...

EDDIE

(...)

Figgered what.

JOHN

You could confirm?

EDDIE

Confirm?

JOHN

If she's a virgin.

EDDIE

(...)

With *what*, John. How am I gonna—

JOHN

I guess it doesn't matter.

EDDIE

It doesn't.

JOHN

Do you think your girlfriend is a virgin?

EDDIE

She's not my girlf—John? A) Who cares? B) She's probably *not* and C) what are we gonna do about Dan's Music and Vacuum?

JOHN

Just don't let what happened to me to happen to you.

EDDIE

What's that mean?

JOHN

Don't let *them*—the degenerates, the addicts, the scum—don't let them take something that's yours, that you *earned*, the way they took Jodie from me.

Now...

Lets get our vendors in line.

7.

December 7th.

Evening.

JOHN wears jeans, cowboy boots, and a wife beater.

He's doing push ups

He finishes.

Puts on a shoulder holster.

Underneath a green military jacket

Poses in front of the mirror.

Draws the gun out of his holster.

JOHN

Faster than you. Saw you comin...fuckin shit-heal.

(puts the gun back into his holster)

You make a move, you make the move, it's your move.

(draws)

Don't try it, you fuck.

EDDIE enters with a stack of catalogues.

JOHN holsters his gun before EDDIE sees it.

JOHN

You're late.

EDDIE

For what?

JOHN

Our meeting.

EDDIE

I was making the rounds.

JOHN

Don't mean you're not late.

EDDIE

Bus was late.

JOHN

You shoulda walked.

EDDIE

It's cold.

JOHN

You shoulda ran.

EDDIE

You gonna turn on the heat?

JOHN

If you're cold you're not sweating. You're not sweating, you're not moving. You're not moving? You're dead.

EDDIE

Does that mean 'no'?

JOHN

(stops)

Our bodies have got to be ready, Eddie.

EDDIE

I'm hungry.

JOHN

For when the time comes.

EDDIE

Wanna eat? All I had today was a box of Juke-Jukes.

JOHN

I already ate. Eggs yolks and Metamusil. Then I went for a run.

EDDIE

Well I already ordered us Chinese from the lobby phone.

JOHN

I'm not poisoning my body, Eddie. With *Chinese*, no less. Especially today.

EDDIE

What's today?

JOHN

December 7th, Edward.

EDDIE

So?

JOHN

So show some respect for the American Men Who Have Fallen! I'm boycotting Chink-food.

EDDIE

Japan attacked Pearl Harbor.

JOHN

What's your point?

EDDIE

My point is I'm hungry so I ordered Chinese.

JOHN

Don't you understand what's a stake? Every muscle, every vein has to be perfect. No grease. No fat. Total organization. It's the only way we'll accomplish our mission tomorrow.

EDDIE

I don't want any part of your mission. Especially if it involves—

JOHN

It does.

EDDIE

Yeah well count me out. You've stalked, sorry, *wooed* Jodie Foster for a month. Her and that guy. They're not together, dude.

JOHN

So why do they talk?

EDDIE

They're actors, John, they can't shut up. Besides, he's probably queer. What d'you know?

JOHN

I know enough.

EDDIE

All you know is that Jodie hasn't replied to your creepy messages because they're creepy.

JOHN

She can't reply to my messages because the Black Panthers / are holding...

EDDIE

(sotto)

Here he goes again with the Black / Panthers...

JOHN

Pick up a newspaper, Eddie! Wake up! The Black Panthers gave a speech to—

EDDIE

10 years ago!

JOHN

(he might consult a notebook)

These are facts, Eddie. They came to Yale and gave a speech to the Black Ensemble Company, less than a block away from this hotel room. Where Jodie walks to school everyday.

EDDIE

So the Black Panthers are holding Jodie Foster hostage.

JOHN

An investigation has been launched.

EDDIE

And they free her from the sex-dungeon every night for rehearsal?

JOHN

They drug her. They give her drugs so she doesn't talk to anyone.

EDDIE

If you ever took drugs before you'd know that sentence makes *no* sense.

JOHN

And every time I call her dorm I hear her voice in the background. And her roommate laughs at me. They're *laughing* at me, Eddie. You want me to just sit here and let them laugh at me?

EDDIE

While you're pining away for some has-been actress we made no money last week. It's cold and no one's buying.

JOHN

Ha.

EDDIE

What.

JOHN

(sotto)

Because it's cold.

EDDIE

It's not cold out? How would you know; you're in here all day marking up newspapers with red marker while I'm out there/ bustin my ass!

JOHN

How can you be so smart and so stupid? Have you even met your associate?

EDDIE

I vet everyone I do business with.

JOHN

He doesn't return your calls and half the businesses in the Listalot catalogue—*half*—were

totally made up.

EDDIE

At least I had something to begin with.

JOHN

And what's that supposed to mean.

EDDIE

It means at least I had something before it was stolen by a queer actor.

JOHN

You said they weren't together!

EDDIE

They're not.

JOHN

So why did you just say—

EDDIE

It's just something I said and now I'm gonna say something else: I'm not what you'd call a, uh. Psychological expert? But here's my diagnosis if you'd like to hear it.

JOHN

I wouldn't.

EDDIE

Well here it is anyway: I think you're weird, dude. You're weird and you got some serious issues and I'm begging you not to go through with this tomorrow—What are you doing?

JOHN

I wanna show you my trumpet. It's part of my new business plan. I think you'll like it.

Phone rings.

EDDIE

Dinner's ready.

(answers it)

I'll be right down. Don't spit in it.

(hangs up)

Fascist. I'll be right back. Unless you're out caroling with a 6th grade marching band.

EDDIE exits.

JOHN opens the trumpet case and removes a replica of a Robert Deniro's character's sleeve-gun from the movie Taxi Driver.

JOHN attaches the devise to his arm.

Puts on a green military jacket.

Returns to the mirror.

Admires himself.

JOHN

(poorly imitating Robert Deniro)

You talkin to me?

You talk-ing to me?

Well who the hell else you talkin to? You talkin to me?

Well I'm the only one here.

Who the fuck do you think you're talkin to?

Oh yeah?

Okay.

Just before he can release the sleeve gun,

EDDIE enters with Chinese take-out.

EDDIE

They fucked up and gave us extra won ton which got me thinkin about food delivery. Wouldn't it be groovy if there was just one number you could call? Like. Instead of digging around all these different menus, there's one number with a concierge who would place your order. And restaurants would outsource the delivery us.

JOHN

You shoulda got Pepes.

EDDIE

I'm sick of pizza.

JOHN

I like Pepes Pizza.

EDDIE

You know pizza's from Italy, right.

JOHN

Yeah.

EDDIE

So Italy and Japan?

JOHN

Uh-huhn.

EDDIE

They were allies.

They eat.

JOHN hands EDDIE a flyer.

JOHN

Read.

EDDIE

(reading)

"Getting Out" by Marsha Norman at the Yale Cabaret. What is this?

JOHN

The play.

EDDIE

What kinda title is that? "Getting Out."

JOHN

I don't know.

EDDIE

Know what's a good title? "Star Wars." You can just see it like. On a big marquee. In lights. What's wrong with people.

JOHN

Beats me.

EDDIE

And who's Marsha Norman?

JOHN

She's the writer.

EDDIE

You said it was a play.

JOHN

She's the playwright. Starts at 8:00 tomorrow. House opens at 7:30.

EDDIE

So you're just gonna. What. You're gonna jump on stage in the middle of the show and scream something in Latin. Like you're John Wilkes Booth or somethin?

JOHN

I don't speak Latin so I don't know what this has to do with me. And I'll only shoot if that nigger tries to stop us.

Eddie winces.

They begin to eat.

I need a fork. All they got is chopsticks?

EDDIE

You ever hear of Mo Dak?

JOHN

Huh?

EDDIE

Mo Dak.

JOHN

The butterfly thing?

EDDIE

It's a secret Kung Fu passed down thousands of years by Shaolin Monks. Buddy a mine taught me back in Pittsburg. You can subdue any opponent with just a pair chop sticks.

JOHN

Will it help me eat stir fry.

EDDIE

Monks don't believe in lethal force.

JOHN

I said I'll only shoot if the nigger tries to stop us.

EDDIE

You know Booth hated Black people too. John Wilkes Booth. That's why he shot Lincoln in the face.

JOHN

I don't hate the Blacks. I just don't think Blacks should mix with Whites.

EDDIE

Like apartheid?

JOHN

Maybe.

EDDIE

You don't even know what apartheid is.

JOHN

Yes I do.

EDDIE

So you'd know that in South Africa they don't mix Blacks and Whites.

JOHN

They should do that here.

EDDIE

What about Dominicans? Should Whites mix with Dominicans?

JOHN

I don't have an opinion about Dominicans.

EDDIE

You should. Cuz the actor you're gonna kill tomorrow? Is Dominican.

JOHN

(...)

I'm...I'm not gonna kill him. That's why you're gonna tackle him. After the intermission there's a scene where he kisses her. That's when you restrain him while I go for Jodie.

EDDIE

What if I can't restrain him.

JOHN

Use your Mo Dak.

EDDIE

(as if quoting an ancient text)

(maybe a hand gesture)

Mo Dak is for self-defense only.

JOHN

What's that mean?

EDDIE

It means I'm not beating a man to death with a trumpet.

JOHN

I'm not gonna beat him with a—

EDDIE

Or blow the national anthem into his ear like. *Really* loud.

JOHN

It's not a trumpet.

EDDIE

No shit.

JOHN

You wanna know what it is?

EDDIE

Not really.

JOHN

So there's that part in "Taxi Driver," when DeNiro makes that sleeve-thing? Remember?

That thing he uses to hide the gun beneath his jacket-sleeve?

EDDIE

Yeah.

JOHN

And it pops out? Boom!

EDDIE

I said yeah.

JOHN

I got one of those. Mitch at the pawn shop hooked me up with everything I need. It'll be ready by tomorrow's mission.

EDDIE

Have fun cuz I got plans

JOHN

What plans.

EDDIE

Plans, John. That I got.

JOHN

You don't got any plans.

EDDIE

What do you call a fundraiser? At Yale University, dude.

JOHN

How'd you get that.

EDDIE

Joan. She's running it. No big deal.

JOHN

Who's Joan?

EDDIE

The girl I told you ab—See? This is the thing with crazy people. Not once have I met a lunatic who was also like. An *active* listener.

JOHN

What's she raising funds for?

EDDIE

South Africa.

(...)

What am I worried about anyway. S'not like you'll get away with it.

JOHN

You gonna call the cops?

EDDIE

I'm no nark.

JOHN

Go ahead, call the cops. I want you to. Maybe they'd like to hear about what's going on in New Haven. My private investigation work has lead me to uncover some Black military ops that directly involve the president. Reagan'll probably give me a medal of honor. But you're not gonna call, Eddie. Know why? Cuz if something happens to me? You don't gotta pot to piss in.

EDDIE

I coulda moved on without you a long time ago.

JOHN

So why don't you?

EDDIE

Cuz I'm the only thing stopping you from hurting yourself. And because you're a spoiled rich boy. With no friends.

...

...

...

JOHN

You're right, Eddie. You're always right. I'll abort the mission.

EDDIE

Good.

JOHN

I don't know what I was thinking.

EDDIE

You're always coming up with these conspiracies.

JOHN

Cuz I'm gonna take a walk down there to the rally instead.

EDDIE

What rally?

JOHN

Your rally.

EDDIE

You mean the fundraiser?

JOHN

The people at these fundraisers, what are they? Jews?

EDDIE

They're undergads who believe / in a....

JOHN

Jews. Raising money. For Africa.

EDDIE

South Africa.

JOHN

Where do you think the Blacks come from anyway? The sky? Maybe these Jew-students are part of the uprising. Maybe I got questions for some of the Yalies running this group. And maybe I'll start with Joan.

...

...

EDDIE

Are you messin with me right now? Or you just messin with me.

JOHN

I'm just messin with you.

I mean...I don't even know where what Joan looks like.

Or where she lives.

Or the route she takes to Econ every Wednesday morning at 9AM.

EDDIE starts moving toward JOHN

JOHN retreats.

EDDIE

Are you following her?

JOHN

Why would I follow her?

EDDIE

How do you know about her Econ class.

JOHN

Have I ever told you that I'm a member of the Audubon society?

EDDIE

What.

JOHN

Birdwatching. I like to birdwatch.

JOHN gets a folder.

JOHN

On a nice day I take my camera out. New Haven's got all kinds a birds. Colorful, beautiful birds. Say, would you like to see?

Hands the folder it EDDIE

I could use some feedback.

EDDIE looks at a picture, drops it to the floor.

I love birds.

Another, drops, repeats.

EDDIE

I always knew you were sick but I thought...I thought you were at least...

JOHN

What.

EDDIE

That I could—

JOHN

Control me?

EDDIE

Stay away from her.

JOHN

I'm afraid I can't do that.

EDDIE

I said stay away from—

EDDIE goes for JOHN

John tries to release the sleeve gun.

It won't work.

The gun is stuck in his sleeve.

JOHN takes off his jacket so he can get at it.

That's when EDDIE goes for him.

They wrestle for the gun on the floor.

The gun gets away from them.

Before JOHN can reach it, EDDIE locates his father's tie.

Nooses it around JOHN's neck.

Pulls it hard.

Harder.

Just before JOHN passes out, EDDIE lets go.

EDDIE rises.

They pause.

Breathing.

EDDIE

I'm...I'm sorry, John. I...

JOHN

Get out.

EDDIE

I didn't...I didn't want it to end this way...I...

EDDIE picks up the gun and leaves.

8.

The next day.

Evening.

The blue glow of the TV illuminates JOHN on a chair.

We hear the sound of a football game .

Announced by Howard Cosell and Frank Gifford.

JOHN, with the heel of his boot, rocks the TV crate back and forth.

Cosell

But the game's suddenly been placed in total perspective for us. Remember this is just a football game, no matter who wins or loses. Hard to go back to the game after that news flash, which, in duty bound, we have to take. It's an unspeakable tragedy. Frank?

Gifford

Indeed, it is.

Cosell

Third down...four?

Gifford

It'll be fourth down. Cavanaugh will let it run down for one final attempt. He'll let the seconds tick off to give Miami no opportunity whatsoever.

JOHN lets the TV fall.

It goes crash.

9.

Later that night.

The T.V, tipped over, is still on.

EDDIE enters.

EDDIE

Eh, John?! Where are you?

He notices light slipping out of the cracks of the bathroom door.

It's locked.

John! It's Eddie! Open up!

JOHN casually opens the door.

He's wearing his John Lennon attire from Scene 1.

JOHN

Why hello, Eddie.

EDDIE

(...?)

JOHN

Something wrong?

EDDIE

You weren't at the show. I assumed...

JOHN

Assumed what?

JOHN crosses to the phone.

Dials.

Hello, I'd like to order a cab for a pick up at The Colony Hotel. Can you have the front desk call when you've arrived? Thank you. I'll meet you outside.

Hangs up.

EDDIE

You goin on a trip?

JOHN

You can say that.

EDDIE

Me too. Guess where.

(buzzer-sound)

Too late. DC. That's right, John. *Washington*. What do you think about that?

JOHN packs his things.

EDDIE

I had pizza with Joan. Her group is going down to Washington to protest Reagan. She invited me and I said I'd go. So I'm going. No big deal.

It's not permanent. I'll be back. They're having a party tonight at the Old Campus. So I just stopped to...uh...get my dad's tie. I wanna look sharp.

Joan and I skipped the fundraiser. Took a walk to the cabaret to see Foster.

You should've of at least watched the play. Not bad. There's a lotta talking in it though.

Sorry I tried to kill you yesterday.

Where you goin'?

JOHN

The hospital.

EDDIE

Why?

JOHN

Because John's dead.

EDDIE

(...?)

(laughs)

Dead? You're not dead, man. Look, it's only natural sometimes or business partners to encounter—

JOHN

I called my mother and told her that John's dead and he's not coming back.

EDDIE

You're freaking me out...

JOHN

So mother called the hospital and they're gonna keep me. Before I do something stupid.

EDDIE

Like what?

JOHN

Like shoot somebody.

EDDIE

I think...John, I think that's a good idea.

JOHN

How could someone do that! Just shoot a man, a hero, out of cold blood?!

EDDIE

Who?

JOHN

Someone shot him, Eddie! In the back! Outside his apartment in New York some lunatic shot John Lennon and now he's dead.

(...)

There's no morality, no law, no justice...

EDDIE

John Lennon's dead?

JOHN

...no God. He's not coming back. And neither am I.

EDDIE

Who shot him?

JOHN

Some guy, I think. 5 foot something. Brown hair. That's all they're saying. And that he's....

EDDIE

He's what.

JOHN

(...)

White.

(...)

I'm....

(John breaks a little)

I'm sorry, Eddie.

EDDIE

For what.

JOHN

For letting us down.

EDDIE

You didn't let us down.

JOHN

I let you down. I let our business down.

EDDIE

It'll be here when you get out.

JOHN

You wont.

EDDIE

You'll visit.

JOHN

I just wanted to do something, Eddie. Something important my dad could be proud of.

EDDIE

Get better and come to D.C. They're all artists. Maybe Jodie will be there. Who knows...

JOHN

Jodie?

EDDIE

She think's Reagan's a fascist anyway.

(subject change)

You know, it's about time we all move on. New Haven's a shit hole. Maybe I'll stay in D.C. Start a food delivery service like / we talked about.

JOHN

Reagan's a what...?

EDDIE

It's important to have more than one revenue stream.

JOHN

Why does Jodie—

Car horn from outside.

EDDIE

That's Joan. I gotta split.

JOHN

What are you saying?

EDDIE

What.

JOHN

Now that Lennon's dead, Reagan's the only one left who represents peace and, and all that is holy and right with the world and now you're saying—

EDDIE

Shh shhh...John. John? This is all in your head, man. You're paranoid.

JOHN

I'm not paranoid I'm just..., Yeah. I'm...

EDDIE

Paranoid.

JOHN

(...)

You're right.

EDDIE

This is what they're gonna take of, right? At the hospital? You packed?

JOHN

Almost.

EDDIE

Tonight you'll have yourself a clean room. Three square meals a day, you'll get to play poker with the spastics, grab ass with the nurses, it's gonna be great. I gotta go to this party if I wanna get to D.C. But wait for the call okay?

JOHN

Okay.

EDDIE

Listen to me: Do *not* leave that bed until the phone rings. The front desk will call when the cab is here.

JOHN

Wait a second.

EDDIE

What.

JOHN

Your tie.

EDDIE

Keep it. All those retards need to know who's president.

JOHN

Thanks, Eddie.

EDDIE

Oh. And I forgot to tell you. You left the audition before you saw how that scene ends

Funny thing is the play's about this woman who goes to prison. Guess why? Cuz she killed a cabby. Weird huh. So she kills a cabby and goes to prison—then she gets outta prison and it flashes back to when she was this spazy kid who's a prostitute. And that's Jodie's part. Just like the movie. And just like the movie she's / got this pimp.

JOHN

Don't say anymore.

EDDIE

No, but John. You left, man. You left the audition before you saw how the scene ends cuz she ditches that guy. For someone else. Who loved her. The entire time. He's just this...normal guy. But, but *strong*. Even though he's weird, he's strong and good. And she sees that in him. So he doesn't kill anybody.

JOHN

Then what.

EDDIE

The play ends.

EDDIE puts a fist in the air.

JOHN (maybe for the first time in the play) smiles

Then puts his fist in the air.

EDDIE exits.

JOHN closes his suit case.

Loops the tie around his neck.

Sits at the end of the bed.

Waiting. Thinking.

The phone rings.

And rings.

And rings.

JOHN remains seated.

The Play Ends.