

FRIDAY NIGHT GROUP

by

Scott R. Adkins

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contact Scott Adkins via the contact
form on the website.

Cast of Characters

- Penny: Female. In her forties and married to Jack.
- Jack: Male. The forty something professor married to Penny.
- Sammy: Male. Jack and Penny's thirteen year old son.
- Emily: Female. Jack and Penny's nine year old daughter.
- Smokey: Male. The dog.
- Amber: Female. A nineteen year old student of Jack's.
- Frank: Male. Frank is in his fifties and married to Rhoda.
- Rhoda: Female. Rhoda is in her forties and married Frank.
- Robert: Male. Robert is in his fifties and married to Sharon.
- Sharon: Female. Sharon is in her forties and married to Robert..
- FBI MAN: Male. The man who lost everything. In his forties.
- Radio Announcer: Male.

Music by Ethan Crenson

Scene

Above ground, a house that is in the process of sinking below ground into a gooey sweet slimy weedville underworld.

Time

The night after another US invasion.

My mother said to me

D A
Go to the bathroom and forget about the bees

D D7
I remember her now

G7
Her golden hair so fine

D A D
All my friends loved her and thought she was divine

D D7
One day she looked down at me

G7
With love in her eyes

D A
And then she left me without sayin' goodbye

D D7
Now all I have left

G7
Is my badge and my guitar

D A D
So I sing these songs and flash my little star

Em
Stay away from here

G
Stay away from me

D A
Or you'll be hanging on the edge of hell

Em
Stay away from here

G
Stay away from me

D A D
Or you'll be hanging on the edge of hell

SCENE 2

(Darkness. SAMMY is sitting
on a chair masturbating.
Brackets are spoken by
SAMMY imitating Amber.)

SAMMY

Oh yeah Amber. You like that. Oh yeah you do. Oh god yes.
Fuck me harder [Fuck me fuck me hard] Yeah oh yeah I'm
going to fuck you you oh oh oh yes yes aaaaaah yeah. Oh.
Yeah. Yeah. Thirty seconds.

(Running water. Lights on. SAMMY is holding a
crumpled piece of paper.)

SAMMY

BLUE SPOT

Grows as I weep
Am I dead?
I can't look up
It is too scary

To look up
Is like looking down
From up there...I am falling

The alarm ringing so loud
Says that something is wrong
But there rarely is...

I live in the alarm between the beep
And the whoop
The part of the alarm that is silent

The cars come and come
And keep coming
And they are not racing
But my ribs are

The heart is no longer
The keeper of the soul
The ribs no longer the cage
To keep the soul from leaving too soon

The heart and the brain had a meeting about this and
decided
That they are equals, the stomach was very upset

Blue spot. Maybe the lake I grew up on wasn't green after-
all.

(EMILY bursts into the room.)

EMILY

What are you doing? Give me that.

SAMMY

Hey get outta here. I need some privacy.

Blue Spot.

EMILY

You idiot give it back. Fucker.

(EMILY spits on SAMMY.)

SAMMY

ewwwwww!

SCENE 3

(PENNY and JACK's living room and a kitchen. PENNY enters the room. She sits on the couch. The house suddenly shakes violently for a moment then AMBER seems to fall into the living room through the front door.)

AMBER

Oh!

PENNY

Oh! Oh!

AMBER

You scared me Mrs. Green, I didn't know anyone was home.

PENNY

Amber, please don't call me Mrs. Green. Call me Penny.

AMBER

I just came in for a couple cokes. Emily wanted a coke.

(AMBER enters the kitchen.)

PENNY

Did Emily have fun?

AMBER

We went to the park. It was chilly though, so we...

PENNY

That's nice.

(AMBER returns carrying two cokes.)

AMBER

I noticed your house seems to be sinking.

PENNY

The house is still settling. I know it sounds crazy, a hundred year old house still settling but did you know we dug the basement out?

AMBER

Oh. That makes sense. So it's like a brand new house sort of. But the stairs coming into the house don't step up anymore.

PENNY

That doesn't make any sense Amber. You must be exhausted. (pause) I'm sorry. (pause) It's just, between work, this house, and my husband stopped...my husband kneading me like a loaf of bread. What?

AMBER

I ah, I should get back to Emily, she probably wonders where I am?

PENNY

Marriage can be very lonely, you think it's not going to be but then...you get to a point when you forget who you were.

AMBER

Mrs. Green, it seems inappropriate.

PENNY

I don't understand.

AMBER

You.

PENNY

Me?

AMBER

No I mean, what you said. I don't feel very comfortable right now?

PENNY

Oh I'm sorry.

AMBER

Emily is...

PENNY

...are you an alien here to abduct my husband?

AMBER

Mrs. Green?

PENNY

Never mind, that would be too easy. You're right. I'm a terrible mother. I spend my day with lawyers slapping my ass, buyers backing down, sellers wanting more more more. My secretary can't even manage to write a cover letter without spelling errors. She can't handle more than two incoming phone calls. Two. When it rains it pours and she freezes up like a deer in the headlights. She wrote a letter the other day to a couple named Bob and Dorothy and wrote Dear Linda and Evan. I don't even know who Linda and Evan are. Oh wait, yes I do anyway never mind. Then I come home to making dinners, laundry, and housecleaning and where is Jack? Oh he had a student advisee meeting or the boys had to meet down at the Elks or it's bridge night. I like to play bridge but we don't play anymore. He doesn't even ask. He just goes off to play.

(AMBER picks up the cokes
and exits out the front
door. Penny is standing
holding a dust rag and
picture frame. She throws
the rag on the floor and
sits down on the couch
looking at the frame.)

SCENE 4

(The following is a phone conversation that occurs in complete darkness. We hear the ringing sound over a phone line. JACK answers the phone.)

JACK

Professor Green.

AMBER

Hi Professor. It's Amber.

JACK

Hi.

AMBER

I missed class today.

JACK

Yes. You did.

AMBER

I'm sorry.

JACK

No need to apologize to me.

AMBER

It's just, I overslept because I was up all night watching the news and I don't even know what time I went to bed, all I know is when I woke up I was sweating and I was almost late picking up your daughter for our afternoon adventure. I'm a disaster and I feel like if I say another word I might explode. You know what the worst of it is? Your class is my favorite class and I missed it.

JACK

It's okay.

AMBER

Did you wear the tweed jacket today?

JACK

Actually I wore a blue blazer.

AMBER

Oh, thank god. I would be even sadder if you'd worn the tweed jacket. You always look so cute in that tweed jacket. You've never worn a blue blazer before. Is something wrong?

JACK

No no, I had to dig deep today, I forgot to get my dry cleaning.

AMBER

Oh I hate when that happens, then you have to dig into the clothes that you never wear and they are always so stale and you don't wear them because there's a reason and then when you don't have a choice it's really annoying.

JACK

Yeah.

AMBER

Hmmmm. (slight giggle)

JACK

What.

AMBER

I'm trying to picture you in a blue blazer. I mean I always picture you in the tweed. I bet you looked pretty good.

JACK

Well if you'd come to class you could have seen the goods first hand.

AMBER

I promise I won't miss another class.

JACK

See you Monday?

AMBER

Professor?

JACK

Yes?

AMBER

I ah, well, hmm, See...I was I was at your house today with Emily and when I went inside, your wife was there. We were talking and she said something.

JACK

What did she say?

AMBER

Uhhmm. (giggles) I don't know. Forget it. (pause) I think your house is sinking.

JACK

What?

AMBER

I thought there were stairs to get in your front door and now there aren't any stairs anymore and I think it's because your house is sinking.

JACK

Strange. I never go in the front door. I don't think we have stairs leading into the house but I could be wrong. We had some construction done recently, maybe that's what you're thinking of, it's probably settling.

AMBER

Yeah well, I thought I don't know, it just seems weird that your house is still settling after so long.

JACK

Yeah, it shakes a little from the new foundation. Did Penny tell you we dug the basement out and now we have a full size basement? It'll be really great for you and the kids to play down there if you have them on a rainy day.

AMBER

Yeah. Hey! Do you like my hair?

JACK

Sure.

AMBER

Can you describe it?

JACK

What?

AMBER

It's a game we played in psych the other day. We all got a partner and then shut our eyes. Then we had to describe that person or something about them as we saw them in our mind. So, what's my hair look like?

JACK

Well let's see. It's a shade of brown and blonde, it's like the color of a golden honey. There are bangs and the sides swoop down and frame your face. It's very nice.

AMBER

Interesting. Very interesting. I like that. What's one word that would describe my hair? And nice does not count.

JACK

Uhhhh, heh. One word. Hmmmm. (pause) Buoyant.

AMBER

Hmmm. Buoyant. Buoyant. That's...I think..

JACK

It's got a lot of energy and pep, like you.

AMBER

Thank you Professor.

(AMBER hangs up.)

JACK

Alright then, okay, so we'll see you Monday.

(Pause)

Hello?

SCENE 5

(FBI MAN is dirty and has
weeds wrapped around
himself. He sings a song.)

FBI MAN

They're all gone, they've all left me
they've all died I'm all alone
my teeth are rotting
my legs give way to the ground

I can hang on though
I won't let the reaper take me without a fight
I will fight til I find her

I'm talking about a lady I saw in dreamland
Her head floated to me, she kissed my hand
A face I will never forget
A face I look for everyday

She has sparkle eyes
And rubber stamp thighs
Where have all the good ones gone
Sparkle eyes rubber stamp thighs
Where have they gone

I can smell the ocean sweat in her curly cue hair
The tickle at my ear
Her arms holding me tight

When I close my eyes
I see her smile call for me
but can't quite read her lips

She's not a stain but
She's damn hard to get out of my head

She has sparkle eyes
And rubber stamp thighs
Where have all the good ones gone
Sparkle eyes rubber stamp thighs
Where have they gone
Sparkle eyes and rubber stamp thighs

SCENE 6

(The eat-in kitchen is lit while the living room is dark.)

PENNY darts around the kitchen pulling down dishes, pulling food out of the refrigerator.

JACK falls through the front door carrying a briefcase, a bundle of dry cleaning and a manila envelope.)

PENNY

Jack, you're home late. You missed dinner.

JACK

Yes, thank you I had a good day. At least it started off real good. A crisp morning, I thought I saw a wisp of green in the front yard. I felt good which is unusual. Took the scenic route to work, down by Sunnyside Park, watched the sun rising for a moment, remembered our family picnic this past summer, the kids swinging and engaging in water warfare with the neighborhood pals. I remembered your hair and how nice it felt and how well you wore it. You were exquisite. I drove on through our adventures until I got to the office. It was good to feel good, to be thankful. The day flew by, the students were exceptional for a Friday and I was sitting in my office when a mysterious envelope was slid under my door.

PENNY

A what?

JACK

A letter in a manila envelope from our lawyer. Here.

(JACK tosses the envelope onto the table.)

Then they ruined my favorite shirt at the dry cleaners.

PENNY

Mmm hmmm. I can't find the potato chips I bought today and we're almost out of Scotch. Look at that. Do we have any more scotch?

(PENNY holds up a nearly empty bottle of Scotch.)

Did you eat?

JACK

I went to the Elks for a burger. Didn't I say that?

PENNY

Oh. No.

JACK

What?

PENNY

You could've called or something. I made a casserole. It's in the fridge.

JACK

Sorry. It's Friday. I grabbed a quick bite after grading mid-terms which kept me late at the office and you and the kids would have been in the middle of dinner and so instead of coming home into the middle of that I went for a quick bite. Where are the kids?

(PENNY picks up the envelope.)

PENNY

Sleep over, I mean lock-in at the Methodist church.

JACK

Both?

PENNY

Mmmm. They'll be fine.

JACK

Are you kidding? It's the Methodist Church, you sent our kids into the Methodist Church alone? They're gonna come home all googly eyed and godified in a totally opposite way of our godification.

PENNY

Oh Jack, come on, it's not a cult, it's a church lock-in just like the one our church had.

JACK

The stories are completely different.

(PENNY is looking at the envelope.)

Open it.

PENNY

It's for you.

JACK

It's all right.

PENNY

You could have called so I wouldn't worry.

JACK

You were worried?

PENNY

Yes, no. Forget it. I think there's more scotch in the basement.

(PENNY heads for the stairs to the basement. There is a strange animal screaming sound coming from the back yard. It is intermittent.)

JACK

What is that noise

(JACK turns on a back yard light.)

PENNY

I don't know. It's been going on since I got home.

JACK

You didn't look? Oh, the dog is fucking.

PENNY

Oh stop.

JACK

The dog is fucking Peaches. Look. He seems to be stuck.

PENNY

That's disgusting.

(PENNY continues toward the
basement.)

JACK

No Seriously. Look, he's stuck. Look at him.

PENNY

Jack.

(JACK leans out the back
door. Penny goes to the
basement.)

JACK

Smokey! Why don't you finish up out there and have
something to eat? Okay. Apparently everyone has eaten then.

(JACK returns and picks up
the envelope. He opens it.
Penny returns.)

JACK

I don't understand.

PENNY

You opened it?

JACK

I don't believe this.

PENNY

What is it?

JACK

What is it? You know damn well what it is.

PENNY

Oh. Well...

JACK

This is crazy.

PENNY

It's not crazy, its how I feel.

JACK

Then you must feel pretty insane because this is CRAZY.

PENNY

Well come on think about it. It's just; it's only a matter of time Jack. I see you, the way you look and work so late and have so many

JACK

So many what.

PENNY

Female students.

JACK

Oh for Christ sake.

PENNY

You want to, I know you do. You've come so close I could smell it on you.

JACK

Do you want me too?

PENNY

No.

JACK

Well for the record, I have not betrayed you.

PENNY

You will.

JACK

I go to the Elks for a burger sometimes that's it. Come on.

PENNY

It's all there. I'm getting older, you're getting older. You don't call. You work late. If you were still interested you would call. You don't talk to me anymore, you sulk. You run away. You watch the T.V. more than you watch me. Oh and you hold your breath. Big red flag. It's a sign of repressed tension. You can hardly breathe around me. Why should I wait for the inevitable? One day you are going to wake up and have the brilliant idea to screw all your young female students who are throwing themselves at you on a daily basis. It would be so easy for you and maybe it already is.

JACK

I'm a crotchety old professor with a hairy back.

PENNY

Who has a certain control over the future of his students. You could fail them or pass them, you could ruin their four point oh average and they may feel the need to take matters into their own hands so to speak.

JACK

This is ridiculous.

PENNY

You can try to deny your position but the facts are there and the end is inevitable.

JACK

So you decide that you might as well divorce me now while you're still ripe. I won't sign the papers. I love you Penny. You have no grounds for this and I won't let you devastate Sammy and Emily.

PENNY

I knew you would try to use them. They agree with me.

JACK

How can they fathom the implications of this?

PENNY

They can. They see the way you treat all of us and how bad it can become. They've seen it happening to their friends. Besides you should be proud, they came up with the idea.

JACK

You can't preemptively divorce me because you have some intuition that I will inevitably sleep around. Nobody does this.

(There is a knock at the door.)

PENNY

I won't talk about this now.

JACK

Who's at the door?

PENNY

We have the Friday night group tonight. I'm not going to say another word about this until Monday.

(JACK stares out the back window. There is another knock at the door.)

PENNY

Are you going to get that?

(JACK answers the door.)

JACK

Robert.

(ROBERT enters the room.)

ROBERT

Jack.

JACK

Drink?

ROBERT

Yeah, that'd be great. Scotch, rocks.

JACK

You got it.

(JACK mixes Robert a drink
and himself a very full
glass.)

ROBERT

Everything alright?

JACK

Sure.

ROBERT

Woa, would you look at that?

JACK

What's that? Oh yeah, Smokey's in a situation.

ROBERT

(ROBERT leans out the back
door.)

Hey Smokey, give her a break.

JACK

Leave him alone.

PENNY

Hi Robert.

ROBERT

Hi Penny. Wow, you look great.

PENNY

You think? Jack, close the blinds. We are not watching or
talking about the damn dog all night.

(JACK closes the blinds.)

PENNY

I thought Sharon was coming tonight.

ROBERT

She is. We're meeting here. She lost three people at the home today. They always die in the spring or the fall. She's up to her neck in paperwork.

(There is a knock at the door.)

I'll get it.

(RHODA enters ahead of FRANK.)

RHODA

It's still cold out there. I can't believe it.

ROBERT

Cold fronts moving in tonight but there's a warm front too.

PENNY

Hi Rhoda.

ROBERT

Hi.

JACK

Hey Frank where'd you park?

FRANK

In your driveway?

JACK

Oh, uhhhh

PENNY

Jack, we go through this every time and you never go out, we don't need anything and we won't need anything.

FRANK

Oh damn. I forgot Jack, I'm sorry.

JACK

Could you park it in the street?

PENNY

Jack, no. Frank you're not going back out you're in you're staying in until the night is done.

FRANK

No no that's alright. Jack wants it on the street I understand.

PENNY

Frank give me your coat. If we have to go out later we'll move his car later Jack.

ROBERT

Penny I got the pills today.

JACK

What are you drinking Frank?

FRANK

Scotch rocks.

JACK

Rhoda?

RHODA

Same. Thanks Frank I mean Jack. Do you have any pills for me Robert?

ROBERT

Not unless you're a horse with a tight constitution.

PENNY

Oh my god Robert I can't believe you just said that.

RHODA

Horse Pills?

PENNY

Well sort of. Tetracycline. It's for my face.

RHODA

Oh.

ROBERT

It's an antibiotic.

JACK

Rhoda.

(JACK hands RHODA a drink.)

RHODA

Thanks Jack. For horses?

(JACK hands FRANK a drink.)

FRANK

Dealing pills on the side eh Robert?

PENNY

Oh they're so much cheaper plus I don't have to go to my doctor.

FRANK

How does a horse pill help your face? I don't get it.

ROBERT

It isn't a horse pill. Well I mean it's a pill for animals but it's the same stuff we take, it's an antibiotic..

RHODA

He was joking.

FRANK

But they must be big pills.

ROBERT

No.

RHODA

What else can you get?

ROBERT

Woa woa, this was a one time favor for Penny.

RHODA

Come on what else?

ROBERT

Anything a doctor can get.

FRANK

If you want me to move the car I'll move it.

JACK

You're here, relax. I'm just anal about that. We'll move it later. I think I'm claustrophobic; I get nervous when I'm parked in. Got any feline pills that'll help that doc?

ROBERT

Uh no.

RHODA

Where's Sharon?

ROBERT

She's coming later. She lost three today.

PENNY

So sad.

RHODA

Oh my god that's terrible.

FRANK

How old?

ROBERT

She didn't say but you know.

JACK

Old.

FRANK

They're all at that age in there; I mean that's why they're there right?

PENNY

Chips?

(PENNY puts out a bowl of chips just as SHARON enters the kitchen without knocking.)

ROBERT

Speak of the devil. We we're just talking about you.

SHARON

Where's the radio?

(SHARON sees the radio and
rushes to it. She fumbles
with it.)

PENNY

What's going on sweetie?

SHARON

How do I turn it on?

PENNY

Here.

(PENNY turns the radio on.
Music blares from its
speaker.)

SHARON

It's happening, tonight I mean right now. Oh god.

(SHARON is changing
channels until she hits a
station where an announcer
is speaking very loudly
over the sounds of heavy
machinery and motors.)

RADIO ANNOUNCER

... can tell you is a very dry desert. Daylight is just
breaking over the horizon.

ROBERT

Oh no. I thought it was just going to be missiles this
time.

PENNY

Oh dear god.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

The tanks are really moving now. I can see tanks and
supply trucks as far as the eye can see in both directions.

This is the largest mobilization we've seen since we were brought over here just ten years ago. They are moving 850,000 troops as I speak.

FRANK

It's finally happening.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

The question on my mind, will this be it? From the looks of it, holy cow I don't know if you could hear that but there are fighter jets flying very low to, what I presume is, to protect the line of marines, regular army, and special forces. This administration is pulling out all the stops.

PENNY

I didn't want to believe it would actually happen.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

The troops are confident and focused. They..

RHODA

Let's turn it off it's too much.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

They foresee little opposition at this point however..

SHARON

Too much? No we must listen. This is the war and..

RADIO ANNOUNCER

...they are prepared for anything and everything. The insurgents trained rabbits, wolves, dogs, tiny dogs, to carry small packages of highly explosive material into the roadways, shopping centers, office buildings, and military camps.

PENNY

She's right. I can't do this again. Not tonight. Okay?

(PENNY turns the radio
off.)

SHARON

We can't pretend it's not happening. It's really happening..

(SHARON turns the radio on.)

RADIO ANNOUNCER
...eradication process. Once underway there will be little left to contemplate..

PENNY
We know it's happening, isn't that enough?

(PENNY turns the radio off.)

ROBERT
I'd like to listen. I mean maybe this will be the end of it.

(SHARON turns the radio on.)

RADIO ANNOUNCER
...total control and a clean slate..

PENNY
No. (PENNY turns the radio off.) Please.

RHODA
We don't need to hear every moment to know how terrible it is. The headlines will tell us tomorrow. Why do we have to know everything right this minute now?

FRANK
I've never cared for the over coverage we get with the media. It's desensitizing.

ROBERT
Desensitizing, meaning you can't feel it or see it or hear it as well after awhile.

FRANK
Yes, after awhile it loses its potency.

JACK

Or really you'd rather not hear it, read it or even know it is happening.

FRANK

I didn't ask for the radio to be turned off. I think that if you turn it into a reality show the viewers lose sight of ...

JACK

Of what?

SHARON

We have to listen because we can, like it or not Frank we are over there killing people.

FRANK

Yes.

JACK

A reality show? Frank, it is reality.

FRANK

Yes and I also believe it is necessary when our interests are at risk. We are simply doing what we have to do.

RHODA

Frank and I are thinking of moving up north to a cabin, away from the center of trouble.

ROBERT

Trouble? Here? We're already in the middle of nowhere.

SHARON

Are the terrorists going to start attacking our farms?

PENNY

Sharon, there's a nuclear power plant across the river making us a ground zero target.

SHARON

Okay, but we are STILL in the middle of nowhere. Why don't we just go and kill the leader?

ROBERT

They don't really have a leader do they? I mean I thought they were cellular, like wolf packs. Wolves are all after

the same thing, genetic survival but they split off into packs, there's no lead wolf.

JACK

Do wolves come from the desert?

ROBERT

Not that I'm aware of.

SHARON

Please don't condescend to me. I'm talking about the country that has nuclear weapons and they are not afraid to use them. They have gas that will burn the skin off of our children's faces.

PENNY

Rhoda you can't just pull your kids out of school and take them up there?

RHODA

Why not?

PENNY

The schools are terrible up there.

FRANK

Oh come on Penny they're not that bad.

RHODA

I was thinking the same thing Penny and...

SHARON

...Home schooling? You're going to home school?

RHODA

Yes. I've got several books on it and there is a whole community of mothers on the internet that home school there kids. It's a real movement. I think they'll get a better education than they would here.

PENNY

I don't know Rhoda.

SHARON

You don't want to home school. Trust me, it's totally consuming.

FRANK

Rhoda always has big ideas. We'll put them in the schools and see how it goes.

RHODA

Frank we're not putting our kids in the schools up there, home schooling is ...

FRANK

We'll see.

RHODA

Anyway what good will living here do us if we're dead or contaminated by radiation.

PENNY

What are you talking about?

JACK

You know she's right, it wouldn't take much to cause a meltdown and small chain reaction and then poof. A cloud of radioactive dust so fine you can't see it. And it plumes into the air and settles 150 miles downwind. I could see that happening. Thyroid cancer would ravage our children, the cows would have to be burned, genetic deformities would become the norm. The elderly generations would have inexplicable pains in their bones.

PENNY

Jack? You're not helping.

JACK

It's just a scenario.

SHARON

Why don't we all just move over there? We can gentrify the old neighborhoods, put Starbucks on every corner, bring Walmart and jobs.

RHODA

If you saw a wounded bird lying on the ground and the bird's nest was a few feet up in a tree you would pick that bird up and that bird would peck you maybe even make you bleed but would you stop and drop the bird on the ground and let

it die? Or would you put it in the nest even though it hurt you?

FRANK

Nonsense. That bird's mother would never take it in after you touched it everyone knows that right Robert?

ROBERT

Depends.

RHODA

You'd wear gloves then, it doesn't matter.

FRANK

Oh Rhoda "it doesn't matter". Please. Don't talk about complex issues you know nothing about, like war. Stick to wall papering.

JACK

Hey I have an idea, why don't we move over there, all of us, not all of us but let's say fifty million of us just move on over and take the country over. We could open up Starbucks and Walmart and make jobs and gentrify the crusty old desert into thriving gardens. What do you say? Who's with me?

SHARON

You're a mean drunk.

RHODA

Oh my god I can't believe I almost forgot. Penny. Sharon and I found an amazing wall paper that will be perfect for your office; it's a retro professional classic look with an arty feel.

SHARON

You're going to love this Penny. Is it still in your car Robert?

ROBERT

I think so. Scotch anyone?

(SHARON exits.)

PENNY

What's the matter with you Jack?

JACK

What.

PENNY

That was mean.

JACK

I'm serious. See then the terrorists couldn't attack us because we wouldn't be here anymore. It's brilliant.

PENNY

You were mocking her.

ROBERT

I think the president is like a queen bee, he doesn't have to do anything.

RHODA

We found the wallpaper in the basement of an old house on Seneca street.

(SHARON enters with a
sample of wall paper.)

SHARON

I've got it.

ROBERT

The worker bees buzzing about taking over territory building the empire, the nest up around her, bringing her nectar to turn into honey. It's quite beautiful and simple.

PENNY

Seneca Street.

FRANK

Yeah. That's how our whole country is and we are unstoppable.

SHARON

Oh Rhoda told you, yeah, we are looking for a pet project and we stumbled upon this stuff at this house on Seneca street. Isn't it amazing?

JACK

Well unstoppable until the cycle ends or until something bigger comes along and takes all the honey. Eh? I think he's more like a pigeon. Like a flying rat or hyena.

ROBERT

Hyena's don't fly. But pigs do.

PENNY

It's beautiful. Oh my god it is perfect.

JACK

He's like a dung beetle. Going around the world rolling up all the shit into tiny balls. A burden that is his destiny.

RHODA

That's a terrible thing to say.

ROBERT

Because it's the truth?

RHODA

No because it refers to people and cultures other than our own as shit.

FRANK

I think that pretty much sums up an evil country, it's a little piece of shit that needs to be balled up and buried.

ROBERT

Hey Jack what's up with your house?

(SMOKEY falls in through
the back door.)

ROBERT

Smokey! Did you do okay back there?

(SMOKEY curls up to
ROBERT.)

JACK

Oh, I can't believe I forgot about this! The FBI called me today.

PENNY

What?

RHODA

What for?

ROBERT

Ladies and gentlemen they finally tracked him down after all these years. They're coming after your compost marijuana.

JACK

No seriously.

ROBERT

They had a few leads but they knew he was naked at the time of the crime and he was carrying mail making it a federal crime. While...

JACK

Seriously. Listen.

ROBERT

... in front of a thousand football fans ladies and gentlemen, this man streaked buck naked while carrying a letter to the provost which said "I want a raise".

JACK

This isn't a joke.

SHARON

Let him speak Robert.

ROBERT

Sorry. Go on.

JACK

I got my raise by the way.

PENNY

You sure did.

JACK

No, the FBI was asking me questions about questionable characters. They wanted to know if I had seen anyone behave strangely lately.

PENNY

What did you tell them?

JACK

I told them no, I've lived here twenty years, no one around here has anything to do with what's going on and that most people here are strange and do strange things. Our dog for example, when he was a pup he got run over by a tractor. He hasn't been right since. That's why when he runs, his butt swings out to the side a little bit like he's running crooked. I said our only crime is being a funny little town.

FRANK

They called me too.

JACK

What'd they call you for?

FRANK

Looking for insurance policies.

SHARON

Frank isn't that illegal to give them information like that?

FRANK

I didn't tell them anything they didn't already know. I told them the truth.

JACK

What truth?

FRANK

People in our congregation, questionable people stopped going to church and I questioned their reasons for coming to begin with.

JACK

A lot of people don't go to church anymore, when was the last time you went to church Frank? Rhoda?

Well...

RHODA

...You don't count.

JACK

As a matter of fact I stopped going to church.

RHODA

Rhoda!

PENNY

Since when?

SHARON

That's not the point, we at least belong to a church.

FRANK

But how is you not going to church different from anyone else not going to church?

JACK

First of all I'm not a terrorist, second of all we don't really know them do we? They say that these guys, these sleepers have been here for as long as a decade.

FRANK

I'm so confused, who are we talking about?

SHARON

I think I know.

ROBERT

What else?

JACK

They bought a new car. They tripled their life insurance policy. Oh come on, these people don't have any money.

FRANK

How do you know?

JACK

FRANK

I never see them eat meat and I think they're from the mid-east.

SHARON

Sounds like a terrorist to me. He doesn't eat meat?

JACK

Wait a minute, you are talking about Manuel?

FRANK

I don't know his name.

JACK

But he has dark skin, he is always tan right? Probably one of ten dark skinned people in this town.

FRANK

Yes.

JACK

You're talking about Manuel. He's from Peru.

FRANK

How do you know that?

JACK

Are you high? You just ruined someone's life. For what? Because you "think" he is acting suspicious because he doesn't act just like you? No wait he does act like you but he isn't white therefore he must be...

ROBERT

Hey. You don't really know him. None of us do. I've seen him all the way on the other side of town by the chicken packing plant and another time over by the Walmart roaming around, what's he doing all the way out there? It's best to let the authorities handle this and they can determine if he is involved or not. They must have a reason to question him, they wouldn't just pick him out of the blue if they didn't have a reason.

JACK

You're right. They wouldn't just pick him out of the blue like that. See, they rely on the neighbors like Frank to tip them off.

FRANK

They were asking the questions Jack.

JACK

And you Robert? You think like this? So what, now they ship him off to a federal prison for how long? Everyone in the neighborhood loves him. Good work Frank. You are a true patriot of freedom and democracy.

SHARON

Two ladies and a man died at the home today. The two ladies were twin sisters and died holding hands while watching wheel of fortune. I couldn't tell but I imagined that they died simultaneously each exhaling one final breath and each slipping away. The man died alone, in his room, staring at the ceiling with his Hamm radio on. I could hear his buddies calling him. He went on the wireless at the same time everyday. He built that radio from scratch. I wanted to pick up the microphone and tell his friends, I wanted to let them know that he was gone but I couldn't, I just stood there with there voices filling the room. Then I reached over and turned the radio off, the lights faded slowly on the console as the electricity drained away.

RHODA

Sharon, I'm sorry. I know how much you care for those people.

SHARON

It's just how it is I guess.

(Pause.)

PENNY

I think we should all go look at our new basement. The cement is dry, the carpet is installed, the pool table is set-up.

JACK

The pool table is set-up?

PENNY

The pool table is set-up, the bathroom is wall papered with the town's bicentennial newspaper clippings, took me hours and hours but I did it god dammit!

(JACK fixes himself another drink.)

RHODA

What are we waiting for?

SHARON

Let's go. Robert?

ROBERT

We'll be down in a minute. A quick refill.

(The women get up and go to the basement. ROBERT, FRANK, and JACK.)

SCENE 7

(Methodist Church. SAMMY
and EMILY are playing spin
the bottle alone.)

EMILY

Where is everyone?

SAMMY

They're coming.

EMILY

How do you want to die?

SAMMY

I'd like to be eaten alive.

EMILY

No.

SAMMY

It'd only be fair. Think of all the animals we've eaten.

EMILY

We don't eat them alive though. I'm serious. How do you
want to die?

SAMMY

How do you want to die?

EMILY

Quietly. Quickly. Without pain or regret. Then I want to go
on an adventure to all the places we can't see but exist. I
want to go where everyone's dreams are and I can eat
popcorn and watch them like a drive in movie.

SAMMY

You don't want to watch my dreams.

EMILY

I bet you dream about war a lot and you are the hero saving
your troops and you carry a big gun and hit everything you
shoot at and bullets seem to go right through you.

SAMMY

Sometimes. Mostly I dream about breathing underwater.

EMILY

Cool.

SAMMY

It's not cool though it's scary because in my dream I know I can't breathe underwater and so when I realize that I am breathing underwater, I drown.

EMILY

That's how you'll die then. Death by drowning.

SAMMY

Come on let's play.

(SAMMY spins the bottle.)

EMILY

I don't want to play until the others get here. Do you die in your dreams.

SAMMY

All the time.

EMILY

Where do you go?

SAMMY

I wake up.

EMILY

Everytime?

SAMMY

Yeah. When I die I end up right here.

EMILY

I dream that moments before the world is destroyed by humans the aliens come down from the dark side of the moon and save us by sucking us into their dimension. It's really the only way we'll survive.

SCENE 8

(Kitchen.)

FRANK

Yesterday I don't know. All I know is when I looked at this light burning through the clouds I thought that it looked unnatural, the clouds looked like they were catching fire and I thought this is it. They did it. They got one through and that's it and it was beautiful even though I was terrified, the way the light burned through the clouds was beautiful with yellow and orange, different variations of orange and flashes of cobalt. I didn't think it could be the sun.

JACK

It could have been an alien?

FRANK

Because it, there wasn't a ah, whatchamacallit a ah rainbow. Only orange and red and streaks of cobalt, a pure blue that was not of this world, I couldn't figure out where the other colors were.

JACK

Abducted by aliens no doubt. They love colors.

ROBERT

It was the sun though, right?

FRANK

Yes. But it doesn't matter I don't want to stick around here, you know what I mean? Waiting for it to really happen. Because it's going to happen. You hear what they say on t.v., they say it's only a matter of time and it's going to happen. I sat there looking at the cloud believing it was really happening and that made me realize that it really could happen.

JACK

Wow Frank. What's going on? I've never seen you so scared.

FRANK

Oh and you're not, you're not afraid of what they'll do next.

(RHODA enters unseen and listens.)

ROBERT

When are you moving?

FRANK

I ordered the packing materials kit yesterday.

JACK

That fast?

FRANK

I'll get it in a couple days they said, maybe even tomorrow. It's a great company, I got twenty five small boxes, fifteen medium boxes, ten large boxes, six rolls of tape, twenty pounds of newsprint packing paper, seventy five feet of bubble wrap, a tape gun, a knife. It was a deal.

ROBERT

You'll need more small boxes don't you think?

JACK

Can never have enough small boxes.

FRANK

Twenty five. I can always send Rhoda to the grocery store for more.

(FRANK sees RHODA.)

Hey.

RHODA

You ordered a moving box kit?

FRANK

Yeah.

RHODA

I don't want to move Frank. I want to think about moving even fantasize about it and plan what we would do if we did move. But we are thinking about it, that doesn't mean you order a moving kit.

FRANK

Box kit.

RHODA

Or whatever. I don't want to leave here yet, I mean maybe but not now not tomorrow or the next day. I can't just leave all this behind. We'll never see our friends again.

FRANK

That is not true. We have to go Rhoda. It's coming and...

RHODA

And what.

FRANK

You heard Jack, thyroid cancer, mutant children...

RHODA

What are you afraid of?

JACK

He's afraid the sky will open up one beautiful morning and it will be raining armed nuclear warheads that look like the sun. So you better run really fast.

SCENE 9

(FBI MAN is holding a black bag while he sits on a dirt mound. It must be wet down there.)

FBI MAN

I got a package today from my boss. They found me. This is a heat sensor decibel canceling laser directed microphone. I use it when I am short on time and the suspect has moved to a place that I haven't had an opportunity to seed. This piece of equipment probably cost the tax payers fifty thousand dollars give or take. It's got a balanced weight and feels solid. The case is made out of hardened steel with a matte finish that won't reflect light. In fact it absorbs light, like a black hole. Range, one hundred yards. I prefer to get as close as possible. Makes it more fun. I've logged about three thousand hours on this suspect.

(Picks up his guitar and begins to sing.)

Three thousand hours and a mile to go
I go to work on a Sunday
Don't get to sleep 'til Tuesday morning

They never see me
They never know me
And if they do it's all over

When I open this bag
I open the window to their soul
One conversation at a time

I've got a bug that'll fit in your ear
A homing device that'll fit in your rear
Satellite links
Pin camera
Infrared camera
Night time day time middle of dinner time camera
Laser guided tracers with magnetic attachment
Mobile lie detector

You can't lie to me
I know that you want to

I know that you have to
But I can see your lies on my computer screen

(Put's down guitar.)

It's true. Everyone lies a little bit. The other day I was at a diner, cute little place with old timers and waitresses with nice legs under their skirts. I really wanted a thick slice of cherry pie but when the waitress came over and told me with her shiny smile and smokeless teeth that the key lime pie was on special I told her that's exactly what I wanted, a nice slice of key lime pie was exactly what I came to that diner for and that I had heard about her key lime pie on the interstate. The smile she gave me lit my heart and I felt all wobbly and like I should stand up and grab her but she held my eyes with her eyes just smiling and I was smiling back and we smiled stupid like that for eternity then she turned and brought me that slice. I lied though and I felt bad about the lie but we both felt so good after that I new the truth would ruin everything.

SCENE 10

(There is persistent knocking on the back door. PENNY enters from the basement and answers the door.)

AMBER

Hi.

PENNY

Amber? Wow, look at that.

AMBER

Yeah. I saw some storm chasers. It was hot this morning.

PENNY

Cold tonight. I love a good storm.

AMBER

Me too. Tornado storm.

PENNY

We haven't had a good storm in awhile. I can't remember the last tornado we had.

(Pause.)

When I was a little girl a tornado hit our town. We had a storm cellar and my parents took me and my sister down into the cellar. I didn't know what was happening until I heard what sounded like a freight train coming right for the house. Everything shook and the noise was so much that I couldn't hear my sister screaming. I knew she was screaming because her mouth was open, she had tears in her eyes and her face was very red.

AMBER

What did you do?

PENNY

I looked up and screamed quietly.

AMBER

My grandma, she could feel the weather in her teeth.

PENNY

Storms often start in the teeth or in the hip.

AMBER

I don't know.

PENNY

So, what's going on Amber?

AMBER

Is Jack around?

PENNY

Yes. He's inside with the others. We're having a little gathering. Would you like to join us? I'm sure Jack would be thrilled.

AMBER

Oh. No. No. I shouldn't do that. I mean he doesn't know I'm here or that I was coming over. I just came over and thought he might be hanging around outside or something. I don't know what I was thinking. I don't know what I'm doing.

PENNY

Can you wait a minute? I'll be right back. Is that alright?

AMBER

I guess so.

(PENNY enters the house.
FBI MAN enters.)

FBI MAN

Excuse me Miss. Do you live here?

AMBER

Uh, no. This is Professor Green's house.

(FBI MAN pounds heavily on
the door. Penny answers the
door.)

PENNY

I'm right here Amb...oh.

FBI MAN

FBI, may I come in?

PENNY

Um, just a minute. Jack? Jack!

FBI MAN

I just have a few questions.

PENNY

Really?

(JACK enters the room.)

JACK

I found the Jenga set, it was on the top shelf. There's no table in the basement to play on.

PENNY

Jack, the FBI is here to talk to you.

JACK

Me?

FBI MAN

May I come in?

PENNY

Yes, please.

JACK

Are you the one I spoke to today?

FBI MAN

Yes sir.

JACK

I may need to go over some things to make sure you guys understand what I was saying.

FBI MAN

You mentioned the dog in our conversation today sir, and I have to follow up on that lead.

JACK

Oh. Uh, is this a joke?

FBI MAN

...

I think you're missing the seriousness of this situation sir. I am here on behalf of your country. I am here in an effort to protect your freedom. You have no idea what I've seen. You have no idea what these people are capable of. Imagine a beautiful cool night like this one. You're having a few drinks with friends. The cutest little Bijon Francaise walks up and cuddles into one of your buddies' lap. You notice something off about the dog, maybe the eyes are glazed over, maybe it seems abnormally fat, and maybe it has no teeth. You get up and walk away to think about these nagging things and BLAM KA BLAM nothing but blood and body parts are left and you, you are left with a memory of knowing something was wrong, knowing that the enemy had been using animals as the delivery mechanism for improvised explosive devices and you could have done something if you'd not had so much to drink or smoke or whatever you could have done something if you had been on top of your game. But you didn't.

PENNY

Our dog is always sleeping.

FBI MAN

Is that a fact?

(FBI MAN pulls out a notebook and writes.)

PENNY

He's outlived all his friends and many of his pups.

JACK

Huh. Excuse me sir, may we see some identification.

FBI MAN

Certainly.

I am Agent Sullivan, I apologize for not introducing myself sooner.

JACK

You know, Agent Sullivan, Smokey had a big day today. He's really worn out and could use some rest, would you be able to come back tomorrow maybe?

FBI MAN

No sir. Under the patriot act sir, I believe you are harboring a suspected terrorist, if you do not present said dog immediately I will have no choice but to take all of you in for questioning. There are hundreds of suspected terrorists in jail, others didn't have the same fate. Let's just say they are no longer a problem.

JACK

You are threatening us. Take us where?

PENNY

Jack they'll just take him over night and he'll be back in here in the morning right?

FBI MAN

No. We will not return the dog until we are satisfied that he is not a terrorist.

JACK

Where will you take him?

FBI MAN

That's classified sir.

JACK

This isn't fair.

(FBI MAN leads SMOKEY out the back door. JACK follows. AMBER is lingering outside.)

JACK

This isn't right! You can't just take my dog away from us like this!

Amber?

AMBER

Yeah.

JACK

What are you doing here?

AMBER

I'm sorry, I ... did they just arrest your dog?

JACK

No I mean sort of, it's complicated.

AMBER

Professor Green, um I was wondering can I make the test up?

JACK

You had to see me tonight to ask me about making up a test?
Amber...your thumb is bleeding.

AMBER

I know. I put it in my mouth and there was all this blood.
I don't know.

JACK

You have some on your face. Here..

(JACK wipes AMBERS face
with a handkerchief.)

AMBER

That's chocolate or ketchup. It always ends up in the same
spot on my chin. I'm so gross. Are you going to fail me?

JACK

You can make the exam up. Come inside, we'll get you a
band aid.

AMBER

But you have people over. No. I'll just go. It's okay.

JACK

We have those people over all the time. I'm tired of them
tonight. We're just talking around and around and around in

circles about shit that we can't do a damn thing about.
You know?

AMBER

I shouldn't be here.

(JACK puts his arm around
her and leads her inside
the house.)

JACK

Band aids. Sit down over there. No wait, wash the thumb
off with soap and water. I'll get the band aid.

AMBER

I had fun with your daughter today. We went on a little
field trip.

JACK

Oh yes of course. She was very excited about the trip.
She wouldn't stop talking about it.

AMBER

Yes of course. What does that mean?

JACK

Hmmmm? I forgot that you were going to be with her today.

AMBER

You hesitated. You didn't answer right away which means
you had to think about the question and then calculate the
response as to not make me suspicious because what you
really meant to say is that you have me spend time with
your daughter so you can keep track of me.

JACK

You think that I'm keeping tabs on you?

AMBER

Why else would you have me hanging out with your daughter.
I mean it's kind of weird, right?

JACK

No. I happen to put a great deal of trust in you and I
think you would be a good influence on her.

AMBER

And you think she would be a good influence on me and have her feed you information about what we talk about and..

JACK

Also, it gets you out of the library, gives you contact with a different world. Out of the realm of text and studies and quite frankly, beer. Listen, if you don't have time. I understand.

AMBER

Just tell me do you have me spending time with your daughter so she could have a friend, a mentor or is it so you could watch over me? Because I need to know why I keep having dreams about you, why I can't get you out of my mind, why I feel so defenseless around you, why I am always so nervous. Oh god, those words weren't supposed to come out of my mouth like that.

JACK

Amber, I think that maybe you are putting too much stress on yourself.

AMBER

I don't think that's it. I need to know something.

(AMBER leans into JACK suddenly and kisses him. They kiss tenderly for a moment.)

That's what I thought. Oh boy.

JACK

Oh boy. (sighs) Let's fix your cut.

AMBER

My body won't let me move.

JACK

It's just upstairs.

AMBER

Won't they know?

JACK

Come on. Nothings going to happen. They're in the basement.

AMBER

Oh. Okay.

JACK

Do you want to?

AMBER

Yes. Wait. What do you mean?

JACK

Stand up.

AMBER

Jack. Professor.

JACK

They don't have to know. Besides we're just fulfilling destiny. This is supposed to happen.

AMBER

What? Wait a minute. That doesn't make any sense. Um. I gotta go. Do you have a band aid? Forget it, I better go.

JACK

Wait, what is it? All I want to do is go out for a walk, go to a movie with you. Drink coffee and talk.

AMBER

You like having me here don't you? Gives you a rush of adrenaline. You like having her so close to us and her not knowing. It's harmless.

JACK

No. Listen if you...

AMBER

Maybe we should go upstairs. Just for a little while? I don't have anywhere else to go.

JACK

You're right, we'll talk in my office on Monday.

AMBER

Oh the office, is that really how you see us?

JACK

Stop messing around alright? Just come back later.

AMBER

How much later?

JACK

I don't know. Just later. When all the lights are out.
When we can talk.

(AMBER leaves.)

SCENE 11

(SAMMY and EMILY at the
Methodist church.)

SAMMY

Psst. Emily come here.

EMILY

I'm reading.

SAMMY

You're reading? Come on it's a party.

EMILY

No it's not, it's lame.

SAMMY

No really, it's a party. They're smashing drink cups in
the basement.

EMILY

So.

SAMMY

Stomping them to see who can make the loudest noise.

EMILY

That's not a party.

SAMMY

Come here show me what I showed you.

EMILY

Not here.

SAMMY

Someone has a bottle. They're playing spin the bottle.

EMILY

I thought they were smashing cups.

SAMMY

Later. They're playing spin the bottle later, after the pop
is all gone and they have an empty bottle. Come on, no
one's here. Do you want to embarrass yourself?

EMILY

No.

SAMMY

Then just show me.

(Emily drags herself over to Sammy. She kisses him quickly on the lips.)

SAMMY

Not bad but use the tongue this time.

(Emily leans in and kisses Sammy open mouthed long and slow.)

EMILY

Better?

(SAMMY wipes EMILY'S spit from his lips.)

SAMMY

One more time, this time swallow your spit before, that way it's not so sloppy.

EMILY

Last time.

(EMILY leans in and kisses SAMMY. When she breaks the kiss SAMMY is frozen from the perfect kiss.)

EMILY

Did I do it right this time?

SCENE 12

(ALL have returned to the kitchen. Jenga has been set up on the kitchen table.)

PENNY

I'm making popcorn.

RHODA

Penny you are amazing. How did you find the time?

PENNY

I didn't sleep. I'm most productive in the twilight.

RHODA

I can't do that anymore.

SHARON

Me either.

PENNY

I had to. It was just about to make me crazy.

SHARON

I can't believe you saved all those papers.

PENNY

I know. Jack almost through them out a hundred times or used them on the dog.

FRANK

Jolly time popcorn. I recognize that.

PENNY

Sammy sold the most popcorn in his Cub Scout troupe this year.

FRANK

How much did you have to buy?

PENNY

Two bags.

FRANK

How do you figure? I had to buy a whole case off of John. He sat at home and played on his video games instead of getting out and selling.

(FRANK exits toward the bathroom.)

PENNY

Jack sent him over to the dorms.

RHODA

He did not.

PENNY

Sure. Those students love the popcorn.

(SAMMY and EMILY at the Methodist Church.)

SAMMY

They do. They really love it. I knocked on this one door and I heard a guy say come in. So I did. I opened the door. This guy was half naked with two girls draped on him. They were almost naked too. Oh man. One was rubbing his temples and the other one was puffing on this jar of smoke. It was so cool. The room smelled kind of funny though. I said "Do you wanna buy some popcorn?" They all laughed. Hey kid - what are you? I said "A weebalo" naturally. They laughed at that one too. "No man, what are you?" I didn't know what he meant. I mean I just wanted to sell him some popcorn. I started to leave and he said "how much for the whole box". I turned to my friend Paul but he was long gone. He blew outta there as soon as the door opened I guess. I started to count the bags and the guy says "I'll give you fifty bucks for the box and you can stay and party with us" I said "I guess so" The girl smoking the jar took my hand and said it would be okay. After that I walked all the way home alone with my empty wagon.

EMILY

That's it?

SAMMY

Yeah.

EMILY

You're so lame.

SAMMY

Blue spot.

EMILY

Shut-up.

PENNY

What's wrong with sending him into the dorms?

RHODA

You know what those kids do these days. Remember what we did?

PENNY

He's thirteen now and besides he goes during the day anyway.

All this standing around. Let's dance.

(PENNY is moving and jiving around. JACK, ROBERT, SHARON, FRANK and RHODA play Jenga.)

Okay. How about you Robert?

JACK

We're playing Jenga.

PENNY

Oh come on I won't bite.

Please dance with me. Now here's a real dancer. Show 'em your stuff Bobby.

ROBERT

The hip's a little stiff tonight.

RHODA

I'll dance with you Penny. A woman shouldn't have to beg. And you can even call me Bobby if you want to.

PENNY

Thank you Rhoda.

FRANK

Do your dip and twist.

RHODA

We'll dance just how we want. If you want a dip and twist you'll have to come up and do it yourself.

FRANK

Ah come on, show us a little leg or something.

ROBERT

Yeah.

(PENNY swishes RHODA around
and her dress flies up a
little.)

FRANK

Now we're talking.

SHARON

Dirty old men. You'd think they weren't getting any the way they carry on. Ooo good one Jack.

PENNY

Jack and I used to dance at all the dances. Didn't we Jack?

We would travel up to Spirit Lake and dance all night and spend the rest of the night in a motel. The sun would warm up the room and the thick humidity would stick to us like honey. Sweet and thick.

SHARON

Nice one Jack.

(The Jenga tower wobbles.)

ROBERT

Uh oh.

(Jack attacks the Jenga tower sending pieces all over the room.)

SHARON

Oh Jack. You knocked it over.

(JACK exits. SHARON picks up the pieces and sets up the Jenga set.)

Why'd he do that.

PENNY

We're getting divorced.

SHARON

What? Penny, that's terrible I'm so sorry.

RHODA

What happened.

ROBERT

I'm sorry Penny.

PENNY

He's going to eventually have an affair and I can't wait for that to happen so I filed for divorce today.

RHODA

You go girl.

SHARON

Oh my god Penny.

ROBERT

Can you do that?

FRANK

You see, this is why I hate Democrats.

RHODA

Shut-up Frank.

FRANK

You can walk. I'm not going sit around for this.

(FRANK goes home.)

RHODA

Goodnight Frank.

ROBERT, SHARON, PENNY
Goodnight Frank.

SHARON

I just can't believe you did that Penny. What if you're wrong?

PENNY

Then I'm wrong. I'll live with my choice. I'd rather make a choice than sit around waiting for one to be made for me.

ROBERT

You're unbelievable.

RHODA

My hero.

PENNY

I met someone.

ROBERT

You're making a big mistake.

RHODA

How?

PENNY

When I was working on the basement bathroom. A man came out from behind our new furnace. When he said hello, I wasn't scared and didn't think it was strange that he was in my house it seemed natural. He was covered in dirt and roots and vines and wet. He wore a beautiful black suit. He was sweet. He took me behind the furnace and showed me a beautiful wonder world.

SHARON

Radon. Oh my god Penny you...

ROBERT

That's what I'm thinking.

RHODA

Shhh. Let her speak.

ROBERT

We've got to get her to the hospital she's hallucinating and it's probably radon gas in the new basement she could be dying Rhoda.

RHODA

Nonsense. I dreamt about this.

PENNY

I saw your dreams. All of your dreams.

SHARON

What did I dream?

PENNY

I can't remember your dreams. I just know I saw them. Down there.

(JACK enters. He's been weeping.)

PENNY

Hi Jack.

ROBERT

It was a good night tonight. Thanks Jack.

SHARON

I'm sorry Jack. I really am. Call me.

ROBERT

See you later buddy. Penny, I'm serious, go to the doctor.

RHODA

Don't listen to him Penny. Jack.

(SHARON, ROBERT, RHODA, exit.)

SCENE 13

(The house sinks into the
underworld of basil roots
and weeds. There is a loud
slimy sucking noise and the
noise of the house
shuddering as it descends.)

SCENE 14

(The underworld. The FBI
MAN has fashioned a
catapult out of roots and
weeds.)

FBI MAN

Why are you following me?

PENNY

Why did you come to the house?

FBI MAN

It's my job.

PENNY

I had to see you.

FBI MAN

I'm going back.

PENNY

Why?

FBI MAN

I can't stop looking at the moon
It's a safe place
No one on the moon has bombs strapped to their back

PENNY

What if you miss?

FBI MAN

I never thought of that. I always see myself landing but if
I miss I might end up right back here or I might land on
the sun.

PENNY

I mean, what if you miss me?

I feel the urge to welcome you home. Can I say welcome
home?

FBI MAN

You can say whatever you want.

PENNY

I know but can I? I know your stories, I know your skin, your eyes I know so much but I mean I know you must have a big heart. That's what I think.

FBI MAN

Then I guess it's appropriate for you to welcome me back but you should know I was never really gone.

PENNY

Right. You were living below my house, below my basement that wasn't a basement yet.

FBI MAN

Yes. If that's how you see it.

PENNY

So what are you then?

FBI MAN

A person just like you, although I'm not as beautiful as you.

PENNY

Oh ho ho. You little devil.

FBI MAN

No.

PENNY

Right. (pause) I saw the way you were looking at me tonight. It reminded me of my grandfather.

FBI MAN

Oh.

PENNY

The way he would look longingly at the placid lake on his fishing trips. He was a desperate fisherman. I think the fish could sense that and stayed away from his hook.

FBI MAN

And that's why you followed me?

PENNY

Actually, I didn't follow you.

FBI MAN

Have you lost your mother?

PENNY

What? No, oh god. That's terrible. I've lost my mother's mother. She and grandpa used to dance for me when I played my saxophone.

(FBI MAN picks up a saxophone and plays.)

Yeah, like that. So soft and quiet I never knew they were there until I was done playing. Then they would ask me not to stop, to keep playing.

(FBI MAN opens his guitar case and takes out his guitar. PENNY drops a quarter into the case.)

FBI MAN

Why did you do that?

PENNY

Isn't it what you wanted?

FBI MAN

I just play to play. What do you want to hear?

PENNY

I miss you. No. Would you miss me?

FBI MAN

Not likely.

PENNY

Don't go.

FBI MAN

Last song. Last dance.

SCENE 15

(AMBER is in a yard with no house.)

AMBER

Jack! Jack! Professor Green.

(JACK emerges from under ground. He is slimy.)

JACK

I was just about to dye my hair. Wanna help?

AMBER

No. I need to talk to you. Something's happened.

JACK

Have you seen my gray hairs? You must have.

AMBER

Where's your house? Where is everyone? You smell like basil.

JACK

The house has sunk. But it sank into the most beautiful place you've ever seen. Warm but not hot. It was a place of purity or something. You have to experience it to know. Hey come with me, come down there and we'll dye my hair or something.

AMBER

When I got back to my doorm tonight there was a strip of police tape across my door and a very large balding detective standing next to the door. He was waiting for me. My RA has been murdered Jack.

JACK

Oh my god, that's terrible. What happened?

AMBER

I don't know, it's so strange. I don't know what happened.

JACK

Did you see anything?

AMBER

No. I mean it was weird. I thought maybe I saw a pool of blood or something in the foyer entrance but I don't know what I saw, I just left.

JACK

The police let you leave?

AMBER

Well yeah, I mean they asked a million questions and then they said I could go to my room. I couldn't though, it was so creepy. They put a plastic bag over her head and bound her to a chair Jack. Then they beat her until she suffocated herself in a panic.

JACK

Why?

AMBER

I don't know. I don't know if they beat her or not I mean she was tough as nails. I know she would have put up a fight. I can't believe she's gone, how can this be happening?

(JACK embraces AMBER.)

JACK

Shhhhhhh. It's okay.

AMBER

She's gone.

JACK

I'm sorry you had to see that.

AMBER

I can hear her voice in my mind calling my name the way she used to from down the hall.

JACK

Yes.

AMBER

But now it's all there is of her, just echoes. A disconnected voice bouncing around my memory.

JACK

Mmmm hmmm.

(JACK kisses AMBER'S neck.
They kiss on the lips for a
moment.)

AMBER

You taste so good. Fruity. What is that?

JACK

I don't know, don't stop.

AMBER

Wow, it's the slime.

JACK

Yeah. I passed through a soft wet part of the ground to get up here. That must be it.

AMBER

What's that?

(JACK quickly picks up a
folded tattered photo from
the ground.)

JACK

Debris.

AMBER

Let me see it, what is it?

JACK

It's just an old photograph. It's nothing.

AMBER

If it's nothing you'll let me see it.

(AMBER grabs the photo from
JACK.)

JACK

It's an old photo of you.

AMBER

You keep a photograph of me with you?

JACK

Yeah.

AMBER

Why?

JACK

What.

AMBER

People who say they are not in love with another person don't keep a photo of that person around.

JACK

It doesn't mean anything.

AMBER

So, you aren't in love with me?

JACK

I didn't say that.

AMBER

Exactly.

JACK

May I have it back?

(AMBER starts unfolding the photo.)

AMBER

Where did you get this?

JACK

You don't remember? It was when you went rafting with us on the Upper River.

AMBER

You're crazy. What if your wife found this? It was just sitting out in the middle of the yard.

JACK

Maybe she already has found it.

AMBER

You told me that once you get married, nothing is sacred.

JACK

Please, may I have the photo back now?

AMBER

(pause) Do you masturbate to it? I mean, I just recently guessed that you liked me but you've had this photo a long time.

JACK

No, I don't masturbate to it.

AMBER

Why not? Why do you have it around then if you don't love me?

JACK

I'm passionate about you. I keep it because sometimes, not all the time, I can't get you out of my head and I have to see you. I have to touch your lips, caress your eyelids. This photo shows you best because that red swim suit makes your breasts perk up. I'll never forget that day.

AMBER

God, what is going on? I am officially creeped out.

JACK

It's just a photo. It's innocent. No big deal. Especially now.

AMBER

I feel violated or something.

JACK

Listen, it was just fantasy. That's all, harmless. You wanna know the best part?

AMBER

No.

JACK

My wife and I are getting divorced. So now it doesn't have to be fantasy it can be real.

AMBER

Now it can be real? You mean we can like date and go out and have long romantic walks and passionate talks about movies and politics in public. And then sometimes I can stay at your place and sometimes you can stay at my place in the dorms and we can drink coffee together and read the newspaper in the mornings and even have ridiculous arguments that verge on the edge of violent. So why didn't you try to kiss me before?

JACK

Before what?

AMBER

You know, before, when you noticed me?

(Pause.)

Because you were married? But now you're almost not married so it's okay to kiss me?

JACK

Something like that. I wanted to. I thought about that first kiss all the time. Different locations, down by the lake at sunset or spontaneously in my office amid the musty smell of my books.

AMBER

What was your favorite?

JACK

The Country Kitchen. I had just gone to the bathroom. My family eating on the otherside of the restaurant. I come out of the bathroom and there you are waiting. We see each other, I back into the bathroom pulling you with me by your belt buckle. We kiss.

AMBER

Stop.

JACK

I've lived my whole marriage by a code. My own code. It's okay to look but never touch. That's how it happened, how I could never kiss you.

AMBER

A code? You are so lame. I mean we had a spark before, it was real intense. But that's because it was dangerous right? Now, what's the point Jack? Now it could actually mean something. I can't do this. You know? Next time, just come and fuck the girl, don't wait to be divorced.

(AMBER grabs JACK and kisses him across his face, her black lipstick leaving a streak on his cheek. AMBER exits. PENNY emerges behind JACK.)

JACK

The storm never happened. It was all cued up out there, the hot front taking a stand and waiting for the cold front to slam into it. Storms, so simple, moving air, cold hot wet and dry, all mix together at the right speed and volume and boom fireworks.

PENNY

I'm going to miss that kitchen. It was efficient and it had miles of counter space. Pristine clean counter space.

JACK

Recycle bins.

PENNY

Hidden recycle bins, under the counter in a cabinet on ball bearing rollers. They come out and then they go back in.

JACK

What's that?

(JACK points to a rolled up carpet.)

PENNY

I don't know.

(JACK unravels the carpet
and SMOKEY spills out
bloody and dead.)

JACK

Oh sweet death. Smokey.

PENNY

Is he dead?

JACK

He's been ripped open. There's a note. I can't read it.

PENNY

(reading) I'm sorry about your dog. I drive a big gray car
and your dog is so small and he ran under my wheel I guess
and I'm sorry about your dog. I drive a monte carlo and I
couldn't stop. I'm not from around here. I'm sorry.

JACK

Did they sign it?

PENNY

No. Poor smokey.

JACK

Oh look at him. He probably didn't suffer. I mean something
like that is so fast right?

PENNY

No. He couldn't have suffered.

JACK

Gray car.

PENNY

What?

JACK

I hate gray, it's so non-committal. There's nothing behind
it, it's a dab of everything with not much of anything.
Poor smokey.

PENNY

I'm sorry Jack.

(PENNY rubs the black lipstick from JACK'S cheek.)

SCENE 16

(The Methodist church.)

EMILY

I don't want to go home.

SAMMY

They're playing limbo now. Limbo. I saw a couple boys breaking into the vending machine.

EMILY

We can stay here forever right? It's a house and we could live here.

SAMMY

You don't want to live here. The bathrooms stink. They aren't like the Presbyterians. There's something different.

EMILY

But it's worse anywhere else right?

SAMMY

No. This is pretty boring. I mean, they're gonna start sing-a-longs and then go to sleep. What about hide and seek, or search tag, or assassination, or spin the bottle, limbo? Come on Emily, this place sucks. Let's break out.

EMILY

No way.

SAMMY

Yeah, they would talk about that one forever. Emily and Sammy broke out of the Methodist lock-in.

EMILY

Hmmm. I don't know. That's pretty lame, it's not like the doors are really locked.

SAMMY

There's guards though. They'll get in so much trouble for not keeping track of us. Oh this is good, this is real good.

EMILY

Escape the boredom.

SAMMY

That's it.

EMILY

Let's do it.

SCENE 17

(PENNY lays flat on the grass where her house used to be. The guitar lies next to her.)

PENNY

I want to sit in a room and do nothing for about five years. I want to watch the traffic, listen to the wind. Watch a storm start from the flap of a butterfly's wing and grow into a terrifying force that rips buildings apart and slices through towns with death on it's mind and then it can lift me off the ground with its fierce wet hands and drop me like a sack of potatoes. So when I open my eyes I will look up at the blue sky with my back against the beaten grass and the earth will reach it's arms around me until my aching bones no longer ache until my head no longer throbs and I can smell the wet air again.

(JACK emerges from the darkness.)

JACK

Hey. Let's go back underground. Forget the papers. Let's go back down there where it's safe. The new kitchen is down there.

PENNY

The kids.

JACK

The Methodists. They'll find us won't they? Like little turtles looking for their parents. They'll come crawling along tomorrow morning and slip through the hole and we'll all be down there together.

PENNY

No. It's not a place for innocence. You stay here Jack. You wait for the kids.

JACK

You too?

PENNY

No Jack. I'm going back down there. I'm getting into a catapult and I'm going to land somewhere far away. Alone.

(PENNY disappears down the hole.)

JACK

The kids.

(JACK picks up the guitar.)

You're their mother.

(JACK sings.)

It's a hard life it's a hard life
It's a hard life you know
It's a hard life after all

It's a hard life it's a hard life
It's a hard life you know
It's a hard life after all

I lost my woman one night
There wasn't a fight
Or any trouble like that

My house disappeared
My friends went home
My kids were locked-in
My dog lost his life to a Monte Carlo

All I could do was stand here
All I could do was listen to the air

All my life over and it didn't seem fair

The storm never came
The clouds went away
The rain went home
And left the stars

I pick up my pieces
Try not to be sad
Fix what I can
And move on with what I have

END PLAY