

The Unmitigated Consequence

A play in 2 Acts

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Preface

This play was inspired by real events, taken from women who survived domestic violence, and have told their stories.

Given the graphic nature, and violent situations of this play, it must be understood that this is NOT a play about "violence against women" but, rather, it is a play about violence period. Violence, whether it is domestic, on the streets, or in war, is still violence. Though it is tame, in relation to actual domestic violence, this play should be performed with as much intensity, and realism as possible. It must also be understood that the language and violence in this play are not meant to be taken or played in a gratuitous manor if the proper message is to be received. The overall philosophy is NOT to titillate one's violent fantasies, but, to simply exploit domestic violence for what it really is.

None of the characters have been given a name, nor are there any names mentioned in this play. This is done deliberately to put the focus on the character of the character, rather than their names.

THE CHARACTERS

MAN: Forties. Uneducated. Abusive. A narcissist.

WOMAN: Thirties. Abused spouse. Teacher.

PROSECUTOR: Female. Feminine but fearless.

SOCIAL WORKER: Female. Mid-late Fifties. Self absorbed.

BOY: Twelve to thirteen. A recluse.

A full-length original play that engages in an explosive and realistic examination of all aspects of domestic violence; the abused, the abuser, and the people who stand by and watch, but do nothing about it.

SYNOPSIS

Based on true events; Alone and running out of options, a woman struggles to protect her son from a violent husband and a social worker that refuses to take her seriously. However, no struggle can compare to the fight she faces to rebuild her life after inadvertently carrying out the unthinkable.

Wrongfully convicted of the crime and sent to prison, her husband carefully plans his escape and returns to their old home to "see" her. To him, she holds the answers to his conviction and will stop at nothing to get her to admit it.

The audience becomes a witness to the events that led up to that fateful day through the eyes of each character as the action passes back and forth in time, creating a high-octane, heavy dramatic "he said-she said" battle for the truth.

All settings consist of two wooden chairs, placed at various locations of the stage.

ACT I

Scene one: WOMAN'S home

Scene two: Interior, Social Services complex

Scene three: Courtroom

Scene four: Interior, Social Services complex

Scene five: WOMAN'S home

Scene six: Exterior, Social Services complex

Scene seven: Courtroom

ACT II

Scene one: Courtroom

Scene two: Exterior, busy street

Scene three: WOMAN'S home

Scene four: Basement

Scene five: Exterior, city park

Scene six: WOMAN'S home

The Unmitigated Consequence

ACT I

Scene One

The set consists of two wooden chairs on opposite sides of the stage. These chairs will be moved from time to time for various scenes.

Once the house is completely dark and silent, a loud thunder crash is heard, followed by rain. The lights slowly rise on the left side of the stage. MAN is sitting in the chair R. The audience can just make out his presence. He is wearing faded blue jeans and a white t-shirt. He totes a gun in the back of his pants and has a white pillowcase next to the chair with some handcuffs and two white prison-issued bed sheets inside. After a moment, we hear WOMAN off stage on her cell phone.

WOMAN

(From off)

Of course, it will. I promise. You just wait and see darling, we are going to be so happy together- Oh, I forgot to tell you. Your mother found the address. We have an appointment next week. Is that okay? . . . Are you sure? . . . You don't sound very sure . . . Of course it's necessary . . . Great. I'll call her back tonight and let her know . . . I don't know, I think she did. Why? Is that a problem?

(Loud thunder crash)

Oh, my goodness. Did you hear that? It's really getting nasty out there.

(Enters, wearing a long skirt and blouse, carrying her shoes. She is

WOMAN cont.

still on the phone and does not notice MAN. She crosses to the chair L, sits, putting on her shoes. Her hair is long)

Look sweetie, I'm very sorry, but can we talk about this at lunch? I am running so behind today I can't believe it.

(Teasing)

And you know how the principal gets when his teachers are late . . . Darling? Is something wrong? . . . Are you sure? . . . I don't know, you sound like something is bothering you? . . . Well, I do worry . . .

(Reminding him)

Sweetheart - I love you.

(Closes phone and puts it in her purse. When she looks up, MAN is suddenly, fully illuminated. She is startled)

Ah! Oh my god! What are you doing here?

MAN

(Rises)

I'm back baby. Did you miss me?

WOMAN

How did you get out?

(Reaches in her purse)

MAN

(Smiles)

Good behavior.

(Moves in)

WOMAN

Don't come any closer. I have pepper spray. I will use it.

MAN

You don't want to do that.

(Moving in closer to her.)

WOMAN

Stay back goddamn-it! I will spray you.

MAN

I told you, you don't want to do that.

(Moves in closer)

Now, you just put that away and we can talk about thi-

(She sprays him in the eyes)

Ahhhhhh! You fucking bitch!

(WOMAN tries to run away. MAN gets a hold of her.)

WOMAN

(Struggles to free herself)

Help! Help!

MAN

What the fuck are you doing?

WOMAN

I told you, stay away from me!

(She screams, MAN stifles her scream with his hand. They struggle. MAN is still affected by the pepper spray, tries to keep a hold of her and wipe his eyes with his sleeve. She manages to get her mouth away from his hand and screams again. When he tries to put his hand back over her mouth, she bites down on one of his fingers.)

MAN

Ahhhh! You wanna play rough, huh? Is that it? All right. We'll play rough.

(Throws her to the floor, reaches around and pulls out his gun)

WOMAN

Oh my god, no! No!

MAN

(Standing over her)

That's right sweetie. This is a gun. And it's loaded too. So, if you wanna go ahead and play that rough shit, then that's fine by me. I'll play as rough as you wanna get.

WOMAN

Oh my god, no. Don't do this. Please. Don't do this.

MAN

I'll do what ever the hell I want. It's my right. I've earned it.

(Kicks her)

So, don't you ever tell me what the hell to do again. You got that?

WOMAN

(In pain)

They're going to find you, you know.

MAN

Yeah, well, them's the breaks. But not before I've finished my business. That, I can assure you.

WOMAN

What business?

MAN

My business with you. You owe me.

WOMAN

I don't owe you anything.

MAN

The hell you don't. You owe me your life . . . All I wanted to do was to come here and see you. To make sure my baby was doing okay . . .

WOMAN

. . . I'm not your baby anymore . . .

MAN

. . . And, you have to spray me with fucking mace?
(Wiping his eyes)
Goddamn this burns.

WOMAN

Good. It's supposed to.

MAN

(Kicks her again, takes a moment)
Fuck. You always do this to me. Every time I try and be nice to you, you make me hurt you. Why do you do this to me, huh? . . . Why?

WOMAN

(Begins screaming)
Ahhhhhhhhhh! . . . Ahhhhhhhhhhh!

MAN

(Points gun directly at her forehead)
You make one more sound and I swear to fucking god I will kill you, you understand me? I will blow your brains all over this fucking room. Now, shut the fuck up!
(Pause, as he wipes his eyes again)
I don't understand you. I really don't. I go out of my way to come here and see you, and this is how you treat me.

WOMAN

You can't stay here.

MAN

Do you realize what I had to do to even get here? Huh? . . . I mean it has been four years, you know. You would think a little hospitality would be in order, for Christ's sake . . . But, oh no. You have to go back to your old ways and egg me on. Just like you always did.
(Kneels down, caresses her cheek)

MAN cont.

I just want us to be together again. You know . . . like we used to be . . . You know I still love you . . . You know that right?

(She just looks at him)

Right?

(She remains looking at him with no response, he suddenly becomes enraged, pulls her head back by her hair)

You ungrateful fucking cunt! After all I did for you!

(Pulls her up by the hair, and punches her in the stomach, she falls to back the ground)

I worked my ass off for you lazy, good-for-nothing bitch!

(Kicks her)

I gave you a home!

(Kicks her)

Put clothes on your back!

(Kicks her)

Fed you!

(Kicks her)

And the first chance you got, you turned on me.

(Kicks her)

How dare you! How fucking dare you do this to me?

WOMAN

(Crying)

Stop it. Just stop. Please.

MAN

Goddamn-it! It's like you want me to hurt you . . . Do you enjoy this? Huh? Do you get off on this or something?

WOMAN

What do you want from me?

MAN

I want respect!

WOMAN

I gave you respect. You just didn't appreciate it.

MAN

You never gave me shit! The only thing I ever got from you, was twenty-five to life.

(Points the gun at her again)

Now get on your feet!

(She doesn't move fast enough for him, he pulls her up)

I said on your fucking feet! . . . Now, take off your clothes and sit in that chair. I'm going to teach you the real meaning of respect.

(Again, she doesn't move fast enough for him, he points gun at her)

Strip!

WOMAN

All right, all right. I'll do what ever you say.

(She apprehensively starts to unbutton her blouse.)

MAN

Come on, quicker! Get to the skin already!

(Pulls her skirt down)

There, that's more like it.

(Seductively close to her as she undresses, softly in her ear.)

You feel that? . . . You know what that is? That's fear . . . Humiliation. The same fear and humiliation you gave me.

(She starts to cry.)

You like that? Huh? You like that feeling of humiliation? Feels good, doesn't it? . . . That's it. Let it out. Cry, you selfish little bitch . . . You make me sick, you know that? Where were your fucking tears four years ago, when you lied and had me sent me to jail, huh? They weren't there. That's where they were. Because you're a lying, backstabbing bitch!

WOMAN

(Frightened and still in tears.)

Are you going to kill me?

MAN

Hell, after what you did to me, you should be begging me to kill you . . . Do you have any idea, what I had to go

MAN cont.

through, just to even get here? . . . And what do I get for it? Nothing but disrespect. That's what.

(She is now down to her underwear and pantyhose)
Lose the pantyhose.

(As she slides her pantyhose down, he grabs her by the arm and leads her to the chair. Her pantyhose are down to her ankles, where they remain throughout the scene.)

Now sit.

(He goes behind her)

Put your hands behind your back.

(Stows gun in his pants and pulls out some handcuffs from the pillowcase)

Now you're going to learn what it's like to be humiliated.

(Tightens the cuffs on her wrists)

There, nice and tight.

(Into her ear.)

You like that? You like them chains on your wrists? Doesn't feel good does it? You're scared . . . Defenseless . . . Alone . . . Now you know what it's like. Now you know what you put me through . . . Now you know.

WOMAN

(Crying)

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. I didn't know they were going to do that to you. Believe me. They forced me to tell them.

MAN

Oh bullshit! You weren't forced to do anything. You went out of your way to tell them. You made it up!

WOMAN

No. No. That's not true.

MAN

You were always making things up. You were always lying to me.

WOMAN

I never, ever lied to you.

MAN

Oh, come on, now. You think I don't know what you were doing behind my back? You think I didn't see what was going on? I seen everything honey. I seen it all.

WOMAN

I was very good to you.

MAN

You call flirting with every guy that passed you by, being good to me? You realize how that hurt me? Knowing my wife was bangin' damn near every guy in town? You were a slut. Nothing but a lousy whore!

WOMAN

I never cheated on you and you know it. I never even had the chance to look at other men. You would never let me out of the house.

MAN

That's right. Because you couldn't be trusted. You were my wife for Christ's sake. All I wanted was respect . . .

WOMAN

. . . Which, I gave you.

MAN

You never gave me shit. All day long, you'd play with that damn kid. Never once, thinking about me. I'd come home from work, after a twelve-hour day, dead fucking tired . . .

WOMAN

. . . Dead fucking drunk is more like it.

MAN

(Pulls her head back by the hair)

Smart off to me one more time and see what happens! You understand me?

(Holds for a moment, then releases his grip)

MAN cont.

That's right. I was drunk. It was the only way to handle even looking at you, half the time . . . Boy, it sure didn't take you long to start going downhill, you know that? You shouldda got your tits done like I told you to. Might-a least made you look a little more attractive.

WOMAN

(In tears, bursting out)
You killed our son!

MAN

(Grabs her by the throat.)
What the fuck did you just say?

WOMAN

(He still has a grip, but she manages to speak)
I'm sorry. I didn't mean it. Please. I don't know where that came from. I didn't mean it. Please. I'm sorry, I'm sorry . . .

MAN

(Releasing his grip)
Ah, shut the fuck up. I can't take any more excuses out of you today.

(Begins gathering her clothes and stuffing them in the pillowcase. After a moment, WOMAN starts to cry again.)

And stop that damn crying! You're giving me a headache. You only cry because you're weak. You've always been weak.

(Pause)

What do you care anyway? You're not sorry. You did it on purpose . . . to destroy me. You've always been out to destroy me.

WOMAN

No. That's not true. I loved you. I never wanted to destroy you.

MAN

Why did they lock me up for then, huh? . . . Because you lied.

WOMAN

What about all the lies you told about me?

MAN

That was called self-defense, sweetheart . . . Hey! I figured if you were gunna lie about me, I might as well get a few in, before it's too late.

WOMAN

You've always been pretty good at twisting the truth, haven't you? Well, the jury saw right through you. Right through all your bullshit. I think all the booze and drugs you took, warped your mind . . . It's gone.

MAN

That's it!

(Rushes to the pepper spray bottle that was dropped in the scuffle and sprays her face. WOMAN screams)

You wanna mouth off to me? Huh? You wanna disrespect me?

(Sprays her face again)

There. How does it feel? You want some more? Huh? Here, take the rest of it, you filthy slut.

(Empties its contents in her face)

Take it! Take it all . . . Take it all, you fucking whore.

(It's now empty, he throws the bottle at her)

There. There's your fucking bottle back . . . You better learn your place with me woman.

(Continues gathering the rest of her clothes. WOMAN cries)

Stop fucking crying!

(Pause.)

I don't know why you're crying. You had to know this was going to happen sooner or later. I mean, it's only fair, right? You destroy my life, I destroy yours . . . Tit-for-tat.

WOMAN

(Crying)

My eyes!

MAN

Fuck your eyes. You shouldn't have disrespected me.

WOMAN

I'm sorry-I'm sorry. Please. Wipe them off at least.
I'm begging you . . .

MAN

Oh, now you're begging me. What about when I was begging you? Huh? I begged you, I begged you, I begged you. But, you wouldn't listen. You never wanted to hear my side of the story . . . Ever. So, what did you do? I tell you what you did. You lied. You made up some cock and bull story, to protect yourself from anyone finding out the truth . . . You destroyed my fucking life!

(Leans in eye-to-eye with her.)

I want you to take a very long, hard look at me?

(She is reluctant to make eye contact)

Look at me!

(Forcing her chin upwards.)

Look at me goddamn-it! Do you see me?

(She nods)

Do you know what you see? Huh? . . . You see a shell. A shell of a man that you destroyed. That you killed! That's what you see!

WOMAN

Look, I'll do anything you want, okay. If you want to rape me, then fine do it. Just do it and . . .

MAN

. . . Rape you? . . . Honey, don't flatter yourself, all right? You were never that good anyway, believe me. Why would I want to even waste my time?

WOMAN

What do you want with me then? We're over! We have nothing to do with each other anymore. I have a new life now. I even went back to school. I teach kindergarten. I'm also getting re-married.

MAN

What are you talking about? You can't get married again. You're still married to me, remember?

WOMAN

We're not married anymore. Remember?

MAN

In the eyes of God, we will always be married.

WOMAN

What do you know about God anyway? You never believed in God, a day in your life.

MAN

I know that if you get married in a house of God, you get married for life. That's what I know about God. And we were married in a house of God. So, fuck you! . . . Hey, he made the rules, not me.

WOMAN

You're sick, you know that? You need help.

MAN

(Quickly goes to her, lifting her up by the hair and forcing her D.S.)

I want you to look out that window. I want you to see all that I gave you. All that I did for you . . . Look at it. Do you see what's out there? Huh? Do you see it? All that out there, is because of me. I built it all. That shed. That fence. That stupid fucking windmill you just had to have. That little greenhouse, so you could grow your faggot-assed spices in. Everything. I did it for you. And, if it wasn't for me, none of that would even be there. I built those things. Me, not you. Me. And all you wanted was more, more, more. Look out there. You see it? You see what I did for you?

WOMAN

(Crying)

Yes.

MAN

Then why would you do this too me, huh? Why would you take this away from me?

WOMAN

I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

MAN

You're always fucking sorry. That's all I ever heard out of you. "I'm sorry-I'm sorry" . . . You're an ungrateful bitch, that doesn't deserve to live. You make me wanna puke.

(Shoving her away)

Now get back in that chair.

(She waddles back to the chair)

Faster!

(She finally sits)

I can't believe you would do this to me. I swear to fucking God, I can't believe it . . . You've got an awful lot of explaining to do bitch, so you better get started. And just in case you were thinking of lying your way out of this . . . think again. You see, I know the truth about you. I know what you did. I've had four years in the can to piece together all the evidence. I got the goods on you honey. And, you're not going to get away with it either.

WOMAN

What evidence? What goods? What the hell are you talking about?

MAN

Don't play stupid with me goddamn it! Knock it off! You know exactly what you did to me. You did it deliberate.

WOMAN

Did what?

(Starts to cry)

Oh my god. I don't know what you're talking about.

MAN

Lies! That's what. Lies! . . . Fucking lies!

WOMAN

The only one who ever lied was you!

(MAN becomes immediately enraged, crosses in and starts to hit her. First starting with one fist, then escalates into whaling on her with both, growling like a rabid dog. When he is finally finished, she slowly looks up. Defiant)

Are you through?

MAN

(Spits on her)

Now, I'm through.

(Crosses to D.R. wall and unzips his pants)

WOMAN

What are you doing?

MAN

I gotta take a leak.

WOMAN

Can't you use the bathroom?

MAN

What, and have you run out the house while I'm in the john? Nothin' doin' honey. I gotta keep an eye on you.

WOMAN

You're disgusting.

MAN

Turn your head and don't look at it then.

(Lights fade to black as MAN pees against the wall. Thunder crashes.)

ACT I
Scene Two

(The lights rise. After a moment SOCIAL WORKER enters D.S. and crosses to U.L. She is a mature woman and dresses very plainly. She is talking on her cell phone and carries a briefcase.)

SOCIAL WORKER

. . . No, no, no, don't use those. Those are for public works. We use the yellow. Oh! And don't forget to make sure all the daily's in by four. If you have to get on em, get on em. You have to watch these people sometimes. Don't let them take advantage of you because I'm not there . . . No. Yes! Yes, yes, yes. Those get put in with the daily's also. But, not the- . . . right. They go in the- . . . Who? . . . Yes, I know her. She's on now? . . . No, no. Keep her on hold. She can rest for a minute or two. We need to go over this . . . Just tell her . . . I don't know. Make something up. You can handle people like her better than I can . . . No. That's alright. I'll call her tomorrow . . . I'll take care of it. Anything else? I'm waiting for my mechanic to call me back . . . Oh, I don't know, something to do with the something, or whatever. I don't know . . . Yes those go out before you go home. I don't want to come in to the office tomorrow and find out they are still sitting on my desk . . . What do you mean again? I thought you said she was just on hold? . . . How did she get in my office? . . . Well listen. Tell her- . . . Hold on. I think that's my mechanic.

(She looks at her phone)

It's him. I gotta go. Just tell her I will call her- . . . Well, let her. She couldn't possibly find me down here anyway. Gotta run!

(As she clicks her phone to take other call)

Don't forget the daily's!

(Back into the phone)

Hello . . . Yes, this is her . . . No we will not. We need that car . . . Today. Do you understand me? It should have been done by now anyway . . . No I'm not a mechanic, but, I do know it doesn't take that long to fix whatever problem you people claim it has. You told me three days . . . Yes, you did. You told me specifically, three days at the most . . . Well, that's not my problem. Maybe you

SOCIAL WORKER cont.

should have ordered more parts . . . That doesn't . . .
That . . . That doesn't over ride the fact that I am still
out of a car . . . No I can not hold . . . Yes I would
like to speak with him . . . No. I told you I will not
hold . . . Ahhh, Alright, fine. Call me back then . . .
By when? . . . It better be.

(Snaps her phone closed, sighs, then
opens the phone back up and dials.
Lights fade to black)

ACT I

Scene Three

(The lights rise. Court. WOMAN is seated L.C... PROSECUTOR stands C. MAN is seated U.R. He wears a prison smock. WOMAN'S hair is shorter now; she is wearing a summer dress and holds a handkerchief.)

PROSECUTOR

. . . And, how old were you, when you got married.

WOMAN

I got married when I was nineteen.

PROSECUTOR

And how old was your husband?

WOMAN

He was thirty-two.

PROSECUTOR

Where did you two first meet?

WOMAN

I had been attending the city college, here in town. And, he was working with a company that was doing some carpentry work in one of the halls. I was just walking through one day, to one of my classes, and he just came up to me and asked me out.

PROSECUTOR

Were you taken aback by this?

WOMAN

No. Actually, I thought it was rather cute . . . Charming in a way.

PROSECUTOR

And, did you say, yes?

WOMAN

Yes.

PROSECUTOR

How long after that, were you two married?

WOMAN

About a year.

PROSECUTOR

You say you were attending city college . . . what ever became of that?

WOMAN

He made me drop out . . .

PROSECUTOR

. . . When you say he, do you mean . . .

WOMAN

. . . Oh, sorry. My husband.

PROSECUTOR

Why did he make you drop out?

WOMAN

He said it was pointless for me to work because he was brought up to believe that the man should be the only breadwinner in the family.

PROSECUTOR

What sort of work were you hoping to go in to?

WOMAN

I wanted to be a teacher.

PROSECUTOR

Did that decision upset you at all, that he made you drop out of college?

WOMAN

At the time, no. I was very young and naïve, I guess. He somehow convinced me, that it was for the best. Like I said, he was a really good talker.

PROSECUTOR

Describe to us, the first few years of your marriage, the relationship between you and your husband.

WOMAN

Well, at first, it was everything a girl could ever dream of. He was so kind, and loving. He would do anything for me. He treated me like a queen.

PROSECUTOR

What are some of the things he did for you, that made you feel like a queen?

WOMAN

Well, you know, he would open doors for me, buy me little gifts, send me flowers, that kind of thing. He was a real gentleman.

PROSECUTOR

Did he do anything else?

WOMAN

Yes. He was very handy around the house too. When we first moved into our new place, he spent a lot of time fixing up the back yard, building things for me.

PROSECUTOR

What sort of things did he build for you?

WOMAN

Well, this may sound a little corny, but, ever since I was a little girl, I had always dreamed of having a windmill.

PROSECUTOR

A windmill?

WOMAN

Yeah, you know? Not a very big one or anything. Just a small one. One that I could just gaze at on a lazy day, plant flowers under it. My grandfather had one when he lived in the country, and I guess I have always been enamored by them. So, when he asked me to marry him, I said yes . . . with the promise he would build me one.

PROSECUTOR

And did he make good on his promise? Did he build you that windmill?

WOMAN

Yes. He was very good with his hands. He was a great carpenter. He also built me a greenhouse to grow tomatoes and spices in as well.

PROSECUTOR

What did your husband do for a living?

WOMAN

Well, the last job he had, he was working for a construction company.

PROSECUTOR

Was he ever employed as a carpenter, given he was so good with his hands?

WOMAN

Well, he was . . . but he was fired. He said it was because of "cut-backs" and a "slow economy" . . . But, I found out later, from one of the guys he used to work with, he told me that he hit his boss with a board or

WOMAN cont.

something, I can't remember. I just know he got in a fight of some kind.

PROSECUTOR

How many jobs did he go through during your marriage?

WOMAN

Only one, up until about five years ago. Our son was around six or so, when he lost his first job. Then, after that, it seems like every week, he had another job.

PROSECUTOR

Did he make enough money to support you and your son?

WOMAN

Sometimes . . . Sometimes we would have to borrow money from my parents though.

PROSECUTOR

And, at some point, did your parents stop giving you money?

WOMAN

Yes. They were killed in an auto accident a little over two years ago.

PROSECUTOR

And, did you receive an inheritance from your parent's estate?

WOMAN

Yes.

PROSECUTOR

And, how much was it, do you remember?

WOMAN

About, fifty thousand dollars.

PROSECUTOR

And, do you still have any of the fifty thousand dollars from the estate?

WOMAN

No. He spent it on a fishing boat.

PROSECUTOR

The whole fifty thousand on a fishing boat?

WOMAN

That, and other things. He wouldn't tell me. I was never allowed to handle anything to do with money anyway. He always took care of it. He said, "Women shouldn't be allowed to carry money. It makes them whores."

PROSECUTOR

Did your husband ever use any illegal drugs? Cocaine, marijuana, anything like that?

WOMAN

Yes. He used cocaine.

MAN

(Thinking out loud)

Liar.

PROSECUTOR

(Looks at MAN, then back to WOMAN)

Did your husband ever use cocaine in front of you or your son?

WOMAN

Yes. A lot.

PROSECUTOR

Every day?

WOMAN

. . . Sometimes.

PROSECUTOR

Did he ever drink alcohol?

WOMAN

Yes.

PROSECUTOR

And, how often would you say he drank alcohol?

WOMAN

All the time. The last few years or so, I don't think I ever saw him sober.

PROSECUTOR

Describe his demeanor, when he was drinking alcohol?

WOMAN

Angry . . . Very angry.

PROSECUTOR

What did he do exactly, that made you believe he was angry? Did he scream at you?

WOMAN

Yes.

PROSECUTOR

Call you names?

WOMAN

Yes.

PROSECUTOR

What kind of names did he call you?

WOMAN

Bitch. Cunt. Whore. Names like that. I never heard anybody ever call anybody those names before. I used to hide in another room and just cry for hours. Eventually, I got used to it, and it was like I didn't really hear them anymore.

PROSECUTOR

Did he ever hit you when he was drinking?

WOMAN

Yes. Almost always.

MAN

(Rises)

Oh come on! I never hit you and you know it!

PROSECUTOR

(Looks L.C.)

Your Honor, I would ask the court to remind the defendant to please remai- . . .

MAN

. . . But, she's lying!

(Looks L.C.)

Look judge, I need a chance to speak here. Get the record straight.

(Pause, looking L.C. for a moment, then dismissive)

Fine.

(Sitting)

Continue with your lies counselor.

PROSECUTOR

Your Honor?!

MAN

(Rises, looks L.C. for a moment)

I'm sorry your Honor. I'm still a little emotional, after loosing my son and all-

(Pause)

MAN cont.

No. Your right. It was no excuse . . . I understand . . .
I understand.

(Sits)

PROSECUTOR

Now . . . Please ma'am,

(Looking out to the audience)

tell the ladies and gentlemen of the jury, how your
husband hit you? Was it with his fist or . . . ?

WOMAN

. . . Yes. With his fist.

PROSECUTOR

Did he ever hit you with anything other than his fist?

WOMAN

Yes. He sometimes would throw things at me. Dishes,
lamps, chairs, pretty much anything that was close to him
at the time. He also hit me with a baseball bat once.

MAN

(Shaking his head and mumbling to himself in
disagreement)

PROSECUTOR

Were you hospitalized, after you were struck with the bat?

WOMAN

Yes I was.

PROSECUTOR

And how long were you in the hospital for?

WOMAN

A little over a week.

PROSECUTOR

And, what was the extent of your injuries?

WOMAN

Both of my arms were broken, my jaw was broken, a cracked skull and some bruises on my legs.

PROSECUTOR

When you were brought in to the hospital . . . did the doctor ask you how you received your injuries?

WOMAN

I don't remember if he did or not. I just remember the nurses talking to me about it. I knew my husband had made up some kind of story, by what they were saying. I was so afraid to say anything different than what he had told them, so I just kept saying, "I don't remember-I don't remember"

PROSECUTOR

Did you ever find out later, what that story was, that your husband had apparently made up? What were the nurses saying to you, about what had happened?

WOMAN

Something about, him practicing with the bat, and I fell down the stairs. Something like that.

PROSECUTOR

Did he ever practice swinging a bat in the house before this incident?

WOMAN

No. Never. He just watched sports on television. He never played them.

PROSECUTOR

How about your son? . . . Did he take an interest in sports at all? Did he ever watch them with his father?

WOMAN

No. I think he hated sports, because he knew his father liked them.

PROSECUTOR

I see . . . What did your husband say to you, when you came home from the hospital, after he hit you with the bat? Was he apologetic to you at all?

WOMAN

No. He told me that it was an accident and if I ever said anything different, he would kill me.

MAN

(Rises)

What?! I never said that. What are you trying to do to me? Stop lying! . . .

PROSECUTOR

. . . Your Honor? . . .

MAN

. . . What's going on here? How can you let her get away with all this? I never did any of that shit she's telling you. I deserve a mistrial!

(Turns behind him)

What the—?

(Mimes being handcuffed by the Bailiff)

Hey! What are you doing man? You can't do this to me! I have a right to speak just like everybody else!

(Mimes being dragged out of court by the Bailiff. MAN becomes hysterical.)

What are you doing man? Where are taking me? You can't do this. I have rights ya know. I want a mistrial! I never did anything she said. She's lying. Can't you people see that? She's lying! Look at her. You can see she's lying.

(Turning his head as he is walking out)

I hate you, you lying bitch! You hear me? I hate you! I hate you!

(MAN out)

PROSECUTOR

(Brief pause)

I'm sorry. Would you like a little break, or do you think you can continue?

WOMAN

No. I'm fine thanks.

PROSECUTOR

We'll move on then . . . Now, getting back to when you first came home from the hospital, after being struck with a bat. You say your husband had told you that if you were to say anything other than it was an accident, that he would kill you. Is that correct?

WOMAN

Yes.

PROSECUTOR

Did he make these kinds of threats to you often?

WOMAN

The last few years, almost every day. Sometimes he would come home in the middle of the night and wake me up, specifically to threaten me.

PROSECUTOR

Can you give us an example, of something that he said or did to you, when he woke you up in the middle of the night?

WOMAN

Well . . . if you notice, my hair is a lot shorter now.

PROSECUTOR

What happened to your hair?

WOMAN

He cut it off.

PROSECUTOR

Why did he cut off your hair?

WOMAN

Because he thought other men were admiring it, and that I was flirting with them.

PROSECUTOR

Were you flirting with other men?

WOMAN

No. Never.

PROSECUTOR

Did you ever do anything to try to convince him that you were not seeing other men?

WOMAN

Yes. I once fixed my hair up, just how I did when we were dating. I was trying to entice him, you know. I put on make-up and wore this sexy outfit. I thought it would make him interested in me again. To see me as the woman he first fell in love with.

PROSECUTOR

Did it work?

WOMAN

No. That just set him off even more. He immediately started accusing me of having another affair. That was probably the worst beating he ever gave me. From there on, almost every time he came home, and I'd be in bed asleep. He'd wake me up and start in on me. He would say real horrible things too. Demented, evil things. Like, "If you ever leave me for another man, I will cut you up and scatter your body all over the woods and let the animals eat you."

PROSECUTOR

He said that to you?

WOMAN

(Almost in tears)

Hmm-Hmm. He said a lot of sick and twisted stuff like that. I don't know where he got it from. It wasn't him. He would then make me undress in front of him, and he would feel me up and smell me. He said he wanted to make sure there was no residue of a man on me.

PROSECUTOR

Residue?

WOMAN

That was his word.

PROSECUTOR

Why did you stay with him for so long then? If you knew, he was like this to you?

WOMAN

I was scared. I didn't know what to do. He had this, like, control over me and I couldn't get away from it.

PROSECUTOR

Did he ever threaten your son at all?

WOMAN

Yes. All the time.

PROSECUTOR

Did he ever hit your son?

WOMAN

(Starts to cry)

Yes.

PROSECUTOR

How often would he hit your son?

WOMAN

(Still in tears, but collected)

Not as much as me, but he did beat him a lot.

PROSECUTOR

Would he call him names as well?

WOMAN

Yes. He always called him, "the little bastard" That was his favorite. He would also call him stupid, and no-good. Things like that. Anything to humiliate him.

PROSECUTOR

How did your son react to all of this?

WOMAN

Ashamed . . . and hurt. He would hide down in the basement a lot, sometimes for days. I think he was too frightened to come out.

PROSECUTOR

How did your son do in school? Did he get good grades?

WOMAN

No. He didn't do very well in school. He was held back in the first grade, then again in the third.

PROSECUTOR

Did he have any kind of disability that would inhibit him from learning?

WOMAN

No. Nothing like that. I think all the beatings and verbal abuse he got from his father, made him very reclusive. He tried to learn, but . . .

PROSECUTOR

Did your husband ever acknowledge to you, that he had a problem with being abusive?

WOMAN

No . . . Well, at first, when he first starting becoming abusive, he would be. Then after a while, he just . . . then he . . . to be honest, I don't think he even realized what he was doing most of the time.

PROSECUTOR

Why do you say that?

WOMAN

Well, after one of his . . . episodes, most of the time he wasn't even able to remember it. It was like he blacked out or something during it.

PROSECUTOR

Was he calmer afterwards . . . after an episode?

WOMAN

A little, yes. Sometimes he would fall asleep. I guess it took a lot out of him. He blamed it on the stress at work, money problems, that sort of thing. Personally, I think it was the drugs and alcohol that made him mean.

PROSECUTOR

When was the first time you noticed this side of him? This violent side of him.

WOMAN

Shortly after our son was born. He started in by saying, that I was spending too much time with the baby, and he needed me too. Well, one night, I was in the living room, breast feeding my son, when-

(Starts to cry)

PROSECUTOR

I know this is hard for you. But, it is important that you tell us what happened. Would like a glass of water, maybe?

(WOMAN shakes her head "no")

You want to take a little break?

WOMAN

(Tries to collect herself)

No. I'm fine.

PROSECUTOR

Are you sure?

(WOMAN nods her head "yes")

All right. Whenever you need a break, you let me know, okay?

(WOMAN nods her head "yes". Wiping her eyes)

Now, take a few breaths, and tell us what happened.

WOMAN

(Still in tears)

I was sitting on the couch, breast-feeding . . . He came home, I knew he was drinking too, I could smell it as soon as he walked in the door. Then, I heard him trip over something. It sounded like he fell down.

PROSECUTOR

Was he saying anything at that point?

WOMAN

Just cursing. I couldn't exactly make out what it was. It just sounded like he had tripped over something and was cursing. He started calling for me, and I kept saying, "I'm in the living room—I'm in the living room" But that wasn't good enough for him I guess. So, he ran into the room, took one look at me and just snapped. He looked so different. Like a completely different person. I didn't recognize him. His eyes seemed like they were bulging out of the sockets. Like a wild animal.

(Becoming very emotional now)

Then he said . . . and I'll always remember this . . . He said, "Is that all you do is feed that fucking kid? If I knew you were going to spend this much time with him, I would have had you get an abortion." I didn't know how to react to that. He never talked that way before. I couldn't believe I heard it. It was like it was him, but someone else. And before I could say anything, he slapped my baby off my chest and on to the floor

(Breaking down)

WOMAN cont.

He was crying so hard. I kneeled down to pick him up, and that's when he grabbed me by the hair and dragged me on across the room and in to the kitchen. He started screaming at me, "You lazy cunt" "You no-good lousy whore" And then, he just started hitting me. Swinging his arms like this

(Demonstrates)

I was on my back and I could see out of the corner of my eye, into the living room, my baby on the floor. He was bleeding . . . and crying so hard. I wanted to go to him, but I couldn't move . . . And then . . . he, lifted up my dress, and with one pull, my panties were ripped off me. It happened so fast. Then he . . . he began to rape me.

(Breaks down harder)

He just kept hitting me. And raping me. Over and over. He wouldn't stop!

(Breaks down even harder)

Oh my God. I can't. I can't do this. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

(She breaks down as the lights fade to black)

ACT I
Scene Four

(The lights rise, SOCIAL WORKER U.L.)

SOCIAL WORKER

(Into phone)

No. He's supposed to call me back . . . I don't know yet. He's checking with the head mechanic or somebody to see what he can do . . . You know, I have really had it with these people. I don't understand why we even take it there in the first place . . . Well, I think we'd be a lot better off. A lot less hassles, I can tell you that . . . Hold on, I think that's him. I'll call you back. Bye.

(Clicks her phone then talks)

Hello? . . . Yes, yes, yes, this is her.

(Looks at her watch)

Listen, I can't be bothered with this right now. I just want my car back. Today . . . Look, I'm running late for a meeting and- . . . No I will not pay extra for it. You promised me the free oil change when I brought it in last week . . . Yes you did. That was our agreement . . .

WOMAN

(Enters from U.R. Her hair is long now. She sees SOCIAL WORKER and rushes towards her)

Oh, great. I found you. I've been trying to reach you, but . . .

SOCIAL WORKER

(Raising her hand as to say "hold on")

Well, look, I- . . . I- . . . No . . . No . . . I can't do that . . . You were supposed to have the brakes done yesterday. And now you're telling me that they won't be done until tomorrow or maybe the next . . . So, what am I supposed to do in the mean time? . . .

WOMAN

. . . Please. I need to speak with you. It's important.

SOCIAL WORKER

(Into phone)

Can you hold on for just a second.

(To WOMAN)

Do you mind? You're being very rude.

WOMAN

Yes. But, I really need to talk to you.

SOCIAL WORKER

I will be done in just a minute.

WOMAN

But my son. He's in dang- . . .

SOCIAL WORKER

. . . Please.

(WOMAN turns away and waits. SOCIAL WORKER back into phone, forgetting she is not alone)

Okay, I'm back . . . No. It was nobody. Not important. What I want to know is, when will my car be ready? . . . You people have really put me in a bind here you know that? How am I supposed to- . . . Oh., so it's all my fault now? . . . You know, you guys do this crap to me all the time. I'm sick of it! So, here's what I'm going to do. I'm coming down there tonight to pick up the car, with my husband, who happens to be an attorney by the way. So, it had better be spit-shining clean and ready to go or you will have one hell of a law suit on your hands! Do you understand me?

(Quickly closes her phone)

Ahhhhh!

WOMAN

(Approaches SOCIAL WORKER again)

Please. You have to help me. I've been calling your office for three days now, and you haven't returned my calls.

SOCIAL WORKER

Yes, I know.

WOMAN

Well, can you help me?

SOCIAL WORKER

How? You don't have a case. I've told you that before, but you don't want to listen to me. Now look, I have a . . .

WOMAN

(Begging)

Please! My husband is going to kill me and my son. I know it. I just need some help.

SOCIAL WORKER

Why don't you go home, and cook a nice dinner for him. Just try being nice.

WOMAN

Be nice? How could you say such a thing? What do you think I have been doing? Oh my God! I don't believe this. I have been nice. I have cooked him dinners. Then he beats me because I didn't do it right. Isn't there something you can do?

(Tearing up)

My son. He's only nine.

SOCIAL WORKER

I'm sure your son will be just fine. I talked to him remember?

WOMAN

He's going to kill us. I know it. You have to do something!

SOCIAL WORKER

What? . . .

WOMAN

I don't know. Anything. Have him arrested.

SOCIAL WORKER

I can't just have someone arrested based on hearsay.

WOMAN

But it's not hearsay. I showed you my scars. You've seen his record. You know what he's capable of.

SOCIAL WORKER

No, I don't know what he's capable of.

WOMAN

Yes you do!

SOCIAL WORKER

You never give up do you? We've been over this and over this, and it's always the same answer. I shouldn't have to, but I'm going to say it again. Please listen to me this time . . . I don't believe you. I think you are a troubled young lady who is simply desperate for attention. I have real cases to follow up on, I can't be bogged down with hearsay and over-reactions. Now please, go home and let me get to my meeting.

(Looks at her watch)

Now I'm late. Thank you.

WOMAN

(Breaking down)

No! No! This can't be happening. How can you be so callous? I come to you for help and you treat me like a total fool. My son's life is in danger and you tell me to cook a fucking dinner! I don't understand you at all.

SOCIAL WORKER

All right. If your going to use that kind of language to me, then this conversation is now over.

(Begins to walk away)

WOMAN

(Grabbing SOCIAL WORKER by the sleeve.
Desperate.)

Please. He's going to kill us.

SOCIAL WORKER

Let go of me.

WOMAN

(Letting go)

What do I have to do to convince you? Why don't you believe me?

SOCIAL WORKER

I'm sorry. But, there's really nothing I can do for you. If you feel that strongly about this, why don't you go to the police and file a complaint?

WOMAN

(Still in tears)

I did.

SOCIAL WORKER

And . . . ?

WOMAN

They said unless they catch him in the act, there is nothing they can do.

SOCIAL WORKER

Do you have anybody you can stay with for a while? A friend or a parent perhaps?

WOMAN

No. My parents are dead.

SOCIAL WORKER

You don't have any friends?

WOMAN

No. That's just it. He doesn't allow me to have friends. Please. I know there is something you can do. A restraining order. Anything. Please. I wouldn't be asking you for anything if it wasn't this important. I'm desperate. My son's life is in danger.

SOCIAL WORKER

I'm sorry. But, unless you can present me with some hard facts that you or your son's life is in danger, there is really nothing I can do for you. Now if you'll excuse me, I do have a meeting to get to.

(Starts to walk away)

WOMAN

Fuck you! I hope you rot in hell.

(Runs off crying)

SOCIAL WORKER

(Chasing after her)

Sewer mouth! No wonder nobody wants to help you!

(Sighs, then opens her phone and dials)

I'm sorry, but a crazy woman just held me up . . . No, no, nothing like that. I'm fine. She was just a little out of control, that's all. It's the nature of the job I guess . . . Oh good. I have a few more minutes then. Should I pick up some bagels or donuts or something? . . . Fifteen? . . . No problem. I'm on my way.

(Closes her phone and exits)

Blackout

ACT I
Scene Five

(Lights rise. MAN and WOMAN are back to where they left off in ACT I scene one. MAN is at the wall zipping up his pants and WOMAN is seated in chair R.C.)

MAN
Ahhhh, goddamn, that felt good. I've been holding that piss since before I got released.

WOMAN
You mean escaped.

MAN
(Stares at her for a moment)
Whatever.
(Crossing to chair from R., sets it across from WOMAN. Sits.)
So . . . Tell me about this new man of yours. This guy you're gonna marry . . . Who is he?

WOMAN
. . . Just a guy I met.

MAN
Yeah? . . . When'd you meet him?

WOMAN
Last year.

MAN
You're lying.

WOMAN
Why is it every time I say something you think I'm lying? I'm telling you the truth.

MAN

You're not! You were bangin' this guy behind my back, weren't you?

WOMAN

No.

MAN

Stop lying to me!

WOMAN

I am telling you the truth.

MAN

Do I have to get up and hit you again? Is this what I have to do to get you to start telling me the truth? Huh? Haven't you had enough already today? Jesus Christ. You have to be the stupidest damn person on earth, ya know that. When are you ever gonna fucking learn?

(Rises)

WOMAN

All right, all right!

(He re-sits)

We were seeing each other, but not the way you think.

MAN

What other way is there? You're seeing someone, then you're fucking someone. That's just the way it is.

WOMAN

Do you always have to be so crude about everything? My God! He was trying to get me back in school, so I could finish my degree. That's all.

MAN

You were fucking him, weren't you?

WOMAN

No.

MAN

Hmm-hmm- What I thought. You were fucking him . . . So, who is this guy anyway?

WOMAN

I told you . . . Just a guy.

MAN

Yeah, but, who is he? . . . He's that principal aint he? That guy who used to call all the time. Trying to get you to go to all those PTA meetings . . . It's him, ain't it?

WOMAN

So. What if it is?

MAN

(Rises)

I knew it! You were cheating on me.

WOMAN

I wasn't cheating on you.

MAN

What do you call it then, huh? What do you call it when your wife is banging some guy behind your back? What do you call that?

WOMAN

I wasn't banging him!

MAN

Oh bullshit. You think I didn't know what was going on? Always fixing your hair, putting on make-up, getting new clothes. I knew what you were up to.

WOMAN

I was wearing them for you!

MAN

For me?

WOMAN

So, you would notice me.

MAN

What the hell are you talking about? How could I not notice you? We lived in the same house together, you idiot. We slept in the same bed every night. It was kinda hard not to notice you.

WOMAN

I was talking about you taking an interest in me . . . Like you did when we were dating.

MAN

Oh, cut the crap will ya? It's different when you're married. You know that. You have responsibilities. You don't have time for all that nonsense anymore.

WOMAN

It still would have been nice, that's all.

MAN

See? Right there! That's just what I have been talking about. It was always about you, you, you! Never about me. You never gave a damn about my needs. What I wanted. As long as you were happy, then the whole world was happy. Well, it don't work that way honey. You sometimes have to make sacrifices.

WOMAN

I made plenty of sacrifices, believe me.

MAN

You have no idea what sacrifices are. I changed my entire life around for you, and never once, thought about me . . . You don't know how good you had it sweetheart. You're a selfish little whore!

(Sits, pause)

MAN cont.

So, this new guy of yours. This principal. He have a lot of money? . . . Nah, being a principal, he probably doesn't. You should have went after a millionaire, at least it would have been worth it.

WOMAN

I wouldn't know.

MAN

Aren't there rules against that sort of thing? Ain't there a rule against teachers bangin' their principals?

WOMAN

I imagine there is, yes. But, he's moving in the chancellor's office soon, so it won't be a problem.

MAN

But, it's a problem now though, isn't it?

(Stares her down, then rises)

Was he the one you were talking to when I came in?

WOMAN

(Softly)

Yes.

MAN

Yeah? So, what were you two talking about?

WOMAN

Just some wedding plans . . . you know.

MAN

What I could tell of the conversation, he didn't seem all that enthusiastic about the whole thing. Sounded more like he couldn't wait to get off the damn phone.

WOMAN

He was just tired. He's been working a lot of hours lately.

MAN

Hmm-hmm . . . I'm curious . . . You think he loves you, as much as you love him?

WOMAN

I know he does.

MAN

Is that what you believe, or is that what you want to believe?

WOMAN

It's not only what I believe; it's what I know.

MAN

Really?

WOMAN

Yes. Really.

MAN

Yeah? So, when's the big day?

(She says nothing)

You pick a date?

WOMAN

(Softly)

August.

MAN

What was that? Did you say, August? . . . Yeah? . . . August what?

(She says nothing)

Can't think of it can you? . . . Yeah, I know, it's hard trying to picture a calendar in your head, isn't it? You got all those days and numbers swirling around up there. What day goes to what number. What number goes to what day. It can get confusing. And then if it's a leap year, well, then you're really fucked.

(Pause)

MAN cont.

You don't have a date, do you?

(WOMAN starts to cry, MAN crosses in to her)

You don't have a date, because there is no date! There is no wedding.

WOMAN

There is.

MAN

Stop fucking lying!

WOMAN

(In tears)

Why are you doing this to me?

MAN

Because I want you to tell the truth!

WOMAN

I am telling you the truth. What more do you want?

MAN

I want to know why you lied! Why you cheated on me? Why you told the cops all that shit about me. Everything! You know I didn't kill our son. You know it!

WOMAN

You might as well have.

MAN

What happened that day anyway? How did the lights go out? I wasn't anywhere near that damn fuse box . . . You were though. Weren't you? . . . Weren't you? If I didn't know better, I'd bet it was you that turned off those lights. You killed our son!

WOMAN

No! No! That's not true! Stop saying that.

MAN

Why? Because it's true? . . . You did it, didn't you?

WOMAN

No!

MAN

Why all the lies then? Why all that shit to the cops, and the lawyers. Why say all that shit if it wasn't true?

(Coming to a realization)

Wait a minute . . . Now it's coming in. Now I get it. Christ! I can't believe it. I can't believe I didn't see this before. Now it makes sense . . . You and him were in on this together . . . Yes. That's it! You two plotted this whole thing together. To destroy me!

WOMAN

What? No. You did this. You destroyed your own life.

MAN

I should have seen it coming. It was right there in front of me and I missed it. I knew something was up somewhere, but I just didn't know what. Damn! I am such a fool . . . How long were you two planning this, this little scheme anyway, huh? What were you going to get out of it? You kill your son, send your husband to jail and you walk away with what?

WOMAN

What are you talking about? Nobody was planning anything. Jesus. Where is all this coming from? I wasn't cheating on you. There was no scheme! There was no plot! And, nobody is out to get you! My God! You go from one thing to the next. I can't keep up with you. It was you! You did this to yourself. Nobody fucking lied!

MAN

Yes you did! All of you did. You. Your boyfriend. The lawyers. Everybody! You all lied!

WOMAN

No they didn't! You're not making any sense. You're rambling.

MAN

No, no. I'm making perfect sense. It's all starting to come together. All the evidence is coming in to place . . . If you wanted just to leave me for this guy, you shouldda just done it. Saved us both a whole lot of trouble.

WOMAN

What? Then have you come after me and kill me? No thanks. I only took your abuse for the sake our son. And, that's the only reason.

MAN

You never got any abuse from me and you know it. If anybody got any abuse at all, it was me. All the shit you put me through. All the misery. And yet, you blame me. . . Typical. Always blaming someone else for your problems, aren't you? Oh, no. It's never your fault. You couldn't do anything like that. You're too pure, and innocent . . . You're a real piece of work you know that?

WOMAN

Fuck you.

MAN

No, no. Fuck you! . . . Fuck you!

(Pause, sits)

Now . . . Why don't you go ahead and start telling me what really happened. Starting from the time you went back upstairs.

WOMAN

What's there to tell? You told me to leave the room, so I did. And when I came back down, he was lying on the floor dead. What more is there?

MAN

(Rises)

Well, you see . . . Right there. Right there, is where shit starts getting all fucked up. You leave the room, the lights go out, and he suddenly gets his head bashed in. No. No. There's a whole lot more to this story that you're not telling me here. And that's why I'm came back. That's why I'm here. To get it all straightened out.

WOMAN

I heard you. I saw what you did.

MAN

Yeah? What did you hear, huh? . . . What did you see?

WOMAN

You said you wanted to kill him. I heard you. I was standing right there, and you said it!

MAN

So what? I was angry. I said a lot of things. People say things like that all the time. Nobody really means it.

WOMAN

It was the way you said it.

MAN

The way I said it? . . . He insulted me! I had to teach him a lesson. How to respect me. I'm his father for Christ's sake! Kids have to learn to respect their parents. My father taught me how to respect him, and in-turn, I taught him to respect me.

WOMAN

Yeah, you really taught him all right, didn't you? . . . You killed him!

MAN

Fuck you! I never killed anybody, and you know it! I shouldda killed you. That's what I shouldda done. You never saw me kill him and you know it. You saw nothing!

WOMAN

When I came back in the room, he was on the floor, blood was everywhere. What was I supposed to think? They asked me what happened and I told them. What else could I say?

MAN

The truth!

WOMAN

I did.

MAN

You didn't! You have no idea what the truth is . . . You killed him. You killed our son.

WOMAN

What? . . . You're crazy!

MAN

Am I?

WOMAN

Yes. You are!

MAN

Explain to me then, why you leave the room, and the lights go out? Then they come back on, and all of a sudden, there you are. Why was that? Explain to me how that couldda happened.

WOMAN

What lights? What are you talking about? Why do you keep saying that? The lights never went out.

MAN

The hell they didn't!

WOMAN

The lights didn't go out. You just blacked out! Like you always do. That way, you don't have to remember what you did to us. Just another way of escaping any responsibility.

MAN

Oh, no. They went out, all right. They went out! . . . Funny aint it? Right before you came in, they came back on. Don't you find that funny? . . . I do. The fuse box was right there by the stairs. You could have easily flipped the switch, killed him, then run back up and turn them on again.

WOMAN

(Bewildered)

I-I . . .

MAN

Yeah. Uh huh. The evidence just keeps on mounting, don't it? Fucking lawyers. Fucking investigators. They spent months on this case and never found shit. I spend ten minutes with you and find out all kinds of things. Maybe I should have defended myself. Then the real criminal would be behind bars, instead of me.

WOMAN

Oh my God. You're unbelievable. Is there any fact you don't twist?

MAN

You're the one twisting the facts, honey. Not me. I ain't twisting shit. He never had a chance with you as his mother. Look at why he was so dumb in school. It was your fault why he had to be held back, ya know. All that crap you put in his head. That's why he couldn't learn. You and that crazy old bat, mother of yours . . . What? You think I don't know what you two were doing to him? The things you were saying to him? I know everything

MAN cont.

honey. I used to hear all that bullshit you and her would say to him. All the shit you used to say about me. (Sits) You didn't know it, but I would listen in from the other room. I heard every damn word.

WOMAN

Okay, so what. You heard what we said. It was all true . . . "Every damn word"

MAN

(Glares in her eyes, deathly serious)

Mock me one more goddamn time . . . And you wonder why I had to hit you so much? Why you needed to be disciplined? Don't you see how disrespectful you are to me? . . . Ah, you were always that way, though. From the time I met you. You were a spoiled little brat . . . This is all my fault really. I should have seen the signs, and dumped you right away. But, no. Here I am, the moron, thinking you would change. But, you didn't. You never will. I could beat you all day long and you would still never change.

(Pause)

I'm starving. You got anything to eat in this place?

(WOMAN shrugs her shoulders)

What the fuck is this?

(He repeats her gesture)

. . . Now, I'm going to ask you one more time.

(Slow and deliberate)

Do you have anything to eat in this place?

WOMAN

Just go in the kitchen and take what ever you want. You're going to do it anyway. So why even ask?

MAN

(Crosses in to her and pulls her up)

Come on. Lets go. You're going into the kitchen and cook me lunch.

(Pushing her out)

Now, come on, move it. I'm starving here . . . And you better not cook me any of that rabbit shit either. I want food. Real food.

(The lights fade as they exit)

ACT I
Scene Six

(Lights rise. Both chairs are placed together UR to represent a park bench SOCIAL WORKER is sitting. Into phone)

SOCIAL WORKER

Honey, I just got out of court and I think I made a huge mistake! . . . I think I might be responsible for- oh my god, I'm shaking. I can't stop shaking . . . As soon as I parked the car, it all just hit me at once.

(Starting to tear up)

Oh my god, that boy. He was so young. I should have listened to her. I should have seen the signs. I should have done something . . . I am beating myself up for this, I'm responsible! . . . Yes I am! Don't you see? I should have done something. But, I didn't . . . I don't know, anything. Something!. . . Honey can you please pick me up, I don't think I can drive right now . . . No, it'll be alright. I'll get my assistant to cover me this afternoon . . .

(Breaking down)

Oh my God, what did I do to that poor girl? She was telling the truth and I didn't believe her. This is all my fault. What am I going to do? I killed him. I killed him . . . I am trying to calm down, but I can't.

(Holding up her hand)

My hands, they won't stop shaking . . .

(Trying to compose herself)

Maybe you're right. Maybe I should take a walk or something. It might clear my head . . . No, I'll call you back in a little while . . . I promise . . . Okay . . . Bye.

(Closes phone, sits for a moment in thought, rises and exits UR)

ACT I
Scene Seven

The lights rise. Court. WOMAN is seated L.C.. against the wall. PROSECUTOR stands C.

PROSECUTOR

. . . And what did you do at that point?

WOMAN

I cried. I was so scared. I didn't want to go home, but what else could I do? I felt so helpless. You know?

PROSECUTOR

Did you ever go back to see another social worker?

WOMAN

Yes. I went three different times in fact. I was just trying to get protection for my son, you know? I just wanted someone to listen to me. Anyone that would believe me.

PROSECUTOR

And did you ever find one that did believe you?

WOMAN

Well, one did, yes. But, she said, there was really not much she could do. The law apparently was on his side.

PROSECUTOR

Do you know why they didn't want to take you serious?

WOMAN

You heard her testimony. You know what she said and what she did. She admitted it. My son is dead because of her. My son is dead because nobody wanted to take me serious.

PROSECUTOR

At some point, did you ever go to the police? File a report?

WOMAN

Yes. But, they said, unless it was an incident that had just occurred, they couldn't do anything. I knew right there, I would have to deal with this alone.

PROSECUTOR

What did you do after you left the police station? Did you go anywhere else? Like, to your parents or a friends house, to see if they could help you?

WOMAN

No. I just took my son and we went home. I remember sitting on the couch, looking through the TV guide trying to find a show that he would allow. Just to keep my son calm. He was a little nervous and confused from everything. I kept telling him over and over not to say anything to daddy on where we were, so he wouldn't get mad. He was only around nine at the time. But, I think he understood.

PROSECUTOR

When you said a TV show that he would allow . . . Are you saying he controlled what you watched on television?

WOMAN

Yes. You see, he had these rules about watching television. We were only allowed to watch the shows that he liked. If he said no to a particular show, then you had to obey his decision.

PROSECUTOR

And what would happen if you were watching another program, other than one he liked? What would happen then?

WOMAN

He would either beat us, or smash up the TV. Then we would have to go out and buy another one.

PROSECUTOR

How many new televisions did he have to buy, because he smashed them?

WOMAN

Only a few. After the last one, I never really watched television again. I just didn't want to press the issue. I felt it was safer that way.

PROSECUTOR

Did your husband have any other rules, like the rules he had for viewing television?

WOMAN

Yes. Several.

PROSECUTOR

What were some of these rules?

WOMAN

Well, for instance . . . He would get really upset if I didn't vacuum first, then dust. He said it was lazy and sloppy if I did it any other way. And would make me do the entire house over again, if I did. Also, there were to be no reading of newspapers or magazines, except for him. He felt that if I needed to know what was going on in the world, he would tell me. When I served his dinner, I was to make sure that none of the food was touching any of the other food. He broke a plate over my head once for that one.

(Touching her head)

I still have pieces of it in my head today, because of it. He had a lot of really stupid ones too. Like, no chunky peanut butter. No mustard. You could only put mayonnaise on his sandwiches and that was it. No cinnamon flavored toothpaste. No candy. You could never wear any shoes or socks in the house either. You had to be barefoot at all times. Again, except for him. No music, no liquid soap, no candles, no laughing, no talking on the telephone. It got to the point, I was afraid to even say that I liked something, because he would then put it on the rules list, and have it forbidden. It was like living in hell.

PROSECUTOR

How about any pets? Did he ever allow any animals or pets in the house?

WOMAN

No. Never.

PROSECUTOR

There was a time when you thought that wasn't the case though, right?

WOMAN

Right.

PROSECUTOR

Tell us about that.

WOMAN

Well . . . It was right after he had lost his first job. He was rather depressed and was beating me quite regularly by then. So, I wanted to give him something. You know? Hoping it would put him in a better mood. He was always talking about how dogs were a mans' best friend, and that they were more loyal than a woman ever could be. Stuff like that. So, I thought, maybe if he had a dog, a best friend of some kind, then he wouldn't need to hit me so much. I know. It's silly, but that's how I felt at the time. So, I went out and brought him home a puppy.

PROSECUTOR

Where did you get the puppy from?

WOMAN

My mother's friend. Her dog had just given birth to a rather large litter and she was trying to get rid of them. It was an old farm way out in the country and I didn't know how to get there. So, my mother picked me up and drove me to the house. I'm glad she did too, because I would have never found the place. Anyway, we get there, and the lady said she had only one puppy left, and somebody else had already claimed it. So, as we were going back to the car to leave, the man who was to claim

WOMAN cont.

the puppy pulled up and said that he changed his mind. Which meant that we could have the last puppy.

PROSECUTOR

What happened when you brought the puppy home?

WOMAN

Well, my mother had just dropped me off, and I went . . .

PROSECUTOR

. . . She didn't come inside with you?

WOMAN

No. She just pulled into the driveway and dropped me off. She said she didn't want to come in for some reason. Maybe it was a premonition or something, I don't know, but she just dropped me off and left.

PROSECUTOR

Was your husband home at the time?

WOMAN

No. He was out.

PROSECUTOR

So, what did you do with the puppy while you were waiting for your husband to return?

WOMAN

I found an old cardboard box and put a towel in it. Then I went and got a bowl with some water, and I was just holding the puppy and playing with it.

PROSECUTOR

Where was your son at this time?

WOMAN

He was at school.

PROSECUTOR

And what happened when your husband came home? Did you give him the puppy right away, or . . . ?

WOMAN

Well, I wanted to hold off a bit and kind of surprise him. You know? But, for some reason he came in through the back, so I couldn't.

PROSECUTOR

Where were you? What part of the house were you in?

WOMAN

The kitchen.

PROSECUTOR

So, he came in . . . what happened next?

WOMAN

He seen me holding the puppy and immediately started yelling at me. Calling me irresponsible and selfish for getting a dog when he was out of work. I told him that I didn't pay for it and it was a gift for him. I thought he would come around, ya know. See it as a nice gesture, or something. But, he didn't.

(Starting to tear up)

Then he . . . he yanked the puppy out of my arms, threw it on the floor and started stomping on his head. He had these big heavy boots on, and he just kept stomping on it. Blood was everywhere. All over the floor and the cabinets. It was the most horrible thing I have ever seen in my life.

PROSECUTOR

What were you doing, while this was going on?

WOMAN

I was just crying and screaming at him. "Stop" "Stop" "What are you doing?" "Stop it" But, he wouldn't. He just kept stomping on that little puppy's head. Over and over and over. I thought he would never stop . . . He was making this growling noise too. Evil like. Like a wild

WOMAN cont.

animal.

(Wiping her eyes)

Then after,

(Blows her nose)

after he was finally through, he . . . he told me that I had to clean it up.

PROSECUTOR

And, did you?

WOMAN

No. I tried, but I couldn't. There was so much blood. I became sick to my stomach and ran out to the side of the house as fast as I could, and vomited. Then, I just fell to the ground and cried. I couldn't believe he would do that . . . That was so mean.

PROSECUTOR

Who finally cleaned up the mess then?

WOMAN

He did. Then he came over to me. I was still out side crying. And he started yelling at me again. Calling me weak and pitiful and that I should learn to toughen up.

(Tears become very heavy now)

I don't have it in me! I can't do things like that! . . . Why would someone do something like that? Why?

(Cries for a moment)

Oh God! Oh my God!

(Lights fade as she cries.)

END OF ACT I

ACT II
Scene One

(The lights rise. Court. MAN is seated L.C. and is handcuffed. PROSECUTOR stands C.)

MAN

. . . It was a spider! I stepped on a lousy spider. That's all.

PROSECUTOR

Why would she say you stomped on a puppy? Why would she make that up?

MAN

I don't know. She's crazy. She's always telling lies like that. Maybe she just wants attention, who knows.

PROSECUTOR

Did you order her, to clean up the all the blood, after you killed the, what you claim was a spider?

MAN

First of all, there really wasn't that much of a mess. I mean it was just a spider. How big a mess could a little spider possibly make anyway? And second, I didn't order her, I just asked her?

PROSECUTOR

Why would you ask her? You stepped on it. Why wouldn't you clean it up?

MAN

Because, I was trying to teach her to get over this thing she had with bugs. You see, she thinks that if you kill a spider, it's like, bad-luck or something. She was always like that with insects. Personally, I don't care if it's bad-luck or not. I don't want em in my house. So, I killed it.

PROSECUTOR

Do you remember calling her weak and pitiful, because she couldn't clean up all the blood?

MAN

What? No. What are you talking about? Listen. I don't know where she got this story from, but, she's always making things up like that. I did not kill no damn puppy.

PROSECUTOR

She claims you did.

MAN

So. Just because somebody says you did something, doesn't mean that you did. Look. Ever since we were married, she has done this. Making things up. I don't know why I put up with it for so long.

PROSECUTOR

Was she making it up when you hit her with a baseball bat?

MAN

I was just practicing my swing, that's all. Hey, how was I supposed to know she was behind me? I just swung the bat, and accidentally hit her. That's all that happened.

PROSECUTOR

When you noticed she was struck by the bat and had fallen down the stairs . . . Were you concerned at all about her well-being?

MAN

Well, of course I was concerned. She was my wife. I'm the one who called the ambulance, ya know.

PROSECUTOR

When your wife was in the hospital, receiving treatment for her injuries, what did you tell the doctors as to what happened?

MAN

Just what I told you. Exactly what did happen. I didn't see her behind me, she got accidentally hit with the bat and fell down the stairs.

PROSECUTOR

Well, your wife claims that you never play any sports. That you own no equipment. That you only watch sports on television.

MAN

Again. She's lying.

PROSECUTOR

Is she?

MAN

Yes. She is.

PROSECUTOR

Where is the bat now?

MAN

I had to throw it away.

PROSECUTOR

Why did you throw it away?

MAN

It split in half.

PROSECUTOR

Was that because you hit your wife so hard with it that it split in two?

(She looks to her immediate left, then looks U.L.)

I'll rephrase the question your honor . . . How did the bat "split in half"?

MAN

I don't remember. It was just old. Ya know? I mean, nothing lasts forever, right? And, if she told you I broke the bat when I hit her, then that is an out and out lie!

PROSECUTOR

How about your violent behavior? Is she lying about that as well? Is she making it up regarding all the times you physically abused her, and your son?

MAN

She abuses me. What are you kidding? She's the one who's violent. Not me.

PROSECUTOR

She abuses you?

MAN

All the time. She's even a lesbian. Just look at her.
(Pointing)
She even cut her hair like one. All lesbians are violent.

PROSECUTOR

What makes you think all lesbians are violent?

MAN

I don't know. I just read it somewhere. That's what they say anyway.

PROSECUTOR

Do you really think your wife is a lesbian?

MAN

She told me she was. That's why she wanted to leave me. She said she hated men.

PROSECUTOR

And because of this, she was violent with you? Is that what your telling us?

MAN

Yes.

PROSECUTOR

Do you have any proof, that your wife was ever violent with you?

MAN

Well, I don't have any proof-proof . . . But she was violent.

PROSECUTOR

Was she ever violent with your son?

MAN

All the time. He had to be held back a couple of grades because of her hitting him so much. He couldn't learn because of her. I think she caused him brain damage or something.

PROSECUTOR

You were held back in school too, were you not?

MAN

Once. I had to do the second grade over.

PROSECUTOR

What was the highest grade that you completed?

MAN

I dropped out in the tenth.

PROSECUTOR

Hmm-hmm . . . So, how was your wife violent with you?

MAN

She would throw things at me. Call me names. Threaten to leave me for other women. Hit me. Stuff like that.

PROSECUTOR

Did you ever hit her back?

MAN

Only when I had to.

PROSECUTOR

When you had to?

MAN

Yeah. To defend myself.

PROSECUTOR

Was your wife ever arrested for any physical abuse to either you or your son?

MAN

Well, she was never arrested or anything, but, she was ab-
. . .

PROSECUTOR

. . . You have though, haven't you? In fact, you've been arrested more than once for domestic violence, haven't you?

MAN

Look. I may have been arrested for it. But it doesn't mean that I did it.

PROSECUTOR

But, you were convicted though? You had to serve time in jail for it, isn't that correct?

MAN

Well, Yes and no. Maybe you should check your records there, councilor. All the charges were dropped. Besides, it's not what you think anyway. They were all accidents.

PROSECUTOR

What were accidents? The fact you beat up your wife in your front yard, for all the neighbors to see? The fact you emptied an entire can of Raid in her face, waiting in line at the supermarket? Those were just accidents?

MAN

Hey, look. All the charges were dropped. Okay? So, let it go!

PROSECUTOR

They were only dropped because you threatened to kill her if she didn't drop them.

(MAN starts to rise, stops, re-sits)

What? . . . Well, go on . . . Take your shot . . . Show the world how tough you really are.

(MAN is visibly fuming, she peers into his eyes)

. . . No? . . . No guts?

(Staring him down, after a moment, MAN moves his eyes away)

Well, maybe you'd like to answer my question then?

MAN

(Still fuming, very deliberate)

No! I've-never-threatened-her.

PROSECUTOR

No?

(Stares him down again)

. . . We'll get back to that.

(Pause, shuffles through her notes)

How about siblings? Do you have any brothers or sisters?

MAN

Yes. I had an older brother and a sister, but she died when I was about five.

PROSECUTOR

How old was your sister when she died?

MAN

I don't know, I think like, twelve maybe. Something like that. Yeah, twelve.

PROSECUTOR

What happened? How did she die? Do you remember?

MAN

Uh . . . She fell.

PROSECUTOR

She fell?

MAN

Yeah.

PROSECUTOR

Do you know how she fell?

MAN

She fell down the stairs.

PROSECUTOR

How did she fall down the stairs? Did she trip over something? Was she pushed?

MAN

I don't know. She just fell. That's all I know. She fell.

PROSECUTOR

How about your brother? You said he was older than you. How much older was he to you?

MAN

He was out of the house before I was born, so, I . . . I never really knew him.

PROSECUTOR

What was your childhood like? Describe what it was like growing up in your home? For instance . . . Did you get along with your parents?

MAN

Yeah . . . I guess so. About normal, I guess.

PROSECUTOR

Were they strict with you at all?

MAN

The old man was.

PROSECUTOR

How about your mother? Was she strict as well?

MAN

She was kinda quiet, ya know. She hardly ever said anything.

PROSECUTOR

Were you close to your mother?

MAN

Hmm. I don't know . . . Yeah, I'd say we were kinda close, I guess.

PROSECUTOR

How about your father? Were you close to him?

MAN

Well, he wasn't that kind of a guy, ya know. He was tough. He was the breadwinner. He demanded a lot of respect. I did what I had to do to keep off his bad side. Ya know what I mean?

PROSECUTOR

Are your parents still alive?

MAN

My mother is. The old man died about ten years ago.

PROSECUTOR

How did your father die?

MAN

Cancer, I think. Something to do with his liver.

PROSECUTOR

Did he drink a lot? . . . Alcohol?

MAN

Oh yeah . . . Hell, my old man could put em down until he went blind, then still drive ten miles to get another six-pack. He was a real mans-man, ya know.

PROSECUTOR

Do you think his heavy drinking might have contributed to his death?

MAN

How would I know? I'm not a doctor.

PROSECUTOR

Was he a violent man? Did he ever hit anyone in your family?

MAN

I don't know . . . maybe. I don't really know.

PROSECUTOR

Did he ever hit you?

MAN

No more than any other parent, I guess. Hey, I was a wild kid. What can I say?

PROSECUTOR

He hit you a lot, didn't he?

MAN

I don't know . . . it was a long time ago, all right. I don't care what happened anymore. It's over.

PROSECUTOR

Did he ever hit your sister?

MAN

I don't know, I don't remember.

PROSECUTOR

On the day your sister fell down the stairs . . . Did you see her fall?

(MAN shakes his head "yes")

Sir, you have to answer aloud.

MAN

Yes!

PROSECUTOR

Your father pushed her down the stairs didn't he?

MAN

No.

PROSECUTOR

Didn't he?

MAN

No!

PROSECUTOR

How did she fall then?

MAN

I-don't-know.

PROSECUTOR

But you did see her fall though, correct?

MAN

Yes. I seen her fall. But, I don't know how she fell. She just fell.

PROSECUTOR

Sir, I believe you do know how she fell. She fell, because your father pushed her, didn't he?

MAN

No.

PROSECUTOR

If your father didn't push her down the stairs, who did? . . . You?

MAN

Okay, okay. Jesus. Yes. The old man pushed her down the stairs. All right? I don't know why he did it. He just did it.

PROSECUTOR

Was he arrested for it?

MAN

I don't know . . . I think so. But, he never spent any real time for it, I know that. I think the charges were dropped or something. Something about, not enough evidence.

PROSECUTOR

Sort of like what happened with you?

MAN

(Surprised at that. Glares at her for a moment)
Yeah. Something like that.

PROSECUTOR

(Looking through her notes)
I'd like to go back for a moment to when your son was killed. Now, I want you to tell us, from the beginning, everything that transpired on that day.

MAN

Well, I had just finished doing a double shift. As I was pulling up to the house, I could see the lawn wasn't mowed properly.

(Lights stating to fade)

So, I parked the truck, inspected the yard then went inside. I came in through the back door, where the kitchen is and saw my wife was cooking dinner and . . .

(Blackout)

ACT II
Scene Two

(Lights rise. Boy is pacing along the L. wall. He has a baseball glove on one hand and tosses a ball up in the air, catching it with the glove. After a moment, we hear voices off stage.)

MAN

(Sound of a door opening then shut)

Hi sweetheart.

WOMAN

Ah. Don't touch me. It's too hot, and you're all sweaty. You're disgusting.

MAN

Oh, come on, I just want to give you a kiss.

WOMAN

What the hell's the matter with you? It's ninety-plus degrees outside, and you want to kiss. Jesus.

MAN

I'm sorry.

WOMAN

You're always sorry.

MAN

Where is he? I want to talk to him about the lawn.

WOMAN

Oh god! Not that damn lawn again. What's wrong with it this time?

MAN

He missed some spots.

WOMAN

Oh Christ! You're never satisfied with that stupid lawn. Who gives a shit?

MAN

I do. I just want to the lawn to look good. And he has to learn to be responsible.

WOMAN

Oh, screw responsible. Maybe if you weren't so stupid, you might be able to get a real job and we could pay someone to mow the fucking lawn.

MAN

Well, we don't have that . . . So, where is he?

WOMAN

The little bastard is downstairs where he always is. He's like a hermit that damn kid.

MAN

Well, maybe he doesn't want to be around you.

WOMAN

Don't start with me please. I'm in no mood for any of your shit today. If it's really that damn important to you, go down there and tell that no-good little prick to mow the lawn again. Jesus. You are such a pain in the ass with that stupid lawn. Just do whatever you want and leave me out of it, okay?

MAN

Can you be nice for just once in you're life?

WOMAN

Go fuck yourself!

MAN

You're amazing, ya know that?

WOMAN

Drop dead.

MAN

(Sounds of footsteps down stairs. MAN enters. He is in jeans and t-shirt, and an orange construction vest)

Son? Come over here a minute, I want to talk to you.

(BOY doesn't respond. He keeps squeaking his sneakers against the floor. MAN calmly walks over to him.)

Son? I'm speaking to you.

BOY

Go away.

MAN

Damn-it son. I'm your father. You don't speak to me that way.

BOY

Why not? Mom does.

MAN

Well, that's your mother, that's not you.
(Crosses and sits C.)

BOY

What do you want?

MAN

Well, I'm a little upset with you. I want to know why you didn't mow the lawn the way I showed you.

BOY

Hey! I mowed it the best I could all right. If that's not good enough for you, then too bad. Mow it yourself from now on.

MAN

That's not the point. The point is, this is your responsibility. You are responsible for mowing the lawn. I work twelve hours a day, your mother takes care of the house and the only thing we ask of you is to mow the lawn.

BOY

What's wrong with the way I mowed it. It looks fine to me.

MAN

Well, for starters, you missed a lot of spots.

(Boy is still pacing, slapping the ball into his glove hard)

Look! Will you stop that and pay attention to me please. I'm trying to talk to you.

(BOY stops and turns to MAN)

Thank you . . . Now, did you mow it the way I showed you?

BOY

Yes.

MAN

Then why did you miss so many spots?

BOY

It's the mower. It doesn't work.

MAN

Oh, come on now. That mower works just fine.

BOY

No it doesn't!

MAN

What's wrong with it then?

BOY

I don't know.

MAN

Then how do you know it doesn't work?

BOY

It sucks!

MAN

Stop talking like that.

BOY

I'll talk anyway, I want.

(Crosses to D.L. corner and sits)

MAN

Look son. I'm just trying to teach you how to do things right. To be responsible.

BOY

I am responsible.

MAN

No. No son, you're not. Are you having trouble in school again? Maybe I can help you.

BOY

What do you know? You're an idiot! (WOMAN enters)

MAN

(Rises)

Listen! I am tired of the way you talk to me. You are going to learn to respect me weather you like it or not. Is that understood?

WOMAN

Oh God! First, it's that goddamn lawn and now it's respect. What, are you kidding me? Get over yourself all ready. Jesus.

MAN

Excuse me, but I happen to be talking to our son right now. Do you mind?

WOMAN

I am sick and tired of you going on and on about the stupidest things. You're giving me a headache.

MAN

Just let me talk to our son please . . . Alone.

WOMAN

Fine, do whatever you want. Just get it out of your system once and for all. Dinner is almost ready.

(She exits, MAN crossing to BOY)

BOY

Leave me alone!

MAN

Okay! That's it! Now I want you to go over there and sit in that chair.

(Boy doesn't move)

Come on! Lets go . . . Now.

(Boy reluctantly gets up and sits in chair)

I'm going to go over this one more time with you. I want you to watch me. It's important that you mow the lawn the right way so it grows evenly and looks nice. You want it to look nice don't you? Nobody wants to live in a place that looks bad, do they?

BOY

I do.

MAN

No you don't. You're just saying that. Now look at me. Watch what I do. This is how it is done.

(Demonstrates)

You mow, in a straight line, all the way up, then all the way down. Then you go to the next lane. Up, then down. Up then down. That's all you have to do. It's simple.

MAN cont.

You just have to keep your mind focused on what your doing. But with you, it's like you just don't care.

BOY

That's because I don't care!

MAN

Damn-it son! Why are you like this to me? Why do you treat me this way? You know, if I did that to my father he would have thrown me against the wall and beat the pants off of me. You don't see me doing that to you, now do you? . . . Do you?

BOY

No.

MAN

Exactly. You know, I work very hard for you and your mother. We don't have a lot of money so we all have to pitch in and carry our share of the load here.

(Crosses to him, puts his hands on BOY'S shoulders. BOY relaxes his attitude a bit.)

I know it's hard for you and all. You being held back in school and all that. You don't have many friends . . . Hey, I was held back in school too you know. I've never had any friends, and I turned out all right

(BOY looks up at him)

Now look, after dinner we will both go outside and take turns mowing, until you get it right, okay?

BOY

Okay.

MAN

Okay. That's a start anyway. Now stay here, I gotta go to the bathroom and when I get back, we'll go up stairs and eat. All right?

BOY

Whatever.

MAN

(Takes a couple steps D.S. and suddenly the lights go out.)

Hold on son, don't move. I have a flashlight in the bathroom here, I'll be right back. Don't move.

(After a moment, the lights resume and BOY is on the lying on the floor, the chair is on its side. MAN is off. WOMAN is just in from the U.L. entrance. WOMAN screams, then runs off. Lights go out again. WOMAN is still screaming. When the lights resume, MAN is on the witness stand and back in handcuffs.)

. . . And that's when I noticed him on the floor.

PROSECUTOR

When you first came inside the house that day, you said you were having an argument with your wife, is that correct?

MAN

Yes.

PROSECUTOR

Was it a heated argument?

MAN

No. Not at all. I just wanted to talk to my son about the way he mowed the lawn, and she said that the lawn was fine. We argued about that.

PROSECUTOR

Did you throw anything at her? Dishes, silverware, chairs, anything like that?

MAN

No. It was just an argument. Look, married people argue all the time. It's no big deal.

PROSECUTOR

How would you describe your demeanor at the time you were talking to your son, just before the lights went out?

MAN

Uh . . . I don't know. About like I am now, I guess.

PROSECUTOR

Were you angry with your son at all, for not mowing the lawn properly?

MAN

Well, I wouldn't say angry . . .

PROSECUTOR

. . . Would you say you were upset?

MAN

Yeah, I'd say that. Kinda disappointed, ya know.

PROSECUTOR

Did you threaten him?

MAN

No. Never. I loved my son. Look, I was just explaining to him how to mow the lawn the right way. That's all.

PROSECUTOR

I'm curious, exactly how was the lawn not mowed, the right way?

MAN

There were just a lot of spots that weren't mowed.

PROSECUTOR

So, when you . . . Uh . . . When the lights finally came back on, and you noticed your son on the floor . . .

PROSECUTOR cont.

Roughly how far, would you say you were away from him at this point?

MAN

Oh, I don't know . . . about fifteen feet maybe.

PROSECUTOR

So about fifteen feet away . . . Could it have been closer, you think? Like say, maybe just a foot or so, rather than fifteen?

MAN

I don't know, maybe. I just started to walk away, ya know. Maybe a couple of steps.

PROSECUTOR

(Pause)

Now, both you and your wife, both testified earlier that you were pretty good with your hands. You can fix things, build things. Is that correct?

MAN

(Beaming)

Absolutely. I can fix or build just about anything.

PROSECUTOR

You have a lot of tools then, I imagine, hammers, wrenches, screwdrivers- . . . ?

MAN

. . . Have em all.

PROSECUTOR

And like most men I know, your tools are like a part of you. They are yours and you take care of them, is that correct?

MAN

Absolutely. My tools are my life.

PROSECUTOR

Do you ever let anyone borrow your tools? Like say a neighbor or a friend?

MAN

No way. You lend your tools, you loose your tools.

PROSECUTOR

So then, you and you alone, would be the only one to ever use your tools. Is that a fair statement?

MAN

That's right. Nobody touches my tools.

PROSECUTOR

How about your wife, did she ever use any of your tools?

MAN

(Smiling)

No. I don't think she even knows where they are, to be honest with you. And if she did know where they were, she wouldn't know the first thing on how to use em.

PROSECUTOR

Were you aware, that the police found a hammer with your son's blood and hair on it under your kitchen sink?

MAN

I heard something like that.

PROSECUTOR

How do you suppose the hammer got under the sink?

MAN

I don't know. Maybe my wife put it there.

PROSECUTOR

Your wife? Didn't you just testify that your wife doesn't even know where they are, and if she did, she wouldn't even know how to use them?

MAN

Well. I-ah . . . I had just came home from work, you see, and I . . . I didn't even go into the garage. So, it must have been somebody. I'm just assuming it was her.

PROSECUTOR

Well, we know your son didn't use the hammer on himself. So, let me ask you again. How do you suppose the hammer, your hammer got under the kitchen sink with your sons blood and hair on it?

MAN

Hey, they never found my finger-prints on it, so . . .

PROSECUTOR

. . . The police also found several broken dishes in the kitchen. According to the officers, they say it looked like a disaster area. What happened in the kitchen? Were you and your wife fighting? How was your kitchen destroyed?

MAN

Well . . . I tried going back in my memory, and the only thing I could come up with is, that I was so upset at my son being killed, I think I just trashed the place.

PROSECUTOR

. . . Let me go back to when the lights went out one more time . . . Did you ever hear anyone come into the room? Or hear any sound that would indicate that someone was in the room?

MAN

No.

PROSECUTOR

How long did lights remain out? Can you give us a time frame?

MAN

Oh, I don't know, they just went out. Just a few seconds maybe.

PROSECUTOR

And at some point, after a few seconds had passed, the lights came back on, is that correct?

MAN

Yes.

PROSECUTOR

And what were you doing at that time?

MAN

I was just standing there. I could see blood coming out of his head. He just was lying there. Bleeding. I wanted to help him, but I couldn't move. It was like I was frozen or something.

PROSECUTOR

Then what happened?

MAN

My wife came in the room, she just stood there screaming, then ran out.

PROSECUTOR

Did the paramedics come to the house?

MAN

Yes.

PROSECUTOR

Who called them, do you remember?

MAN

I think my wife did. I don't remember.

PROSECUTOR

Sir, do you drink alcohol?

MAN

Sure. Most people do. There's nothing wrong with it.

PROSECUTOR

How often would you say you drink alcohol?

MAN

I don't know. I like to have a beer with the boy's from time to time.

PROSECUTOR

Every day?

MAN

Well, you know, after work you need a little something to help you unwind.

PROSECUTOR

And when you drink . . . do you ever get angry?

MAN

Well, if I'm watching the ballgame and my team is loosing. Sure, I'll get a little angry. Who doesn't?

PROSECUTOR

That's not the kind of anger I'm referring to. What I mean is, when you are drinking, do you ever find yourself in a physical altercation with somebody? Such as a fight, or a heated argument?

MAN

No. Uh-uh, never.

PROSECUTOR

You drink a lot more than you've told us here today, don't you?

MAN

What do you mean?

PROSECUTOR

I mean, you have a lot more than just "a beer with the boys" don't you?

MAN

Maybe. Sometimes.

PROSECUTOR

How often is sometimes?

MAN

I don't know . . . Sometimes.

PROSECUTOR

Have you ever drank so much that you blacked-out?

MAN

Well, I don't know if you could call it a "black-out" But, it does happen. Sometimes you drink too much, and when you wake up in the morning . . . things can be a little fuzzy. Ya know?

PROSECUTOR

Were you drinking on the day your son was killed?

MAN

Well . . .It . . . It was the foreman's birthday and . . .

PROSECUTOR

. . . So, you had been drinking then?

MAN

We were all drinking. The boss gave it to us. It wasn't illegal or anything.

PROSECUTOR

How much did you have to drink that day?

MAN

Just a few beers. The Forman brought a cooler to the job-site, because it was really hot that day, and it was his birthday. I guess he just wanted to celebrate. So, we just sat in the truck and had a couple of beers.

PROSECUTOR

How about drugs? Do you ever use any illegal drugs?

MAN

Uh . . . I've tried cocaine a couple times, that's about it. I didn't really like it.

PROSECUTOR

Your wife claims you used cocaine on a regular basis.

MAN

Yeah, well, she doesn't know what she's talking about. I only tried it a few times and I didn't like it. That's it.

PROSECUTOR

Did you use any cocaine on the day your son was killed?

MAN

No. Like I said, I don't use cocaine.

PROSECUTOR

That's not my question. My question is, did you use cocaine on the day your son was killed?

MAN

(Sighs)

No.

PROSECUTOR

But, you were drinking on that day though, correct?

MAN

. . . Yes.

PROSECUTOR

Do you think it's possible that you had too much to drink that day and you blacked-out? And that's why you claim the power went out? Because you don't remember?

MAN

(Angry)

No. I didn't black out! I told you the truth. The power just went out.

PROSECUTOR

No further questions at this time, your honor.

MAN

What? You can't just end it here. I need to be heard! Listen to me. I didn't black out!

PROSECUTOR

It's been duly noted. Now please step down.

MAN

But, I didn't black out!

PROSECUTOR

Sir. Please step down.

MAN

Did you hear me? I didn't black out!

PROSECUTOR

Yes. We heard you. Now please step down.

MAN

(Rises)

No. I want this on the record! I didn't black out! I didn't black out!

(Blackout)

ACT II
Scene Three

(Thunder crashes along with rain. The lights rise, MAN, is seated center across from WOMAN, who is seated R.C. back in handcuffs and underwear. Her pantyhose are still down around her ankles. She has a plate, with one half of a sandwich sitting on her lap. MAN is eating the other half of the sandwich, with large, open-mouth chaws. A very long pause as MAN chews, never taking his eyes off WOMAN.)

MAN

(After a long while)

You know, you should really try and use a little less mayonnaise next time. You can't taste the meat.

WOMAN

I thought you liked mayonnaise?

MAN

I do, but, not this much. And this cheese. Whatever kind it is, it tastes like shit. If I wasn't so damn hungry right now, I'd choke you with it. That was always your problem in the kitchen. You always tried to mix things that don't mix. I mean, Christ. How can you screw up a simple thing like a fucking sandwich? I don't understand it.

WOMAN

You want me to make you something else?

MAN

Why? So, you can fuck that up too. Or poison me? No thanks. Just sit there and shut up.

(Rises)

Let me figure out what I'm going to do with you.

(Crosses D.S. and looks through imaginary window. Another long pause as he takes another large bite of his

MAN cont.

sandwich. He is lost in his own world.) With all this rain today, I bet it would be easy to dig a hole in that garden. It would be like cutting through butter.

WOMAN

What are you mumbling about?

MAN

(Still staring out the window)

A hole. I bet it would be easy to dig a hole in your garden.

WOMAN

Why do you want to dig a hole?

MAN

(Turning in)

To bury things.

(They look at each other for a moment, then MAN crosses back to chair)

So, you wanna go ahead and finally tell me what really happened that day? Cause I gotta tell ya, I'm starting to run out of patients here.

WOMAN

What's the difference? Our son is dead and we've both moved on. It doesn't matter anymore.

MAN

Well, you see. It does matter. It matters a lot. He is dead, yes. But, the real person who killed him hasn't paid the price for it yet. So, why don't you just start by telling me what really happened and then I can leave. If you had just told me the truth from the very beginning, I would have been gone along time ago. I mean that's the whole reason I came back here. Was to simply get the truth.

(Sits)

MAN cont.

So . . . lets have it.

(Takes another bite of his sandwich)

WOMAN

I have told you. Why are you still on this? Jesus. I can't tell you anymore than what I already have.

MAN

Well, that's not good enough.

WOMAN

Well, it's going to have to be, because that's all there is.

MAN

How'd my hammer get under the kitchen sink?

WOMAN

I don't know. The police found it.

MAN

Yes, but, how did it get there?

WOMAN

Why are you asking me?

MAN

Because, I think you know.

WOMAN

Well, I don't.

MAN

(Rises)

Then figure it the fuck out! Cause I'm not leaving until you do.

WOMAN

Who are you kidding? You're not going to leave until you want to leave. That's how you've always been. It's always been about you, hasn't it? Our entire marriage was all about you.

MAN

That's right . . . I'm the man. I've earned it.
(Sits. Puts the last of his sandwich in his mouth and stares her down.
Long pause)

WOMAN

If I tell you what happened, you promise to leave? Let me have my life back, never to return again?

MAN

That all depends on you. Whether it's the truth or not.

WOMAN

How would you know if I'm telling you the truth or not? I can make up anything I want, and you would never be the wiser.

MAN

I'll know . . . I'll know.

WOMAN

I don't trust you. What assurances do I have?

MAN

I give you my word.

WOMAN

Ha! Your word . . . I'm better off not saying anything.

MAN

Suit yourself. But, I'm not leaving until I get the truth. So, if you want to just sit there and give me the silent treatment, that's fine by me. I must warn you

MAN cont.

though. It's going to be a long fucking day.

(Pause. Stares her down)

WOMAN

(She finally caves)

Okay. First. The hammer? I found it on the floor in the basement, when I came down the second time. I thought you had killed him. So, I picked up the hammer and hid it under the kitchen sink so the police wouldn't find it. I rubbed the prints off with a rag . . . I thought I was protecting you.

(Cries)

MAN

(Rises)

Bullshit!

(Crosses in and chokes her with both hands)

Why are you doing this to me, huh? Why do you keep fucking with me? Now tell me what happened! Stop playing these goddamn games with me!

(Releases his grip)

WOMAN

(Gasps for air until she is able to speak)

Okay. You win.

(MAN slowly sits)

I don't care what happens to me anymore. I just want this over with.

(Loud thunder crashes are heard.
Blackout)

ACT II
Scene Four

(A single light up on BOY. Boy is sitting on the floor in D.L. corner, barefoot, head between his knees. After a moment, we hear voices off stage.)

MAN

(Sound of a door opening then slamming shut)

Where is he!?

WOMAN

Who?

MAN

(Sound of a slap)

Who do you think, you idiot? The little bastard. Where is he?

WOMAN

Why? What's the matter? What did he do?

(Sound of a slap) Ah!

MAN

I ask the fucking questions in this house, goddamn-it. Not you. Now, where is he?

WOMAN

I don't know. I think he's at a friends house.

MAN

Don't you lie to me whore. I'm not in the mood for this shit.

(We hear crashing noises followed by some slaps, then what sounds like a body falling to the floor.)

WOMAN

Ow! Ow! . . . Stop!

MAN

You wanna lie to me? Huh?

(Sound of a slap)

You wanna fucking lie to me?

WOMAN

No, I- . . . Ow! My arm! Stop!

MAN

Where is he!?

WOMAN

I don't know.

(Sound of a slap)

MAN

Don't make me hurt you bitch. Now tell me where he is!

WOMAN

I don't know. I'm telling you the truth.

MAN

Where is he?

WOMAN

(In tears)

I don't know.

MAN

I will not be disrespected like this in my own fucking house.

(Sound of dishes breaking)

You wanna lie to me? After all I do for you?

(Another crash)

You like that?

(Crash)

WOMAN

(In tears)
Oh my god no! Please, stop!
(Crash)

MAN

Fuck you!
(Crash)
I'll break every dish in this house if I want to. I paid
for them.
(Crash)
There, you like that one? Here's another.
(Crash)
And another.
(Crash)

WOMAN

No! Stop! . . . Stop!
(A series of crashes)

MAN

If I have to search every room in this entire house, I
will. And if I find out you're lying to me, you're gunna
die! You understand me? Now tell me where he is!

WOMAN

Owww! Stop! Stop! Okay-okay, I'll tell you, Ill tell you.
(Reluctantly)
He's in the basement.

MAN

Stupid whore! I knew you were lying to me! . . . Now,
clean up this mess. And get dinner ready. I'm hungry.

WOMAN

(Sounds of footsteps down stairs,
WOMAN cries out)
Please, no! Don't hurt him! Leave him alone!

MAN

(Enters. The lights fully illuminate
that side of the stage. MAN is in

MAN cont.

jeans and t-shirt, and an orange construction vest. During his dialogue, MAN rushes over to BOY, picking him up. MAN is enraged)

Get off your ass boy! You think you can do whatever you want around here? Huh?

(Punches BOY in stomach. BOY falls to ground)

How dare you defy my orders. I told you to mow the lawn, and what did you do?

(Kicks BOY)

What did you do?

BOY

(In pain)

I mowed it.

MAN

(Pulling BOY up)

Are you calling me a liar?

(Shaking him)

You think I'm stupid? You think I'm an idiot? I told you to have that lawn mowed before I got home. Now, why wasn't it done? You think you don't have to do what I tell you anymore? You're free to do as you please?

(Punches him again, BOY falls to ground)

Who do you think you are? You think you're special or something? Is that it? Huh?

BOY

(Crying)

No sir. I'm sorry-I'm sorry

MAN

SHUT UP!

(Kicks BOY)

When I tell you to do something you little prick, then you do it! You don't do what you want to do. You do what I want you to do. You understand me?

BOY

Dad, I'm sorry. I mowed it. What did I do?

MAN

(Gets on his knees and hovers over BOY savagely punching him. BOY is crying out under the barrage of punches. Once MAN is finished, he rises)

Do I have your attention now? Weren't you listening to me? Are you retarded or something? I specifically told you to have that fucking lawn mowed. And you defied me! What the hell were you doing all afternoon?

BOY

(In pain)

I - I . . .

MAN

. . . You will respect me you little bastard. You're not in charge of this household. I am! . . . Now stand up . . . STAND UP!

(BOY tries to stand, but is having difficulty)

I said stand up!

(MAN pulls BOY up by his arm, keeping a tight grip. BOY screams in pain "Ow" "Ow" etc.)

Oh, stop it already. You big sissy. Maybe if you had mowed the lawn the way I told you too, you wouldn't be in this mess. You've got no one to blame but yourself. So, quit your whining and shut up already.

(MAN releases his grip, BOY still crying, MAN mocks him)

Ahh, poor wit-oo baby . . . You in pain sweetheart? Huh? . . . You big fucking girl.

(MAN throws BOY to ground again, then sits in chair C.)

I need to toughen you up. You little pansy.

(BOY lays on the ground crying for a while)

Stand up.

(BOY tries to stand, but can barely move, WOMAN enters, her hair is short and very uneven, as if it were chopped with a knife. She is wearing a loose fitting summer-type dress, and barefoot.)

Get on your goddamn feet!

WOMAN

What are you doing? Leave him alone!

MAN

Mind your own business, bitch! This is between me and him. Not you! Now, do what you're told and go up stairs!

(To BOY)

You don't deserve to live in this house the way you treat me. I should just kill you now and get it over with.

WOMAN

Stop it! You can't do this anymore.

MAN

(Rises)

I said, UP STAIRS!

(MAN stares her down, WOMAN exits, MAN re-sits)

You better get on your feet boy.

(BOY tries again to stand up but having difficulty.)

You're pathetic. I should have had your mother get an abortion when we had the chance. You've been nothing but a total disappointment to me. I can't believe you are actually my son. You're more of a daughter than a son. Now, stop your stalling and get your ass up!

(MAN becomes impatient, rises and goes to BOY dragging him C. BOY cries out in pain)

You still want to disobey me? How many times do I have to hit you before you before you do what I tell you? Now, stand the fuck up!

BOY

I'm trying. It's just hard.

MAN

Well, whose fault is that? I wouldn't have to hit you so hard, if you would just do what the hell you're told. This is all your fault. So, don't cry to me about a damn thing. I don't want to hear it.

(The action between MAN and BOY continue as the lights come up on other side of stage. WOMAN enters.)

MAN cont.

There is a toolbox on the floor. She goes to it, opens it, searches and discovers a hammer, then quickly makes her way out. When she exits, lights go out on that side of stage. BOY is slowly making his way on his feet. MAN sits)

So . . . you want to tell me why you didn't mow the lawn the way I told you?

BOY

I'm sorry, dad. But, I tried to do it like you said. Really, I did.

MAN

Well, you didn't did you?

BOY

I-I . . .

MAN

Did you?

BOY

No sir.

MAN

That's right. You didn't . . . You know, you have a lot of nerve treating me like this. I work my ass off for you, and all I get out of you is nothing but disrespect.

BOY

I'm sorry.

MAN

SHUT UP! You don't speak until I give you permission to speak. You got that?

(BOY nods his head)

What do I have to do to get you to do what I tell you? Huh? What do I have to do? Do you realize what the

MAN cont.

neighbors might be thinking of us? Anyone who sees that lawn out there is gunna think a bunch of retards live here. Is that what you want people to think? Huh?

BOY

No sir.

MAN

Then why did you mow it like one then?

BOY

I'm sorry. I was just in a hurry to get it mowed before you got home. So, you would be happy.

MAN

Well, I'm not happy! . . . Do I look happy to you? Huh? Does it really look like I am happy right now?

BOY

No sir.

MAN

You damn right, I'm not happy. You goddamn right I'm not . . . You're useless you know that? Completely useless.

BOY

I'm sorry dad. I tried.

MAN

Well you didn't try very hard, did you? It looks like shit!

BOY

Yes sir.

MAN

You're an idiot!

BOY

I'll mow it better from now on, I promise.

MAN

Oh, you goddamn right you're going to mow it better from now on. You goddamn right you are.

(BOY starts to double over from the blows to the stomach)

Stand up straight when I'm talking to you!

(BOY tries)

NOW!

BOY

(In pain)

I can't.

MAN

(MAN rises, enraged again, forces BOY into the chair)

You want to disrespect me? Huh? Who the hell do you think you are? I told you to stand up straight and you deliberately defied me! You think you can just live in this house and do whatever you want? Huh?

BOY

No dad. I'm trying. I just . . .

MAN

(Punches BOY in stomach)

Keep your mouth shut when I'm talking to you. Jesus Christ, you are stupid! Haven't you listened to a single word I've been saying to you? Goddamn it! You have to be the dumbest person on this planet . . . That's it! I'm going into the bathroom and get my belt, and when I get back, I'm going to teach you the real meaning of respect. It's obvious you are too stupid to figure it out on your own. So, maybe the buckle of my belt might get you to figure it out. And, don't you even think about getting out of that chair either. Or, that will be the last stupid thing you ever do on this earth!

(MAN starts to exit D.S. Suddenly the lights go out. When the lights come back on, BOY is lying on the floor and the chair is on its side . MAN is

MAN cont.
holding a belt. WOMAN enters and stands just in from the U.L. entrance, she holds a hammer in her hand. She sees BOY on the floor, screams and runs off as the lights fade.)

ACT II
Scene Five

(Lights rise. SOCIAL WORKER enters from UR. Dialing phone. The two chairs are back together UR.. After a moment she speaks into phone)

SOCIAL WORKER

Hi, it's me again

(Sits)

. . . No, I'm not. I'm not doing good at all . . . Yes, I tried taking a walk, but I can hardly stand on my feet. This is just too much for me right now . . . Do you think you can pick me up? I don't think I can drive back to the office right now . . . No. I can get my assistant to cover for me. I'm in no state to see anybody today . . . Honey, I know what you're trying to do, and I appreciate it, but, it wont work . . . Oh, what did I do to that poor girl? She was telling the truth and I didn't believe her. What am I going to do? . . . Oh my god! I killed that boy!

(Breaking down)

I killed him! I killed him! . . .

(Snapping back)

I can't calm down! Don't you understand? This is my fault! That young boy is dead because of me. I killed him! . . .

(To herself)

Oh my God, my hands, they still wont stop shaking . . . Honey, please. I just need you to come pick me up. We can talk about it then . . . Please! I wouldn't be asking you for help if I didn't need it . . . I know you're busy, but, I really can't be alone right now . . . But I need you now! . . . Well, who's more important to you, your wife or your goddamn case? . . . Honey please. I need you now, more than I ever have . . . No. No, don't hang up . . . No, pleas- . . . No. Don't hang-

(Realizes the other end has hung up. Closes phone, Breaks down hard. After a moment, lights fade to black)

ACT II
Scene Six

(Lights rise. WOMAN is seated R.C. again and MAN is seated across from her. WOMAN is back in her bra and panties, with here pantyhose around her ankles. The plate with the sandwich is still on her lap.)

MAN

(Rises)

I knew it!

(Picks up the sandwich that is on her lap and smashes in her face, then exits D.S.)

WOMAN

(Crying)

I thought he was you! It was supposed to be you! Oh my God, why? Why did you do this to me? Why? . . . Oh my God! What have I done? What have I done?

(Belts out a couple loud cries)

Ahhhhh! Ahhhh! . . . Where are you? Come back here and finish the job you coward. I can't take this any more! I want you out of my life once and for all. You hear me? I'm ready! Come on, what are you waiting for? Here I am. I'm all tied up and completely defenseless. A perfect opportunity. Get it out! Get it all out. Kill me you fucking coward! Get it over with. Do it! If it will make you feel more like a man, then do it. It's what you want anyway. I don't care any more! Just fucking end it! End it you son-of-a-bitch! End it!

(MAN enters holding a shovel)

Oh my God! NO! (MAN raises the shovel over his head as if to strike) NO! NO!

(Quick blackout. Loud thunder crash is heard then fades into music, with a voice-over of WOMAN speaking from the grave. ***WOMAN'S monologue below*** The lights resume as the monologue begins, WOMAN is on the floor C, still in handcuffs, next to the chair that is now turned over. MAN drops the shovel, slowly exits UL and returns with a bottle of water. Standing DS looking out, he stares and drinks. He then goes to the pillowcase with WOMAN'S

WOMAN cont.

clothes in it, pulls out a bed sheet. He spreads the bed sheet in front of her, rolls her up in it, then drags her off D.S. through the house. The sheet is loosely wrapped around her, so as he is dragging her off, her head becomes exposed. A moment later, MAN returns and retrieves the shovel, then exits again D.S. After a while, MAN enters, goes to the pillowcase, takes out an article of her clothing, sits, drinks again from the bottle, then wipes his brow. He appears to be exhausted. He then collects any remaining articles and stuffs them back into the pillowcase along with the gun. He re-sets the chairs as they were in the opening scene, using the same article of clothing he wiped his brow with, he begins to wipe off the chairs to hide any finger prints. He then retrieves the pillowcase, slings it over his shoulder, goes DS, takes another look out the window and then calmly exits UR, as the L stage lights go black, leaving only the R chair illuminated. When the monologue and music are over, there is a few beats of total silence, then the R light slowly fades to black. No curtain call.)

THE END

* WOMAN'S MONOLOGUE (Voice over)

And just like that . . . it was over. The pain was gone. All the fear. All the angst. All the guilt . . . Suddenly disappeared. That exact moment in time, when the shovel first made contact with my skull, I immediately felt this overwhelming and unexpected sense of calm and peace. All at once, my body was completely void of any pain or suffering . . . Funny, I had always imagined death as something painful . . . Sad . . . But, to me, death was painless . . . A relief . . . To tell you the truth, I'm kind of glad its over. My only regret is that my son never got the chance to live. Even when he was alive, he never really was allowed to live. He didn't deserve that. He was innocent. And, no matter how hard I tried to justify it in my mind, I never got over the fact that it was my hand that actually took his life. (Pause) I can't help but wonder . . . What if I had married someone different. Would he have been abusive as well? Would I have met the same exact fate? . . . I don't know. Maybe we're not supposed to know. Maybe fate . . . is just fate. But, why is fate, fate? What makes fate, fate? And, Who is guiding that fate? . . . God? . . . Us? . . . Do we really guide our own fate? If so, then, how do we guide it? . . . Why do we guide it? . . . Maybe we are supposed to just accept things the way they are and not question it . . . But, I cant help but question it. I just want to know why my life turned out the way it did. (Pause) Shortly after the trial, I read in a magazine somewhere that most women who are abused by their husbands, were also abused by their fathers. I remember thinking at the time that that was an interesting observation, but, never gave it much thought until later that night in bed, when it finally, for the lack of a better word, hit me . . . I was one of those women they were talking about. How did I not see this? How did I not connect the dots? I grew up in it. I lived with it most of my life. It was all I ever knew. There it was, right in front of me. All around me, and I still couldn't see it. My father wasn't near as abusive to me as my husband was, but he was very physical. More to my mother actually than me. I remember growing up, my mother would always wear long sleeve shirts in the summer and almost always had on sunglasses, even on a rainy day. I know now, she was just trying to hide the bruises she got from my father. It's hard to believe that someone could be so naïve, but I, like many women in these relationships unfortunately are . . . So, I sat up and thought about it

WOMAN'S MONOLOGUE cont.

for a while. Trying my best to have an intellectual conversation with myself, asking out loud, why do women do that? What lures us back into these types of relationships? What do these men have, that we want? And why do we want it? It's like we run as fast as we can to get out of one abusive relationship, just to run even faster into another. And we are not stupid people either. Most of us are very intelligent . . . So, why do we do the least intelligent thing imaginable, and let ourselves, almost by design, fall prey to yet another vicious animal? What drives us into that way of life? . . . If you were to take a hundred of the world's top psychologists, put them in a room and ask them that same question, you would get a hundred different answers. . . The truth is . . . Every person who is abused, has their own reasons for staying. Just like every abuser has their own reasons why they abuse . . . For me, it was simple. I stayed for one reason and one reason only, and that was for my son. I was so convinced that if I left, he would find us and he would kill us. This is the kind of control abusers have over their victims . . . But, is that really a good reason to stay? . . . What did it get me? . . . What did it get my son? . . . I wish there was a way I could talk to every abused women out there. Even for just a few moments. Let them know, they no longer have to live in fear. They no longer have to tolerate abuse, just for the sake of their children. They can get the help they need if they just have the courage to ask for it. A lot easier said than done, I understand that, but, there are many more shelters and safe-houses now, women can go to that will protect them. Stress to them the cold hard facts. Make them understand that if they stay in an abusive relationship, regardless of what they want to believe, or what they have been told to believe, that it will not get any better. Abusive people do not change. The inevitable will happen . . . And that inevitable is, eventually someone will die . . . Statistically, one in three women who are victims of homicide, are killed by the hand of their abusive partner. I want to tell these women that. Show these women that . . . But, I'll never get that opportunity . . . You see, he buried me under the windmill I made him promise to build me before we were married . . . It's a beautiful spot actually. Plenty of shade. And the bright yellow Daffodils I planted last week are even starting to bloom. They are going to look so pretty in a few days. Daffodils have always been one of my favorite flowers. I never knew this before, but, the Daffodil symbolizes rebirth and new

WOMAN'S MONOLOGUE cont.

beginnings . . . I'm not sure weather this was fate simply working its magic again, or just happenstance. Either way, it's rather ironic to say the least . . . They found him a few days later sleeping on a park bench. He was arrested with out incident and is now back in prison where he belongs . . . I have to go now. They say I will be able to see my son today. So, I want to have time to prepare myself. It's been almost five years since I've seen him. I wonder if he still looks the same. I wonder if he will even remember me. I cant wait to wrap my arms around him and hold him for all eternity. Let him know that I love him so very much and how sorry I am for all that has happened. I know deep down in my heart of hearts that this was not my fault, and that I really did do my very best to protect him. I just hope he understands . . .