

# **Wolves at the Door**

A Play

By Jeremy B. Storey

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**ACT ONE****Scene 1**

FADE IN LIGHTS:

*A large wooden-bar holds court at center stage. Old and worn, the bar is imbued with character and substance. Perched atop the bar are three beer taps. Behind, is a multi-tiered shelf on which sits a full, collection of liquor bottles.*

*A door leading to the outside world is set to the far right of the bar. Between the bar and the door is a hallway that leads backstage.*

*Three small tables stand staggered in front of the bar. Each table is complemented by two simple chairs. Everything about this setting is humble and comfortable.*

*(Standing behind the bar, is RAY. He is dresses casually, and wears a pair of reading glasses on the crown of his head.*

*He is carefully polishing glasses, humming a folksy tune to himself.*

*BRUNO enters from the door. He's wearing a large, burly coat. He shakes himself off at the door and stomps his feet.)*

BRUNO: Can you believe this crap?

RAY: Spring for ya.

BRUNO: In Alaska, maybe.

RAY: Won't last.

BRUNO: They said that, three weeks ago.

RAY: They?

BRUNO: Powers that be.

RAY: Shows how much they know.

BRUNO: ...and they get paid for it.

RAY: We're in the wrong line of work.

BRUNO: Well, least we got a nine-to-five.

RAY: You said it.

*(BRUNO strolls behind the bar, pulls out an apron, and pulls it around his waist.)*

BRUNO: Vinny come by?

RAY: Not yet.

BRUNO: Damn. We're outta paddies, wings, breasts... only a couple old heads o' lettuce and some half-rotten tomatoes.

RAY: Won't matter. We're gonna be light.

BRUNO: *(Nods.)* Uh-huh. *(Looks around.)* Millie?

RAY: Hopefully warm and at home.

BRUNO: Should I call?

RAY: I tried. No answer.

*(RAY walks around the bar, to start wiping down one of the tables. He stops abruptly when his foot hits something on the floor.)*

*RAY reaches down, and pulls up a rat trap.)*

RAY: C'mon B, this is a health hazard.

BRUNO: No... rat shit's a health hazard, dude.

RAY: They're still coming through?

BRUNO: City engineers got 'em running scared with all the drilling.

RAY: They should've left well enough alone.

BRUNO: You tried, man.

RAY: *(Throwing trap into a garbage behind the bar)* Not hard enough.

(BRUNO *grabs a beer and sits on one of the bar stools.*)

BRUNO: See what's goin' on downtown?

RAY: No.

BRUNO: Boys in blue were out in force. Streets were blocked off, 'n all.

RAY: Parade? Protest, maybe.

BRUNO: Yeah, protesting the weather.

RAY: Good a reason as any to assemble.

BRUNO: No, man. Looked like something serious. Big.

RAY: News'll be all over it. (*Pause.*) Why are you so interested?

BRUNO: Shondra's down there shopping. (*Pause.*) Didn't answer her phone.

RAY: Sure it's nothing.

BRUNO: (*Pause.*) You... uh... know anyone who might...?

RAY: (*Abrasive.*) No. (*Pause.*) Have you texted her?

BRUNO: No... I'll give it a shot. (*Pause.*) Hey, did Parker call you last night?

RAY: No. Why?

BRUNO: 'Matlock' must think I'm a liability.

RAY: How so?

BRUNO: More coaching. 'Say this'. 'Don't say that'. 'Keep it civil.' 'Don't make it personal'. Same old shit.

RAY: Better prepared than not.

BRUNO: Amen to that, brother.

(RAY goes over to the tables and starts arranging them with napkin holders, candles, condiments, etc. BRUNO goes behind the bar and while he sends a text on his phone.)

RAY: (Yawning.) Put some Joe on would ya?

BRUNO: Sure... (Curious.) When'd ya hit the sack?

RAY: Usual time.

BRUNO: Usual bed?

RAY: (Rolls eyeballs.) Spit it out, B.

(BRUNO takes one of the table chairs, spins it around and straddles it in front of RAY... his face eager with anticipation.)

BRUNO: So... how'd it go?

RAY: Fine.

BRUNO: Fine?

RAY: Fine.

BRUNO: That's all you got?

RAY: What more do you want?

BRUNO: Details, dude. Dee-taaaills!

RAY: Details, eh?

BRUNO: Been married 20-years. Details' all I got.

RAY: (Chortles.) Oh come on. You can do better than that.

BRUNO: You really gonna leave me hanging? That's cold, brother. Cold.

RAY: Shondra?

BRUNO: Man you know what it's like... Her friend's gonna gossip about you... and then my Baby's gonna wanna know if we talked. (high pitched) 'What did he say about her?' 'Did he

like her hair'? 'He gonna call her'? The usual shit. And hell if I come home empty handed.

RAY: Okay... okay... (*Pause.*) Tell Shondra, her friend was pretty, nice, and... um, a really good conversationalist. And uh... her hair... was, big... and curly.

BRUNO: (*Sardonic.*) You just described Oprah.

RAY: So?

BRUNO: So I don't wanna screw Oprah.

RAY: I don't kiss and tell.

BRUNO: Brother, you don't kiss at all.

(MILLIE quietly walks in through the door.)

BRUNO sits up from the table, does not yet notice MILLIE as she is standing behind him.)

BRUNO: Gonna see her again?

MILLIE: See who?

RAY: No one. (*Gives BRUNO a look.*)

BRUNO: Ray went on a blind date.

MILLIE: Really? How'd it go? Did you... 'make a connection'?

RAY: She seemed okay.

MILLIE: Just okay?

RAY: She wasn't really my type.

MILLIE: Ray... you can't always judge a book by its cover.

BRUNO: Forget it, Millie. Man can't read, nevermind pick up a book.

RAY: Now, don't you... (*To MILLIE.*) Why are you here?

MILLIE: Why wouldn't I be?

RAY: (*Pointing to the general outside direction.*) The weather?

MILLIE: I grew up in Vermont.

BRUNO: How the hell did you get that Rabbit of yours through the shit?

MILLIE: Superior driving.

BRUNO: Vermont my ass. You were lucky.

MILLIE: You didn't drive, did you?

BRUNO: No way.

MILLIE: Ohh... is the big strong man scared of driving a little bitty snow?

BRUNO: Last thing I want is to be stuck in a car with no way out.

MILLIE: It's not that hard. (*Giggling.*) I could teach you?

BRUNO: Laugh it up, sister.

(*MILLIE continues to chuckle as she hangs up her coat and puts on an apron.*)

RAY: Where's Bella?

MILLIE: With a sitter.

RAY: Who?

MILLIE: (*Pause.*) Chasey.

RAY: Chasey? You can't let-

MILLIE: (*Terse.*) Everyone else was snowed in.

RAY: You should've stayed home.

MILLIE: Who would cover for me?

RAY: Does it look like we need cover?

MILLIE: You never know.

RAY: Stil...

MILLIE: Still, nothing. Every penny counts.

RAY: I would've taken care of it.

MILLIE: No hand outs for me, mister.

RAY: Wouldn't be a hand out-

MILLIE: I'm not a charity case.

RAY: I didn't say... (*Pause.*) Doesn't matter. We're closing early tonight.

MILLIE: What? You can't do that.

RAY: I can't?

MILLIE: No.

RAY: Remind me... what's the name of this bar?

MILLIE: Ray Portillo... don't you dare...

BRUNO: You know who you two remind me of?

MILLIE/RAY: (*Irritated.*) Who?

BRUNO: Moms and Pops.

MILLIE: Didn't your mom try and stab your dad once?

BRUNO: Man disrespected her fried chicken.

MILLIE: So?

BRUNO: Never dis Mama's cookin'. Ain't that right, Ray?

RAY: (*Nods in agreement.*) Two things Mrs. Jenkins doesn't like: culinary critics... and lying.

BRUNO: (*Chuckling.*) Yep, Pops made the mistake of doing both in one sitting.

MILLIE: (*Sarcastic.*) Oh yeah... sounds like he had it coming.

RAY: Pretty much.

(*Door opens, in walks IKE. He carefully takes off his coat and hat, and places both on the coat stand.*)

BRUNO: Evenin', Doc.

IKE: Indeed it is, young man.

RAY: Surprised you braved the elements.

IKE: The wolves of winter may be biting and I may be tottering into antiquity. But I'm not infirm. Besides, where else can I sink my teeth into the best meatloaf in Seattle?

BRUNO: Yeah, about that, Doc...

RAY: We're still waiting for a delivery.

IKE: Oh? How long will it be?

RAY: Hard to say... could be a while.

IKE: Well, in that case I'll pass the time with a G&D.

(*RAY pauses, looks over at MILLIE then back at IKE.*)

MILLIE: Ray?

RAY: Yeah... coming right up.

IKE: (*Taking MILLIE'S hand.*) You look positively radiant, my dear. How's that splendid angel of yours?

MILLIE: Driving me bananas.

IKE: The smart ones always do.

(*RAY hands IKE his drink.*)

MILLIE: Well you must've been a little tyrant.

IKE: Oh yes... a rambunctious, whirling-dervish I was... until I met Alicia. (*Looks away, swallows his whole drink.*) She was my eye in the storm.

BRUNO: Speaking of... how is the better half?

IKE: Improving.

BRUNO: Helluva of cold.

IKE: Yes. Quite.

MILLIE: Tell her to get better, 'cos I need some advice on how to crochet a quilt for Bella.

IKE: Absolutely. (*Pushes glass gently back to MILLIE.*) Would you mind?

MILLIE: (*Smiling.*) Not at all. (*Pause.*) Ray, would you-

(DANNY and JOE enter the bar through the front door.)

JOE'S hoody is pulled down over his forehead, putting his eyes in shadow. DANNY shiftily surveys the room - assessing everything and everyone at a glance. There is an air of menace and urgency about them.)

MILLIE: Grab a seat. I'll be right with you.

DANNY: (*Grunts a response. Taps JOE'S shoulder, pointing to a nearby table.*)

DANNY: Brew?

JOE: You having one?

DANNY: Why not?

JOE: Okay.

(JOE sits at the table closest to the front door while DANNY heads to the bar.)

MILLIE: (*To DANNY.*) Still coming down out there?

DANNY: Yeah.

MILLIE: Never seen anything like it. What about you?

DANNY: (*Ignoring MILLIE. To Ray*) Beer. (*Holds up two fingers.*)

RAY: Got ID?

DANNY: (*Pauses. Stares back at RAY.*) Why?

RAY: It's the law.

DANNY: (*Pauses. Reaches into his pocket, pulls out his wallet.*) Anything else?

RAY: (*Pointing to JOE.*) His too.

(*JOE gets up, and moves toward the bar.*)

DANNY: We're the same age.

RAY: You want to drink here, you gotta have ID.

DANNY: Is there a reason you're bustin' my balls?

JOE: (*Pulls ID out of back pocket, and hands it to RAY.*) Here you go, sir.

(*RAY stares at both IDs for a beat longer than usual for such a rote procedure.*)

DANNY: Wanna see my birth certificate too?

RAY: Perhaps you'd rather take your business down the street.

DANNY: Yeah, maybe we should.

MILLIE: Oh, don't be silly-nilly. It's freezing out there, and besides which, nowhere else is open. (*Reproachfully glances at RAY.*) So, please stay a while.

RAY: (*Off MILLIE'S withering glare, hands back the IDs to DANNY and JOE.*)

DANNY: (*Reaches into his pocket and pulls out a crumpled fistful of dollars... flicks them on to the bar.*) Keep the change.

RAY: (*Looking at the bills, holds one up, that's covered in ink splashes*) Spill some ink?

DANNY: (*Restless.*) Got a problem with my money now?

MILLIE: (*Intervening*) I'll bring your drinks right over.

(*JOE and DANNY go back to their table.*)

MILLIE: (*To RAY.*) What's up with the bouncer routine?

RAY: (*Looking at the notes*) Didn't like their attitude.

MILLIE: They're probably cold, which'd be enough to set anyone's mood off kilter. Mine included.

BRUNO: (*Foreboding.*) Ray knows bad when he sees it.

MILLIE: I swear sometimes there isn't a trusting bone between the two of you. Least we can do on a night like this is open our door to strangers.

BRUNO: Problem with open doors is you never know who or what the wind'll blow in.

MILLIE: (*Shakes her head in disbelief.*) Beers?

RAY: (*Hands her the bottles.*)

(*MILLIE takes the bottles over to where DANNY and JOE are sitting.*)

*Taps the top of his beer bottle three times with the palm of his hand before taking a sip.. a process he repeats each time before drinking.*

*MILLIE watches as he does this.*)

DANNY: Thanks.

(*MILLIE heads back to the bar.*)

JOE: What's our move?

DANNY: Depends.

JOE: On what?

DANNY: I dunno... just depends.

JOE: Dallas?

DANNY: In Texas for all I know.

JOE: 'Cos of the thing?

DANNY: Probably. *(Pause.)* Fuck.

JOE: So, just sit here?

DANNY: Once shit cools down, we'll head home.

JOE: Can we?

DANNY: What?

JOE: Go home?

DANNY: *(Hesitates.)* Don't see why not.

JOE: What if they know... know who we are... where we...

DANNY: They don't. They can't.

JOE: But-

DANNY: *(Firm.)* It's cool. Chill.

JOE: *(Thinks about this.)* Okay... Be quiet, right? Hidden like a mouse.

DANNY: That's the idea.

JOE: *(Looking at RAY)* Stick to the shadows.

DANNY: *(Ruffled.)* Yeah. *(Concurring.)* Blend in.

*(JERRY and LAURA enter. JERRY eyes the bar and the people therein with an undercurrent of contempt. LAURA retains a big, gracious smile on her face. She clings affectioJoely to JERRY'S arm.)*

JERRY: Didn't know places like this were still around.

LAURA: It's cute. Reminds me of that show... the super-old one from the eighties... the one with that fat chick who used to be thin...

BRUNO: 'Cheers'.

LAURA: You're welcome.

BRUNO: No... I mean, the show was called 'Cheers'

LAURA: (*Winks at BRUNO and flashes a disarming smile.*) Got it.

BRUNO: (*Smiling.*) Well lookee here... it's Stand Up night at 'Ray's'.

MILLIE: Great. Maybe she can teach you some funny!

BRUNO: (*Chuckling.*) Careful now.

RAY: (*To LAURA and JERRY.*) Can I get you something?

JERRY: (*Holds up a dismissive index finger to RAY, gesturing for him to hold on. To LAURA.*) We could go to the Belmont.

LAURA: Really?

JERRY: Not feeling it, baby.

LAURA: Just one drink... then the Belmont.

JERRY: One.

LAURA: Just one. I'll even make it a shot, if you like. (*Smiles.*)

JERRY: (*Won over by her charm.*) Wine?

LAURA: Always.

JERRY: (*Kisses her cheek. Looks at RAY.*) What chardonnays do you have?

RAY: The dry kind.

JERRY: I'll take two, boss.

RAY: You got it, ace.

(DANNY abruptly sits up and starts to move toward the bar. JOE reaches up and grabs his arm, stopping him.)

JOE: (Quietly.) Where you going?

DANNY: Just see that two-faced, bullshit?

JOE: What bullshit?

DANNY: Cards us, but not them. Why? 'Cos they're money?

JOE: I dunno. Maybe.

DANNY: Fucking judgmental pricks. I'll...

JOE: Like a mouse, right? Right?

DANNY: (Stares furiously at RAY, but then looks at JOE.) Right. Like a mouse.

(LAURA and JERRY sit at their table.)

JERRY: (Looks over at DANNY... To LAURA.) Drink quickly... I believe the natives are restless.

LAURA: C'mon... don't you like taking a walk on the wild side?

JERRY: We should've gone downtown.

LAURA: Too cold and slippery.

JERRY: I'd carry you.

LAURA: I know you would, my Prince. (Eyes DANNY, and JOE. Specifically, JOE.) What's their story.

JERRY: Don't know. Don't care.

LAURA: Ever look at people and wonder where they're from... how they got here, where they're going?

JERRY: Not really.

LAURA: I do. All the time. People are like books... each has a unique story, waiting to be read. Wanting to be read. (Pause.) My psychic says, the path to enlightenment is through the window of the souls we encounter. They all have a story we can learn and grow from.

JERRY: You see a psychic?

LAURA: Oh yeah... he's terrific. The things he knew about me... stuff I'd never told anyone. It blew my mind. (Sips drink.) You should totally go see him.

JERRY: Not a Goddamn chance.

LAURA: Why?

JERRY: 'Cos they're full it.

LAURA: You really think so?

JERRY: Snake oil for the brain.

LAURA: How do you explain him knowing my parents' names... or where I was born... or even predicting who I will meet...?

JERRY: This guy did all that?

LAURA: Hells bells, yes.

JERRY: Probably looked you up on the Web.

LAURA: Impossible. First time I met him was at a fair. He couldn't have known anything about me.

JERRY: Well you must have given something away through your body language.

LAURA: I had no idea you were such a cynic.

JERRY: Only when it comes to fortune-telling humbo-jumbo.

LAURA: Well... I'll have you know... he predicted we'd meet.

JERRY: (Lowers voice.) Really? Does he know what you do for a living?

LAURA: Yeah.

JERRY: And he predicted you'd meet a man? That's like predicting that trees might lose their leaves in the fall.

LAURA: He also predicted that the man I met would be different from the others...

JERRY: Different, eh? How so?

LAURA: He was very specific about our relationship... said that I'd meet a 'business' man who would unexpectedly fall head over heels in love with me.

JERRY: Love?

LAURA: Uh huh.

JERRY: And did he say you'd fall in love too?

LAURA: Wouldn't you like to know!

JERRY: Predicting someone would fall in love with you is hardly a psychic leap of faith.

LAURA: I guess I'll take that as a compliment. (*Pause.*) Anyhoozle... do you?

JERRY: Do I what?

LAURA: Love me?

JERRY: (*Pause.*) Does it matter?

LAURA: I'm not a blow up doll. I do have feelings.

JERRY: I know that... it's just... Considering the nature of our relationship... it feels... you know...

LAURA: Inappropriate?

JERRY: Yeah. Exactly... inappropriate. (*Looks away. Embarrassed.*)

(MILLIE brings a drink over to IKE.)

*Meanwhile, BRUNO pulls his phone out and starts reading a text message.)*

IKE: Thank you, my dear. *(Pause.)* By chance, did you encounter that ruckus going on downtown with the police?

MILLIE: I saw some squad cars skidding through the snow, on the way here. You think something's going on?

IKE: Given the show of numbers and urgency of the response, I'd assume it's a significant matter.

MILLIE: Whatever it is... hopefully no one was hurt. *(Pause.)* Can I get you another, Ike?

IKE: No thank you. I think it's time to return home.

MILLIE: So soon?

IKE: The odds are against your kitchen being replenished this evening. Probably best for me to eat at home.

MILLIE: I'm sure Alicia can whip you up something yummy. *(Pause.)* She must feel like you're cheating on her with how much you've been eating here.

IKE: Not my Alicia. She understands my taste for fine food... and good company. Besides... I don't want her getting out of bed to tend to an old fart like me.

MILLIE: Stop it! *(To BRUNO.)* B... would you check out the window, see if it's getting worse? Don't want our Ike flapping around out there in a blizzard.

BRUNO: Sure thing.

*(BRUNO goes to the window by the front door. Peels back the curtain and peaks out. His expression darkens considerably.)*

BRUNO: Holy shit.

MILLIE: Drats! How bad is it?

BRUNO: Ray... You gotta see this.

RAY: *(Off BRUNO'S look.)* What is it?

BRUNO: (*Stands aside from the window.*) Take a look-see.

(*RAY walks over to BRUNO. Looks out of the window.*)

BRUNO: What are they doing out there?

RAY: (*Still looking out the window*) Waiting. Watching.

BRUNO: For what?

MILLIE: (*Walking toward the window.*) Who's waiting?

RAY: Looks like an entire precinct.

MILLIE: What are you guys yappin' about? (*Nudges RAY aside, looks out of the window.*) What on Earth is going on?

BRUNO: Why are they set up like that?

RAY: It's... (*stops himself.*)

BRUNO: It's... It's what?

RAY: A kill zone.

BRUNO: A kill zone?

RAY: Kill zone... it's the type of perimeter the police set up when there's a... a hostage event.

BRUNO: Hostages? On our street? Where?

MILLIE: Why they all facing our building?

BRUNO: Gotta be mistaken. Ain't nothin' goin' on around here.

RAY: Unless... unless... (*Turns, looks at DANNY and JOE.*)

(*DANNY stands up slowly, stares at RAY, who in turn, stares back.*)

BRUNO: Unless what?

RAY: Unless the hostage takers haven't taken a hostage... (*Pause.*) B... get the-

(DANNY pulls a gun from his pants and points it in the general direction of RAY, BRUNO and MILLIE.)

DANNY: Don't move a fucking muscle.

(BRUNO, MILLIE and rest of the bar folks are frozen in shock.)

DANNY: Get the fuck back. (To JOE.) Joe... Look alive.

(JOE appears slightly confused, but still pulls a gun out and trains it generally toward the different faces in the bar... not sure who or what to focus on.)

JOE: Nobody move. Okay?

(DANNY goes to the window and quickly looks out.)

JOE: We in trouble?

DANNY: You could say that.

JOE: How'd they find us?

DANNY: Not a fucking clue. (To RAY.) Got a back door?

RAY: (Points behind the bar.) Down the hallway to the left.

DANNY: (To JOE.) Check it out. (Pause.) Look first, okay?

JOE: Ten four.

DANNY: (Swings gun around the room, pointing at everyone.) Every one of you to stay still.

RAY: Take it easy, my friend. You're in charge.

DANNY: Damn right.

RAY: We're not gonna make any sudden moves... (To BRUNO.) ... are we?

BRUNO: (Shakes head.) Wouldn't think of it.

DANNY: Good. Keep it that way. (Louder.) You all got that? Do what I say, and, um, no one will get hurt.

JERRY: (*Incredulous.*) Who the hell are you?

DANNY: Who am I? (*Steps closer to JERRY.*) You really wanna know?

RAY: Okay... let's stay stay. (*To JERRY.*) Our friend's in charge here... right?

JERRY: Right.

DANNY: Too fucking right.

(*JOE returns... looking visibly shaken.*)

JOE: They're everywhere, Danny. Everywhere. I swear I even heard them on the roof. Like little rats... shuffling around. (*Pause.*) What do we do?

DANNY: Let me think for a second... (*holds hands against head, painfully willing a constructive thought to come to him.*)

RAY: If...

DANNY: (*Angry, turns on RAY.*) If what? If what, motherfucker?

RAY: If you go out now... peacefully... it will reflect well. Show you cooperated.

DANNY: Will it now? What are you? A lawyer?

RAY: No... just a concerned citizen who doesn't wanna see anyone get hurt.

DANNY: Yeah... well it might be too late for that.

RAY: How so?

DANNY: (*Pointedly ignores the question.*) Everyone sit down and hold your hands out on the table.

(*The group responds sluggishly to the request.*)

DANNY: (*Raises voice.*) Are you all deaf? I said, sit-the-fuck down!

*(Those that were standing, sit.*

*JOE moves closer to DANNY.)*

JOE: *(To DANNY.)* Don't let them talk.

DANNY: Gag them?

JOE: No, I mean, talk to the outside.

DANNY: Yeah... yeah... right. Gimme your backpack.

*(JOE hands his small back-pack to DANNY.*

*Taking the bag, DANNY starts to walk around the room to each table.)*

DANNY: *(To everyone.)* Okay, take out your phones and put them in here. No screwing around.

*(DANNY goes to each person and retrieves their phone.*

*When he gets to BRUNO...)*

BRUNO: Can't help you, dude. Left mine at home.

DANNY: Hell you did.

BRUNO: Frisk me then.

DANNY: *(Looking BRUNO over.)* Don't be fuckin' with me.

BRUNO: Wouldn't dream of it, my man.

*(DANNY moves to the corner of the room with JOE. They quietly confer.*

*(Over in front of the bar, BRUNO scoots closer to RAY. They speak in hushed tones.)*

RAY: Should've given them your phone.

BRUNO: They look like bad dudes to you?

RAY: That's not the point... Right now they're rattled. The slightest provocation could set them off.

BRUNO: So... let them get comfortable first?

RAY: Something like that.

BRUNO: Learn that at the academy?

RAY: Yeah.

BRUNO: Did it work?

RAY: Most of the time.

BRUNO: *(Pause.)* You're right... I-.

RAY: What's done is done. Just be careful, alright?

BRUNO: Always, bro. You know me... I'm sneaky, like a ninja.

RAY: Uh-huh.

*(JERRY and LAURA move closer to together. They too speak quietly to one another.)*

LAURA: What do you think they want?

JERRY: Money. Drugs. Who knows?

LAURA: They seem confused.

JERRY: Yeah, 'cos they're idiots.

LAURA: They don't look like... you know, criminals.

JERRY: What do they look like?

LAURA: Boys. Just boys. *(Pointing the JOE.)* Especially that one.

JERRY: He's a retard.

LAURA: Jerry.

JERRY: Maybe not fully... more like *Forrest Gump* retarded.

LAURA: Keep your voice down.

JERRY: What's wrong? Don't wanna hurt Forrest's feelings?

LAURA: (*Serious.*) Just be cool, Jerry.

JERRY: (*Incredulous.*) 'Be cool'? Mind your fucking tongue.

LAURA: Sorry, Jerry! But, I'm a little freaked out here.

JERRY: You're a professional. Act accordingly. Or I'll have words with your supervisor.

LAURA: I think she'd understand.

JERRY: My patronage and the benefaction of my friends are more important than your station. Don't ever forget that.

(*LAURA and JERRY fall in to an uncomfortable, antagonistic silence.*)

(*MILLIE pull closer to IKE. They converse between themselves.*)

MILLIE: (*To IKE.*) How ya feelin, doc?

IKE: I'm beginning to feel that I should've taken Ray's advice and stayed indoors.

MILLIE: Me too! (*Pause.*) We're gonna be okay, right?

IKE: (*Looks reassuringly at MILLIE.*) From what I can tell, neither of these men seem dangerous... but still, even the most mild-mannered dog can turn rabid if backed in to a corner.

MILLIE: So, do you think they're more Lassie or Cujo?

IKE: Much depends on what happens next.

MILLIE: How so?

IKE: They have two choices: Surrender... or hold us until their terms are met.

MILLIE: You're kidding?

IKE: Based on the circumstances, I see no other options.

MILLIE: Hostages? Good Lord.

IKE: Most of the time these situations have a peaceful conclusion. No reason to think this will be any different.

MILLIE: What makes you so sure?

IKE: These boys don't appear to be politically motivated nor do they seem intent to capitalize on human collateral.

MILLIE: *(Let's IKE's words sink in.)* Uh... Ike...

IKE: Yes?

MILLIE: Were you ever a practicing therapist?

IKE: Briefly. I was better at theory, than people. As Alicia was always fond of saying I'm more Spock than Doc.

MILLIE: You don't say.

IKE: *(Chuckles lightly.)* Well, those that can't do...

MILLIE: Teach. *(Pause.)* You must be worried about Alicia. Don't you usually administer her meds?

IKE: I do. *(Pause.)* This will all be over soon enough.

MILLIE: Maybe... but...

*(MILLIE'S protestation is abruptly interrupted by the jarring ring of the bar telephone.)*

*The phone's grating, metronomic ringing induces a foreboding silence.)*

RAY: *(To DANNY.)* I think this is for you.

DANNY: *(Points gun at RAY.)* Pick it up.

*(RAY backs slowly behind the bar, toward the phone, his hands raised in a gesture of supplication.)*

RAY: *(Picks up the phone.)* Hello. *(Pause.)* You're speaking to Ray Portilo. I'm the owner of this establishment. *(Pause.)* No one's hurt. *(Pause. Looks at DANNY.)* They'd like to speak with you.

(DANNY lowers gun, starts to move, but is unexpectedly halted by JOE.)

DANNY: What?

JOE: Don't.

DANNY: Why?

BRUNO: Yeah... what?

DANNY: (*Toggles gun over to BRUNO.*) Shut your fucking mouth.

JOE: They don't wanna help. They just wanna get in your head. Control your thoughts.

DANNY: (*To JOE, reassuring.*) No one steers my car. You know that.

JOE: Lies. Distortions. Manipulations. Everything they say.

DANNY: I gotta take this call, bro.

JOE: (*Violently shakes his head.*) I... I... swear I'll kill someone.

DANNY: Whoa... chill... (*Moves closer to JOE.*) They just wanna talk.

JOE: Do it different.

DANNY: (*Annoyed.*) Don't, Joe. Don't you pull this fucking idiot shit with me. Not here. Not now.

JOE: I'm not an idiot.

DANNY: Sorry. Sorry, man. (*Frustrated.*) I didn't mean... shit. You're paintin' me into a corner here.

JOE: (*Points to RAY.*) Speak through him.

DANNY: (*Considers JOE'S suggestion.*) Why not? (*To RAY.*) Tell 'em we only speak through you.

RAY: With all due respect, you might want to reconsider.

DANNY: Just do it.

RAY: (*Takes hand off receiver.*) Officer? They've asked me to speak on their behalf. (*Listening.*) Yes, I understand. They're not going to change their mind. (*Pause, listening.*) They want to know if everyone is okay.

DANNY: What does it look like?

RAY: (*To the phone.*) No one's hurt. (*Pause, looks around the room.*) Six. (*Listens, looks at DANNY.*) Does anyone need food, drink or specialized medical attention?

DANNY: No.

JERRY: What makes you so sure? That old man might have a bum ticker for all you know? I might have asthma.

DANNY: Yeah... and you might have a bullet in your knee if you don't it a rest.

RAY: (*To phone.*) Everyone's fine. (*Listens, to DANNY.*) You guys okay?

DANNY: Peachy.

RAY: (*To phone.*) They're good. (*Listens, face furrows into a concerned brow.*) You're speaking with Sergeant Barbara Porter, lead negotiator of the CNT.

DANNY: Well howdy-fuckin'-do.

RAY: (*Pause.*) Your names?

DANNY: Sure. I'm Cheech... and he's Chong.

RAY: (*Says nothing down the phone, looks earnestly at DANNY.*) Help me out here, guys. It's not a good idea to make her... I mean, them, uncomfortable.

DANNY: Or what?

RAY: Or they won't wait for you to play nice.

BRUNO: SWAT don't screw around, dude.

DANNY: (*Looking at JOE.*) Danny and Joe.

JOE: Why'd you do that? With our names, they have power over us. See, that's why, why, why, a wizard never reveals his true name to anyone.

BRUNO: What the hell is he talking about?

DANNY: (*Calmly.*) One way or the other, they're gonna figure it out. Not point in waiting for the punch-line.

JOE: You told me. You promised.

Danny: Well, I fucked up, didn't I?

JOE: Yeah, yeah, yeah, you eff'd it up bad.

DANNY: Done?

JOE: (*Meekly.*) No. (*Pause.*) Yes.

DANNY: (*To RAY.*) Get on with it.

RAY: (*To the phone.*) Their names are Danny and Joe. (*Listens, looks at DANNY.*) Last names?

DANNY: Danny and Joe.

RAY: (*To the phone.*) Gonna stick with first names for now. (*Listens, looks at DANNY.*) They want to help get this resolved quickly and with no one getting hurt.

DANNY: Sounds good.

RAY: They request a gesture of good faith.

DANNY: Let me guess... let someone walk?

RAY: Exactly.

JERRY: Yeah. Yeah. A good faith gesture. Great idea. I like it.

JOE: Bad idea.

JERRY: What? Are you kidding? It's a hum-fucking-dinger of an idea.

DANNY: Shut up.

JERRY: Are you- *(LAURA roughly grabs JERRY'S arm, puts a finger to her lips gesturing for him to be quiet.)*

RAY: *(To DANNY.)* You want to get you and your brother out of here? You gotta start by cooperating.

DANNY: He's not my brother.

RAY: Well, brother, friend, lover, whatever... you need to take this shit seriously, dude.

JOE: No we don't. *(To DANNY.)* See... give a dog a bone and they'll keep coming back for more... until you've got nothing left to give them... then... *(Loudly.)* BANG!

DANNY: You got a point.

JERRY: A 'point'? You're gonna let 'Rain Man' call the shots?

*(DANNY moves forcibly over to JERRY, gets close up to his face.)*

DANNY: *(To JERRY.)* You're college educated, right? Probably went to one of those big schools out in California. Mommy and Daddy paid for your ride. But instead of going to class, you spent most of your time partyin' with your Frat bros. And when you weren't suckin' down a brew or fucking a cheerleader, I bet you'd hang out on the edge... smoke a little dope, snort a little coke... maybe get into it with some guys from another Frat house. *(Off JERRY'S reaction).* Oh yeah. Bet you could handle yourself too, right? Maybe they even had a cute nickname for you... like 'Spartacus' or 'Bruce Lee'. *(Pause.)* But, something tells me, you've never been in a real fight. You know... the kind where you get jumped by guys with knives. Yeah, you've never been in a fight like that. Never had to go to that place... that place deep inside where you become an animal, where instinct takes over, and you do whatever it takes to survive. You get stabbed in the chest, but the animal takes that knife out and uses it fuck up the guys who put it there. I bet you never done that... have you 'Spartacus'?

JERRY: *(Stares back at DANNY, says nothing.)*

DANNY: (*Shouts.*) HAVE YOU?

JERRY: (*Submissively shakes his head.*)

DANNY: Next time you got something to say... we're gonna find out if 'Spartacus' can really handle himself. Got it?

RAY: Danny... I need to give them an answer.

DANNY: (*Stepping back from JERRY.*) Tell them this: I want two-hundred and eighty three thousand dollars, a lawyer, and a helicopter down here in an hour.

RAY: Danny... please, be realistic.

DANNY: (*Moves toward RAY.*) Keep it real? Okay... how about they start by bringing me some burgers and fries... and (*looks at JOE.*)... a strawberry milkshake. See... I can't think straight on an empty stomach.

RAY: Danny-

DANNY: (*Points gun angrily at RAY.*) TELL THEM!

RAY: (*To the phone.*) They're not willing to release anyone at this time. They want... (*Pause.*) they want you bring them hamburgers and fries.

DANNY: Don't forget the milkshake.

RAY: (*Off a look from DANNY.*) And a strawberry milkshake.

DANNY: Make sure they bring enough for everyone.

RAY: (*To phone.*) Make that order for eight. (*Pause.*) Yes, I understand. (*To DANNY.*) They will do as you requested, but urge you to rethink your position on releasing a hostage.

DANNY: (*Slightly apprehensive.*) A hostage?

BRUNO: Yes. That's what you call folks being held against their will.

DANNY: (*Preoccupied.*) No. (*Looks at his watch.*) I hope there's some drive-thrus open... 'cos if I don't get my burger on, there's gonna be hell to pay.

RAY: *(To phone.)* No deal. *(Pause.)* Anything else you want?

JOE: Yeah. Yeah... ask them to go home.

RAY: *(To phone.)* That's all. *(Puts phone down.)* Danny... take it from me... if you continue to be hostile they'll assume the worse and then... *(Voice trails off.)*

DANNY: What?

RAY: Breach.

DANNY: *(Pause.)* Breach? How fucking stupid are they?

RAY: Nothing 'stupid' about it. If they sense imminent danger, they'll risk a breach in order to save lives.

JOE: That's... that's... that's what happens in the book. But the movie's different; the story changes. No lives are saved. Everyone dies. There's no happy ending.

RAY: What do you mean?

DANNY: He means you guys are full of shit. *(Pause.)* Listen up, people. Be cool and you'll get through this, act like a chump, and you'll be treated like one. *(Points at MILLIE.)* You. Make sure everyone stays hydrated.

MILLIE: *(Nods, understanding)* I can do that.

*(DANNY gestures for JOE to follow him across the room, away from the others. They huddle at the closest table to the door.)*

JOE: *(Checks the ammunition cartridge on his gun.)* Should I make sure the doors are locked?

DANNY: If you need to.

JOE: *(Checks ammo again.)* Uh... do you really think they'll bring us burgers?

DANNY: Why not?

JOE: I dunno. 'Cos you're full of shit.

DANNY: You know that, but they don't.

JOE: *(Checks ammo again.)* I'm not hungry.

DANNY: Me neither.

JOE: Then why?

DANNY: Show 'em who's in charge. Establish dominance... shit like that.

JOE: *(Absentmindedly repeats motion of checking the ammo.)* Well...?

DANNY: Well what?

JOE: What do we want?

DANNY: A way outta here. *(Pause.)* What was that back there?

JOE: Back there?

DANNY: Books? Movie versions? I know sometimes you say things... but even for you that was way out of left field.

JOE: *(Begins to check ammo more frantically.)* It was nothing. Nothing. Just. A. Nothing. *(Body language grows increasingly agitated.)*

DANNY: *(Puts a hand on JOE'S shoulder, tries to make eye contact with him.)* Forget I asked.

JOE: *(Agitation devolving to panic.)* I said it was nothing. Okay? Nothing!

*(DANNY looks around, and notices the others watching with alarm the growing commotion between them.)*

DANNY: What the fuck are you assholes looking at?

*(The people in the bar attempt to avert their attention.)*

*DANNY tries to help JOE sit down, but JOE angrily shrugs him away.*

DANNY *turns to where MILLIE is standing and snaps his fingers at her.*)

DANNY: You.

MILLIE: Me?

DANNY: Yeah, you. Got any paper behind there? Pens? Pencils?

MILLIE: *(Shrugs, looks at RAY for guidance.)*

RAY: We got pens. But no paper.

DANNY: Napkins? Plain napkins?

RAY: Sure we got those.

DANNY: *(To RAY, points at MILLIE.)* Give them to her... and some pens.

JOE: *(Bobbing his head furiously.)* Why don't you leave it alone? I said it was NOTHING!

DANNY: *(Placating to JOE.)* I got it. I got it. *(Snaps fingers again at MILLIE.)* Hey... hurry up.

*(RAY hands pens and napkins to MILLIE, who in turn walks them over to DANNY and JOE.)*

*She puts them down on the table.)*

DANNY *(To JOE, points to the napkins and pens.)* Show me what you see.

JOE: *(Calms momentarily).* I'll show you.

*(DANNY pulls out a chair and gestures for JOE to sit down.)*

*JOE puts his gun down on the table and stares for a moment at the pens and napkins. His agitation slowly dissipates as he picks up a pen and starts to draw.)*

DANNY: *(Tenderly grips JOE'S shoulder.)* Sorry I asked.

*(MILLIE continues to hover. DANNY takes notice.)*

DANNY: What are you waiting for? A 'thank you'?

MILLIE: (To DANNY.) Millie.

DANNY: Who the hell is Millie?

MILLIE: My name is Millie.

DANNY: Millie?

MILLIE: I tend to be more helpful when people call me by my name... Danny.

DANNY: (*Pause.*) Okay... Millie.

MILLIE: (*Starts to turn away, stops.*) Could I... could I speak with you?

DANNY: About?

MILLIE: In private.

DANNY: Take a look around, lady... see any confessionals?

MILLIE: No, but...

DANNY: Anything you gotta say, you can say in front of him.

MILLIE: I get that. I really do. But if you wanna avoid another episode, I'd give him some space to settle.

DANNY: (*Leans in toward MILLIE, speak quietly*) What do you know about it?

MILLIE: My daughter has OCD.

DANNY: OC... what?

MILLIE: Obsessive Compulsive Disorder.

DANNY: So?

MILLIE: (*Studies DANNY sympathetically.*) You really don't know what I'm talking about? (*Looks at JOE.*) Has he ever been tested?

DANNY: What the fuck business is that of yours?

MILLIE: A diagnosis can help give him and you coping tools.

DANNY: (*Pointing to JOE'S drawing.*) Our tools work fine.

MILLIE: That's a band aid.

DANNY: You've got some- (*Pause.*) What do you want?

MILLIE: (*Gestures to where IKE is sitting.*) Ike.

DANNY: What about him?

MILLIE: I think you should let him go.

DANNY: And I think the DH should be abolished. But there ya go, some things are set in stone.

MILLIE: He had a double bypass surgery last year.

DANNY: So, he's got a bum ticker?

MILLIE: Yes, he has a weak heart. And this kind of stress could trigger a cardiac event.

DANNY: (*Looks over at RAY.*) You know, I can't tell if this place is a bar, a courthouse, or an ER.

MILLIE: I used to... (*Pause.*) If he goes in to cardiac arrest, are you just gonna let him die?

DANNY: We'll cross that bridge when we come to it.

MILLIE: Should I tell that to his wife of forty-years?

DANNY: Tell her whatever you like.

MILLIE: Yeah. I'll tell her you were a heartless son-of-a-gun who didn't care if her husband lived or died.

DANNY: Maybe I don't.

MILLIE: Yeah... but maybe you do...

DANNY: (*Glowers angrily at MILLIE for a beat.*) You know nothing about me. (*Looks away, and then to IKE.*) Fine.

(DANNY strides purposefully over to IKE.)

DANNY: You. (*Kicks the table to get his attention.*) Get your shit together... it's time to bounce.

IKE: I beg your pardon?

DANNY: (*Looks exasperatedly at MILLIE.*) Thought you said his heart's for crap... is his hearing fucked too?

IKE: (*Confused, looks to MILLIE.*) What's going on, Millie?

MILLIE: He's letting you go.

IKE: For what reason?

DANNY: What's it matter? You've won the golden ticket. Take it, and get the hell outta here.

IKE: No.

DANNY / MILLIE: What?

(IKE stands up.)

IKE: I will not leave my friends to endure alone.

DANNY: I'm not asking, hoss... I'm tellin'.

IKE: Still, I respectfully decline.

RAY: Ike... please... do what he asks.

IKE: I'd rather not.

ANNIE: Think of Alicia.

IKE: (*Pause.*) She'll understand.

MILLIE: I know you're trying to-

IKE: You're asking me to willfully comply with cowardice.

RAY: Please, Ike. Reconsider.

IKE: Everyone will testify that I stayed of my own volition.

DANNY: (*Puts hand on gun.*) I can make you leave.

IKE: (*Pause.*) I don't doubt it. But that wouldn't satisfy either of us.

*(An oppressive, expectant silence drapes itself over the bar as DANNY and IKE inaudibly size up their options.)*

DANNY: (*Sighs, takes a calming breath.*) To hell with it. You wanna stay? Be my guest.

MILLIE: No. No. Ike... don't.

DANNY: (*To MILLIE.*) You tried. You failed. Get over it.

*(DANNY goes back to where JOE was sitting and stands silently behind him... watching as he continues to draw.*

*IKE sits back down. MILLIE squats beside him.)*

MILLIE: (*To IKE.*) No one would question your courage for leaving.

IKE: When the ship is sinking, women and children go first.

MILLIE: Do you really think Alicia would want you-

IKE: Alicia would agree that the gift of life should be reserved for those that have a life to live.

MILLIE: We all deserve salvation.

IKE: What about Bella? (*Pause.*) You are her 'universe complete'.

MILLIE: Alicia needs you.

IKE: (*Mumbles.*) Not anymore.

MILLIE: What do you mean?

IKE: (*Pause.*) I mean, I could really use a libation, dear.

MILLIE: (*Still concerned.*) Of course.

(MILLIE *straightens herself and goes to the bar.*

RAY *is standing to the side of the bar, whereas BRUNO is slightly behind it. The bottom half of this body concealed.*

BRUNO *furtively steals glances down at something he's holding in his hand.*)

MILLIE: Something's wrong with Ike.

RAY: People can act out of character under stress.

MILLIE: Ray... I'm not a dope.

RAY: Wasn't saying you're-

MILLIE: Point being... above and beyond our present to-do, Ike's not himself.

RAY: Well, what do you think-

BRUNO: (*Muttering to himself.*) Jesus.

RAY: What is it?

BRUNO: (*Discreetly holds up his phone, and then pulls it back down under the bar.*) Just got a text from Shondra. (*Pause.*) We're all over the news, man. (*Pause.*) S'posedly Huey and Dewey over there robbed a bank downtown... and then ... (*as he reads more.*) shot a cop trying to get away.

RAY: Fatal?

BRUNO: 'Fraid so.

RAY: (*Troubled.*) That changes things.

BRUNO: Damn right. Cop killers' are bad news.

RAY: I'm more worried about the guys outside.

MILLIE: Why? They're trying to protect us.

RAY: One of their own is dead. And the lead negotiator... she, (pause.) she won't hesitate to use lethal force.

BRUNO: So what we've got here is a burning house and whole bunch of fuel tanks parked outside.

RAY: I think it gets worst.

MILLIE: How can it possibly get-

RAY: (To BRUNO) What bank was it?

BRUNO: WAMU on Second.

RAY: (Pensive) Knock over a flagship like that you need a professional crew of at least five bandits.

BRUNO: So, where the others?

RAY: There's the rub... what we got here are tourists. No experience. No real planning. Just acting on impulse, driven by desperation.

MILLIE: How can you tell?

RAY: A pro crew wouldn't do this job in midday. And if they did, they sure wouldn't trip the silent alarm. (Holds up one of the bills DANNY gave him) They'd also avoid die packs and tracers.

MILLE: I don't get it. What's the problem with 'tourists'?

RAY: They're unpredictable. Just as likely to roll over, as they are to bite your hand off.

BRUNO: Like the man said... they're desperate.

MILLIE: What do we do?

RAY: Just keep things very, very calm.

BRUNO: Hell with that, man.

RAY: We discussed this already.

BRUNO: Damned if I'm gonna get popped by some cops out for revenge.

MILLIE: I doubt-

BRUNO: You doubt? *(Pause.)* All due respect Millie... if the 'cavalry' charges in guns blazing, they won't discrimiJoe between those two and the big black dude.

RAY: B...

BRUNO: Hell, Ray... you know the score.

RAY: That's not gonna happen.

BRUNO: You said it... they're blind with righteous rage.

RAY: It won't go down like that. *(Pause.)* Not again.

BRUNO *(Takes a deep calming breath.)* Shit takes a hard left turn, we're taking care of business.

RAY: *(Earnest.)* Goes without saying.

BRUNO: *(Exhales.)* Good.

RAY: *(To MILLIE.)* I need you to help these folks keep their cool.

MILLIE: Sure. *(Pause.)* I can do that.

RAY: *(Tenderly, tentatively, places his hand on MILLIE'S.)* This time tomorrow, everything'll be back to normal... or... close to it.

MILLIE: I hope you're right. *(Pause.)* Gonna see if those two *(gestures to JERRY and LAURA)* need anything.

RAY: *(Nods, and slowly removes his hand from MILLIE'S.)* Good idea.

*(RAY moves behind the bar and absentmindedly picks up a glass and starts to clean it. His eyes never leave MILLIE as she walks over to LAURA and JERRY'S table.)*

MILLIE: *(Kindly)* How ya holdin' up?

JERRY: Never better.

MILLIE: (*To LAURA.*) And you?

LAURA: Okay. (*Pause.*) I mean, I know I should be scared, but... it's kinda exciting.

MILLIE: I'd rather get my kicks the old fashioned way.

LAURA: But... doesn't it make you feel alive?

MILLIE: Yeah, and I'd like to keep it that way.

LAURA: I-

JERRY: Tell me something... how'd you persuade those douchebags to let the old guy go?

MILLIE: I asked.

JERRY: And they granted your wish out of the kindness of their hearts?

MILLIE: 'Please' and 'Thank you' can go a long way.

JERRY: Courtesy, my ass. There has to be a quid pro quo.

MILLIE: Why? Because they're 'bad guys'?

JERRY: Exactly.

ANNE: Well, you see 'bad', I see 'misunderstood'.

JERRY: Right, right... I say tomato and you say tomato.

MILLIE: As my mom used to say to me... Everything rotten was once pure.

JERRY: And your point is?

MILLIE: Treat them decent, and they'll act human.

LAURA: (*Pause, looking at JOE.*) They seem pretty harmless to me.

MILLIE: I didn't say they were harmless. (*Quiets her voice.*) We're all in this cluster fudge, 'cos they robbed a bank.

LAURA: Whoa... no shit?

JERRY: (*Thinking.*) So, they need money.

MILLIE: You think?

JERRY: A man with a need for money is open to reason and negotiation.

MILLIE: And I'm sure those outside are banking on it. Forgive the pun!

JERRY: (*Lost in thought.*) Uh-huh.

MILLIE: (*Looks at both JERRY and LAURA.*) You'll be telling this story at cocktail parties before you know it... and it'll make a great tale to share with your kids one day.

LAURA: (*Scoffs.*) Cocktail parties... sure. Kids, nuh-ah.

JERRY: (*Off LAURA'S response.*) Yeah, well, uh, we'd have to get hitched first, before... all that other stuff.

LAURA: Married? Really?

JERRY: (*To MILLIE.*) We're all good...

MILLIE: Okey dokey. (*Smiling.*) Hang in there, alright?

(*MILLIE moves back toward the bar where RAY and BRUNO are stationed.*)

LAURA: (*To JERRY.*) Was that a proposal?

JERRY: Just playing along.

LAURA: You were very convincing.

JERRY: I- (*Pause.*) I learned from a pro.

LAURA: Touché.

JERRY: (*Straightens.*) I think I can get us outta here.

LAURA: How?

JERRY: By playing a game of deal or no deal.

LAURA: They don't look like they're into game-playing.

JERRY: Oh... is that... is that genuine concern?

LAURA: A pro... remember?

JERRY: Right.

LAURA: A pro, who is genuinely concerned for the well-being of her benefactor.

JERRY: *(Pause.)* Wish me luck.

LAURA: Get 'em tiger.

*(JERRY slowly pulls back from the table, stands and cautiously moves toward DANNY and JOE.)*

*DANNY notices JERRY coming. He visibly tightens.*

*JERRY holds out his hand, in which he is holding a white napkin. He waves it above his head in a gesture of surrender.*

*JERRY points to a chair next to DANNY.)*

JERRY: You mind?

DANNY: Two's company. Three's a pain in the ass.

JERRY: Look, I think we got off on the wrong foot.

*(Ignoring DANNY'S clear displeasure, JERRY pulls out the chair and slowly sits down.)*

JERRY: I said some knuckleheaded things in the heat of the moment, I'm sorry. I was just, you know...

DANNY: You got scared and acted like a bitch.

JERRY: One way to look at it.

DANNY: No... that's the only way to look at it.

JOE: Apology accepted. Thanks. *(Goes back to drawing.)*

JERRY: (*To DANNY.*) See, there ya go. We're all human... we all make mistakes. But what separates us from the apes, is our ability to forgive and forget, right?

JOE: Actually, it's a few Y chromosomes in our DNA.

DANNY: Okay... enough with the Curious George bullshit. (*To JERRY.*) Spit it out.

JERRY: I want to ask you a question.

DANNY: Need a microphone?

JERRY: It's a sensitive question.

DANNY: Do I not look like a sensitive guy?

JERRY: (*Pause.*) Are you in this jam, 'cos of money?

DANNY: (*Takes a deep breath, shifts in his seat.*) Now, either you got coconut-sized cojones, or you're the dumbest fuck I've ever met.

JERRY: Whoa, hold on now... let's keep the peace. My questi-

JOE: Yes.

JERRY: Yes?

JOE: We're here 'cos of money. For money. Through money.

DANNY: Jesus, Joe.

JOE: (*Shrugs.*) He asked. Deserves to know why we're keeping him here.

DANNY: Let me make those decisions, okay?

JOE: Sure. (*Goes back to drawing.*)

JERRY: (*Pause.*) How much do you need?

DANNY: More than you can afford, pal.

JERRY: Don't be so sure about that.

JOE: \$284,154... and change.

DANNY: Dammit, Joe. Didn't we just-

JOE: Oh. Yeah. Sorry.

JERRY: I have access to significant funds.

DANNY: (*Pause.*) Okay...?

JERRY: If... if you let me and my... my, girlfriend go... I'll get you a check for 280K, as soon as-

JOE: \$284,154... and change.

JERRY: Whatever the exact number is... I can get it for you.

DANNY: And what good does that do me in the clink?

JERRY: Like the guy said, let some people walk and they'll ease up on you. In a couple of years you get out, and *boom*... you'll have a nest egg waiting for you.

DANNY: Just do my two year bit, and... 'boom'. Right?

JERRY: I'm just saying... you gotta think long term.

JOE: He's right.

DANNY: (*Pause.*) Why should we trust you?

JERRY: What have you got to lose?

DANNY: Leverage.

JERRY: I'm following; we're assets... and you don't wanna sacrifice something valuable based on speculation.

DANNY: Learn you that in business school?

JERRY: Here's the thing... I'm the king of turning speculation into success.

DANNY: Yeah, how's that?

JERRY: I'm a mortgage lender. I help people transform dreams into reality.

DANNY: *(Suddenly agitated.)* Yeah, by fucking them in the ass, after slippin' them a roofie.

JERRY: What are you talking about?

DANNY: You're a matchstick man.

JERRY: I run a legitimate business, my friend.

DANNY: Bullshit. You spin illusions and make people so dizzy with hope they forget to check the small print.

JERRY: That's called being a salesman.

DANNY: No that's called being a scumbag.

JERRY: Hey man, I'm not asking for a Bromance, just your trust.

DANNY: I'd trust a pedophile over you.

JERRY: Say what?

DANNY: Negotiations are over, Wall Street. Take a hike.

JERRY: Maybe I wasn't clear enough...

DANNY: No, let me be clear... we're done.

JERRY: Gimme a chance to explain...

DANNY: *(Raised voice.)* I said, bounce, motherfucker.

*(Noticing the commotion, RAY and BRUNO step out from behind the bar.)*

RAY: Everything okay?

JERRY: We're cool. Just two guys shootin' the shit.

*(JERRY gets up and backs slowly to his table. He sits down gingerly, like a child who has been spanked.)*

*(DANNY stands, addresses the group.)*

DANNY: Listen up, assholes... This isn't the goddamn high school cafeteria. So, stay put, unless I say otherwise. Do I make myself clear?

*(Everyone silently nods in understanding.)*

MILLIE *takes two cups of coffee and slowly moves from behind the bar toward where JOE and DANNY are sitting.)*

JOE: *(Looks up from his drawing.)* You handled that well.

DANNY: Glad you approve, Joe.

JOE: They're terrified. *(Pause.)* I'd be too.

DANNY: No one's gonna get hurt.

JOE: Someone already did.

DANNY: It was you or him.

JOE: He was telling us to stand down.

DANNY: I was trying to scare him... I didn't mean to actually... you know...

JOE: Kill him?

DANNY: I- *(Pause, notices that MILLIE is now standing directly behind him. To MILLIE.)* What part of 'stay put' didn't you understand?

MILLIE: I... I wanted to offer you boys some coffee.

DANNY: Do I look-

JOE: Thank you, Millie. We'd both love some coffee. Wouldn't we, Danny?

DANNY: *(Sighs.)* Sure, fuck it, why not?

*(MILLIE leans over, to hand them the coffee. As she does so, she accidentally spills some on to the table.)*

MILLIE: Oh fudge!

(MILLIE leans across the table, absentmindedly grabs the napkins JOE had been drawing on, and uses them to mop up the spilt coffee.)

JOE slowly stands, and glares balefully at what MILLIE has done. He starts to make a low, guttural sound of carnal anguish.)

DANNY: Oh, Shit.

MILLIE: What did I do?

DANNY: The drawings.

MILLIE: (Looks down at her hands. Notices the crumpled napkins. To JOE.) I'm so sorry, I didn't see them there.

JOE: (Moan wanes. Angrily to MILLIE.) You did it on purpose.

DANNY: Joe. It was an accident.

JOE: You brainless b-b-bitch.

(JOE irately shoves his chair aside and moves menacingly closer to MILLIE.)

MILLIE staggers backward alarmed. She looks to RAY and BRUNO for help.)

MILLIE: I'm sorry, it was an accident-

JOE: SHUT UP!

(Takes gun out of his waistband and points it at MILLIE'S head. She staggers back into a chair.)

DANNY steps cautiously toward JOE.)

DANNY: Mistakes happen, Joe. You know that.

JOE: No... no... she wants to take it all away. Burn it.

DANNY: That's Millie. She works here. She's safe. (Calming whisper.) Ride the wave, Van Joe. Ride the wave.

JOE: (Steadying himself. To MILLIE.) Put them down.

MILLIE: *(Nods compliantly.)*

*(MILLIE, carefully places the wet soiled napkins at the end of the bar. And then backs behind the bar.)*

*JOE walks over. Puts his gun down on the counter. He picks up his damp works of art and handles them like a delicate flower.*

*Distracted by the napkins, JOE does not notice BRUNO inching toward the end of the bar. DANNY does...)*

DANNY: *(Shouting.)* JOE! Your gun!

RAY: Bruno! No!

*(BRUNO snatches the gun before JOE can react. He points the gun at JOE, and steps out from behind the bar and positions himself next to the window by the front door. JOE stands like a shield between BRUNO and DANNY.)*

*DANNY struggles to get a clear sight on BRUNO.)*

BRUNO: Put it down, dude.

DANNY: You first, slick.

RAY: Do what he says, Bruno.

BRUNO: Hey, man! You heard; they're cop killers.

JOE: Killers?

BRUNO: Yeah, or did you forget about the cop you shot.

JOE: Killers?

DANNY: He's trying to scare you.

JOE: I knew he was hurt... but... b-but... killers?

BRUNO: *(Squinting.)* Put it down, or I put him down.

DANNY: And then I put you down.

BRUNO: You really gonna let me pop your buddy?

DANNY: You won't do it.

BRUNO: The hell I won't. (*Squints again. Glances over at MILLIE.*) Turn the lights up, Millie.

*(MILLIE reaches over to the wall behind her and turns up the lights.*

*The spot where BRUNO stands brightens considerably. His body is suddenly silhouetted against the window.)*

RAY: (*Alarmed.*) Bruno! (*Shouts urgently.*) Get down, now!

BRUNO: (*Confused.*) Get down? Why?

*(The lights fade quickly.*

*A loud, piercing shot rings out and then a low, painful scream follows. And then... silence.)*

**ACT TWO**FADE IN LIGHTS:

(RAY, LAURA, JERRY and IKE are all seated nervously around a table at the center of the stage. Perched behind them, sitting cross-legged on the bar, is DANNY. Tension is palpable)

RAY: (*Quiet anger.*) He needs medical attention.

DANNY: You don't say.

RAY: What are you waiting for?

DANNY: I think you should calm down, Ray.

LAURA: Why wait?

DANNY: 'Cos that's what they want.

RAY: This isn't a game of chicken.

DANNY: Tell that to the Angry Birds outside.

RAY: Let him die, you might as well be the shooter.

DANNY: Maybe you should be asking what they're waiting for.

JERRY: He has a point.

LAURA: (*To JERRY.*) Really?

JERRY: Think about it. They just shot at a shadow, without warning. And then... nothing. What the hell?

IKE: He's right; the action and lack of reaction flies in the face of reason.

RAY: They... um, they... they reacted to a perceived threat.

JERRY: Okay, but, why the radio silence?

DANNY: Yeah, Ray... why?

RAY: (*Uncertain.*) Hard to say.

DANNY: Here's what I think... one of their guys left the reservation without permission. And now they're trying to flush their shit away before it leaves a stink.

LAURA: Or... Maybe the phone's broken.

JERRY: Only one way to find out.

DANNY: Phone's fine.

JERRY: How do you know?

DANNY: (*Firm.*) 'Cos I know.

RAY: You're making a mistake.

DANNY: And you're really pissing me off.

(MILLIE enters. Her apron is doused in blood. JOE trundles behind her. Both appear grave.)

RAY: (*Anxious.*) How is he?

MILLIE: (*A disconsolate shake of the head.*) Did they call?

DANNY: Nope.

MILLIE: Why not?

JERRY: That's the two hundred and eighty-three thousand dollar question.

DANNY: (*To MILLIE.*) Is he... you know... bad?

MILLIE: (*Looking at RAY.*) He's in a coma. (*Pause.*) It's ugly. Really, really ugly.

RAY: But if we can get him to a hospital.

MILLIE: Maybe... I... don't know. I... I'm not a doctor. But...

RAY: But what?

MILLIE: Honestly... I'm surprised he's still breathing.

RAY: He's a fighter. He can pull through.

(DANNY hops off the bar, and pulls JOE aside.)

DANNY: You okay?

JOE: (*Disturbed.*) You ever see the Zapruder video?

DANNY: (*Confused.*) The, uh, the JFK assassination?

JOE: Yeah...

DANNY: (*Baffled.*) What about it?

JOE: In slow motion, you can see the back of his head come right off. And then, his wife... she like, goes and tries to get it... put it back on or something.

DANNY: The fuck?

JOE: I wanted to do the same thing after the bullet hit his head.

DANNY: Joe... it wasn't our fault.

JOE: Yeah it is.

DANNY: Listen, we can't-

(DANNY is cut off as the phone rings.)

DANNY: (*Stares at RAY.*) Better late than never.

RAY: You gonna answer it?

DANNY: (*Simply stares back at RAY.*)

RAY: (*Through gritted teeth.*) Ridiculous.

(RAY stands and walks over behind the bar. Picks up the phone.)

RAY: This is Ray. (*Listens.*) No. You got one of the hostages. And he needs immediate medical attention. (*Pause.*) What the hell took you so long?

DANNY: Ray! Stay on topic.

RAY: (*calming breath*) Line went down 'cos of the storm. (*Listens.*) I'll let 'em know. (*To Danny.*) They're sending an ambulance. (*Pause.*) And they want you to let us go. End this thing peacefully.

DANNY: (*Sniggers.*) Peacefully? Coming from the grunts who just put a round into you're buddy's skull?

RAY: (*To DANNY.*) Still don't get it, do you?

JOE: I do.

RAY: (*To JOE.*) That right?

JOE: I think so. (*To DANNY.*) I do. Don't I?

DANNY: (*Looking at RAY.*) He's mind-fucking you.

JOE: Well, tell him not to.

DANNY: (*To RAY.*) What's your point?

RAY: Killing a cop changed the rules. To them, there's only an outcome now: life in prison or six feet under.

DANNY: (*Pause.*) Tell them this... if they don't give me and my pal here safe passage outta here in one hour, I'm gonna kill someone. And then every hour, on the hour after that, until someone over there gets me (*shouts*) what I fucking want.

RAY: Please.

DANNY: (*Shouting.*) Do it!

(*RAY, cradling the phone, quietly repeats DANNY'S demands.*)

(*JOE shifts closer to DANNY.*)

JOE: I think it's time to go.

DANNY: Wave the white flag?

JOE: Maybe.

DANNY: Wake up, Joe! We did a bad, bad thing. And one way or the other, they're gonna fuck us, and fuck us hard.

JOE: I don't see how making things worse, are gonna make things better.

DANNY: Okay... Okay... so we turn ourselves in. *(Pause.)* After they spend a few weeks beating our asses behind closed doors, there'll be trial. And trust me lady justice will be blind as a motherfucker that day. After that, you'll be sent to WA-state, where you'll spend the rest of your shitty-ass days wasting away on death row. And then... after all that waiting and worry is over, they'll lay you down in a bed, stick an IV in your arm, and put you to sleep like a dog. Like a fucking dog. And you know what the worst part is, Joe? The world will keep on turning, and not a single person will shed a tear for the guy who robbed a bank and killed a cop.

JOE: You'd shed a tear.

DANNY: I'll already be dead.

JOE: I... I... someone would?

DANNY: Who? Sharon? Ricky?

JOE: You swore to never say his name again.

DANNY: Yeah, well ain't that a bitch.

JOE: I wanna go home now.

DANNY: We can't.

JOE: Never?

DANNY: *(Pause.)* Check the doors again, would you?

JOE: *(Quietly.)* Roger that.

*(JOE checks the front door, and then heads off stage to check the back door.)*

*DANNY moves back to toward the table at the center of the room.*

*Meanwhile, RAY is wrapping-up up the call.*

*MILLIE, slumps down on a chair, next to IKE.)*

MILLIE: *(To IKE.)* Can I get you something?

IKE: New patrons would be nice.

MILLIE: *(Smiles.)* I'll look into it.

LAURA: *(Shivers.)* Think they'll let me put my coat on?

JERRY: Just ask.

LAURA: Doesn't look like the band's taking requests.

JERRY: Pfft... since when have you been a shrinking violet?

LAURA: *(Looking at her watch.)* Since about... I dunno..., sometime between half-past getting taken hostage, and quarter to seeing a guy get shot in the head.

JERRY: Just saying... Act like a victim, you get bubkus. Show some balls, and you'll get some respect.

LAURA: No... you get screwed.

JERRY: You'd know.

LAURA: For real?

IKE: Perhaps what your lady friend is suggesting is that our collective well-being is better served through compliance, than conflict.

JERRY: Action always speaks louder than words.

IKE: Your last 'action' with our hosts suggests otherwise.

JERRY: *(Pause.)* Whatevs.

LAURA: *(To IKE.)* Ike. That you're name?

IKE: Yes, Ma'am.

LAURA: Ma'am? I like that. Very old fashioned.

IKE: What else would you expect from an old, curmudgeonly canine?

MILLIE: Ike... you're more sweet puppy, than cranky dog.

IKE: Perhaps. But, like all animals, I'm capable of going into a feral rage, if the circumstances dictate.

MILLIE: Nah... still can't imagine you all bent outta shape.

IKE: When pushed to a point beyond reason, we're all capable for dreadful deeds.

LAURA: It's like with the preschoolers I used to teach... when they saw red, watch out. There was no reasoning. You just had to give them space to cool off.

JERRY: Didn't know you were a teacher.

LAURA: For three years... that's why I'm so good with little boys.

JERRY: Cute.

IKE: For how long have you been an item?

JERRY: Technically-

LAURA: It's complicated.

IKE: How so?

LAURA: Let's just say our relationship is unconventional.

IKE: Forgive my prying, dear.

LAURA: Oh please... I'm the one who should apologize for acting all mysterious.

IKE: Such is the prerogative of all women.

(DANNY suddenly squats between IKE and MILLIE...  
startling MILLIE.)

DANNY: Okay Nurse Betty... what's the diagnosis?

IKE: Are you always so flippant, young man?

DANNY: Sorry, but I wasn't paging Dr. Quincy.

IKE: Ha! Freud said only the truly ignorant use sarcasm as a tool for abuse.

DANNY: Isn't he the quack who used to snort dust and fuck horses?

IKE: We all have our crosses to bear. But at least he had something of substance to offer the world.

MILLIE: Ike... I've got it. (To DANNY.) What do you want to know?

DANNY: Is he gonna live?

MILLIE: I told you... I'm not a doctor.

DANNY: And I'm not John Dillinger, but here we are.

MILLIE: (Pause, looking over at RAY.) Maybe... maybe if he can make it to surgery on time... they could. But the ambulance will have to get here soon.

DANNY: Even so... what are his chances?

MILLIE: I can't say.

DANNY: Guess.

MILLIE: Why?

DANNY: 'Cos I'm telling you to.

MILLIE: (Looks over to RAY again for guidance)

RAY: Go on...

MILLIE: Maybe 5%... at best. Even then... there's gotta be substantial brain damage.

DANNY: So, he's fucked?

RAY: Mind your tongue.

(JOE steps, slowly awkwardly back into the room. He appears distant, almost in shock.)

DANNY: Joe? You okay?

JOE: (To MILLIE.) Is he married?

MILLIE: Yes... to Jenny.

JOE: Kids?

RAY: A boy.

JOE: What's his name?

DANNY: Joe!

JOE: (Ignoring DANNY.) His name?

RAY: Raymond Jermain Baptiste. But they call him, 'RJ'.

JOE: Well, at least he'll have his Ma.

RAY: What was that?

JOE: One's better than none, right?

RAY: He's not dead yet.

JOE: Danny... you remember Rosebud?

DANNY: The dog from back in the old place?

JOE: They kept her tied up outside all the time. (Pause.) Even when she got too old to stand and spent most of her days laying in her own piss and poop.

DANNY: This isn't the time for a trip down memory lane.

JOE: It was fall, I think. I was raking leaves and Rosebud was out there as usual. She'd just crapped on herself and was trying to move away from her mess. She looked pretty pathetic. So, I helped her. Right after I did, she let out this little bark... I thought it was her way of saying thanks (Pause.) But when she did it again, I heard something else. So, later that night I sat with her again. This time I bought a little bacon with me... she liked that. And when she

was done, I held her tight to my chest... really, really tight. *(Pause.)* She didn't struggle... not one bit. *(Pause.)* You see when she barked... it wasn't to say 'thanks'... she was really saying... 'help me'. So I did... it was the merciful thing to do. *(Pause.)* It was the merciful thing to do.

DANNY: *(Pause.)* Joe... you did check the doors, right?

JOE: *(Slightly rocking.)* It was the merciful thing to do.

DANNY: Joe?

MILLIE: He's doing that thing again. What's going on?

*(DANNY moves in front of JOE, trying to look him in the eye. He holds JOE by the shoulders.)*

DANNY: Van Joe... speak to me.

JOE: Most of the stuff they show you in movies is BS, right? Not everything. No... I mean, it's true... a pillow really does muffle a gun shot.

*(DANNY moves closer to JOE. He slowly looks him over. He plucks a small feather out of JOE'S hair.)*

DANNY: *(Quietly)* What the fuck, Joe?

JOE: It was the merciful thing to do.

DANNY: *(Pause.)* Shit a fucking brick.

RAY: *(Concerned)*. What's he talking about?

DANNY: Your friend.

RAY: Bruno? What happened?

DANNY: I think... he... um... shit...

JOE: It was the merciful thing to do.

RAY: *(Pause.)* No... no... what happened?

*(MILLIE shoots up and moves with urgency to go check on BRUNO. DANNY intercepts her.)*

MILLIE: Let go.

DANNY: Leave it be.

MILLIE: I need to check on him.

DANNY: There's nothing to check.

RAY: *(To DANNY)* You killed him.

DANNY: Hell I did.

RAY: *(Steps closer to DANNY.)* You bought this... this... this shit to my doorstep.

DANNY: *(Holds gun up to RAY'S face.)* Back off.

MILLIE: Ray!

RAY: It's okay. I'm under control. I'm under control.

*(RAY and DANNY square off. DANNY holds his ground and gun steady. RAY eventually takes a step back.)*

DANNY: 'attaboy. Now... take a seat.

RAY: I'm not tired.

DANNY: I'm not playing.

MILLIE: Ray... please... come, be with me.

RAY: *(Pointing finger at DANNY.)* We're not done.

DANNY: Yeah we are.

*(MILLIE takes RAY by the shoulders and tenderly guides him away from DANNY to the table furthest from the bar.)*

*RAY slumps down, dejected.*

*JOE, moves next to DANNY, they quietly speak to one another behind the bar.)*

RAY: I should've listened to him.

MILLIE: And done what? Get yourself killed?

RAY: We should've done acted sooner.

MILLIE: He did act. And look what happened.

RAY: (*Sighs*) Jesus... what am I gonna tell her?

MILLIE: That he died trying to save us.

RAY: She'll still blame me.

MILLIE: (*Perplexed*) Why?

RAY: Shondra felt he could do better than this place.

MILLIE: But he loves being here.

RAY: Love's got nothing to do with it. Did I ever tell you where he worked before here?

MILLIE: No. We never... I never thought to ask.

RAY: He was the executive Chef at The Lincoln.

MILLIE: THE Lincoln.

RAY: Yep. Professionally trained, and all.

MILLIE: The same Lincoln that burned down during the... (*realizing*), the riots.

RAY: One and the same.

MILLIE: Good Lord... he's that guy, isn't he?

RAY: Was. Was that guy.

MILLIE: I remember the video. He got right between those officers and the rioters.

RAY: They weren't rioters. They were kids.

MILLIE: That's not what the news said.

RAY: Trust me.

MILLIE: They tried to charge him with assault, right?

RAY: Charges were dropped.

MILLIE: That's right... 'cos another officer, one of their own, testified on his behalf.

RAY: Couldn't let an innocent man get sold down river.

MILLIE: 'Seattle Serpico'... that was the headline, right?

RAY: Uh-huh.

MILLIE: Weren't they charged with-

RAY: Nothing stuck. My word against theirs.

MILLIE: What actually happened?

RAY: Nasty things, Millie. Very nasty things.

MILLIE: To Bruno.

RAY: He was just the tip of a very deep, deadly iceberg.

MILLIE: I had no idea. You've never spoken about the past.

RAY: 'Cos that was then... this is me.

MILLIE: So, Bruno ditched the Lincoln, for... for this? Why?

RAY: I saved his life. So, in return, he became my not-so-silent, silent partner. *(Pause.)* I wasn't all that comfortable with the whole 'blood oath' thing. But, somewhere along the lines we went from being odd bedfellows... to...

MILLIE: The odd couple.

RAY: Yeah... Something like that.

MILLIE: *(Smiling... puts a hand on RAY'S)* And there I was thinking that dudes don't do feelings.

RAY: Not well. *(Pause.)* Still, I wish... wish I'd told him-

MILLIE: (*Reassuring.*) He knew.

RAY: Maybe... but in my experience, words left unsaid become the seeds of regret.

MILLIE: Then maybe it's time for you to speak your mind.

RAY: (*Moves slightly closer to MILLIE.*) You're right. I should.

(*JERRY suddenly sits up.*)

JERRY: Hey, can someone turn the heat up in here?

MILLIE: (*Frustrated, looks over her shoulder at JERRY*) Then put a darn jacket on, snowflake.

RAY: Whoa... Millie...!

(*DANNY jumps over the bar, on high alert.*)

DANNY: Hell's going on?

JERRY: Nothing. Just asked if-

MILLIE: He wanted to know why it's so cold... and I jumped down his throat... because... well... (*To JERRY*). I'm sorry.

JERRY: Right. (*To RAY.*) So? The heat?

IKE: He's right... the room does feels cooler.

RAY: (*To DANNY.*) Mind if I take a look?

DANNY: Knock yourself out.

(*RAY gets up, and moves behind the bar to check a thermostat.*)

(*LAURA moves in the other direction back to the table JERRY is sitting at.*)

RAY: (*Perplexed.*) Gotta be a mistake.

MILLIE: Ray?

RAY: Control says it's turned up to 72. But the actual room temperature is 50.

MILLIE: Maybe there's something screwy with the boiler.

RAY: Got it fixed up last winter, remember? Should be in perfect working order.

JERRY: Well, just like everything else in this place... it's fucked up.

RAY: Could be the snow... overworking the central ducts.

IKE: It's not broken.

DANNY: Come again?

IKE: (To RAY.) Your boiler is controlled by a generalized terminal in this building, correct?

RAY: Last I looked.

IKE: Those terminals are connected to a central grid... which subsequently is run by Seattle Electricity Board.

JERRY: What's that got to do with-

RAY: (Realizing.) They shut it down.

JERRY: Who did?

LAURA: The men behind the flashing lights outside.

JERRY: The police? Why?

RAY: Standard operating procedure.

JERRY: Freezing my ass is their idea of saving us?

DANNY: (To JERRY.) Shut up. (To DANNY.) What's the deal?

RAY: This is what they do.

DANNY: Care to elaborate...?

RAY: Well... in cases of-

IKE: ( *Holding up his index finger* ) One... set up a safe perimeter. Two, establish contact. Three, modulate speech patterns for the HT. Four, listen to set of demands. Do not capitulate. Respectfully deflect, postpone and modify. But never capitulate. Five... do not use the term, 'surrender' to the HT, always modify with something less loaded, such as 'come out'. Six, have SWAT develop incursion plans. Seven, in protracted negotiations with stubborn HTs, start to withdraw amenities such as heat and water. Eight... ( *Pause.* )... in the event that the situation turns imminently hostile... breach.

*(A small, stunned silence blankets the room. RAY, specifically seems shocked, by IKE's bizarre outpouring.)*

RAY: Goddamn, Ike. You just recited the standard playbook. How do you even know all that stuff?

IKE: Prior to teaching, I used to consult with the FBI; specifically, hostile negotiation psychology.

DANNY: So, what? It was your idea to turn off the heat?

IKE: You're giving me too much credit, sonny.

DANNY: ( *Intrigued.* ) But you know their moves, right?

IKE: Every negotiation has its nuances.

DANNY: Okay... but if you were out there, what'd you be telling them?

IKE: ( *Pause.* ). Did you know there's a 95% success rate in resolving a hostage negotiation without incident?

DANNY: You saying I'm betting against the house?

IKE: I'm saying, 5% of the time the wheels come off. And those are odds I stopped playing long ago.

DANNY: Well it's time to sack up and get back to the table.

IKE: ( *Pause.* ) Son... Last time I gave my counsel in such matters, a mother and her three sons were hacked to death with Samurai sword. So, no offense, but I'd rather not

play. *(Pause.)* You wanna get into their heads? *(Points to RAY.)* Ask him.

DANNY: I know what he thinks already. *(Holds up his hands in a mocking gesture)* 'Come out'... right?

RAY: If you ask me, they're done negotiating.

DANNY: They are? Or you are?

RAY: It's not about me.

DANNY: Give that man a prize. *(Pause. To RAY.)* Get back on the phone, and tell them, I executed your friend. So, no need for an ambulance.

RAY: You're kidding me?

DANNY: *(Firmer.)* And, in thirty minutes, I'm gonna do another, unless they give me what I want.

RAY: They will breach.

DANNY: Like fuck they will.

RAY: Trust me.

DANNY: You're bluffing.

RAY: I'm done lip-syncing for you.

DANNY: Pick up the phone Millie Vanilli.

RAY: No.

*(DANNY grabs MILLIE forcibly and sits her down in front of him.)*

*RAY, gestures to move forward, but stops short when DANNY points his weapon at the back of MILLIE's head.)*

DANNY: Make the damn call.

*(RAY picks up the phone and starts speaking quietly.)*

*JOE kneels down beside MILLIE. He reaches out and holds up her hand.)*

DANNY: Joe... stay outta this.

JOE: She's scared.

DANNY: That's the idea.

JOE: *(To MILLIE.)* I don't want you to be scared.

MILLIE: That makes two of us.

JOE: He's just trying to get your friend to do what he wants.

MILLIE: No offense honey... but would you mind, you know... shutting up.

JOE: I understand. Sorry.

*(RAY puts down the phone. He looks over anxiously at MILLIE.)*

DANNY: *(To RAY.)* So?

RAY: *(Pointing to MILLIE.)* I did what you asked.

*(DANNY pulls the gun down to his side, and away from MILLIE'S head.)*

*MILLIE, lurches forward, and takes a deep, syncopated breath.*

*JOE attempts to help MILLIE up, but she dismissively shrugs him off, and helps herself up. She moves toward where RAY is standing.*

*JOE takes a small, almost shameful step back.)*

DANNY: *(To RAY.)* Spill it.

RAY: They're working on your request.

DANNY: Working?

RAY: Yeah. Working.

JOE: *(Gestures toward IKE.)* He did say they deflect.

DANNY: Wonder if they can deflect a bullet from their heads.

MILLIE: Coffee?

DANNY: What?

MILLIE: Do you want some coffee?

DANNY: Again, with the coffee. What the fuck?

JOE: Cream and sugar, please.

*(DANNY grabs JOE by the arm, and pulls him toward the corner of the room. They speak in private.)*

DANNY: Cream and sugar?

JOE: What?

DANNY: Does this look like a Starbucks to you?

JOE: Just trying to be friendly.

DANNY: C'mon! You think they give a damn about you?

JOE: I don't know. Maybe...

DANNY: *(Tapping JOE's forehead.)* You're the bad guy. You took them hostage. You killed their friend.

JOE: You were the one who insisted they stay.

DANNY: As far as they're concerned, we're one and the same.

JOE: *(Pause.)* Where will we go, once we get out? Home?

DANNY: Not sure.

JOE: I'd like to go back to the shop tomorrow. There's a '62 Harvey Davidson Shuvlehead, some guy bought in. Wanted a red dragon painted on the-

DANNY: For Chrissakes, the shop's closed, Joe. How many times do I have to tell you?

JOE: But that's why we were at the bank, right... To get money to pay the mortgage?

DANNY: And how did that work out?

JOE: After we get outta here, we could... could try again.

DANNY: Joe... Van Joe... we're not... God, I'm sorry.

JOE: What for?

DANNY: Everything.

JOE: You lost me.

DANNY: Yea. That's the problem. (*Pause.*) Okay... (*Looking over at the others.*) Who's it gonna be?

JOE: Be?

DANNY: In thirty... (*Looks at watch*), make that twenty-four minutes, one of them's gotta go.

JOE: Go where?

DANNY: You know...

JOE: Execution?

DANNY: (*Slightly cringes.*) Yeah.

JOE: I don't think you can do that, Danny.

DANNY: Bed's made. (*Pause.*) I say we pop the loudmouth.

JOE: I don't think you can 'pop' anyone, Danny.

DANNY: You sound like a broken record.

JOE: But you can't do it.

DANNY: Can't do what? Kill? What makes you so sure?

JOE: You're not a murderer.

DANNY: Mercy-killing some brain-dead guy doesn't make you the *Terminator*. (Pause.) You'd be surprised what I'm capable of. In fact, you know what I'm capable of.

JOE: (Pause.) I once read that soldiers in a firing squad sometimes mix blanks with live rounds. That way, they don't know for sure if theirs was the kill shot. Weird, right? They got no problem killing in battle, but when it comes to an execution, they wig out.

DANNY: Your point?

JOE: Some of us are soldiers... and some are executioners.

DANNY: You're right about that, Joe. So, why don't you be a 'good soldier', and go stand sentry by the door. Keep an eye on the outside.

JOE: But what about...

DANNY: I'll figure it out.

JOE: But I'm worried...

DANNY: Don't be. I got it under control.

JOE: (Nods.) Under control.

(JOE moves closer to the front door, to assume sentry duty.)

DANNY sits at the table closest to the front door.

MILLIE swings by and brings his coffee.

MILLIE, uninvited, takes a seat opposite DANNY.)

DANNY: (Upon noticing MILLIE.) Didn't ask for company, sweetheart.

MILLIE: Nor did we, honey.

DANNY: Whatever you're selling... I'm not buying.

MILLIE: Good conversation costs nothing.

DANNY: You want a heart-to-heart over coffee? Just us girls gossiping about guns and gangsters?

MILLIE: And there I was thinking you'd be my new BFF.

DANNY: Sorry to disappoint.

MILLIE: Oh, I'll come to terms.

DANNY: (*Pause.*) So, talk.

MILLIE: I want know who you are.

DANNY: Hey... What you see is what you get.

MILLIE: Hope not. Because what I see, is a very mean man. A murderer. A destroyer of lives. But is that, who you are?

DANNY: (*Uncomfortable.*) Today it is.

MILLIE: What I also see is a very scared, desperate little lost boy.

DANNY: 'Peter Pan' ain't got nothin' on me.

MILLIE: Like I say to my daughter... nothing stays lost that wants to be found.

DANNY: (*Sniggers.*) Oh, yeah... I bet you whitewash her mind with all sorts of happy endings.

MILLIE: That's what a good parent does. But I'm guessing you don't know anything about that.

DANNY: (*Mocking.*) Oh you got me pegged... Daddy was a drunk, Mama was a whore. Life was a daily routine of physical and verbal abuse. I mean, all criminals come from a broken home, right?

MILLIE: So, you're a fatalist?

DANNY: If that's what you want to believe.

MILLIE: I believe in mind over matter.

DANNY: Along with Santa Clause, The Easter Bunny and Unicorns too, right?

MILLIE: Ike over there once read me this poem... the last line really resoJoed... what was it again? Oh yeah... 'I am the master of my fate. I am the captain of my soul'.

DANNY: Tell me, Millie... you practice what you preach?

MILLIE: I try.

DANNY: Then, why'd you quit being a nurse?

MILLIE: *(Pause.)* That's... complicated.

DANNY: Probably not.

MILLIE: Either way. It's none of your business.

DANNY: We all share in group therapy, remember?

MILLIE: *(Pause.)* Yes, I quit nursing school.

DANNY: Why?

MILLIE: Because I was young, naïve, and turned on by intelligence. And for some professors that's a cocktail too tempting to turn down. *(Pause.)* When I got pregnant, I thought he'd leave his wife and look after me. But after 18 hours of labor and an emergency c-section, I guess he lost his taste for this particular cocktail. So there I was, twenty-one years young, with a beautiful baby girl to care for. So... I choose to quit. And never went back.

DANNY: *(Scoffs.)* Oh please. You expect me to believe you walked away 'cos of your damn kid? No... you ran away, 'cos as it turns out, you were no different from those other jock-fucking cheerleaders you mocked at school. Shoulder pads, tweed jacket, same fucking difference. Just another girlie groupie turned on by power. And yet, you sit here blowing smoke up my ass about controlling your fate and destiny. *(Pause.)* You probably come from strong roots, right? Not from some diseased hole, raised by a foster mother who took in kids for pay checks and then would lock them a room seven days a week... while she uses the money she's supposed to feed them with, to bump meth. Oh, and when she runs outta money, *(Pause.)* boy, girl, ten, seven... it's doesn't matter... 'cos 'as long as there's a hole,

there's dough', she'd say. (*Pause. Mocking.*) 'Master of my fate. Captain of my soul'. That's not poetry. It's fiction.

MILLIE: (*Sympathetic.*) Your glass has been half-empty for a long time, hasn't it?

DANNY: (*Looking into his coffee cup.*) Your coffee tastes like shit.

MILLIE: (*Gesturing to JOE.*) He seems to like it.

DANNY: Well, that's 'cos he's a glass half-full kinda guy.

MILLIE: How long have you known each other?

DANNY: 'Show & Tell' is over, lady.

MILLIE: You really care for him, don't you?

DANNY: How can a total shit-heel like me care for anything?

MILLIE: Good question. And something I'll think very long and hard about when I'm up there testifying against you.

DANNY: (*Pause.*) He came to live with the foster bitch when we were both 13. (*Looking at JOE.*) He was a quiet kid; smart, kinda goofy when he wanted to be. Definitely not a punk like me or the others. He was unusual.

MILLIE: How so?

DANNY: He could tell these crazy stories, about anything. And he could draw the most amazing shit. Like we were once in this church... and he was so into the murals, that he drew an exact replica of them on our bedroom wall. The kid could copy anything he laid his eyes on.

MILLIE: He's a savant.

DANNY: (*Clicks his fingers and points approvingly at MILLIE*) You got it. (*Frowns.*) UnfortunJoely, so did the foster bitch's boyfriend. But he had a different name for it... Rain Man.

MILLIE: I take it her boyfriend was a jerk?

DANNY: Ricky made foster bitch look like a saint. Shit, when she wasn't pimpin' us out, he'd use everyones asses for batting practice. Everyone, 'cept me. He knew if tried that shit, he'd have to sleep with one eye open. *(Makes a slitting gesture with his index fingers across his throat)*

MILLIE: What about Joe?

DANNY: Mostly steered clear of him... 'cos of me. But when he found out that Joe was... 'special', he wanted to use him at the track.

MILLIE: You wouldn't let him?

DANNY: No... but then I got busted up in juvie for three months on assault.

MILLIE: Was that the knife thing you-

DANNY: Joe thought he could be tough like me. So, he went to the track with Ricky. And then fed him a bunch of bull, and just like that, Ricky was down two large. *(Pause.)* Man, wish I'd been there to see the look on that douche's face when he realized that he'd been played by Rain Man. I bet Joe was smiling from ear-to-ear. And he was probably still smiling when Ricky dragged him to the top of the bleachers, and threw him over the railing into the parking lot. *(Pause.)* Joe spent the next four months in hospital. Had to learn to walk again, use his fingers... everything got fucked up. Most of it came back, though. Most of it.

MILLIE: I can't imagine.

DANNY: No you can't.

MILLIE: You've been his own personal bodyguard ever since, haven't you?

DANNY: *(Hands coffee cup to MILLIE.)* Fill 'er up.

*(MILLIE takes DANNY'S coffee cup, stands up, and starts to move away, but then hesitates to a stop, as though she is about to say something. She thinks better of it, and moves quietly over the where JERRY and LAURA are sitting.)*

MILLIE: Can I get you anything?

LAURA: Is leaving here in one piece on the menu?

MILLIE: (Winks.) It's our most popular item.

JERRY: What did he say to you?

MILLIE: This and that.

JERRY: Looked like the two of you were having a *Barbara Walters* moment.

MILLIE: Soft focus and all?

JERRY: You know what I mean.

MILLIE: Was asking how he knows the other guy.

LAURA: Joe?

MILLIE: Yeah. They were in a foster home together. (*Shakes her head.*) Let's just say it was a house of horrors.

JERRY: (*Ruffled.*) And so it begins.

LAURA: So 'what' begins?

JERRY: What do they call it when the hostages start to sympathize with their kidnapers?

IKE: (*From the other table*) Stockholm Syndrome. From the 1970s when a you lady was-

JERRY: Thanks professor... just looking for the expression, not a lecture.

IKE: And we wonder why we're doomed to repeat history.

JERRY: Say what?

IKE: (*Smiles.*) It's an expression, son... not a lecture.

JERRY: (*To MILLIE.*) Think they're gonna go through with it?

MILLIE: They'll do anything to protect each other.

JERRY: But what if one of them wasn't completely sold.

MILLIE: They're a unit. One for one, and one for all.  
(Pause.) If you kids are cool, I'm gonna go get the 'big bad' some coffee.

(MILLIE gets up and moves behind the bar close to where RAY is, and then proceeds to make more coffee.)

LAURA: What was that about?

JERRY: Can't a man make friendly conversation?

LAURA: Jerry, everything you say and do has an agenda. In fact, your agendas have agendas.

JERRY: I was conducting a situational analysis.

LAURA: A 'situational'... Why?

JERRY: Those that wait and react finish last. Those who preempt and prepare, win. And that, babe, might be the difference between living and dying.

LAURA: I really don't think they're gonna kill anyone.

JERRY: Hello? Retard-boy shot that guy in cold blood.

LAURA: You make it sound like an execution.

JERRY: (*Chortles callously.*) You're defending the retard?

LAURA: He's not... 'retarded'. (Pause.) I teach Special Ed kids, Jerry... and believe me... he's not mentally handicapped. He's just... his wires are crossed.

JERRY: You still teach.

LAURA: There's a lot you don't know about me.

JERRY: I guess so.

LAURA: Don't be so glum.

JERRY: (*Shifts uncomfortably in his chair.*) Is... is anything about, you know, us, real?

LAURA: If it's real to you, than it's real.

JERRY: That's not what I'm asking.

LAURA: Jerry, guys like you see girls like me, 'cos we're all the taste and none of the calories.

JERRY: But... but sometimes, it feels so... you know?

LAURA: *(Pause.)* I'm good at my job.

JERRY: Very good.*(Pause.)* And that's why I'd like to propose an addendum to our contract.

LAURA: I'm off the clock, Jerry.

JERRY: Here's my offer... the retard, sorry, I mean, Joe, seems like he'd be open to the charms of a woman who is, what did you say, all the taste and none of the calories?

LAURA: *(Scoffs.)* You want me to seduce him? Here? Now?

JERRY: Many a man has abandoned his cause for a perfect pair of tits. His wires may be crossed *(tapping his head)* up here, but I'm sure it's business as usual *(pointing to his crotch)* down there.

LAURA: Do you have a moral bone in your body?

JERRY: One-hundred thousand dollars.

LAURA: *(Pause.)* You don't play by the rules.

JERRY: Yes I do... I just play hard-ball.

LAURA: *(Pause.)* After this... I quit.

JERRY: Good... think of this as a severance package.

*(LAURA stands. JERRY abruptly stands, his demeanor having shifted from confrontational to contrite. They stand silently for a moment, eyes locked.)*

JERRY: Wait.

*(JERRY leans over the table and picks the single flower from the small glass vase in the middle. He leans in toward LAURA, she leans back and away, as*

JERRY *places the flower behind her ear. He takes a step back to admire her and then sits down.*)

JERRY: Now you're dressed for success.

*(Without responding to JERRY, LAURA moves toward where JOE is standing.)*

*JOE is leaning over the end of the bar (side closest to the front door), scribbling on a fresh set of napkins. He continues to draw, while speaking with LAURA.)*

LAURA: *(To JOE.)* Can I ask you a question?

JOE: You just did.

LAURA: *(Smiles warmly.)* You got me there. *(Trying to look at the napkins.)* What are you drawing?

JOE: Is that your question?

LAURA: My first.

*(JOE glances over to DANNY, looking for direction. DANNY signals back an agitated gesture, indicating that JOE should get LAURA to return her table.)*

JOE: I think you should sit down.

LAURA: Been on my ass all day. Really need stretch my legs.

JOE: Then stand next to your boyfriend.

LAURA: He's not my boyfriend.

JOE: Sorry, your husband.

LAURA: He's neither.

JOE: Uh, whoever he is, can you go back.

LAURA: If I don't?

JOE: *(Glances over at DANNY.)* It's against the rules.

LAURA: Rules are meant to be broken.

JOE: Not if they upset someone.

LAURA: Oh, I'm sorry. Am I upsetting you?

JOE: I don't know you.

LAURA: Would you like to know me?

JOE: That depends.

LAURA: On what?

JOE: What you like.

LAURA: I like to draw.

JOE: What type of drawing?

LAURA: Portraits mostly. (*Meekly.*) It's been a while.

JOE: Why?

LAURA: I'm a busy girl.

JOE: Doing what?

LAURA: Working.

JOE: You can't draw when you work?

LAURA: I help others express themselves. I'm like a piece of clay, or a blank canvas... waiting to be infused with creative energy.

JOE: You're a muse.

LAURA: I thought I was asking the questions!

JOE: It was a statement.

LAURA: (*Pause.*) So what kind of artist are you?

(*JOE looks over to DANNY.*)

(*DANNY gets up moves toward the front door, and is looking outside.*)

JOE: I paint custom designs on cars and motor cycles.

LAURA: Oh, like *'American Chopper'*?

JOE: What's that?

LAURA: A TV show.

JOE: I don't own a TV.

LAURA: I can't imagine living without one.

JOE: Maybe if you didn't have one, you'd draw more.

LAURA: Hmm, maybe. (*Pause.*) Tell me about your shop.

JOE: It's closed.

LAURA: Well, it is after 10pm.

JOE: It's in foreclosure.

LAURA: Oh shit... so, it's like, closed closed. Wow. What happened?

JOE: Not sure. Danny said we were upside down on our mortgage. Has something about *'predatory lending'*. I dunno... I'm not good with that kind of thing.

LAURA: Banks are screwing everyone these days.

JOE: Danny calls them a *'bunch of dick-sucking whores'*. (*Pause, contrite.*) Sorry. That was offensive.

LAURA: *'Offensive'*? Why?

JOE: I made a disparaging remark about your industry.

LAURA: Teaching?

JOE: No... the other one.

LAURA: (*Pause.*) Ah, yes, the skin trade.

JOE: (*Shyly.*) Yes, that one.

LAURA: No offense taken.

JOE: Can I ask you a question?

LAURA: You just did.

JOE: Right.

LAURA: (*Encouraging.*) Go on...

JOE: How... (*Trying to find the right words.*) How did you get into your... your industry?

LAURA: Well, once upon a time, I was an art student trying to make ends-meet. And to help pay for my classes, I volunteered to be a 'still art' model.

JOE: Still art?

LAURA: It's a nice way of saying, 'nude'.

JOE: Oh.

LAURA: Anyway, I was so comfortable being in birthday suit in front of strangers, that I thought, why not take this a step further. And that's when I started to dance part-time at *Foxy's*.

JOE: I know that place.

LAURA: Most fellas do.

JOE: Danny goes there.

LAURA: But not you?

JOE: No. It's weird.

LAURA: That's the first time I've heard a straight guy say watching nude women dance is weird. You are straight, right?

JOE: Yes. (*Pause.*) How long were you there?

LAURA: Not long. You see, one night this lady shows up. She wasn't a dyke or a voyeur or any of the usual types we'd get in there. No, she was cut from a different cloth. She

had this air of grace and class about her. *(Pause.)* After I gave her a dance... she handed me her card and told me to call her if I ever wanted to earn some serious cash.

JOE: Doing what?

LAURA: Turns out she runs a specialty service that caters to men with very, very deep pockets. I'm talking high-end. *(Pause.)* At first I was horrified by the idea. I mean, it's one thing shaking what your momma gave ya for money. But... *(Pause.)* But it's not like I'd be a street hustler working for a dime a blow job. I'd get to hand-pick my clients and set the price. *(Pause.)* So, I figured, why not give it try? I mean, it suited my single-girl lifestyle; I don't want to be tied down, but love being tied up... you know?

JOE: Not really. No.

LAURA: *(Laughs a little uncomfortably.)* Then I got paid. And that was it for me... hook, line, and sinker.

JOE: Are you satisfied?

LAURA: Well, some guys can be pretty generous, and spend some time going... *(Pause.)* That's not what you meant was it?

JOE: Not sure, what you think, I think I meant.

LAURA: *(Pause, looks at JERRY.)* Am I satisfied with my job? Most of the time.

JOE: Does your boyfriend know?

LAURA: Boyfriend? Haven't had one of those in years.

JOE: 'Cos of your second job?

LAURA: With my job I don't have to deal with the whole lack of privacy, possessiveness, jealous bullshit that comes with relationships... I get the good parts instead.

JOE: I thought those were the good parts. Or the parts that make the good parts good?

LAURA: *(Sarcastic.)* Have you ever been in a relationship?

JOE: *(Shyly.)* I... not... not really.

LAURA: Trust me, it's not like the songs and movies.

JOE: But isn't that why they make those songs and movies?

LAURA: Holy romance, *Batman*. You're more a *Romeo* than a *Riddler*.

JOE: (*Unmoved.*) You like *Batman*?

LAURA: The first comic book I read was '*The Dark Knight Returns*'. So, yes, you've uncovered the truth about me... I'm a closet dork.

JOE: That makes sense.

LAURA: Flatter much?

JOE: No... that you like *Batman*.

LAURA: Oh... why? (*smiling*) 'Cos we both work at night?

JOE: No... but, I guess that's true too. I just think that maybe, maybe you relate to him, 'cos... 'cos he sees that this world—a world of cops, robbers, birthdays, and weddings—as a place where he can't exist. He can't identify with normal, because normal was torn from him.

LAURA: (*To herself.*) By an act of violence.

JOE: Yeah. Right.

LAURA: (*Taken aback.*) That's a whole lot insight for someone who barely knows me.

JOE: When I draw someone, I can see them. Everything.

LAURA: Did you... draw me?

(*JOE hands LAURA one of the napkins he was drawing on.  
LAURA stares in awe at the napkin.*)

JOE: I see a little bit of me, in you.

LAURA: (*Still staring in awe at the napkin.*) That's amazing. Really... truly... amazing.

*(DANNY suddenly moves over to LAURA and JOE. He roughly grabs the napkin out of LAURA's hand. He looks over reproachfully at JOE. He crumbles the napkin, and puts it into this pocket.)*

DANNY: *(To LAURA.)* Recess is over. Go back to class.

LAURA: *(Pauses, looks over to JOE.)* I...

DANNY: Not gonna to ask twice.

*(LAURA nods in compliance.)*

*LAURA moves back over to the table where JERRY is sitting.)*

DANNY: *(To JOE.)* What the hell was that about?

JOE: Prostitution mostly.

DANNY: Figures. *(Glances at his watch.)* Zero hour.

JOE: Are we really, you know, gonna do this?

DANNY: Engine's cranked and the wheels are turning, bro.

JOE: But couldn't we-

DANNY: That's right. You don't know.

JOE: *(Pause.)* I'm sorry, Danny.

DANNY: For what?

JOE: Me.

DANNY: *(Softer.)* Don't say that.

JOE: This isn't your fault. It's mine.

DANNY: You're many things, kid... martyr isn't one of them.

JOE: Your life would be so much better without me on your back.

DANNY: Are you fucking kidding me?

JOE: You could be free.

DANNY: I could also be behind bars... or dead.

JOE: Or on a beach, sipping Tequila and getting laid.

DANNY: Since when have I ever liked being a party of one?  
(Pause.) Listen... me and you... we're peas in pod... *Butch and Sundance... Tango and Cash...*

JOE: (Small smile.) *Batman and Robin.*

DANNY: Damn right. (Sighing.) And that's why I need your help choosing... we gotta do it together.

JOE: Doesn't seem fair. Who are we to choose who lives and dies?

DANNY: (Pause.) You're right. (Off an idea.) Sit tight.

(DANNY moves closer over to where RAY and MILLIE are behind the bar.)

DANNY: (To RAY.) You got any straws back there?

RAY: Straws?

DANNY: Are we in the Grand-fucking-Canyon? Yes, straws.

MILLIE: (Quickly looking around.) Dang it... I forgot to put them out.

RAY: There's some in the storage room.

DANNY: Okay. (Loudly to JOE.) I'm gonna run an errand. Keep an eye on the kids.

(DANNY moves off stage to the 'back room'.)

Over at JERRY and LAURA's table.)

JERRY: (To LAURA.) So... did he give you his digits?

LAURA: Not exactly.

JERRY: Well?

LAURA: Forget it.

JERRY: Forget what?

LAURA: It's didn't work.

JERRY: Why not? I mean, did you do that thing you do with your hair? Or give him that look, when... you know?

LAURA: No. I don't.

JERRY: Whatever. *(Pause.)* Is he gay?

LAURA: No.

JERRY: Then what?

LAURA: He's out of my league.

JERRY: Good-fucking-God! You picked a helluva time to grow a conscience, Laura.

LAURA: I've always had a conscience, Jerry... you just paid me to keep it on a leash.

JERRY: *(Pause. Shakes his head, and looks at his watch. Raised voice. To no-one in particular.)* What the fuck are they waiting for?

RAY: *(To JERRY.)* Hey... be cool. They're doing everything they can.

JERRY: This is them doing everything they can? This is what I pay taxes for; to train a bunch of lazy, incompetent police officers to sit around and wait for us to get shot?

RAY: *(Loudly.)* You need to calm down.

JERRY: *(Standing up.)* Yeah, well you need to go fuck yourself.

JOE: *(Raising his voice and his gun.)* Will everyone please stop speaking in loud voices?

*(JERRY sits back down.)*

*MILLIE and RAY settle down next to IKE.)*

MILLIE: (*Quietly to RAY.*) He does have a point.

RAY: About?

MILLIE: What are they waiting for?

RAY: Technically the conditions have to be-

MILLIE: Ray... remove the BS filter, okay?

RAY: (*Pause.*) It's been six years since I put on a badge. A lot's changed.

IKE: Protocols perhaps. But in this situation the prevailing wisdom would be to take action.

RAY: Agreed.

MILLIE: Then what's going on?

RAY: Wish I knew.

MILLIE: (*To IKE.*) Any ideas?

IKE: None that would give you comfort.

MILLIE: (*To RAY.*) Next time you tell me to stay home, I'm gonna do just that.

RAY: Good... 'cos next time, I won't take no for an answer.

MILLIE: Maybe next time, there won't be a next time.

RAY: I'll hold you to that.

MILLIE: I hope you do.

*(MILLIE leans in slightly toward RAY. She stops abruptly when DANNY re-enters the stage.)*

*In DANNY'S left hand he is holding five straws, each sticking out at equal length.*

*DANNY stops center-stage at the center table. JOE moves slightly behind him.)*

DANNY: (*Pointing to the table.*) Huddle up, people.

(RAY, MILLIE, IKE, LAURA and JERRY all gather in a semi-circle around the center table.)

JERRY: Now what? You want us to hold hands and sing Kumbaya?

DANNY: Don't make me change my mind, Wall Street.

JERRY: About what?

DANNY: According to my partner here we need to make this a fair deal. But if I had it my way, I'd do this in order of who's the biggest fuck face.

RAY: What do you want us to do?

DANNY: (*Holding his hand out with the straws.*) Pick one.

(*Nobody moves. They all just stare at the straws.*)

DANNY: Either pick one, or I'll play dealer.

(*JERRY quickly leans forward to grab a straw, but RAY slaps his hand back.*)

JERRY: What the hell?

RAY: Ladies first.

MILLIE: I'm all for chivalry, Ray, but to be honest-

DANNY: Quit fucking around and just take one.

MILLIE: Okay, okay... (*Takes a deep breath, and then slowly takes a straw out of DANNY'S hand.*)

DANNY: (*To LAURA.*) Your turn.

LAURA: (*To JOE.*) This is sick, you know that right?

(*As LAURA grabs a straw from DANNY she never breaks eye contact with JOE. JOE eventually looks away.*)

(*RAY leans forward and grabs the next straw without being prompted.*)

JERRY: (To IKE.) Age before beauty.

IKE: Much obliged.

(IKE takes a straw from DANNY. One straw remains.)

With a smirk on his face, JERRY goes to take the last straw from DANNY.

DANNY grips tighter to the last straw making it difficult for JERRY to take it out.

Eventually DANNY loosens his grip, and JERRY frees the straw.)

DANNY: Who's got the longest?

(They all hold up their straws against each other's. They soon realize who has the longest... LAURA.)

LAURA: (Meek.) Shit. (Throws straw down on the table.)

JERRY: Wait. That's not right. It's the short straw. It's always the short straw... that's why they call it 'getting the short straw'.

DANNY: Not today.

JERRY: You can't just change the rules.

DANNY: Wanna take her place?

JERRY: I...

DANNY: Well?

(JERRY shamefully shakes his head and goes back to the seat he'd been occupying earlier. He stares dolefully at the floor in front of him.)

DANNY: (To LAURA) Looks like Prince Charming abandoned you.

RAY: Danny... wait.

DANNY: For what? Milkshake and fries? A pardon from the governor? What, asshole?

RAY: Look at her.

*(DANNY does stop and look at LAURA, who is starting to sob.)*

IKE: There's no shame in walking away from the abyss.

DANNY: *(Pause.)* If I wanted pearls, I'd go to Tiffany's.

IKE: Boy, if I thought counsel could penetrate that dried up little piece of turd that passes for your brain, then I'd gladly share. What I'm stating is fact... plain and simple. Like you.

MILLIE: Ike!

DANNY: Sissy fit over?

IKE: Only sissy I see is the big bad man who is about to kill an innocent, defenseless girl.

DANNY: Sticks and stones. But no matter how you hurt my feelings I'm not going to change my mind.

IKE: But of course. As only the ignorant and profoundly stupid are unable to course correct.

DANNY: Oh, I may be an asshole. But I'm not a stupid asshole.

IKE: During my time consulting with the FBI I determined there were two types of hostage takers; those with third-grade level IQs and those that were borderline genius. And you, my friend, are as much the latter as I am the former.

DANNY: We done?

*(DANNY grabs LAURA firmly by the arm. He starts to lead her in the general direction of the back room.)*

DANNY: Let's go for a walk.

*(IKE abruptly stands up. There is a manic desperation to his countenance.)*

IKE (*Points to JOE.*) You're protecting him because he's special, right? But only someone 'special' would heist a bank, shoot a law enforcement officer, and then conceal themselves in a bar not ten blocks away. And now you want to execute one hostage at a time and expect that this ingenious plan will somehow set you upon the road to salvation? (*Pointing to JOE again*) That poor boy needs to be protected from you, not by you.

(DANNY *let's go of LAURA and faces IKE.*)

DANNY: You don't know shit about us.

IKE: It's hardly complicated... You want society to consider you a selfless saint who sacrifices his happiness to nanny his feeble-minded friend. But it's just a façade. The real reason you keep him close is more sadistic than altruistic. You use him as a shield, so that people don't see you for the pathetic, useless, boil on the backside of humanity that you are.

(DANNY *shoves LAURA aside.*)

DANNY: You want to take her place?

IKE: At last... I was beginning to think that I would have to fling feces at this monkey to get him to understand.

DANNY: Fine. You're in. She's out.

MILLIE: Ike... what are you doing?

IKE: Putting age before beauty.

MILLIE: What about your wife.

IKE: (*Pause.*) I can't live without her.

MILLIE: She feels the same way. So, you can't just-

IKE: I was supposed to go first.

MILLIE: Not by choice.

IKE: It's the only choice. And if I had the smallest pebble of courage in my heart, I would have joined her weeks ago.

MILLIE: 'Joined her'?

IKE: (*Pause.*) For thirty years, every morning I wake at 6am, go for a brisk walk, collect the paper from the porch, and make a cup of tea that I bring to my wife's bedside. Always she would wake with a gentle yawn, and a tender kiss. But... on October 8<sup>th</sup>, at 7.09am there was no yawn. No kiss. Nothing. Just a shell, left vacant by her sojourning soul.

MILLIE: She's... I didn't know... why didn't you say something?

IKE: I wanted her to stay asleep you see... until I was ready to slumber beside her. But... I... I couldn't do it.

MILLIE: It's been ten weeks... Is she... is she still there?

IKE: It may seem morbid to you, but when your heart is fused by forever to another, you can't... you just can't.

JERRY: Oh... that is gross. You have a corpse in your house?

IKE: She's not a corpse.

JERRY: Man, that is beyond morbid... it's fucked up.

LAURA: (*Whispering.*) It's romantic.

IKE: (*To MILLIE.*) Tell them where she is. Arrangements have been made.

LAURA: (*To IKE.*) It doesn't feel right, you taking my place.

IKE: When all else is askew, 'right' is simply a matter of relevance.

(DANNY approaches IKE.)

LAURA: (*Looking at JOE but addressing DANNY.*) 'Do you want to know what power is? Real power? It's not ending a life, it's saving it. It's looking in someone's eyes and seeing that spark of recognition, that instant they realize something they'll never forget.'

DANNY: What the hell are you talking about?

JOE: It's a quote... from Batman.

(DANNY shakes his head in disbelief, and starts to walk *IKE* toward the back room.

JOE unexpectedly steps in front of them.)

JOE: Can we stop now?

DANNY: Stop what?

JOE: Playing cops and robbers.

DANNY: How many times do I have to tell you... this isn't a game, Joe.

JOE: Maybe not. But it is make believe.

DANNY: We're not doing this. Not here. Not now.

JOE: I have a friend and his name is Danny. He likes to read travel magazines. His favorite movie is the *World According to Garp*. He likes to cook Italian, but he's a lousy chef. He loves the *Hawks*, but hates the *Huskies*. His preferred drink is Whiskey and Soda. He funny. He's tough. And he's a good friend. But most of all, he's kind... and would never hurt anyone intentionally.

DANNY: You don't want to go to prison... trust me.

JOE: I can look after myself.

DANNY: Not in there you can't.

JOE: I can look after myself.

DANNY: You're not hearing me... it's going to be hell.

JOE: I can look after myself.

DANNY: Stop it. Just fucking stop it, you moron.

JOE: I can look after myself... and so can you.

(DANNY grabs a bottle and hurls it at JOE, missing him at point blank range.

*For a long, tense moment they simply stand staring at each other.*

DANNY *let's go of IKE, and turns toward I, behind the bar.*)

DANNY: (To RAY.) Gimme a whiskey. (Looks over at JOE.) Hold the soda.

RAY: (Pause.) Uh... uh... you have a preference?

DANNY: I dunno... (points vaguely at the top shelf.) You decide.

RAY: Uh... the... the whiskey's on the bottom shelf.

DANNY: Whatever. Just pour.

*(RAY grabs a bottle of 'Jack'. He holds up the bottle in front of DANNY.)*

RAY: Southern Comfort?

DANNY: (Glances over.) Sure.

*(RAY hands shot of 'Southern Comfort' to DANNY.)*

MILLIE glances over at RAY, wondering what he's up to.

RAY gives her a look that says, 'trust me'.)

DANNY: (To JOE.) Now what?

JOE: Remember the scene at the end of *Butch and Sundance*?

DANNY: Not a fucking chance.

JOE: I was just going to say, let's not do that.

DANNY: Well, I'm glad we ruled that out.

JOE: I guess that leaves just one other option.

DANNY: I guess so. (Shakes his head... more annoyed with himself, than anything else.) What a fucking day. (Slams his shot.)

JERRY: So... what? No one's getting shot?

DANNY: (*To JERRY.*) Never say, never. (*To RAY.*) One more for the road, boss. (*To IKE*>) Looks like that reunion of yours will have to wait awhile.

IKE: My wife often said that we're merely grains of sand at the mercy of the ocean. And who are we to fight the tide?

DANNY: Beautiful. Why don't you sit your ass down, Freud. Me and the ex-lawman here got shit to discuss.

*(IKE sits down at a chair. MILLIE kneels beside to comfort him.)*

*JOE moves closer to DANNY.)*

JOE: Sorry I couldn't go through with it.

DANNY: Wasn't much of a plan in the first place.

JOE: From one moron to another... it's was pretty dumb.

DANNY: (*Smiles despite himself.*) Yes it was. (*To RAY.*) Hand me the phone. Think it's time to negotiate a truce. (*To himself.*) Fucking Dallas.

RAY: Dallas?

DANNY: Diamond Dallas. He's a... a...

RAY: Fence. I know who he is. (*Pause.*) He's also a C.I.

DANNY: For real?

RAY: At least he was back in the day.

DANNY: That motherfucker. This whole thing was his idea; the bank, the take... the meet.

RAY: Here?

DANNY: Unless there's another 'Ray's'.

RAY: He chose this place specifically?

DANNY: Despite what *Freud* might think, I didn't choose this place for its convenience.

RAY: Dallas would know who owns this bar.

(MILLIE walks over to listen to them at the bar.)

DANNY: Either way, I got a call to make.

RAY: I don't think so.

DANNY: Come again?

RAY: I can't do that.

DANNY: Why the hell not?

RAY: Something doesn't fit.

MILLIE: Ray... what are you thinking?

RAY: Very bad things.

JERRY: Have you lost your mind? Let him make the call.

RAY: Did you catch the name of the officer who was shot outside the bank?

DANNY: Of course not, how would I-

JOE: Perkins.

RAY: (*Takes a deep, pained breath.*) Tony Perkins. T.P.

DANNY: Am I missing something?

RAY: Where'd you hit him?

JOE: It was meant to be a warning shot.

RAY: Where. Did. You. Hit him?

DANNY: In the chest.

RAY: From how far away?

DANNY: Maybe thirty feet... why?

RAY: Boy... you couldn't hit a body of water if you fell out a boat.

DANNY: Say what?

RAY: You're long sighted.

DANNY: Long sighted? Where'd you get that from?

RAY: You're also carrying a .22... which wouldn't put a dent into standard issue Kevlar. And Perkins never, never left his desk without a vest.

IKE: A .308 rifle with a 168 grain would do the trick.

RAY: Yes it would.

JOE: What's a .308?

RAY: Sniper rifle.

DANNY: What the hell are you talking about?

RAY: (Pause.) You were set up, Danny.

DANNY: Me? Set up? I mean, I may have stepped on a few toes here and there... but guys in my neighborhood settle scores the old fashioned way.

RAY: This isn't about you.

MILLIE: Then who?

RAY: Me.

MILLIE: Wait... What?

RAY: I told you about the investigation after the riots, right?

MILLIE: Yeah. Nothing stuck. Your word against theirs?

RAY: Exactly. And I thought that was that. But about a year ago, this hot-shot assistant DA opens up a criminal investigation into the killings. At first I thought he had a better chance of finding Jimmy Hoffa... but credit to the

kid, 'cos he uncovered some pretty damning evidence. So, Bruno, myself and one other guy agreed to testify. And this time, we were gonna nail those bastards to the wall.

MILLIE: You're saying they coordinated all of this just to stop you from testifying? No offense Ray, but I never had you pegged as a conspiracy nut.

IKE: It's not as outrageous as you think, Millie. A secret of this magnitude could only be protected by men in considerable positions of power.

MILLIE: Like who?

RAY: The chief.

MILLIE: Shut the front door! The Chief of Police?

JOE: They killed Perkins? Not us?

RAY: He was going to be their star witness.

JOE: His chest exploded.

IKE: A .308 will have that effect.

MILLIE: So you're saying they shot this guy Perkins, and... what? They meant to shot Bruno too?

RAY: More I think about it, yeah. Those two must have walked past that window half-a-dozen times and not a single shot was fired. Then Bruno is there for a split second and BAM they take the shot.

MILLIE: He was holding a gun. The light when on... They thought he was one of them.

RAY: Believe me, with infrared scopes they could tell the difference.

MILLIE: (To IKE.) You buying this?

IKE: (To RAY.) Was it a federal bank?

RAY: Yep.

IKE: Well, an armed robbery would trigger a federal investigation and the FBI would then assume operational control. Initially I thought we hadn't heard anything due to the weather... but now I'm not so sure.

MILLIE: Ike... how can everyone out there, be in on this?

IKE: Not everyone.

RAY: Just need the decision makers.

IKE: And half-a-dozen SWAT.

MILLIE: What happened to 'serve and protect'?

RAY: A badge doesn't make you a saint.

DANNY: No, apparently in Seattle it makes you a lying, homicidal asshole.

RAY: Just the ones with the most to lose.

IKE: Hence the expression, ultimate power corrupts.

DANNY: (*To RAY.*) Why this? Why not burn your house down? Or fake a car accident? Wouldn't that be simpler?

RAY: Sure. But it would raise a lot of questions. With something like this though, they have a patsy.

DANNY: Not anymore they don't.

*(DANNY moves over to phone on the bar.)*

*DANNY puts his hand on the phone.*

*RAY reaches out and firmly grabs DANNY'S hand, preventing him from lifting the phone.)*

DANNY: Get your fucking hand off me.

RAY: As soon as you make that call, they go to plan B.

DANNY: Which is?

RAY: Terminal breach, with 100% collateral damage.

LAURA: You mean... they kill everyone?

RAY: That would be plan B, yes.

MILLIE: Cheese and crackers.

JERRY: Do NOT let him make that call.

*(DANNY takes his hand off the phone and moves back.)*

IKE: The hour is nearly upon us. If he doesn't call, they will. And regardless of the outcome, they'll huff and puff and blow these doors down.

JERRY: *(Slumps down in his chair.)* Wish we'd gone to the Fairmont.

JOE: *(To DANNY.)* What do?

DANNY: Hell if I know.

JOE: But, you always have a plan.

DANNY: Look where that got us.

*(DANNY dejectedly sits down on one of the chairs.)*

MILLIE: We need help. But from the outside...

IKE: The FBI.

RAY: We can't use the landline.

*(JOE pulls out a cell phone, checks it.)*

JOE: I'm not getting any reception.

MILLIE: Try one of the others.

*(RAY looks over to DANNY for affirmation.)*

DANNY: Go on.

*(RAY reaches behind the bar, pulls out the cell phones. With MILLIE'S help they hand them out.)*

EVERYONE *turns on their cell phones. They hold them up in the air, stare at the screens, shake them around... none of them can find reception.*)

JERRY: I paid nine-hundred bucks for this piece of shit. It's supposed to get bars in the most remote areas on the planet. What the fuck?!

MILLIE: Nothing. *(To RAY.)* You?

RAY: *(Shakes his head.)* Anyone?

*(They all shake their heads.)*

IKE: Clearly they're blocking outgoing signals.

JERRY: What does that mean? We're trapped?

JOE: Like rats.

JERRY: *(Pointing to JOE.)* He's right. We're like rats in a barrel.

MILLIE: Rats... rats... *(snaps her fingers)* That's it. Rats.

RAY: What about rats?

MILLIE: Bruno's been setting traps for them for months. He thought they were coming up from underground, right?

RAY: Yeah, he thought their nests we're being disturbed by the new high-speed train tunnels.

MILLIE: The one's you've been protesting, 'cos this place..

RAY: *(Understanding.)* ...sits on top of a historical landmark.

DANNY: What's she talking about?

RAY: The 'Seattle Underground'.

JERRY: What the hell's that?

DANNY: Under here? For real?

RAY: Not exactly.

JERRY: Hello? Did anyone hear me? What or who is the 'Seattle Underground'?

IKE: Old downtown Seattle used to be at sea-level, and most of the buildings were made of wood. In 1889 there was a fire that destroyed nearly twenty-five city blocks. When they rebuilt, they re-graded the streets two stories above their original height. Many of the newer buildings not impacted by the fire, found that their first floors were now subterranean. The byproduct was the creation of an underground city... complete with alleys and street lamps.

MILLIE: It'd been abandoned for years and then the city opened it up as a tourist attraction for the *World Fair*.

LAURA: I remember... my Nanna took me through there when I was seven. It was super-creepy.

DANNY: But that's in Pioneer Square, right? That's at least twenty blocks from here.

RAY: Only a small portion of the underground city was opened for the public. Most if it is still condemned.

IKE: Correct. In the '20s, during prohibition, bootleggers used the existing tunnels in, and around the underground city to transport illegal drugs and alcohol to supposed dry establishments.

RAY: Like this one here.

MILLIE: I knew there were some old tunnels under here... but didn't know they were connected.

RAY: They've been boarded up for decades. Didn't think twice about it, 'till now.

IKE: Are they accessible?

RAY: (*Pause.*) There's an old storm door under the floor boards behind the bar. It was sealed-up over fifty years ago. But I wouldn't exactly call it Fort Knox.

JERRY: Well shit... show me a hammer, and I'll show you a way out of here.

RAY: (*Looking at DANNY.*) Not my call.

(*DANNY takes the whiskey RAY poured him and slowly drinks it... savoring every last drop.*)

JOE: Danny?

DANNY: We're gonna make like mice and hide. (*Pause.*) Cool?

JOE: Cool.

DANNY: Don't just say it, 'cos I asked it. Are you cool?

JOE: Well... (*stops himself*) If you think it's a good idea, I'm in.

DANNY: I'm hitting big fat donut holes when it comes to ideas today, bro.

(*DANNY moves closer to JOE.*)

DANNY: You need to start using your compass. Mine's broken.

JOE: (*Pause, looks around at all the anxious faces... takes a deep breath*) Well... we're going to leave a trail of crumbs... which will make us easy to hunt and then... trap.

DANNY: Hadn't thought of that.

JERRY: We'll be long gone.

RAY: No, he's right. They'll be calling soon, and when they do, the breach will follow. We haven't got time to conceal our escape... unless...

DANNY: Someone covers up our tracks. Buys us enough time.

MILLIE: For what? To go where?

IKE: The Federal Building on 3<sup>rd</sup>. We'll be safe there.

RAY: (*Looking at DANNY.*) So?

DANNY: (*Pause, looks at JOE.*) Looks like I get the long draw this time. (*To RAY.*) You got something to lift these boards?

RAY: Yeah, a crowbar should do it. There's one in storage.

DANNY: Well, what are you waiting for?

*(RAY nods, and then moves backstage, to get the crowbar.)*

JOE: *(Shaking his head vigorously.)* This is a bad idea. Bad, bad idea.

*(DANNY firmly grabs JOE by the shoulders.)*

DANNY: No, no. This here is a good idea. The first good idea I've had in a long, long time.

JOE: You're wrong again. You're wrong. Wrong. Wrong. Wrong.

DANNY: *(Soothing.)* It's cool, bro. I'll meet up with you once all this shit blows over. Trust me.

JOE: You're gonna get away?

DANNY: Hey... how many times have the chips been down and I found a way out? Right?

JOE: Will you meet us later?

DANNY: Um... not right away.

JOE: Where you gonna go?

DANNY: Remember that dude we met in Mexico?

JOE: The prison guard.

DANNY: Former.

JOE: Yeah.

DANNY: I'll lay low on his ranch for a few. And when the time's right, I'll saddle-up.

JOE: We'll reopen the shop?

DANNY: Hell no. It'll already be open.

JOE: How?

DANNY: You.

JOE: I... I can't... I don't know how...

DANNY: You do. And you have.

JOE: But-

DANNY: You found the location. You managed the books. You did nearly all the fucking work.

JOE: But you...

DANNY: All I did was sell what you were making.

JOE: What about the money we owe?

DANNY: *(Pause, looks over at JERRY.)* Wall Street's gonna help you with that. *(To JERRY.)* Aren't you, Wall Street?

JERRY: *(Incredulous.)* Why?

DANNY: 'Cos you owe me.

JERRY: For what?

DANNY: *(Menacingly.)* Life insurance.

JERRY: *(Nodding slowly.)* I guess I can pull some strings.

DANNY: *(Back to JOE.)* There you go.

JOE: But... but I'm no good with customers. You're a people person.

DANNY: You're the one people are drawn to... like a moth to the flame.

JOE: People are drawn to you too...

DANNY: Yeah, like mosquitos to a zapper. *(Looks over at LAURA.)* You want someone who can charm our mostly male customers while, you focus on your work, right?

JOE: I'd like that.

DANNY: (*Points to LAURA.*) What about her? She's experienced at charming men.

JOE: (*Looking at LAURA.*) She already has two jobs.

(DANNY glares imploringly at LAURA.)

LAURA: (*Uncomfortable.*) I, um... I could lend a hand.

JOE: (*Smiles briefly... then fades.*) But, hold on, aren't I going to prison?

DANNY: Well, maybe just for a little while, but when you-

IKE: Diminished capacity.

DANNY: Who the what?

IKE: Any lawyer worth their salt can claim diminished mental capacity.

DANNY: Meaning?

IKE: No jury will convict a mentally-diminished individual who was coerced into committing a pre-meditated crime.

DANNY: You sure about that?

IKE: My wife is... she was a paralegal for thirty-years.

JOE: (*Looking at DANNY.*) I wasn't coerced.

DANNY: Simon says you were.

JOE: But Simon didn't tell me to kill.

DANNY: (*Pause.*) You know, every time I saw Rosebud she'd depress the shit outta me. Stuck there, covered in piss and crap. But you... you stopped her suffering. (*Pause.*) Shit, bro... you didn't kill a man today... you just helped him cross the street and get to his destination. Like you did, Rosebud.

(DANNY turns to see RAY has reentered the stage, holding the crowbar and two flashlights. Clearly he heard everything DANNY said.)

RAY *looks over at DANNY and then JOE.*)

RAY: *(Pause. Holds up the crowbar.)* We're ready.

*(RAY places the flashlights on top of the bar.*

*He walks behind the bar, and starts to search for something back there.)*

DANNY: *(To JERRY.)* Jump to it, Wall Street.

*(JERRY trudges off behind the bar to assist RAY.)*

JOE: I...

DANNY: Enough with the cock-blocking, bro...

JOE: No... I was going to ask... I mean, say, I wanted, to go help.

DANNY: Need my permission?

JOE: No... I don't.

DANNY: *(Winking.)* Compass, right? 'Attaboy.

*(JOE joins RAY and JERRY behind the bar. They all start working on the floor boards.*

*RAY finds what he's looking for... a set of batteries, and places them next to the flashlights.)*

RAY: It's gonna be very dark down there. Won't be able to see a thing without these.

*(RAY heads backstage again to help with the floorboards.*

*DANNY takes the the flashlight and batteries and places them in front of MILLIE and IKE.)*

DANNY: Load 'em up.

MILLIE: Snow, murder, near-execution experience, corrupt police... and now rats. Seriously... can this day get any better?

IKE: Careful what you wish, my dear.

MILLIE: Good point.

*(Both MILLIE and IKE start loading the flashlights with new batteries and testing them.)*

*Meanwhile, LAURA urges DANNY to join her at one of the other tables, away from the others. DANNY goes over to her.*

*LAURA speaks quietly and directly to DANNY.)*

LAURA: Look, I hate to disappoint, but I'm really not a heart of gold kinda gal.

DANNY: Do I look like a reluctant hero kinda guy?

LAURA: I don't get it. Twenty minutes ago, you were gonna kill me. Now you want me to be a babysitter?

DANNY: Fuck romance. You go straight to the kinky shit, don'tcha?

LAURA: I-

DANNY: *(Serious.)* He's into you. And I think you're into him.

LAURA: Yeah, he's cute... and different. But, look at me. I'm not built for relationships. At the first sign of serious I run to the hills. Always have.

DANNY: Gotta stop running at some time. Why not now?

LAURA: Because...

DANNY: 'Cos what?

LAURA: I... I... don't know how.

DANNY: He'll show you.

*(DANNY reaches into his pocket and unfolds the napkin picture JOE had drawn of LAURA. He hands it back to LAURA.)*

LAURA *stares intently at the picture.*)

LAURA: They say starting a relationship under duress never works.

DANNY: What do you say?

LAURA: What I always say... screw conventional wisdom.

*(LAURA smiles to herself and pockets the picture.*

*As she starts to walk away...)*

DANNY: Sometimes... sometimes he screams at night. Read *Harry Potter* with him. Seems to do the trick.

LAURA: *(Smiling again.)* One of my favorites.

*(RAY emerges from the behind the bar.)*

RAY: It's open.

DANNY: *(To LAURA.)* We good?

LAURA: *(Looking at JOE.)* We're trying to be.

DANNY: *(To RAY.)* After the call... how long?

RAY: Two... three minutes tops.

DANNY: The guys they're sending... these the same fuckers who shot up those kids in the riots?

RAY: They're the ones with the most to lose.

DANNY: So no going peacefully then?

RAY: *(Pointing to his neck.)* Aim here. That's where their body armor's most vulnerable.

DANNY: *(Points to his eyes.)* Won't make a difference. Long sighted, remember?

*(RAY pulls off the glasses perched on his forehead.)*

RAY: Failed at firearms three times before I figured out I was long-sighted.

(RAY hands his glasses to DANNY, who then puts them on.)

RAY: Should help.

DANNY: (*Looking around.*) Son-of-a-bitch.

(MILLIE gets up with IKE from the table they'd been sitting at. MILLIE hands a flashlight to RAY.)

MILLIE: We're set. (*Look at her watch.*) Shoot...

RAY: What is it?

MILLIE: Told Chasey I'd be back by twelve. She charges double after midnight.

RAY: I got it covered, Millie.

MILLIE: (*Smirks.*) What did I say about hand-outs?

RAY: What you always say.

MILLIE: I'm not a charity case.

RAY: You said that too.

MILLIE: Do I look like a damsel in need of a knight?

RAY: Sounds about right.

(RAY quickly leans forward and kisses MILLIE tenderly on the lips.)

MILLIE: (*Pause.*) I can live with that.

RAY: (*Pointing to behind the bar.*) After you.

(MILLIE saunters to the back of the bar.)

MILLIE: (*To DANNY.*) Goodbye, Danny.

DANNY: Goodbye... Millie.

RAY: (*To JERRY, IKE, LAURA and JOE.*) The rest of you follow Millie out. I'll bring up the rear.

(IKE heads to the back of the bar. Peeking down at the unseen tunnel below.)

IKE: Hmmm... reminds me of the catacombs in the Vatican.

MILLIE: She loved Rome, didn't she?

IKE: Her favorite city. Perhaps... I'll take her there.

MILLIE: I bet she'd like that.

IKE: Yes. Very much so.

(MILLIE disappears behind the bar, down through the storm doors, followed by IKE.)

JERRY and LAURA move to the back of the bar to follow MILLIE and IKE.)

DANNY: (To JERRY.) Don't forget, Wall Street... Life insurance.

JERRY: Hey man, I'll see what-

LAURA: Jerry will make it happen.

JERRY: I will, will I?

LAURA: Yeah... unless you want your God-fearing mother to find out that her little altar-boy isn't really dating a virginal veterinarian from Vermont.

JERRY: (To LAURA.) I should ask for a refund.

LAURA: Consider yourself lucky, Jerry. You have the honor of being my very last client.

JERRY: Isn't that like congratulating the last guy to blow his load in a gang-bang?

LAURA: And he wonders why he has to pay for sex. (To DANNY.) *Harry Potter*, right?

DANNY: (Nods.) Works every time.

(JERRY and LAURA disappear behind the bar.)

RAY moves behind the bar... and awaits JOE. JOE stands briefly next to DANNY.)

JOE: *'Ten Cuidado'*.

DANNY: Come again?

JOE: Be careful... you know... in Spanish.

DANNY: Right. *Bueno*.

JOE: *(Pause.)* Danny-Boy.

DANNY: Van Joe.

*(JOE takes DANNY by the shoulders and grips him tightly. He then leans forward and touches his forehead against DANNY'S.)*

JOE: Later, alligator.

DANNY: In a while, crocodile.

*(JOE moves behind the bar and looks one last time over at DANNY before descending through the doors.)*

RAY: We'll make sure he's taken care of. You got my word.

DANNY: *(Exhales deeply.)* For what it's worth... I like your bar.

RAY: *(Looking around.)* Yeah. Me too.

*(RAY melts into the darkness behind the bar.)*

DANNY quickly moves behind the bar to shut the storm doors and cover up their escape.

*The PHONE rings.*

DANNY emerges from the blackness behind the bar. He stares intently at the phone. He lets it ring three more times before picking it up.)

DANNY: *(Listens for a moment.)* Do me a favor, asshole... put me on your no-call list.

*(DANNY hangs up the phone and walks out from behind the bar to the center of the stage. He holds out his hand gun, registers a round, and then flips off the safety. He takes a deep breath, rolls his shoulders a couple of times and then stretches his neck to the left and right*

*He then moves his newfound glasses from the top of his head to over his eyes.*

*DANNY is now ready for war.)*

DANNY: *(Smiling.)* In a while, crocodile.

FADE OUT LIGHTS. CURTAINS.