

ACT 1:

Scene 1:

(Breakroom of the penitentiary. Barry Whitland and Donald Scott sit in chairs, not facing each other.)

Barry Whitland: Well it's a question of priorities.

Donald Scott: I'm not asking for sixty, seventy hours a week.

Barry: You're just...

Donald: Yeah, I'm just...

Barry: And they take. They take.

Donald: They take and don't give back.

Barry: It's...uh...

Donald: Not right. None of this is right.

Barry: But you're not asking for sixty....

Donald: Not asking for sixty, seventy hours a week. But the same rules apply.

Barry: The same rules...

Donald: Fuckin' A, the same rules. If they can't give you this, then it's not a...

Barry: Uh, a....

Donald: A, uh, working relationship. This is work, this is my job.

Barry: It's a...uh...a relationship

Donald: I get no support. No fucking support.

Barry: There needs to be support...

Donald: You've gotta know that they've got your back. That if the worst should happen, God forbid, you know?

Barry: The worst has yet to happen.

Donald: That means fuck all. That means shit. That thinking's lower than dog shit.

Barry: Than dog shit, yeah.

Donald: But it's coming up on the holidays. It's coming up on that time...when...

Barry: The holidays, exactly.

Donald: That time when, uh, little Jimmy...

Barry: Jimmy and Janey.

Donald: Does this make sense, what I'm saying?

Barry: I get the gist.

Donald: No support. They don't fucking support you.

Barry: How long have you been here now?

Donald: What the fuck does that mean?

Barry: I'm just asking.

(Edward White walks into the breakroom.)

Edward: Barry, how's the wife?

Barry: She is getting better. I've talked to the doctor.

Donald: What the fuck does that mean, how long I've worked here?

Edward: I caught a kid keying my car. He was just doing it and I caught him. It's all about values. Kids are lacking values.

Donald: Barry, what does that mean?

Barry: Did you turn him in?

Edward: We have a duty, I know. We're supposed to represent the law enforcement community. But I couldn't turn him in. The paintjob of a car is no excuse for turning them over to what we've got here.

Donald: Just what in the fuck do you mean, how long have I worked here?!

Barry: It's none of my business, Don. It wasn't meant to signify anything.

Donald: Why the fuck does it matter how long I've

worked here?!

Edward: Calm down, Don. He was just saying...

Barry: I was just saying...that...uh....

Donald: I know damn well what you're saying. You're not apologizing your way out of this. There's no bargaining here. You understand me? I haven't been around as long as you have? Fuck you.

Edward: Now Donald. Just hold up there.

Donald: Fuck you too. Fuck this place. No support. I'm leaving. I'm going home.

Barry: Your shift is only half over.

Donald: I'm going home. I'm going down the cafeteria. I'm going down to laundry.

Edward: They'll clock you out for that. They dock you for going down to laundry.

Donald: That's what I'm talking about. No support. I'm not asking for sixty hours.

Barry: You're, uh...

Donald: I'm asking for support from this bullshit outfit.

Edward: It's government work.

Barry: You're, uh...

Donald: What's that mean? It's government work, what's that mean?

Edward: You work for the government.

Barry: You're, uh...the government...

Donald (cutting him off): I fucking know I work for the government, you prick. You've got one long eye on you, you know that? You fucker. You little nancyboy.

Edward: I'm just saying it's government work.

Donald: Not my government. I didn't vote for the bastards. I voted for the party that actually supports the working man. I voted for back up in this job.

Barry: Because they take.

Donald: That's right. That's god damn right. They take and they take. And don't give anything back. I've got kids now.

Barry: You're concerned...

Donald: Yeah, I'm concerned.

Barry: Concerned about...

Donald: That's right. Concerned about where this is leading. What kind of life can I provide for my children if I don't get any support at work.

Barry: Because this is your, uh, job.

Donald: This is work. This is what I do for a living. I'm not here out of the goodness of my heart.

Edward: Little punk was going up and down the line, keying every car.

Donald: Will you shut the fuck up about your busted ass car?

Edward: I don't have to take this kind of abuse.

Donald: This is abuse? This is abuse, you motherfucker? You call this abuse?!

Barry: We, uh, need support.

Edward: They give us support. They give us a hotline number to discuss things exactly like this.

(Donald rushes up and gets in his face)

Donald: Are you saying you're gonna call this in?

Edward: Barry, did I do the right thing? Letting the kid go?

Donald: Don't fucking look to him. You're talking to me. Right here, right now.

Edward: Get out of my face, Don.

Donald: Don't touch me.

(Edward pushes him back a step.)

Donald: Don't you fucking touch me.

Edward: Just get out of my face.

Donald: You gonna call this in? You gonna make a phone call about this?

Edward: Barry, get him out of my face.

Barry: You, uh, need to listen, Don.

(Donald turns to Barry.)

Donald: So you're in this too. You're a witness. If they ask questions, he pushed me. You saw it happen.

Barry: So we're not going to call anyone.

(Donald looks at Edward again.)

Donald: Fuck this. Fuck you.

Edward: Why are you always like this?

Donald: I'm leaving. I'm going out to my car for a smoke.

Edward: What's this? Your farewell speech? Your goodbye to the troops?

Donald: I'm going home. I'm gonna go home and change the locks.

Edward: Oh, we'll miss you so much. This little going away speech is just beautiful. Is this your resignation?

(Donald pushes into his face again.)

Donald: I'll take you any day you're ready. Any time of the day or night.

Barry: Don, we were talking about support.

(Donald pushes Edward away from him and walks back to his seat.)

Edward: Weren't you leaving?

(Donald spins around.)

Donald: Fuck you!

Edward: Yeah, give me all you've got.

Donald: Fuck like you couldn't get laid in a women's prison holding a handful of pardons!

Edward: You spend all week thinking that one up?

Donald: Fuck you.

Barry: I told my wife about this the very other day. Exactly the other day. I told her about how, uh...

Donald: I'm going home. No man has the right to talk to me that way. If you were a prisoner, I would bust your lip for you.

Edward: Well I'm not a prisoner. I'm practically your supervisor.

Donald: The fuck you are!

Barry: Told her about...uh...

Donald: You think I'd ever listen to a fucking word you say?

Edward: You listened to everything I said when you first got here. I was the one training you. I made you what you are. And what a disappointment that is.

Donald: Are you degrading my work abilities?

Barry: I told her about the hostility here. The, uh....

Donald: Are you putting me down, you little fuck?

Edward: Sometimes I wish I was a prisoner. Just to see you take a swing at me. That's all I ask for. Take one swing at me.

Donald: Fuck you. I'm leaving. I'm going home.

Edward: So long.

(Donald spins and shouts.)

Donald: Fuck you!

Barry: There's hostility. It makes the days longer. I don't like it.

Donald: And fuck you too! Your wife that's dying, we care.

Edward: I care. That's why I asked about it.

Donald: You're such a fucking fuck! What a fuck you are.

Edward: I can call that number right now. This is abuse.

Donald: That's bush league girlie shit. That's what that is. That's pussy stuff.

Edward: Yeah, you go home. You have a nice day off work.

Barry: It's not that you want sixty hours a week...

Donald: I'm going home. I'm going to Omaha.

Edward: So long.

(Donald storms out, loosening his tie as he charges out the door.)

Barry: There's a lack of support. There's priorities and we're not at the top of the list.

Edward: Barry.

Barry: Yeah?

Edward: Tell me about Nancy.

Barry: Oh, she can see again. She can hear out of one ear.

Edward: That's wonderful.

Barry: There's hope that it will go into remission.

Edward: You see, good things happen to good people.

Barry: The twins are coming back for Christmas. All the way from Baltimore and Salt Lake City.

Edward: With their husbands?

Barry: One of the husbands. The other has to work.

Edward: Fuck him.

Barry: It's so hard. And Don's right. There's no support-

(Edward cuts him off.)

Edward: Don has never been right. He's a fucking wrong bastard and has been since day one.

Barry: Well I'll say nothing against him.

Edward: He's trouble. He's gonna get someone hurt one of these days. Have you seen the way he walks the block?

Barry: He's got a swagger...

Edward: He's a psychopath. He smashes people's fingers with his baton as he walks past. Broke a guy's fingers the other day. For what reason?

Barry: There's hostility here. I was just telling Nancy...

Edward: For no reason, that's what. Just to prove he could do it.

Barry: Well I'll say nothing against him.

Edward: I admire your loyalty, Barry. But you've gotta find appropriate people to be loyal to.

Barry: Remember the winter flu of '99?

Edward: So much overtime.

Barry: Only twelve guards for the twenty-five hundred inmates.

Edward: Never worked a longer day in my life.

Barry: They had us working fifteen hour shifts.

Edward: We stuck together on that one. Where was Don then?

Barry: He was new. He was sick.

Edward: Fucking nowhere. He wasn't sick.

Barry: He said he was sick.

Edward: He wasn't fucking sick. He brought in pictures of him skiing two days before Christmas. He was out skiing somewhere. Nevada mountains or something.

Barry: Now that's something I didn't know.

Edward: And the way he complains. Like nobody else has ever thought to find faults in their job.

Barry: I'm not saying anything against him.

Edward: You're right that there's hostility here. You

can tell Nancy that. But if a fuck up like Don would leave this fucking place, there would only be hostility with the inmates.

Barry: I get this thing where I wanna be friends with them.

Edward: The young ones. The car thief or the drug user. You think there's hope there.

Barry: I'm not saying that there's...uh...

Edward: You think there's room for improvement with them.

Barry: You know, a second chance....

Edward: You want to give them a second chance. That's how it works. That's good. That's healthy.

Barry: I thought there was something wrong with me.

Edward: The only wrong person around here is Don. You turn into Don, then we'll have problems.

Barry: My break's over. I've gotta get back.

Edward: What block are you on today?

Barry: D block.

Edward: Fuckers. A man your age on there.

Barry: I like it. It's quiet.

Edward: It's death row.

Barry: I've really gotta get back. I may be late already.

(Barry exits the breakroom and Edward sits down and lights a cigarette. Lights dim and curtain closes.)

Scene 2:

(Breakroom. Edward and Barry are sitting.)

Edward: They latched onto me. They said stuff about

people's families, their wives.

Barry: You didn't hear it from anyone else.

Edward: They knew who they were talking to. They grew in the dark. Big balls. But only one dick. There's always only one dick. He's in charge, he directs the balls.

Barry: So you're worried that...

Edward: Yeah, I'm worried that...

Barry: Because there's good taste. There's, uh...

Edward: A time and a place.

Barry: Yeah, a time and a place. A, you know...

Edward: It's not right.

Barry: No, it's not right.

Edward: You don't talk about...you know?

Barry: You stop thinking that stuff on the block. You just stop.

Edward: There's no place for it here.

Barry: There are limits. There's good taste. There's, uh...

Edward: They thought I was one of them. They thought I would go along with whatever they were saying.

Barry: Did you?

Edward: I did nothing. I stood and watched. I smiled when it was appropriate.

Barry: Yeah, when it was appropriate. That's the very thing.

Edward: With people like them, you can get everywhere with just a smile. They say "Guy's a fuck up" and you smile. "Can't get his wife off" and you smile. They were probably told this stuff in trust.

Barry: Yeah, in trust.

Edward: It's an abuse.

Barry: It's an...

Edward: It's an abuse of trust.

Barry: It's a, uh...

Edward: It's taking the information someone told you in confidence and using it against them behind their back.

Barry: You've gotta have trust in this job.

Edward: Absolutely.

Barry: Because if we can't trust each other...

Edward: That each man can do their job...

Barry: If we can't trust them to do that...to...

Edward: It betrays that trust. And it makes you wonder.

Barry: Yeah, you wonder.

Edward: Does this guy have my back?

Barry: You wonder if they can perform.

Edward: You just don't know how this guy thinks.

Barry: How he thinks.

Edward: Because he's not like you. You do your best.

Barry: You do...uh...your best...

Edward: You go out there every day and work your shift. And you know if something happens with another guy, you can help them.

Barry: Yes, help them. Because we need to know...

Edward: But if they betray trust like this behind their back...

Barry: We need to know that we can trust them.

Edward: And this just destroys that.

(Pause)

Barry: Did you hear Wilk is leaving?

Edward: Justin Wilk?

Barry: He put in for a transfer over a year ago. It finally went through.

Edward: Justin Wilk is leaving?

Barry: He's moving over to Huntsville in Texas.

Edward: Where did you hear this?

Barry: There's a party. There's people...

Edward: People told you this?

Barry: People were talking...

Edward: What people?

Barry: They were talking about the party. The going away party.

Edward: He's just gone?

Barry: Well not just gone. There's a party for him. A going away party.

Edward: Who gets the job?

Barry: I said to Harry Greenbaum, I said, "That guy's earned his party."

Edward: Who gets the job?

Barry: Harry knew exactly what I meant. He agreed with me straight off.

Edward: Who gets the job?

(Pause)

Barry: Yes, I guess there will be an opening.

Edward: Commandant.

Barry: That's right, commandant.

Edward: Who gets the job?

Barry: The interesting thing would be if one of these guys you were talking about...who were you talking about?

Edward: I don't wanna name names. I don't think that would help anyone.

Barry: I'm just saying if it was Steve Forsythe...or Derek Shields...

Edward: It was neither of them.

Barry: Well that's different. That's a whole new ballgame.

Edward: You think those two are the frontrunners?

Barry: I think they would be at the top of the list, yes.

Edward: Are those the two names you've heard?

Barry: Heard from who?

Edward: Don't play it off like that. I know the brass speaks to you.

Barry: Who? Jenkins? Shit.

Edward: Yeah, Jenkins. Kilkerry.

Barry: Jenkins and I were working together in the seventies. He was here working his way through college. We were more janitors than guards.

Edward: But you still talk.

Barry: I'm his child's godfather, for chrissake!

Edward: What's he said?

Barry: I haven't heard anything from him.

Edward: And Kilkerry?

(Barry stares at the table.)

Edward: Barry?

(Barry wipes his brow with his hand. He's near tears.)

Barry: They found a lump.

Edward: A lump? A lump of coal? That lump Don Scott?

Barry: Not at work. My Nancy.

(Edward looks at the ground in embarrassment.)

Barry: They told me that it had metastasized.

Edward: You thought it was over.

Barry: They pump her so full of chemicals.

Edward: And now a lump.

Barry: Back of her neck. Supposed to be going into remission.

Edward: Barry.

(Barry stands up shakily.)

Edward: Wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a minute! Sit down.

(Barry stares at the ceiling.)

Barry: There was a time when I couldn't imagine ever losing her.

Edward: Your whole life.

Barry: Like water through your fingers. That's just it. It's like trying to transfer a lake using your hands.

Edward: There's a weight there.

Barry: I know of weight. I understand it as the pressure.

Edward: The pressure, yeah. Like a pressure cooker.

Barry: She's supposed to be-

(His voice breaks with emotion.)

Barry: Excuse me. She's supposed to be in remission. Supposed to have killed the sucker off. Now it's all this.

Edward: Have you talked to anyone about this?

Barry: You mean have I revealed a possible depression period for the future?

Edward: No no, I didn't mean-

Barry: Don't worry, Eddie. I'm not after your promotion. I hope they pick you.

Edward: Couldn't hurt to put a good word in. Time like

this and all, it's horrible. But it would be a big favor to me. And I would remember it.

Barry: Jenkins is coming over to the house this weekend.

Edward: Oh that's right, you've got the weekends off now.

Barry: I'm gonna have more time off. I'm gonna dedicate myself to taking care of Nancy.

Edward: It's all one sick joke isn't it?

Barry: What's that?

Edward: This. Life. This trick God plays on us.

Barry: It's a joke?

Edward: Man works his whole life. Always gives up the best so that he can provide. And just when he gets comfortable...

Barry: Yeah, comfort. I was...

Edward: You were...

Barry: I was comfortable. Things were going...

Edward: As things go when you're comfortable.

Barry: And then...

Edward: This.

Barry: Water through my hands.

Edward: Those rain clouds only show up when you really need the sunshine.

Barry: Tide goes out once a day.

Edward: It also comes in once a day.

(Lights dim and curtains close.)

Scene 3:

(Donald and Hymie Drugker sit in the break room

eating.)

Donald: So the guy won't give up. Tells us that the toilet is broken, he has to go, he's embarrassed we're gonna see his crap. Guy's pitching a fit.

Hymie: Over a broken toilet?

Donald: Guy has some issues.

Hymie: What's he in for?

Donald: Assaulting an officer and cocaine possession.

Hymie: So did you go in?

Donald: We knew it was a trick. We followed procedure. Wrist and leg shackles through the bars.

Hymie: Right.

Donald: But it wasn't a trick.

Hymie: It wasn't a trick.

Donald: The guy had already shit in there. Thing must've been thirteen inches.

Hymie: Fuck, no wonder he didn't want to do it again.

Donald: It got around. Everyone's calling him the "long man" now. He's lucky if that's the only thing that gets around.

Hymie: So what was the problem?

Donald: We had to get in there with the plunger but there's a big loaf of shit in the tank.

Hymie: So you had to...

Donald: Someone had to...

Hymie: Did you do it?

Donald: Fuck that. Think I'm gonna touch the guy's shit?

Hymie: Who did it?

Donald: That new kid. Aaron...whatever. The Jew.

Hymie: Did he do it with his hands?

Donald: No, we used the guy's sheet.

Hymie: The prisoner?

Donald: Yeah, his sheet.

Hymie: Whined some more.

Donald: Too fucking right. But something's not right.
We see right away that something's not right.

Hymie: What was it?

Donald: There's blood. Fucking blood.

Hymie: Blood, yeah.

Donald: Yeah, there's blood. Blood in the toilet. We
see that right away. There's fucking blood in there.

Hymie: So the guy...

Donald: You could never believe it about this guy.
Blood in the toilet. So I turn around to look at him,
to ask why there's blood in the toilet. We've gotta
know. If this guy's shitting blood, you know, hospital
and all.

Hymie: Could have been trying to get out of work
detail.

Donald: No no, nothing that simple. You get a feel for
it. You get to where you can see if people are lying.
There's a word.

Hymie: There's a word.

Donald: Yeah, a word. The word is malingerer. It's a
person that fakes illness to be lazy. The guy's a
malingerer but that's not the problem.

Hymie: There's another problem. The guy's shitting
blood.

Donald: Well that's just it. He's not shitting blood.
I turn around to look at him, you know, for an
explanation I guess. And I see at his feet there's a
pool of blood. The guy's bleeding right there.

Hymie: Right there on the block.

Donald: In front of God and women and children and
cripples. Just bleeding away. So I told him to turn
around.

Hymie: You wanted to see for yourself.

Donald: I had to know.

Hymie: And this is just you and Aaron?

Donald: There was three of us. It was me and Aaron the Jew and Whitmore.

Hymie: Whitmore's a good man.

Donald: He's a fuck. All his brains are in his tits. Seriously, a guy with tits. What the fuck?

Hymie: So you...

Donald: Whitmore had the guy around the collar and he turns him around.

Hymie: Where's Aaron?

Donald: He's looking to me. He's got the guy's sheets in his hand with a big ol' log in them. And he's frozen, he doesn't know what to do. So I'm telling the guy to turn around. And Whitmore turns him.

Hymie: Turns him around.

Donald: Yeah, he's got him turned around. Was holding him by the collar. I had my baton up in case.

Hymie: Because of what?

Donald: Fuck if I know. Explosive diarrhea or whatever. You never know with these guys. They'll do anything to you. So I had my baton up. But as soon as the guy's turned, I see immediately, like right off, that there's blood all over his ass and running down his legs.

Hymie: The guy's bleeding. He's shitting blood.

Donald: Would you listen here? He's not shitting blood. The guy's standing weird. We know we've gotta take him down to the hospital. And then it happened.

Hymie: What happened?

Donald: A fucking rat. A big stinking rat. Jumps right out of the toilet and charges Aaron.

Hymie: Holy shit. A rat?

Donald: Was right there in the toilet. Came out and headed between Aaron's feet.

Hymie: A fucking rat?

Donald: A big stinking rat. Right there in the toilet.

Hymie: What'd Aaron do?

Donald: What do you think he did? He freaked out. He screamed, he jumped, he rushed out of the cell.

Hymie: What'd you do?

Donald: I was expecting anything. Literally anything. But it still caught me by surprise. I went by instinct. Aaron shouts and something moves fast so I just pounded the guy in the head with my baton.

Hymie: You hit him.

Donald: I clubbed him right there. I must've hit him five times before I realized what was going on.

Hymie: A rat.

Donald: A big fucking rat. Stinking rat.

Hymie: Why was the guy bleeding?

Donald: We took him down to the hospital. They were looking at his head where I smacked him.

Hymie: Yeah, the head.

Donald: Fucker was fine. He had it coming for what he was doing.

Hymie: I don't know. Seems like he was just standing there.

Donald: No, you don't understand. They looked at the guy's ass. He's got bites and scratch marks. There's obviously been an insertion of some kind. So we strip him naked and put him in the middle of the room. We make him hold his arms out in front of him and squat. You know, like on intake. And it falls right out.

Hymie: What did he have up there?

Donald: A slice of cheese and part of a hot dog bun.

Hymie: So he...

Donald: Yeah, he had them up his ass.

Hymie: Smuggled.

Donald: Contraband from the lunchroom.

Hymie: He stole food.

Donald: He knew about the rat. Had probably captured it and held onto it.

Hymie: So he...

Donald: Yeah, he shoved that food up his ass. And then put the rat up to it. For the rat to go in after it.

Hymie: And that's how...

Donald: That's how he got the scratches. That's why his ass was bleeding. He tried to get the rat to go up his ass.

Hymie: What do you say to something like that?

Donald: I'm glad I got to hit him. They're transferring him.

Hymie: Cedar Pines?

Donald: Of course. They think he's insane.

Hymie: Well a rat up the ass...

Donald: That's not insanity. That's just sick. The guy's a fucking wrong bastard and I'm glad I hit him.

Hymie: Wilk's leaving. You heard this shit?

Donald: They're already grooming his replacement.

Hymie: Who'd they pick?

Donald: That son of a bitch White.

Hymie: They're making White the commandant?

Donald: You didn't hear it from me, but the guy's not gonna last long.

Hymie: How do you know?

Donald: Things are happening. You know what that bastard did to me?

Hymie: What'd he do?

Donald: He, you know, he's got it in for me. He's been against me from day one.

Hymie: I'm sure it's not as bad as all that?

Donald: Don't worry. I've got plans.

Hymie: What kind of plans?

Donald: I say plans and I mean wishes. You see? I'm not actually going to do anything. I'm just talking here.

Hymie: What are we talking about?

Donald: I've got a lot of Proloid from when I had a thyroid problem.

Hymie: Yeah, Proloid.

Donald: So an overdose of that...

Hymie: That would be...

Donald: It would look like a heart attack.

Hymie: You're not going to...?

Donald: No, I'm not going to do anything.

Hymie: We're just...

Donald: We're just talking.

Hymie: We're just...

Donald: This is just talking. That's all.

Hymie: Because if you did that...

Donald: We're only talking here. Nothing wrong with talking. It's like a fantasy. You say, "Man, if I was in charge." Or, "Man, if I had any balls I'd take this Proloid..."

Hymie: So we're just talking?

Donald: We're not planning anything. Planning makes it first degree.

Hymie: We're, uh, talking about...

Donald: Thing like that can't even be traced back. A regular autopsy won't even pick it up. It'll look like a total heart failure. An episode.

Hymie: But we're not-

Donald (cutting him off): It would be easy too. I know just how to do it.

(Silence for several seconds.)

Hymie: But we're not actually planning...

Donald: We're giving up everything for these bastards. So some dipshit nobody who knows fuck all tells us what's wrong with what we do. You understand what I'm saying? Do you see the point?

Hymie: Well they've worked longer than us. They know more than we do.

Donald: They know fuck all. It's Caesar. It's death, it's wrongful actions. Same rules apply up and down the line. Get fat and sit back, forget what it's like in the trenches.

Hymie: We want someone experienced to be...

Donald: This guy's from another era. He's from before AIDS. He doesn't understand us or what we do. The guy's a dinosaur. If he makes a good move I'll eat my hat.

Hymie: But all that experience...

Donald: Yeah, experience in doing fuck all. Guy sits back and lets everyone else do the hard work. He said to me, you know what he said?

Hymie: What'd he say?

Donald: He says to me, "You're too violent."

Hymie: Too violent.

Donald: Yeah. I'm too violent. Me. The only good guard around here. The only one the prisoners show the proper respect to. Because they know what happens if they don't. Too fucking violent. And him. Lets prisoners spit on him. Doesn't even fight back.

Hymie: He considers this place a, uh...

Donald: A fucking daycare.

Hymie: A, uh...

Donald: Treats it like a daycare. A summer camp. Forgets that we're here to do a job. That they are here because they've broken the law and a jury of their peers-

Hymie: Yeah, a jury.

Donald: A jury of their peers has convicted them and recommended sentences. If they get out at all, it's too fucking soon. You know? You've gotta inspire terror in them. And fucking White...

Hymie: But we're not actually talking about...

Donald: Yeah, because we're not talking about doing this. We're discussing it as an idea. Of something that could possibly happen.

Hymie: Because if it happened, we could end up in here.

Donald: That's right. It's a crime.

Hymie: A crime.

Donald: It's also very safe.

Hymie: It's safe?

Donald: It's safe. Wouldn't lead back to us. Not to me, anyway.

Hymie: So we're actually talking about this like...

Donald: We're talking about doing this.

Hymie: Why are you telling me this? I don't want to hear this shit.

Donald: It's too late now, Hym. You're involved now. You understand?

Hymie: You mean that...?

Donald: You're an accessory now.

Hymie: I never...

Donald: You're an accessory. This is a crime. Unless you turn me in.

Hymie: Unless I turn you in.

Donald: Are you gonna turn me in?

Hymie: I'm gonna...

Donald: You're not gonna turn me in, right?

Hymie: I don't know.

Donald: You're not gonna turn me in, right? You wouldn't turn me in?

Hymie: You're saying you're gonna poison-

Donald: I'm saying that you are gonna do it.

Hymie: I'm gonna...

Donald: Yeah, you.

(Pause.)

Donald: I wish to God I could put that guy out of it myself. But I've got a big mouth. I've said too much to too many people. They know I don't like him. They might get suspicious and do an unconventional autopsy. And then where would I be? So you've gotta do it.

Hymie: Wait a minute. We're actually talking about this like...

Donald: We're not just "talking" about it anymore. We're not discussing it. We're talking about it as a thing that will happen.

Hymie: I need to ask my brother. I can't do anything without asking my brother.

Donald: Fuck you. What is this- "I've gotta ask my brother. I've gotta-" Fuck you! What the fuck? Are you gonna...? What the fuck? Did I go to the wrong guy?

Hymie: I just don't know. I'm not good at-

Donald: This is safe. I already told you that. I know just how to do it. No one's gonna get caught. And even if they find out what happened, they won't be able to pin it on anyone.

Hymie: We're talking about something that could-

Donald: If this isn't for you then I can move on. But if I get caught, they're gonna ask me who I talked to

about this.

Hymie: You might tell them?

Donald: If they come to me, there's gonna be a lot of pressure. I don't know how much pressure I can take. You understand me?

Hymie: Why me?

Donald: Because you're the only other straight shooter around here. I know that you're trustworthy. And they would never suspect you.

Hymie: But why am I involved now? I thought we were just talking...

Donald: We talked and now it's happening. I'm gonna have an alibi. I'm going down to Santa Barbara for a week. Gonna surf and get a tan. You understand me?

Hymie: And I'm in trouble now because I just-

Donald: The only way out of this is if you do it. It's safe, I told you.

Hymie: All this because I listened.

Donald: That's right. Because you listened.

Hymie: I need to talk to my brother.

Donald: Your brother's involved too then. How many people you wanna involve? Be a fucking man for once. You walk these blocks?

Hymie: Yeah...

Donald: You walk these blocks?

Hymie: Yeah...

Donald: Okay then. You've faced worse than this. So you're just gonna...

Hymie: I'm gonna...

Donald: Okay, we're through talking. My break is over.

Hymie: I don't think I'm through talking.

Donald: We're through talking. It's completely safe. I'm the only suspect. If they even suspect anyone. You see what I'm saying? I'll be out of town. I'm safe.

You're safe. It's safe.

Hymie: What if they do suspect?

Donald: So fucking what? Let them suspect. You understand? They can suspect but they can't pin it on anyone. Listen, we'll go to Vegas together. Spend a weekend out there.

Hymie: I work weekends.

Donald: A weekday weekend, okay? And we'll talk out there. I'll tell you how it works. But I've gotta go. I need to get back to the block.

(Lights dim and curtains close.)

Scene 4:

(Inmate Forrest Carrington is talking to Barry Whitland in the breakroom.)

Forrest: It was on account of the Jesus program that I got into this racket.

Barry: Yeah, the Jesus program.

Forrest: I shouldn't call it that.

Barry: Everyone calls it that.

Forrest: Do you guys call it that?

Barry: What do you think of us? Do you still call us screws?

Forrest: That's funny. Barry, can I call you Barry?

Barry: Sure.

Forrest: I wasn't sure if that was allowed.

Barry: We'll keep it between us.

Forrest: It's good to have secrets here.

Barry: It's good to make friends.

Forrest: It was on account of the Jesus program. Everyone starts off in there because it's time off your sentence. But nobody sticks around.

Barry: There are moral questions. Moral grounds.

Forrest: Yes, moral grounds. That's the very thing. Nobody wants to stay in the program on account of the serious commitment.

Barry: Yeah, commitment.

Forrest: But I cleaned up my act. Started living for the Lord.

Barry: The Lord.

Forrest: God above and Jesus, his holy son.

Barry: It's that old WC Fields joke.

Forrest: What joke? Where?

Barry: WC Fields is on his deathbed, looking through a Bible.

Forrest: Who's this guy, now?

Barry: And someone asks, "WC, you've never been religious. What on earth are you doing reading a Bible?"

Forrest: Now hold up now. Who's this guy?

Barry: And WC says, "I'm looking for a loophole."

Forrest: That's funny.

Barry: You don't laugh. You say, "That's funny."

Forrest: Not many people laugh in here. You don't wanna be around the ones that laugh. Because they're trouble.

Barry: You were saying about the Jesus program.

Forrest: I cleaned up. Easier to get drugs in here than it is on the outside. But I stopped, I quit, I walked away. You ever walked away from the thing that's killing you?

(Barry holds a hand over his eyes and breaks into sobs.)

Forrest: Barry. Barry. Mr. Whitland. Holy shit. God and all his angels! What's wrong? I didn't mean nothing.

(Barry is recovering himself.)

Barry: I'm sorry, Forrest. I just got overwhelmed.

Forrest: You should go to a doctor. You should go to chapel.

Barry: My wife is dying. That's the simple truth of it. And it's leaving me in a bad position.

Forrest: Go to church. You're free, you know. You're not like me. You can't go to chapel from 3 to 5 Tuesdays and Thursdays. You can go any day of the week.

Barry: Sometimes I forget where I am. You understand? Have you ever lost that bit of sanity where you remember where you are, what you're doing there?

Forrest: Now you're taking me back to the outside.

Barry: The outside.

Forrest: A man doesn't forget where he is when he's in here. It's all you can do to keep your mind off it.

Barry: The regimentation of the day.

Forrest: I'm sorry about your wife. For what it's worth.

Barry: Will you make a new pot of coffee? This has gone bad, it's been on there for hours.

Forrest: That's my whole thing here. I'm the man that makes coffee. There's the man that can get you speed, the man that can get you liquor if that's your thing. The man that can get anything. The man that runs the library. There are levels here. And I'm the man that...

Barry: The man that makes coffee.

Forrest: That's just it. I came all this way to learn to make coffee.

Barry: One more pot. For the day. Then you're done.

Forrest: Back to my illustrious job mopping the blocks.

Barry: Trustees make everything easier. I thank you from my heart for being the rare man in this zoo.

Forrest: Don't thank me. Thank the Lord for finding me in time.

(Forrest begins sweeping the floor.)

Barry: The coffee.

(Forrest puts the broom down and walks to the coffee pot. He begins making coffee as lights dim and curtains close.)

Scene 5:

(Donald and Hymie stand in the breakroom.)

Donald: You fucked it up.

Hymie: I, uh...

Donald: You fucked it. It's fucked.

Hymie: Well I was just trying...

Donald: You were trying to what? Fucking get caught?

Hymie: Don, please don't take that tone with me. Just listen while I try to explain.

(Barry enters the room.)

Donald: Hi, Barry.

Barry: Can you believe it?

Donald: It's a shame.

Barry: A shame.

Donald: A fucking shame.

Barry: They're gonna call all of us in. You know that don't you?

Donald: I was just going over that with Hymie here.

Barry: They're going to call us in and they'll have questions.

Donald: I'm coaching Hymie now.

Barry: What's this now? What...coaching?

Donald: Coaching, teaching. You know. Getting our stories straight.

Barry: Why do you have to get anything straight?

Donald: You know what this adds up to?

Barry: Adds up...

Hymie: We're not saying that...

Donald: It applies up and down the line. Same fucking rules.

Barry: I don't think we're getting to the bottom of...

Donald: What is there to get to the bottom of?

Hymie: Yeah, the bottom of.

Donald: Not the bottom of. No, Hymie, not the bottom of.

Barry: At the bottom of...

Donald: Will you stop it? Will you give it up?

Barry: We've gotta get to the bottom of, uh...

Donald: Will you stop?! Will you stop? I'm asking you, will you stop? Is that enough? You understand me?

Barry: Well we're just talking here.

Hymie: Just talking.

Donald: That's not talking. That's finger pointing. That's the blame game. We have-

Barry: Well I don't think it's unreasonable-

Donald: We have to get our stories straight. What do people say when these things happen?

Barry: When these things...

Donald: When these things happen. This kind of stuff

has never happened. Does this make sense? Guy comes to me, says "Hey what's this now? What's happening?" I can't turn around, I can't say, you know, "What the fuck- you son of a bitch."

Barry: We're not, uh...

Donald: I know just what you're doing.

Barry: Well this isn't a, uh...

Donald: They're gonna call us all in. We have to, you know...

Hymie: Get our ducks in a row.

Donald: The ducks. Get our stories straight. Work things out.

Barry: Don, this isn't a...

Donald: I don't care what this is. This is prelude.

Hymie: What's prelude?

Donald: Shut the fuck up. Just shut the fuck up.

Barry: We aren't under a microscope.

Donald: You think they're gonna pin this as a suicide? You think that?

Barry: No...

Donald: You think that?

Barry: No...

Donald: You think that?

Barry: No, I don't.

Donald: Alright then. Same rules.

Barry: You don't think they're going to...

Hymie: They won't...

Donald: You think they're not looking for someone to scapegoat?

Barry: Well as long as we're all innocent.

Donald: Well someone's not innocent. Someone did the

deed.

Barry: I've gotta go in.

Donald: That's their game. Divide and conquer.

Barry: It's not a, uh...

Donald: Divide and conquer.

Barry: You're saying this is a...

Donald: It's a kangaroo court.

Barry: It's a...

Donald: It's a witch hunt.

Barry: I don't believe it.

Hymie: We're not gonna get into trouble or anything.

Barry: There's no trouble.

Donald: Yeah, there's no trouble for you, you prick.
You and White were chummy. You guys were thick as thieves.

Barry: We were friends, yes.

Donald: Well okay then. That's you out of the running.

Barry: But you weren't enemies or anything.

Donald: There was tension.

Barry: There was tension. There was...

Donald: It wasn't right. I didn't hate the guy.

Barry: You would never...

Donald: I never would. I would never. I never would.

Barry: But you weren't even here.

Donald: That's right, I wasn't even here.

Barry: I've gotta go in. They called me in. I was supposed to be there five minutes ago. I have to go.

Donald: Name, rank, cell block number.

Barry: I'll talk to you later.

(Barry exits.)

Hymie: Maybe he's right. Maybe this is just a-

Donald: You shut the fuck up. Just shut the fuck up. I'm so mad at you that I can't even look at you.

Hymie: I just did what I thought was-

Donald: You fucked it up. Plain and simple. Fucked it all up.

Hymie: You don't understand. I took the pills you gave me. They wouldn't grind up. You understand?

Donald: I told you exactly how to do it.

Hymie: They were capsules, not pills. Little balls inside them. They wouldn't grind. They didn't turn to powder.

Donald: I've done it myself. I tested it with a couple of pills. It worked just fine.

Hymie: I had to use the rat poison. The damn pills wouldn't grind.

Donald: God damn it! If you're a fuck up, then be a fuck up. But at least admit it. Don't blame the pills.

Hymie: I'm not-

Donald: I'm not finished! You fucked this all up. Fucking rat poison?! You used rat poison? What the fuck is the matter with you? Answer me that.

Hymie: I-

Donald: Shut up! Just shut up! What is the matter with you? What the fuck is the matter with you?

Hymie: I was just trying to-

Donald: What the fuck is the matter with you? Didn't I tell you what to do? Didn't I talk to you?

Hymie: Well I-

Donald: I told you. I said, "If it's not good, just walk away." Didn't I tell you that?

(Hymie stares at the floor.)

Donald: What the fuck is the matter with you? Why'd you fuck this all up?

Hymie: I'm sorry.

Donald: You're fucking right you're sorry. God damn idiot. Sorry. That's you all over.

Hymie: I'm scheduled next. They've got me right after Barry.

Donald: Just keep your mouth shut. They won't suspect you. You're god damn fucking lucky I was out of town and have proof. Fucking lucky as hell. That's planning ahead. That's my thing, not your thing. You couldn't plan your way out of a paper sack.

Hymie: I'm gonna go down there. I have to work myself up.

Donald: Just get out of my sight. I don't wanna see you anymore. I don't care if you take the fall on this one. That's how mad I am at you.

Hymie: I'm really sorry, Don.

Donald: Feel sorry for yourself.

Hymie: I'm gonna go.

(Donald turns his back to Hymie and says nothing. Hymie walks out. Donald throws a coffee cup at the wall and breaks it.)

(Lights dim and curtains close.)

Scene 6:

(Barry and Donald stand in the breakroom, Barry is sweeping up the broken glass.)

Barry: Who would do such a thing?

Donald: There's a lot of that going around.

Barry: They were rough. They were...

Donald: They have no right to be talking to people

that way. Who the fuck do they think they are?

Barry: But who broke the glass? That's my glass.

Donald: Someone did that.

Barry: Yeah, someone did it. Someone broke my...

Donald: Your glass.

Barry: My mug.

Donald: Someone broke it.

Barry: But they found their man.

Donald: I knew they would.

Barry: You're all wrong on it. They're wrong.

Donald: It was exactly what I told them. I said you've gotta look at the possibilities.

Barry: Yeah, the possibilities.

Donald: Everyone just looks at, uh, who has the motive.

Barry: You look at the motive. You look at the person that has the most to gain.

Donald: What did he have to gain?

Barry: Well that's the very thing. A nice pair of ponies on the open road. That's the stuff he talked about.

Donald: He had no motive other than the obvious.

Barry: What's the obvious?

Donald: Well I think it's obvious.

Barry: You like playing word games? You like hiding things out in the open? Is this what you're all about?

Donald: Fuck you.

(Derek Shields walks in.)

Derek: They found the man!

Donald: We all know about this already.

Derek: Well excuse me.

Donald: Last man on the block to know. The fucking inmates knew before you.

Barry: What's the obvious motive? Don? Don?

Donald: You got some brain on you, you know that, Derek?

Derek: Is it any match for your mouth?

Barry: Don, what is the motive?

Donald: What the fuck does that mean?

Derek: You're an asshole. You know that? You understand what people think of you?

Donald: What the fuck does that mean, I've got a big mouth?

Derek: You get laid, the whole block smells from the stink of your farts for two weeks. Everything you've ingested comes right out.

Donald: You're saying I've got a big mouth. I don't like that.

Barry: Don, if you could just tell me-

Donald: The fuck do you know about big mouths?! Huh? When have you ever seen the inside of a cell? What a big man you are, standing in the guard towers. Too fucking important to get down on our level.

Derek: There's a reason you were suspect number one in this shit. You know that?

Donald: When was I ever a suspect? When did they ever say my name?

Barry: Don-

Donald: What do you care? Why do you care about anything? Big man like you, you're probably next in line to get the job. I'll bet you're suspect number one.

Derek: I've never been suspected of anything. They knew who has the big mouth around here. They knew who his enemies were.

Donald: Yeah, well, they sure didn't know the guy that

killed him, did they?

Derek: Fuck it. Case is closed. They've got their man.

Donald: I could call the number about this. These accusations. This is harassment. This is bullshit harassment, that's just what this is.

Barry: Don, what's the obvious motive? Why did Forrest kill Ed?

(Pause. Don and Derek are still staring at each other vengefully. Derek breaks eye contact and walks over to the coffee pot.)

Donald: The obvious motive is that the guy's a criminal and is in prison.

Barry: Yeah...

Donald: He's in jail, is he not?

Barry: Yeah...

Donald: He's a violent criminal.

Barry: Yeah...

Donald: So it stands to reason that he would strike back in any way that he can. You see?

Barry: I don't think that shows any motive.

Donald: I'm not claiming he has a motive. It could have been a capricious act. He could have done it on the spur of the moment. Saw the coffee pot, saw the rat poison. Things add up. But the fact remains that he's a criminal. That he is dangerous. Same rules, up and down the line.

Barry: I can't imagine Forrest actually doing this.

Donald: Sob stories, the whole lot. Whatever he told you, it's bullshit. He just revealed his true colors.

Barry: The guy found Jesus. He, uh...

Donald: What man in prison doesn't find Jesus if it means getting out early? Look at the fucking privileges he got as a trustee. Look at the freedom. Find Jesus? That fucker? Sure, why not? If it works for you, you take advantage. You see how the same rules apply?

Derek: I don't doubt he did it. I think you're right, it may have been a capricious act.

(Donald just stares at him with hate.)

Derek: Oh, excuse me. So sorry for sharing your opinion. I was actually on your side on this one. How horrible of me to make such a mistake. I'm going. I'm leaving. I'm taking my lunch out the front.

Donald: Yeah, see ya.

Derek: I hope they do promote me. I'd like to be in charge of you. You'll be scrubbing toilets if I move up.

Donald: Great. That's just what I want to do. And maybe I'll call that hotline number and tell them about your accusations. That could gum up the works in the promotion department, don't you think?

Derek: Are you threatening me?

Barry: Hey, guys, let's just calm down. Nobody's saying anything here. We're all just talking like friends.

(Derek shakes his head sadly and walks out.)

Barry: You really should be more careful, Don. You're making enemies here.

Donald: And what's the alternative? Be poisoned by a trustee piece of shit, like Ed White?

Barry: I'm just saying it would help to have friends on our side.

Donald: I'm sick of you treating this place like a daycare.

Barry: A daycare...

Donald: A fucking nursery. You're just a broken down shitty old man. Your wife's dying? Fuck you. You cheated on her? It happened. Live with it. You've got a thing for little kids? So what?

Barry: I don't like the way you talk to me.

Donald: Well I'm not here to be liked. You get a lot farther with a smile and a gun than just a smile.

Barry: Speak softly and carry a big-

Donald: Oh shut up, you dumb old bastard.

Barry: I'm working overtime this week. I can't stand to go back to Nancy and see what it's doing to her.

Donald: Fuck her. Fuck you. Fuck your wife. Fuck the whole lot of you. Do you hear the words coming out of my mouth?

Barry: I don't have to take this.

Donald: Take what? What is this?

Barry: This is...

Donald: You think this is abuse?

Barry: I think this is...

Donald: It's a shortcut to communication. This is Bill Hicks and George Carlin. Telling you that you're diseased. You think I care whether you live or die? There could be a riot, I would leave you out there to die. That's how much I care about you.

Barry: This conversation is over. I know where we stand now.

Donald: So get out of here. Have some fresh coffee. See if there's any rat poison in it.

(Donald begins laughing maniacally while Barry walks out. Lights dim and curtains close.)

ACT 2:

Scene 7:

(Donald, who now has a beard, and Hymie sit in the breakroom.)

Donald: So they charge me for the gun, right?

Hymie: And you paid for the gun.

Donald: Damn straight. The holster too.

Hymie: Out of your own pocket.

Donald: Son of a bitch accountant says, "Oh, you could have declared that. It's deductible."

Hymie: So it's late.

Donald: Fucking late. God damn bastards. Don't tell you any of this stuff. Don't tell you that it's, uh...

Hymie: That it's...

Donald: Yeah, they don't tell you that it's, you know? They just let you go on with your day. They never stop to say, "Oh, by the way."

Hymie: Yeah, by the way.

Donald: The DOE has come in for a certain person.

Hymie: It's coming up on that time.

Donald: You know who I'm talking about right?

Hymie: That guy that did that thing?

Donald: That guy that didn't do that thing but got blamed for the thing.

Hymie: The guy that we did the thing-

Donald: You did the thing.

Hymie: That thing I did.

Donald: That thing you fucked up.

Hymie: This is coming up on the end.

Donald: This can be the last time we speak of it.

Hymie: The last time.

Donald: Yeah, the last time. Guy's got the date of execution in, guy's on his way out.

(Pause)

Donald: You know what pisses me off about the bastards.

Hymie: What bastards?

Donald: The administration, the fucks. They- Are you

paying attention here?

Hymie: I'm sorry, I'm thinking of the guy.

Donald: Little fuck like you, can't find his own fucking keys at the end of the night. Am I right? You come back in here with a flashlight, looking for your keys?

Hymie: I don't lose my keys.

Donald: Can't find your dick with two hands and a map.

Hymie: I'm sorry. I've already apologized about it.
Don-

Donald: Call me Mr. Scott.

Hymie: Mr. Scott.

Donald: Damn right, Mr. Scott. I'm your supervisor now. I don't want you to forget that.

Hymie: So what were you saying?

Donald: Mr. Scott.

Hymie: What were you saying, Mr. Scott?

Donald: That's better, Hym. Now I was saying what I hate the most about these bastards.

Hymie: The administration.

Donald: That's right. It's like they don't sell you what they're offering. You know what I mean?

Hymie: They sell...

Donald: They make you these offers and it all sounds good until you get here.

Hymie: They sell...

Donald: They sell you on this better life and then it's just shit.

Hymie: It's shit.

Donald: It's shit. That's just what it is.

Hymie: They're established...

Donald: They're established, they're connected. It's

the connections. They can offer you this job but they're really taking your life. You understand? We're no different than those guys on death row, on D block. They took a life, raped a girl, whatever. It's like they think, you know, I'll just shoot the clerk at the gas station and run off with the money to Guatemala because no one's ever thought to do that before.

Hymie: They're not thinking.

Donald: They didn't think and we didn't think. We heard salary and benefits, we thought of our kids...

Hymie: Our kids...

Donald: Well, my kids. You don't have any kids.

Hymie: You thought of your kids...

Donald: And these guys in charge, they're some bunch.

Hymie: It's, uh, Jenkins...and...

Donald: Forget Jenkins. Forget Kilkerry. I'm not talking about them. I'm talking about their bosses. I'm talking about the guys downtown.

Hymie: Downtown...

Donald: You know who they are? Do you know?

Hymie: Who are they?

(Donald pauses and has a sip from his mug.)

Donald: They're Jews. You know that?

Hymie: Jews...

Donald: Fucking Sons of Abraham. Circumcised bastards. Cut bastards. Fucking Jews.

Hymie: They're Jewish?

Donald: Jews run the whole prison industry. Movie industry, the banks, everything. Everything in our culture is ruled by the Jews. They're the ones that put a man out of business and then repossess his house and then when he robs to feed his family-

Hymie: Wait a minute here.

Donald: No, seriously. Robs someone to feed his family- His family- His- I got a family. That could be

me. You understand? I'm one step away from being in here myself. And you're even closer.

Hymie: I would never do anything illegal.

Donald: You've done something illegal, or have you forgotten? You forgotten that shit?

Hymie: I should have asked my brother.

Donald: Well it's not too late. You ask your brother if you did the right thing. And give him a quarter to make the call. Because he will call.

Hymie: My brother's always been-

Donald: Your brother's always been a fucking dick. It's in the genes. Whole fucking family is a washout. You're Pollacks aren't you?

Hymie: We're from Prussia originally.

Donald: You're Pollacks by default. Bunch of Pollacks get together, send a kid to college. Just your brother, right? Nobody else in the family gets to go.

Hymie: I could have gone to community college. I could have-

Donald: Community college means fuck all. You can't even have my job with a degree from there. So your brother goes to college and becomes the big man and where are you? Right fucking here, with me. Someone that did go to college.

Hymie: Did you graduate?

(Donald stares up at the ceiling for several seconds.)

Donald: These bastards take and they don't give back. They killed the goose. Attica, uprisings, people calling unfair. Suing the state that detains them. When the fuck did we give prisoners these rights?

Hymie: I don't know.

Donald: Am I wrong?

Hymie: No.

Donald: Am I wrong?

Hymie: No.

Donald: Am I wrong?

Hymie: No.

Donald: Well okay. So we're agreed then.

Hymie: You don't think this guy can talk about anything, do you?

Donald: We've got these people, these fucking niggers and spics and towelheads, they don't know what's what. Got an attitude. They're big men on the street for going to prison. They come in hard and leave even harder. We've got these groups, these, uh...

Hymie: Groups...

Donald: Aryan Brotherhood and the brothers and, uh...

Hymie: They've got groups...

Donald: And are these groups for protection from them or from us? It's like that old thing about the mafia, that they only exist to protect criminals from other criminals looking to rip them off. You see? That's what I'm talking about. They come in hard, and they play hard. They give you a look.

Hymie: The thousand yard stare.

Donald: They give you a look like, you know, "You go one way, I'll go the other." Kicking the dog upside down, punch a hole in the wall. Everything in prison is made of concrete or steel because it has to be. Because these fuck ups would find a way to punch through their walls and kill each other. You know what they do? They rape each other here. I was talking to this guy, first night here some guy came on his head while he was asleep. Now tell me, is that even human?

Hymie: No.

Donald: Not even human. Fucking animals. They're animals. All of them animals.

Hymie: Animals.

Donald: And the people that run the place are fucked up in a different way. Like the inmates are all concerned with toughness, street cred, whatever. We're lucky there's no spraypaint in here because the place would be covered with nonsense. I saw some graffiti the other day, I swear to God, don't know what it even means. It says, are you ready for this?

Hymie: Sure.

Donald: It says "Bickin back bein' boo."

Hymie: What's it mean?

Donald: Do I look like a fucking gangbanger to you?!
What the fuck- "What's it mean?" Little fuck. I was
right before. Two hands and a map. Same fucking rules.

Hymie: But about the guy that didn't do the thing?

Donald: What about him?

Hymie: Do you think he could talk?

Donald: He talks. Talks a blue streak. What's it
matter? Don't you know what he is?

Hymie: What is he?

Donald: Just another animal. Been talking for over two
years now.

Hymie: He's been talking?

Donald: Yeah, of course he's been talking. He's been
claiming his innocence up and down the line. He's got
a convert out of Barry.

Hymie: Barry...

Donald: Barry's lost it. Ever since his wife.

Hymie: Well a man his age...

Donald: Man his age shouldn't be walking the block.
This is no place to have a heart attack while walking
the inmates down to the chowroom. You know?

Hymie: Been doing this for thirty years.

Donald: He should get his gold watch and leave.

Hymie: Just as long as nothing can be traced back to
us.

Donald: Let the guy talk. He's been talking two years.
Who believes anything he says, other than Barry?

Hymie: It worries me that anyone believes it.

Donald: And who's Barry? Broken down widower with a

bad prostate. Listening to a condemned man, a man that murdered one of his co-workers. Does it matter what he believes?

Hymie: I just don't want-

Donald: What? New investigation? Something like that?

Hymie: Something like that.

Donald: I got the DOE today. The guy's done for. You think they're gonna give a reprieve? You think the state runs things like a fucking bumper car ride? Where if you get stuck in a bad one that only goes left, they're gonna stop everyone and let you find another car? Do you, fuck.

Hymie: I'm just worried.

Donald: Give it three weeks. Then the whole situation will be resolved. And I mean permanently.

Hymie: How'd I ever get involved in all this?

Donald: It's been over two years. Fucking get over yourself.

Hymie: Get over...

Donald: Get over yourself. Over two years. And you're still thinking about it. That's the definition of selfishness. "How's this effect me? What's this doing to me?" All that shit. Just fucking cram it. Shut it. Understood?

Hymie: Don-

Donald: MR. Scott. Understood?

Hymie: Yes. Mr. Scott.

(Lights dim and curtains close.)

Scene 8:

(Inside Forrest's cell. Forrest sits on his bunk and Barry stands.)

Barry: No news is bad news.

Forrest: It's the opposite of that saying.

Barry: Yeah, it's bad news.

Forrest: There's only one way out now.

Barry: There are ways out. There's the state appeals board.

Forrest: The final appeal.

Barry: And then there's always the possibility that the governor may come through for you.

Forrest: The governor.

Barry: I've written him letters. I've called his office to set up a dinner meeting.

Forrest: The guy's not gonna stick his neck out for a cop killer.

Barry: We're not police officers.

Forrest: The principle of the thing.

Barry: There can be an understanding here. I've talked to Jenkins.

Forrest: Jenkins is the big man here?

Barry: Jenkins has all the power in the prison. Him and Kilkerry.

Forrest: You've talked to him?

Barry: There are people on your side.

Forrest: I just never...

Barry: It wasn't anybody's fault. It was...

Forrest: I done my share of wrong. And I'm apologetic for it.

Barry: Apologies. Sincere apologies.

Forrest: It's not right, sir.

Barry: We're running out of time. The DOE has come in. Three weeks.

Forrest: And then...

Barry: And then...

Forrest: I don't wanna die. You hear me, sir? I don't wanna die. I done wrong, I've paid my price. I don't wanna die.

Barry: What do you want me to do, Forrest? You want me to open the door and let you out of here?

Forrest: Why would you do that? You did that, you'd be in here with me.

Barry: Tell me what to do. Do I let you walk out of here?

Forrest: There's nothing can be done.

Barry: I have to know that when I die and I stand before God in judgement, I will be able to take account for my life. That I won't stand there and answer the question of "Why did you kill an innocent man?" with the answer "It was my job." Do you understand? How could I say that? How could I let an innocent man die? How could I face my judgement for that?

Forrest: You're talking like...

Barry: I'm talking here...I'm saying...

Forrest: Are you saying what I think you're saying?

Barry: I'm not just talking here. I'm saying I'll take action.

Forrest: You can't. You can't do nothing.

Barry: How can I face my judgement if I do nothing?

Forrest: God understands. It's not you that kills me, it's the state. It's the mistakes of arrogant men.

Barry: Up and down the line. Everyone's wrong. But a man's gotta take a stand.

Forrest: So you have a plan?

Barry: I don't know what I'm going to do. I could do anything, that's how tight I'm wired. Wound up. You understand?

Forrest: So you're saying...

Barry: It's up to you. You can make an honest start

again, a fresh start. I'll take you out of here if I have to.

Forrest: See the governor. We know I'm innocent. Convince him of it.

Barry: I'll walk if this happens. I will fucking walk.

Forrest: Try your best. That's all I can ask for.

Barry: I'll do my best. I'll do right by you. And God have mercy on the soul of any man that partakes in this. I have to get out now. If they see me missing from the desk there will be questions.

Forrest: I appreciate all your help. And just talking to me.

Barry: It's breaking procedure. I'm not allowed to be in here alone with you.

Forrest: I want you to know it's appreciated.

Barry: I've gotta walk the block. Make sure nobody's hung themselves.

(Lights dim and curtains close as Forrest breaks into sobs.)

Scene 9:

(Breakroom. Donald and Barry sit.)

Donald: Fucking coddling him, that's just it. You understand?

Barry: Yeah.

Donald: Understand?

Barry: Yeah.

Donald: You got this?

Barry: I said yeah.

Donald: Alright then. As long as we know where we stand. These guys aren't your friend. You know that?

You see where the bear shits in the woods? Think I don't know you've gone soft?

Barry: I haven't-

Donald: Bunch of limp dick faggots in here. Prancing little nancy boys. Want to know on whom they can unload. That's me all over. Look for a place to unload. They do it with semen, I do it with my baton. Break a finger, crack a head, it don't matter. This may mean nothing to you, then again it might. You ever take a shit and it feels like your ass is throwing up?

Barry: Did I...?

Donald: That's what I'm asking you. That diarrhea, that's what we've got in here. The diarrhea of society.

Barry: They're not all bad.

Donald: They are. And you're like a fucking horse with those blinkers on. So focused on wild goose chases- That son of a bitch murdered your friend. Not even singling him out. Could've been you, could've been me. Could have been anyone. You see what I'm saying? Diarrhea of society. Lots of people, they take Pepto when they get diarrhea. That's not right. You have to expel the shit from your body. Can't let those toxins stay in there. Shit it all out. It hurts, it takes time, whatever. You see, this is what I'm saying. I'm trying to explain this to you in a way you'll understand.

Barry: Don't say stuff like that to me. That's talking down to me, that's treating me like a child.

Donald: You think I treat you as a child? So be it. You pop a boner over a little girl? Live with it. You wanna die with your wife? That's the way it goes. Your wife dies two years ago, fucking horrible thing. I mean that, I feel awful for you. But is there an absolute morality? There's gotta be. It's what separates us from them. It's why we can go home at the end of the day. They're animals. They tear each other open. The rust of society. What kills it for the good people. People like me, like you. Like you. You see? You're not a bad person. You don't deserve to be in here. You come here of your own free will. Oh sure, there's the whole thing where you wouldn't work here if you had a million dollars, whatever, all that nonsense. Guy says "Get me a low-riding Benz and a couple girls on my arms, that'd be the thing." Bunch of old men run the place, bunch of old Jewish men.

Haven't learned fuck all about the new world order in the past twenty five years.

Barry: Jenkins is a good man. He's learned a lot about-

Donald: Jenkins is a yes man. Jenkins is a lackey. Even Kilkerry doesn't really run the place. Bunch of lackeys and yes men towing the company line. And time comes that things just break down. A pressure cooker. This place is a powder keg. We're one step away from a full-blown riot every time a change is made. Am I wrong?

Barry: No...

Donald: Am I wrong?

Barry: No...

Donald: Okay then. I've said my piece. You know where I stand. Same rules, up and down the line. Bunch of corporate fucks. Fat pieces of shit. Guy comes down from wherever- Guy flies in on a chartered flight, a transport plane or whatever, maybe a corporate jet- Guy with a two thousand dollar suit telling me that I can't work more, make some extra money. You see what I'm saying? Those are not the same rules. They do not apply. Same rules means that they work, I work, everyone's happy. I can do my part to, whatever. You know? Just take my hands off the wheel for a second and there's a crash. That's what it's like, that's exactly it. I'm afraid to move on because I'm the only one here with any sense in their head. Who's gonna stand up to corporate? You, Barry?

Barry: I wouldn't characterize them as-

Donald: I'm asking you. Who's gonna stand up to this bullshit? This, "Oh, you can't work 55 hours, you can't-" Fuck. Those fuckers. They give you no support. A man's got to be able to stand up.

Barry: Now you'd better watch what you say. It wasn't too long ago I could have your job for this. Get on the phone to Jenkins, "Arthur, this boy is getting too big for his britches-"

Donald: I'm waiting. You understand? I wanna see this execution. I'm glad I'm on the prep team and get to walk him to the room. I wanna feel his sobs as we carry him into the chamber before God and everybody. And you should wanna do the same thing. You should want to see the end of this fucking asshole murderer.

Barry: You contradict yourself. You say they're animals and then you characterize their actions as human. You say they belong in here and then you say so what if you molest little girls.

Donald: I was talking about morality. I was illustrating a point, Barry, about what morality is and what your take on it seems to be. You get down on your knees in the shit to kiss them on their boo boo. Like kids with a skinned knee. Well if they didn't want to get hurt, they shouldn't have been jumping off the roof with pillowcases for parachutes. You wanna coddle them, tell them it's all gonna be okay? You want to- fuck.

(Pause.)

Could have been you. Could have been me. How would you have liked to die with your wife the way she was? You think it would have made her last days easier if you were gone?

(Pause.)

What would you tell my kids? Would you get down on your knees and say, "Oh, so sorry for your father being poisoned and killed by a piece of shit inmate pimping Christ to get ahead. But, if it makes you feel better, I'm gonna have dinner with the governor and try to get him to let the bastard go." You wanna say that to my kids, to my wife? You gonna call my mom and tell her that her son's dead but you'll make sure the murderer doesn't get what's coming?

(Pause.)

Have you said that to Ed's wife?

(Long pause.)

Barry: Ed's wife and I have an understanding. She believes in me to do what is right. And I will not betray that trust.

(Pause.)

Donald: So that's how it is? You're in bed with the murderer and the widow? Trying to get the two sides to see eye to eye? Eye to eye, fuck. It's an eye for an eye. You understand what I'm saying? Is this getting through?

Barry: I think I've heard all I need to hear about

this issue from you. You've made your position clear and I respectfully disagree. And that's that.

Donald: I'm leaving. I'm going to take my lunch break at the diner. Nice cup of coffee, with no poison in it from some asshole trustee, and a slice of pie. That's just what I need.

Barry: So go. Who's keeping you here?

Donald: Fuck you. Could have my job with one phone call, one little- Fuck you! I'm leaving. I'm going to the diner. And I'll tell you this-

Barry: Oh great, another nugget of wisdom before you leave. I'm waiting with bated breath.

Donald: Fuck it. You're not worth anything. You're a broken down old widower trying to prove he can still walk a mile. Well the other man's shoes are drenched with the blood on his hands. Just remember that. You're getting in bed with a man that murdered your friend. Remember it.

Barry: I could make a list of everyone here that is against me. I could make a list and one call to Jenkins...

Donald: Oh, what a big man you are. Be sure to put my name twice so you don't miss it.

(Donald storms out. Lights dim and curtains close.)

Scene 10:

(Jenkins, dressed in a suit, stands in the breakroom. Donald sits.)

Jenkins: I'm here to allay fears.

Donald: To, uh...

Jenkins: To check into matters.

Donald: You just want to...

Jenkins: There's been a lot of talk. There have been calls to the hotline. I'm not happy about any of this, Don.

Donald: Well, Mr. Jenkins, I'm afraid a lot of stuff is taken out of context.

Jenkins: Don...

Donald: I know I can be a bit rough around the edges. People have a habit of taking things the wrong way. I'm not infallible. I'm a person. I make mistakes. It's a question of living with your actions.

Jenkins: And you feel that...

Donald: I feel that I've made mistakes, yes. But nothing I can't live with.

Jenkins: I'm here to allay fears.

Donald: Are you here for a disciplinary?

Jenkins: I'm here to allay fears.

Donald: So this isn't a disciplinary?

Jenkins: This is, uh...

Donald: Is this a disciplinary?

Jenkins: No, I would not characterize it as such.

Donald: You're not gonna pull me off the execution?

Jenkins: I would reduce your role if I could.

Donald: But my role-

Jenkins: Your role is negligible. You are merely accompanying the inmate to the chamber. You will not witness the execution, you will not be in the chamber, you will not be prepping the families. Your role is negligible. But this is only your second execution. I will be keeping a close eye on you. There will be a replacement waiting in the wings.

Donald: So you don't trust me?

Jenkins: Do you know what I've been hearing about you?

Donald: Well the inmates will say-

Jenkins: I'm not concerned with the inmates. I expect to hear talk from them. I'm talking about your co-workers.

Donald: What have they been saying?

Jenkins: You know your conduct.

Donald: It would help if I could have specifics.

Jenkins: It worries me that you have committed such travesties in this prison that you are unsure about which ones you have been caught on.

Donald: It's not that-

Jenkins: I think the case is that simple. There have been a number of infractions. You have been accused of violating the Constitutional rights of many prisoners. The term 'cruel and unusual punishment' has been associated with you.

(Pause.)

Jenkins: Listen, let's not fuck around here anymore. I'm sick of pussyfooting and trying to be judicial. I'll just cut the shit because I think that's the only way to get through to you. You're on thin ice. You understand? Thin fucking ice.

Donald: I-

Jenkins: Just cram it, Don. Don't even try to make this a conversation. I'm not discussing this with you now, I'm warning you. If I continue to hear this level of chatter about you, I will have you up before a review board. With testimony from the inmates.

Donald: How can you trust-

Jenkins: A review board, you understand? Now wipe that look off your face. This isn't a shitty thing that's happened to you, this is something you've earned. A man's gotta know that he can depend on his co-workers here. And you've been described as undependable. I expect to hear nothing but good things about you from now on. Because I will by God come down on you like a force ten gale. Is this clear?

(Hymie enters the breakroom.)

Hymie: I'm sorry. I could-

Jenkins: I was just leaving. This is all squared away, right, Don?

Donald: Yeah.

Jenkins: That's what I thought. Gentlemen.

(Jenkins exits.)

Hymie: What was that about?

Donald: Fucking bastard.

Hymie: Is it a bad thing?

Donald: Fucking son of a bitch bastard. God damn nigger-loving punk. God damn company man.

Hymie: Don, what's wrong?

(Donald jumps up and shuts the door.)

Hymie: Don?

Donald: That fucking company man comes in here. Comes right in here to our breakroom. Where we come to relax after a tough day of work. He is supposed to help us work, am I correct?

Hymie: Yeah.

Donald: He is not here to fuck us up. He is not doing his job properly. He is a waste of everyone's time here. He is a company man. He is a yes man.

Hymie: Is it something bad? Did he find out about...?

Donald: No one's going to find that shit out. Haven't we talked about this? I talked to you, didn't I? Right after everything went down, did I talk to you?

Hymie: Well if this changes things-

Donald: The only thing this changes is that I've got a Jew-slurping weasel breathing down my neck. He actually said that to me. "I'm gonna be keeping a close eye on you. I'm gonna-" You know? Fucking son of a bitch like that, god damn bastard that he is. Guy's a fucking asshole. Making everyone else assholes too. You know when you were hired?

Hymie: Yeah.

Donald: You know when you were hired and they gave you that little speech?

Hymie: Yeah.

Donald: They give you this great little speech about how the door is always open and you can talk to the

men in charge about anything. Well where the fuck was he when I needed extra shifts? I've got a car that's dying, my kid's allergies are out of control, Christmas and all- I- Fuck. It's bullshit. This is all bullshit. Where was the open door- Where was the-

Hymie: Don, just calm down.

Donald: Don't you fucking start with me. I'm high strung. You think I don't know this? You think I don't know that I'm always on the edge? My wife gets on me all the time, I'm coming round the house, kicking the dog upside down, smash a hole in the wall, throw a hammer through the sliding glass door. I'm just- I can't- I need to calm down. You're right. You're absolutely right. I need to calm down before I do something stupid.

Hymie: You get, uh...

Donald: I get excited.

Hymie: You get, uh...

Donald: I'm high strung. I'm wound up.

Hymie: You get excited, yes. You're high strung. You get a little crazy.

(Donald looks at him with complete hate.)

Hymie: I'm sorry, Don. I didn't mean-

Donald: It's MR. Scott!

Hymie: Mr. Scott. I'm sorry. I don't want to be taken the wrong way. I was just saying, uh...

Donald: I know what you're saying. I know damn well. You think I'm a fuck up? You think you can have my job? You think I'm rough with the prisoners?

Hymie: I didn't mean-

Donald: Fuck yeah, I'm rough with the prisoners. What have I been telling you all this time? This isn't a daycare, it's not a plant nursery. This is no school field trip. This is a bucket of puke you drown rats in.

Hymie: Yeah, a bucket...

Donald: No fucking support. I've gotta do my job, keep these animals in line. I've gotta- Fuck. These guys-

Nobody cares. No one understands what it is to be me.
To carry this weight. Do you know the weight?

Hymie: I've felt weight.

Donald: Fucking weight. It's like a weight around my neck. Dragging me under. And I have to stand up as best I can. I have to face these monsters with a smile. Who enjoys their job? Who chooses to work in a prison? These are questions you have to keep in mind. What kind of a fucked up person wants to be with the dregs of society all day long? Who am I to work here?

(Pause.)

Donald: Where do these people stand? This guy's got a job above me, what he says is gospel, right? It's what goes on. It's how you deal with- Guy's an asshole. Anyone that listens to this guy's an asshole. I don't- So I'm rough with the prisoners. Big fucking deal. Not a fucking daycare we're running here. They put me on D block to aggravate me. They want to put me up before a review board, fine. That's fine. I've got the dirt on everyone here.

Hymie: What's that mean?

Donald: It means nothing. Fuck all. It means I know where the bear shits in the woods. Same rules. They're gonna screw me, I'm gonna- I wouldn't do anything. I've never done nothing. I come in and work my shift. And what are they? Jealous? So be it.

(Pause.)

Donald: They wanna put me out of a job. So be it. I roll with the punches. Because what is a man? What has he got? You're not your job, you're- Whatever. You know? You gotta patch up the holes you punch in the wall. I'm always flaring like a pack of hemorrhoids. I've got two kids screaming in my ear, I've got my wife thinking another one's gonna straighten shit out, I've got parents that are just- Fuck it. I'm not gonna make excuses. A man lives and dies by his word. Have I ever broken my word?

Hymie: Not to my knowledge.

Donald: So I'm a man. I stick to my word. If I say it'll be this way, that's the way it's gonna be. I need to...

(Hymie stares in confusion.)

Donald: I need to do something.

Hymie: You're not thinking about...

Donald: Another incident like we had with Mr. White?

Hymie: I couldn't do it again. I couldn't, I don't know why I did it the first time.

Donald: There aren't any plans. Plans constitute first degree. Remember that. First degree. They're careful now, there's a camera in here now.

Hymie: There's a...

Donald: That's right, a camera. So they can see if anyone's poisoned the coffee.

(Pause.)

Donald: I'm not going to do anything, you're not going to do anything. Everything will work out on it's own. I've got one last execution here to take apart. You understand? This squares us. I've had my cake, I've eaten it. I've had my share. I'm gonna move on. I just need to see this one last thing through.

Hymie: You're talking about a transfer?

Donald: Go out to California. Live on the coast.

Hymie: North Korea has a nuke that can reach the west coast.

Donald: Fuck them. No fucking rice-eating slant-eye bastards are going to kill me.

(Pause.)

Donald: I may even get out of the prison industry.

Hymie: The prison industry...

Donald: Fucking A, industry. This is a growth industry. The one industry that expands in a recession. It's a business, it's been a business for years. And I might just get out of it. Go into private security.

Hymie: Private security...

Donald: The private sector. Fuck, better than this shit. Be my own boss. Start up my own company. I've got the money. My aunt died and left me money. I've

got- I don't need this shit. It's one week away. And unless that piece of shit Barry can work some kind of magic with the governor, which would be a miracle with the tough crime laws he's showing off for re-election, then our little drama here is ended.

(Pause.)

Donald: Drama. I'm sick of drama. I just want it to end. And I'm gonna put in for a transfer. Find a little house in the hills. Get the kids in good schools. Make the wife happy with a pool in the backyard. Whatever it takes. Move a little further out west. That's the very thing I need. I think you can tell I'm frazzled. Can you?

Hymie: Well you seem-

Donald: Can you tell I'm bent out of shape?

Hymie: You seem-

Donald: Fucking hell. What am I going to do this week? One week and everything will be squared. Seen through to the end. I can leave, no regrets. Did what I had to do. Nothing to come back and bite me in the ass. I just need to go one more week. I'll put in the paperwork today. I think Jenkins will be understanding.

Hymie: He'll be...

Donald: He'll be happy to be rid of me. Fucking cocksucker. Sucking Jewish cock! Thinks he can come in and talk to me like that. I should go home.

Hymie: What about your shift?

Donald: You off the clock?

Hymie: Yeah, just off.

Donald: Take my shift for me?

Hymie: Why would I do that?

Donald: Because nothing's accomplished here. There's nothing to be accomplished here. Take my shift.

(Donald begins walking out without waiting for a response.)

Hymie: Okay, Don.

(Donald shouts over his shoulder.)

Donald: That's MR. Scott.

(Lights dim and curtains close.)

Scene 11:

(Int. of Forrest's cell. Barry stands, Forrest sits on bunk.)

Barry: It's not what you'd call anyone's fault.

Forrest (in tears): What am I gonna do, Mr. Whitmore?
What is there for me?

Barry: You know what they say? A stopped clock...

Forrest: My wife, my kid. What can I tell them? They don't know what it's like in here. They don't know that I'm not coming home for sure now.

Barry: They say a stopped clock...

Forrest: How am I going to explain it to them?

Barry: They say a stopped clock shows the right time twice a day.

Forrest: I don't care about clocks. I care about my wife and kid.

Barry: Listen, none of this went the way I expected it to. I haven't been hard enough. Don tells me I lead with my heart, I guess he's right. I guess there's no point in continuing anything anymore. Because the one spot left, the one thing they couldn't touch...

Forrest: What do I tell my wife? What do I tell her?

Barry: If the worst is yet to come...

Forrest: Does it get any worse than this? You don't know me from Adam, you don't know nothing about me except what you've heard here.

Barry: I know you're innocent.

Forrest: And there's nothing you can do?

Barry: I can let you out of here. I can let you escape.

Forrest: We both know that there's no escaping now. The devil's done his work good and proper. There's only one path left before me.

Barry: They say those dogs at the racetrack, they chase this rabbit.

Forrest: What's any of this got to do with dogs?

Barry: They chase that rabbit and try to catch it. I know a guy works at the racetrack and he tells me that once the dog caught the rabbit.

Forrest: We're talking about something here and you bring in dog racing and rabbits.

Barry: He caught that rabbit. 40,000 volts, that's just what he got.

Forrest: We're talking about how I'm supposed to tell my wife...

Barry: He caught that rabbit and got 40,000 volts.

Forrest: My wife, my kid.

Barry: Let me talk to her. I'll go to her after my shift is over. I know how to talk to people, how to break the bad news. Let me talk to her.

Forrest: That would be mighty kind of you, Mr. Whitmore. That would be more than I could ask.

Barry: Don't get excited. Consider it my job as a good Christian.

Forrest: The rabbit got caught?

Barry: You're sincere in your love for Jesus, aren't you?

Forrest: Jesus is all that matters now. Jesus forgive me for what I do, Jesus be waiting for me come next week.

Barry: You found the path. This is the best thing that could happen to you. There are worse things than dying.

Forrest: I found the path, that's just right. The path. I just follow it.

Barry: This way leads to more way.

Forrest: Little dog caught the rabbit?

Barry: He caught it. It sure wasn't what he wanted after he caught it. But he caught it.

Scene 12:

(Breakroom. Barry and Hymie sit.)

Hymie: I get pure shy with the families.

Barry: Is it on account of the, uh....

Hymie: It's the....

Barry: The, uh....

Hymie: Yeah, exactly. The....

Barry: The gravity.

Hymie: Gravity, yes. It's gravity.

Barry: The magnitude.

Hymie: That's right. Magnitude. I know just what that word means on account of talking to the families.

Barry: Because they, uh...

Hymie: What they've been through. What they've been going through.

Barry: And this is the end. This is the shut of it.

Hymie: This is the end of the road. There's a song, a Talking Heads song.

Barry: A song?

Hymie: Yeah, a song. There's songs that describe this thing. But it's the one song in particular.

Barry: By the Heads?

Hymie: The Talking Heads.

Barry: Talking Heads?

Hymie: Yeah, the Talking Heads.

Barry: I've never heard such a thing.

Hymie: It's this song called Road to Nowhere. And that's just what this is. "We're on a road to nowhere." Does that make sense?

Barry: It has a poetic charm. A tad morose.

Hymie: I don't know what you're speaking of.

Barry: It's not sunshine and lollipops.

Hymie: If you could hear this song, the way the guy sings it. You know that he knows, you know? He knows. He says it all. He says "We're on a road to nowhere" and he means it. That's the song I think of when I'm sitting down with the families.

(Donald walks in.)

Donald: What are you ladies talking about?

Barry: Shopping, knitting, the usual.

(Pause.)

Donald: Fuck you.

Barry: Ignore him. Ignore him. Let's just talk about this. You've gotta do this one right. You've memorized the speech haven't you?

Donald: What is this shit?

Barry: Ignore him.

Donald: What, I don't exist here?

Barry: Have you memorized it?

Hymie (looking at Donald): I know what to say.

Barry: You've gotta have this right. This is the most important thing you'll ever do at this prison.

Donald: Hymie?

Hymie: Yeah.

Donald: Hymie?

Hymie: Yeah.

Barry: You got it memorized?

Donald: Hymie?

Hymie: Yeah.

Donald: You answering me or him?

Hymie: Barry?

Donald: Answer me.

Hymie: Barry?

Donald: Answer me, you shit.

Hymie: Barry?

Barry: Just answer him, Hymie.

Hymie: What do you want, Don?

(Donald looks bewildered.)

Donald: You think I use you? Is that what you're saying?

Hymie: Did I say that?

Donald: You're getting to be- Fuck. You're turning-Shit. You're growing quite a pair of balls, you know that?

Barry: Lay off him, Don.

Donald: What a big fucking man you are. We're all real impressed.

Barry: I said to lay off him.

Donald: The both of you are against me.

Barry: I'll leave. I think Hymie can stand up for himself without me. I have faith in him.

Hymie: Thanks, Barry.

Barry: I can leave. It's not a big deal. I'll talk to you about it later, Hymie.

Donald: We'll all miss you around here.

Barry: You've heard.

Donald: Yeah, the big retirement.

Hymie: You're retiring?

Donald: Can't get anything past the big man. Like a fisherman on clear water. Just reels it in, one piece at a time.

Barry (to Hymie): Gets worse every day, doesn't he?

(Donald stares.)

(Pause.)

Donald: So goodbye. Go ahead. We'll all miss you. There will be a party, I'm sure.

(Barry shakes his head sadly and walks out the door.)

(Donald begins singing.)

Donald: Na na na na, na na na na, hey hey heyyyyy, goodbye.

(Hymie looks embarrassed.)

Donald: The fucking prick. Ratbastard son of a bitch. He's moved against me before. I think I'm only block supervisor because he's held me back. All palsy walsy with Jenkins like that. Telling them I've got a big mouth, I've got a temper. Fuck yeah, I've got my problems. I carry myself in a different way. Should I be an object of ridicule? Should I be a pariah?

Hymie: What's that mean?

Donald: You know how nobody here actually likes you?

Hymie: They don't?

Donald: Hym, come on. Don't be an idiot.

Hymie: I don't think-

Donald: No support. There's no support here. They don't watch your back. Where were they when I had my troubles? They were forcing me into anger management classes, they were telling me to go to AA. People say, you know, "Oh, Big Brother and television cameras everywhere-" Well fuck that. Fuck everything people say. There's a bigger enemy out

there. It's the fucking corporations. You know, they decide to rob everyone blind and move up to the hills because no one's ever thought of doing that before. You know, and people say, "Who's got the guns? And who's got the diamonds? Who's got the—" Fucking hell. None of this matters. Fucking corporations. My fucking brother, worked sixteen years on an assembly line. You know, shit job but it pays the bills. It's his livelihood, it's his- Whatever. And fucking corporation, they up and move. They just move to Pakistan or Venezuela or wherever it's cheapest to do things this year. Because some kid will do the same job for two bucks a day and no bathroom breaks. And now my brother, what's he gonna do? He's gonna end up in here, he's gonna hit his wife, he's gonna get drunk and crash his car. You know? There's stuff there, there's direct data. Correlations between unemployment and crime. Suicide. Can you imagine that? If my brother goes and puts a gun in his mouth over this shit? What am I gonna do this year? How am I gonna explain this to my kids?

Hymie: I-

Donald: A man's gotta be able to stand up. That's the hard part is just standing up. People say, "You know, if the Nazis bashed down my door in Poland, I'd—" Whatever the fuck. It's now, it's not then. Man's gotta fucking stand up. Just to be heard. Just to escape whatever it is that they want. They want whatever, they take a man for all he's worth. Imagine a party for fucking Barry. Imagine that. We're celebrating the fact that the man's useful life is up, now he's in the long gray slide into adult diapers. They took his life and he gets a party at the end of it. Is that what we're in this for? To be used up and then have a party? Is that it? Is that what you're here for?

Hymie: It pays the bills.

Donald: And that's all you have to offer? That's your say?

(Pause.)

Hymie: I'm not a genius. I know I'm never going to write a bestseller or be a rock star. I know where my life is. This isn't funny, is it? You probably wanted a funny response so you could yell at me some more. But I'm tired, Don.

Donald: I-

Hymie: I'm tired. I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired. I want to go home and climb in the bathtub and fill it with cold water.

(Don stares at Hymie for several seconds.)

Donald: What did Barry do to you? What- What happened before I walked in here?

Hymie: Do you realize we're killing an innocent man tomorrow?

Donald: Innocent? Innocent? Here? You think anyone here is innocent?

Hymie: I know he is.

Donald: He's not innocent. He's in here for cocaine possession, for battering his wife. You think a guy like that deserves a second chance? You know, does he- Do you know what a second chance is?

Hymie: It's the most valuable thing life can-

Donald: A second chance is the chance to make the same mistake twice.

Hymie: Look at what we did! Look at what I've gotta do tomorrow. This is your fault, your fault. You did this. It's your fault.

Donald: Don't back me into a corner here, Hym. You wouldn't like it if I got angry.

Hymie: I'm going. I'm cutting my break short. I don't care about anything anymore. So let me just ask you. Are you really leaving after this execution?

Donald: I'm not sure what I'm doing.

Hymie: Because I think you need to leave. I think you've done your time here and it's best if you just leave.

Donald: You think you can tell me what to do, you little shit?

Hymie: I would just feel better if you left.

Donald: Oh, you'd feel better?

Hymie: I would-

Donald: (Mocking) He would feel better. "Gee, Don,

I'm, uh, I'm not sure about things. I would feel better..." Don't make no more fuss than a dog with a tick. Parasites. You know anything about parasites?

Hymie: I just-

Donald: Let me introduce you to parasites. Let me tell you about the waste of civilization. Because you'll find it here. It's right here in this very building with us. Those are parasites out there. Sucking at the teat of government stipends. They rob us and we have to pay taxes to build facilities to hold them. Fucking death penalty should apply up and down the line. Death penalty for shoplifters. Why not? If you're fucking dumb enough to get caught shoplifting, you don't fucking deserve to live. Where's it end?

Hymie: I was just saying-

Donald: No, I'm asking you. Where does it end? Where is the end of people shooting smack. Fucking H freaks, get hooked on the shit so they're out there robbing my grandmother to pay for it. It's like bile in my mouth. Where does it end? Where does any of it end?

Hymie: It ends with an execution tomorrow.

(Pause.)

Donald: Don't make a big deal out of this. Don't go making this a big deal. Come on, be a man. Stand up for once in your life. You're trying to- Fuck. You're trying to make me think of what we did here. Is that it? Is that what you want you little shit?

Hymie: I don't want anything except for you to leave.

Donald: Oh, what's this? You gonna break into tears now? You gonna fucking shed a tear over a cokehead wife-beater?

Hymie: I want this to end.

Donald: And what's that? That's your big plan? We throw the switch and the guy goes under and that's the end? There is no end here.

Hymie: It's more of an ending than-

Donald: And you can go home afterwards. Been going home for over two years. Did you hold your breath through the appeal process? Were you at home stroking it every time the paper said he got denied a new hearing? I'll bet you went a big rubbery one over

this. I'll bet every time the guy got another nail in the coffin you cheered inside because it felt so fucking great to be alive.

Hymie: I didn't-

Donald: You go out there in the real world and what's the difference? Guy will shank you in here, maybe out there he'll smile as he points the gun at you. This isn't a holding pen, it's not a rehab center. And it's sure as not a fucking daycare. You know what this is? It's a matchstick factory. It's creating explosives primed to detonate. We feed the fire in here, we put a man down, we take his livelihood, put him with the sodomites- Fuck, guy in here- Two things you've gotta remember when dealing with inmates. A) Don't turn your back for a second and B) You are what everyone says you are. You think people smile with no teeth in their mouth? You think we're remolding anyone to return to society? It's a fucking matchstick factory, it's a crime school. People come in soft, they leave hard. Skinny little fuck, little drug dealer. From the suburbs, dad put his house up as collateral on a bond to get the little fuck out. What did the little prick do? He jumped bail.

Hymie: Don-

Donald: The kid knew. He knew he couldn't make it in here. He knows he's gonna get fucked and shit on and he'll be tossing salads. Everyone knows what goes on in here and we act like we don't. We catch two guys raping some kid, do we charge them with anything? No. We storm in and no one swarms in like law enforcement. We rearrange the order of daily life. We tell ourselves this is important to prevent this from happening. You say, "My wife, she could die in a car crash. Lightning could strike me. I could be victim of a home invasion. Some pervert could touch my kid." Does any of this stuff happen?

(Pause.)

Donald: No, of course not. Is there a twisted thrill we get from planning for the worst our whole life with nothing to show for it? Why worry? It's not the stuff that happens like we expected. It's the stuff that blindsides us at 4:30 in the afternoon on a Thursday. Do I worry about this stuff? Do I, fuck. Why worry about what you can't control? Why waste your time considering major reality shifting events that are never going to happen? You say, "A man's gotta be prepared." Well fuck that. It's bullshit. You know that?

Hymie: I-

Donald: You know that? You know when it's bullshit?

Hymie: I-

Donald: You know it's bullshit because it looks like it, it tastes like it, it smells like it, you call it what it is. It's horseshit. It's a defeatist attitude. Now what did I just tell you are the two rules of being a prison guard?

Hymie: You said-

Donald: That's right, I said. I said you don't turn your back and you are what everyone says you are. Now what do they say about you, Hym?

Hymie: They think I'm dumb.

Donald: That's right, they think you're dumb. That's god damn right.

(Pause.)

Donald: You know what they say about me?

Hymie: What?

Donald: Can I tell you this without becoming all palsy walsy with you?

Hymie: Sure.

Donald: They say I'm a closet fag. You believe that?

Hymie: They say...

Donald: They call me a fucking queer. They say I'm a nancy boy. I act tough to prove I'm not.

Hymie: Don-

Donald: And I'm glad I'm getting one of them back. I'm glad he's going down. I wish I could send more with him. But you're right. It's time for me to move on. Just get a little farther down the line.

Hymie: It would be best...

Donald: I don't need a simpleton to tell me when the goose is cooked. What time are you due back?

Hymie: I've gotta go now.

Donald: Get out there and work your ass off. And if anyone mouths off, smack them one for me. They might not think you're so dumb if you used some common sense. When a guy gives you shit, you pop him one. Common sense, simple common sense. Fucking bastards upstairs, like Russians. There's gonna be protests, they know this. Do they plan for it? Do they, fuck. They're right on the phone to the media saying come watch the end of this bastard.

Hymie: I have to go.

Donald: Who's stopping you?

(Hymie stands and walks out.)

(Lights dim and curtains close.)

Scene 13:

(Waiting area. Hymie talks to Mary and Steven.)

Hymie: He may use offensive language. He may make obscene gestures and say awful things you never want to hear. It is likely he will assert his innocence to the end, robbing even the piece of mind of knowing that the murderer of your husband, your father, has received his punishment.

Steven: We're prepared for-

Hymie: That's my job. That's my job here, to prepare you. He may urinate or soil himself. He may die cursing your names, calling you murderers. It's not uncommon. I'm just trying to prepare you for what is to come. If you can look at me after the...event...and say that you were not surprised by anything, then I've done my job.

Mary: I just want to know that Ed's life had some purpose.

Steven: Mom-

Mary: No, I'm okay. I need to know what they do. What do you do?

Hymie: Well, Mary, we're bonded by the state to end

the life of an inmate that has been found guilty by his peers-

Mary: I know all that. I wanna know what is going to happen to him. Specifically. How will he be executed?

Hymie: There is a list of things that happen in the last 24 hours. He will spend most of the day with a spiritual advisor and family. The warden will visit him for an hour or two. He will be allowed to shower and put on new clothes. The last meal will be ordered.

Mary: The execution.

Hymie: Yes, the execution. First sodium pentathol is injected into the IV tube. This acts as an anesthetic and puts the prisoner to sleep. Then a saline solution flushes the IV tube. Then pancuronium bromide, a paralyzing agent, is injected. This constricts the diaphragm and lungs, it makes the inmate stop breathing. Then the saline solution again. It takes between one and three minutes for the paralyzing agent to work. Finally potassium chloride is delivered. This causes a cardiac arrest.

Mary: Will he feel it?

Steven: Mom-

Hymie: He will not feel anything. The sodium pentathol will put him into a deep sleep. Don't be concerned about the ending of his life. I want you prepared for his preparing to die, if you see what I mean.

Mary: Will he be able to see us?

Hymie: I'm afraid he will. We do not have a one-way glass shield in this facility. I apologize for that.

(Pause.)

Hymie: Do you have any other questions?

Mary: No, I think I'd rather just get this over with.

Hymie: It will be just fifteen minutes.

Steven: It's strange.

Hymie: What's that?

Steven: He actually knows the exact minute he's going to do.

(Pause.)

Hymie: I'm gonna go check in. I'll be back to lead you into the witness chamber when we're ready.

(Lights dim and curtains close.)

Scene 14:

(Execution chamber. Forrest is strapped down to a gurney with an IV in his arm. Mary, Steven, Barry, and two witnesses observe from behind a window. Hymie is in chamber with Forrest.)

Hymie: Forrest Carrington, you have been convicted of the crime of murder in the first degree by a jury of your peers and sentence imposed by a judge in good standing in this state. Do you have any last words?

Forrest (in tears): I'm sorry for what I am. I'm sorry for everything I've ever done. I'm sorry about the time I pushed my brother down the stairs and then blamed it on the dog. I'm sorry I got Coretta pregnant and we had an abortion. I'm sorry I was a cocaine addict and I hit my wife and got arrested. I'm sorry for what brought me here. But I have salvation in the Lord.

(Hymie opens his mouth to talk and raises his arm but Forrest continues.)

Forrest: I want you people to know that I did not kill anyone in my life. I shot a dog that had gone rabid on my uncle's farm outside Detroit when I was 14. That's the only living thing I've ever killed. I liked Mr. White. He was kind. He bandaged my arm when I got cut by some crazy fucker. I didn't kill him.

(Pause.)

Forrest: But you people. You people are killing me and that's not right. I think it was somebody said an eye for an eye makes everyone blind. That's just right. That's just what I've got to say. You'll all be blinded by what you've done.

(Mary bursts into tears.)

Forrest: There's going to be a reckoning day when you are called before the Lord. And you will be asked to

explain yourself for what you're doing right now. And what answer are you gonna give? Revenge? Do you think God is going to accept revenge as an answer to killing an innocent man?

(Hymie looks offstage and nods.)

Forrest: I've never committed no murder but that's just what you're doing here.

(Forrest breaks into the shakes and his voice quivers.)

Forrest: Ya'll are killing a man, an innocent man.

(Pause.)

Forrest: I'm sorry for everything I do.

(Pause.)

Hymie: Forrest Carrington, a lethal injection will now be administered to you in accordance with state law. May God have mercy on your soul.

(Forrest begins wailing in anguish.)

(Lights dim and curtains close.)

Scene 15:

(Breakroom. Hymie and Donald sit in chairs.)

Donald: And I see right away that the fucker's got something behind his back. Little fucker signaled them, you see?

(Hymie stares at floor throughout, looking shell-shocked.)

Donald: Pounding on the wall with a cup, I could hear it echoing down the corridor. So I knew right away that something was up. It got very quiet in the block. And you know what that means.

Hymie: The one thing...

Donald: The one thing you don't want.

Hymie: Is when everything gets quiet.

Donald: That's when you know something bad is

happening. When everyone shuts the fuck up for a minute. So I- You know what I did?

Hymie: What, Don?

Donald: I dropped my belt. Like this.

(Donald stands up and quietly undoes his belt and lays it on the floor.)

Donald: All quiet like. So they don't hear the keys, the cuffs. There's no sound. I've got my baton up, ready to defend myself. I- Are you even listening?

Hymie (dejected): Yeah, it's very interesting, Don. You took off your belt.

Donald: I don't know why I waste my time with punk kids like you. A royal fuck up. So much ass in the air that planes are likely to hit it. Did I tell you what would happen? It's over. It's finished. Fucking finished. I'm leaving. I'm getting out of here. Done what I had to do, now I can move on. Saw it through to the end.

Hymie: You call this the end? It's fitting.

Donald: Yeah, it's fitting. Yeah, it's the end. Your problem is you can't see the writing on the wall. You can't see where this is headed. You know what this is? You know? You know what it is?

Hymie: What?

Donald: You know what this is?

Hymie: What is it?

Donald: You know what this is? It's a future train wreck. It's a train about to go off the tracks. You're here every day, you hear what's going on. Big Tony is organizing an army to fight the brothers. Aryan Nation is getting new members every fucking day. It's a race war. It's a class war dressed up as a race war.

Hymie: It's a-

Donald: It's a class war. This isn't about, you know, the blacks and the whites and oh, they have such problems. This isn't about the wetback gangbangers showing up in droves as they do drive by and rob the liquor store on the corner. This isn't even about the Korean that owns the corner store in the black neighborhood. Because they're just trying to make a

life for themselves, just like everyone else. It's gentrification. Niggers killing each other off and the rich are loving it because it means less niggers, more drug sells, more people in the prisons they own, more slave labor working for their companies in these prisons. It's gentrification. The blacks and Mexicans can kill each other out there in the ghetto and it runs down the property value until everyone's in jail and decent people that work two jobs so they can afford a little house find out that they paid twice what it's worth now. And then the rich come in and buy up the land at a reduced price and turn it into fucking theme parks or middle class housing or whatever the fuck.

Hymie: What amazes me most about you...

Donald: I'm explaining something to you here.

Hymie: Is that everything has shades of gray in your black and white world. You hate everyone equally.

Donald: What am I talking for, to hear myself speak? I'm telling you how the world works.

(Pause.)

Donald: And the gentrification, which is endorsed and loved by the rich because it means lower property values they can pounce on, the killings of kids on the street- You've gotta- You can't- You know? You have to realize that on the streets, it's just like it is in here. All a man has is his name among his peers. You remember that, remember where you heard it. Because that is the key to prison. And to life on the streets. You turn punk once, you become a mark, it's gonna hound you to your grave, any fucking hood or prison you go to. So the fucking blacks are so concerned with their image, with who's dissing who. You've gotta be the toughest motherfucker around. And if that means killing someone because they said your girl's a slut or your brother's a punk or your hood's for queers, then that's what you do, you fucking kill them. And then you get sent here and when you get out, it's like you fucking graduated college. People are slapping you on the back and saying "Way to go, man."

(Pause.)

Donald: And how's this look to the middle class? All they know about it is that they can't drive through some neighborhoods and they see on the news that people are dying by the dozens in their city each day from drive by shootings or turf warfare. And one

minute it's the news saying, "Oh, another fucking child murdered by a stray bullet in a neighborhood you don't wanna be in"; the next minute it's a fucking commercial saying "Buy this barbacue grill and you'll finally be happy and everyone will love you." It becomes a culture of fear and shopping. Fear that you could get killed. Shopping to make yourself a complete person.

(Pause.)

(Hymie stares at the floor.)

Donald: You don't see the connections here? You don't see how it's fear and shopping? America's afraid and we're afraid of the wrong things. It's us, the middle class, the working man that provides for his family, we're more scared than the fucking gangbangers that are on the front lines about to get shot. And what choice do they have? Where they gonna go, the army? The fucking army? Get shot at at home or get shot at in the Middle East. Some fucking choice.

Hymie: I'm leaving. I'm going home and I'm not coming back.

Donald: Don't you see what I'm trying to say here? Something is wrong.

Hymie: Something's wrong. We killed an innocent man today and I gave the order. That's the second time I've killed an innocent man. I'm going home.

(Hymie stands up and leaves.)

(Pause.)

Donald: And some fucker with sick ideas steps up and gets a crew together. Hundreds of guys, and he tells them "Oh, it's America's fault because they're so wealthy and can buy fast food and they fuck on the first date." And they're against everything because their fucking book says to kill all enemies, and unbelievers are enemies by proxy. So we've got a billion people hating our guts and for what? Because we want their oil? Is that such a terrible thing to want? Are we there raping and pillaging? Are we the only reason that Israel hasn't been directly attacked and a nuclear war breaks out, so in reality are we not saving them from complete doom?

(Pause.)

And then there's a fucking joke administration that

fixed an election and they're saying that these terrorists hate us for our freedom and is that idea any less sick and wrong than the hate they're spewing? Is it any safer to ignore the problems we're causing by pawning it all off on them, saying they can't stand us being free? And when we're getting ready to go into Baghdad and there are artillery shells on the frontline that have "Payback" written on them, and what's this prove? That we can't tell one sandnigger from another. Fucking great, I say. Kill them all and take back the land. Let's have another Vietnam to purge the ranks of an apathetic generation weened on television to appreciate irony as the greatest form of brilliance in art.

(Pause.)

Fuck, I saw a movie the other day and it wasn't even a movie. It was an hour and a half ode to pop culture references where plot and character are submerged so that we can all wink at references to Pop Tarts commercials and dilettantes can slum for a couple of hours and feel they're still in touch with the people. Don't even get me fucking started on the rich getting richer because I see the result in here every day, I see good men turned to animals by corporate raiders and Wall Street geniuses that hide the money under the mattress. Any man that has a Swiss savings account needs to be shot for our own good.

(Pause.)

People in here are animals. People aren't even fucking people anymore, they're god damn animals. Tear each other open and we're worried about sodomy laws. How silly is that? You get brought up before the man on a charge that you take it up the ass and they send you here where you take it up the ass regularly. And fucking prostitution. It's illegal to sell something you can give away for free. Pros and fags, what's the difference? What's love and what's marriage? Where does any of this world fit into God's plan? Where are the cell phones in the Bible? What is God, where is he? Absentee father figure pointing an accusing finger from two thousand years back and still people say how high when told to jump. What is morality? Where are the absolutes of the age? It's so easy to kill someone, that's the thing people have to learn. It can go from a word to a deed without more than a nod. You can snap your neck in a car crash and be paralyzed the rest of your life. Did I ever tell you about the car crash I was in? Damn near killed myself just in time for prom, for- Whatever. People say, "What are you doing with him? Why are you-" They're fucking

vultures. Crushing and devouring, picking the fucking bones. A man can not stand up under this weight.

(Pause.)

A man can not stand up.

(Pause.)

Fuck. I'm going home. I've got two kids and a wife and a cat and a dog. I've got my share. I've got my American dream. That's me, the American dream. And I don't care about anyone anymore, I don't care about anything. I'm going home. I'm going to California. I'm going. I'll be out there. I'm gone.

(Lights dim and curtains close.)

End