

INT. AN APARTMENT - NIGHT

TITLE SEQUENCE

In darkness and in slow motion, the TOY HANDGUN slowly twists around in a series of hands, like a BOY'S HAND, WOMAN'S HAND, MAN'S HAND back and forth until a finger is resting on the trigger. We watch the gun's firing mechanism as it is drawn back and then begins moving forward. Just as two metal pieces of the firing mechanism come together, a slow, successive series of BANGS, followed WHITE LIGHT SATURATION and then ORANGE LIGHT SATURATION.

The following words appear and dissolve as they are spoken.

They're dreaming,  
of me, Gabriel.

A small dark apartment. A MASKED FIGURE appears in a mirror, walking around slowly, carefully, as if checking out the room one last time.

It moves slowly and chaotically around the dimly lit apartment. We see him only from behind and sometimes from the side. He is wearing a series of THREE HALLOWEEN MASKS that keep changing. One mask is of a pig-like creature, one of a haggard witch-like figure, and the other of a somber undertaker figure.

As the figure enters the frame for the last time, we we

see an orange toy gun in its hand.

The figure opens the apartment door and leaves.

INT. THE LARSON MANSION - DAY

MARLA LARSON is sitting at a DESK in THE LIBRARY of her late 19th- century mansion. She's holding a ringing phone.

TWO-WAY PHONE CONVERSATION, ONLY MARLA IN FRAME.

MIKE (O.S.)

Hi Marla

MARLA

Hi Mike, I'm here with Doug. Are you done for the day?

MIKE (O.S.)

Yeah, pretty much, just some paper work paying some bills for the office. Can everybody still get together tonight? Did you get ahold of them?

Marla's husband, TOM LARSON, is unseen in another room occupied with something.

MARLA

Yeah, we're still on.

Marla's DOORBELL rings.

MIKE (O.S.)  
That's okay. You know the process  
you referred me to?

Marla's DOORBELL rings again.

MARLA  
Mhmm.

MIKE (O.S.)  
I think it will work well, making  
what we're doing more  
structured... maybe more  
challenging than where we were  
last time we met.

Marla's DOORBELL rings again.

MARLA  
(distracted by the  
bell)  
That's great. I'm glad you liked  
it.

MIKE (O.S.)  
I suppose you thought so too, or  
you wouldn't have sent me to it,  
right? I guess my overall  
assessment was that it...

MARLA  
(interrupting)  
Sorry Mike, could you hold for a  
minute.

MARLA shouts to Tom Larson, asking if he can get the  
door, and then she gets back on with Mike.

MARLA

Hey Mike, I'm sorry, someone's  
ringing the doorbell.

(beat)

I'll see you there later, okay.

MIKE (O.S.)

Okay, see you in a while.

MARLA

Alright, bye.

Marla goes to THE FRONT DOOR. An old brown manila PACKAGE with German stamps and a Berlin postmark is wedged there. She reaches down and picks it up.

EXT. A PARK WITH A FOUNTAIN IN THE MIDDLE OF A TRAFFIC  
CIRCLE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

THE PARK is mostly empty as cars move around the traffic circle, turning into and out of it here and there.

Mike BRANNIGAN enters the park on foot, approaching the fountain, looking for and finding the underground ENTRANCE TUNNEL to the fountain pump room set into the sidewalk. When he finds it, he kicks its METAL DOOR with the heel of his boot, and then looks around to see if anyone is watching.

EXT. A STOPPED CAR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

LISA BRANNIGAN drives up to circle and stops before she enters it. She see Mike from her car. Mike notices her car.

EXT. SMALL TOWN MAIN STREET - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Marla is walking down the town's MAIN STREET, window shopping. We see her from inside and outside the windows as she is followed down the sidewalk.

A person in a HALLOWEEN MASK passes, reflected in WINDOWS, half-noticed. But, as she turns her head the person is seen as normal, unmasked, walking away from her.

NARRATOR

Although I really didn't have ANY idea of what was coming when I first got involved with the group of people I'm gonna tell you about, it was this woman, Marla Larson, who drew me in .

(beat)

While I'd been sort casually acquainted with her husband Tom Larson, who's a local family court judge, its seems I had been the only person who'd never even heard of Marla and who she WAS in our small community.

(beat)

I met her for the first time at a gathering of people who had gotten together to discuss the possibility of raising money for and building a seniors center for older persons in St. Gabriel, which is the small city of about 10,000 that Marla and I both live

in.

(beat)

While I was supposed to be representing the provincial government of Michigan at the meeting, Marla was there because of who she WAS, as someone who had influence and connections.

(beat)

I guess because I hadn't known her until that day, I was surprised or really INTRIGUED to find out she was more than just one of the typical local fixtures one finds in these places.

(beat)

On her own, or at least it SEEMED, and I'm still COMPLETELY sure, but for a couple years at that point Marla had been cooking up an odd and ingenious plan to take Charles Dickens' story in A Christmas Carol and write an adaptation of it.

(beat)

The way she first described it to me, Marla planned to CHANGE the story so that Scrooge was actually a VICTIM.

He would be a old man in crisis, some socially isolated figure with a disability, suffering from dementia, or Alzheimer's disease.

(beat)

Instead of Scrooge's family and others around him being the VICTIMS of HIS greed or repressed goodness, each of them in their own ways were going to be Scrooge's VICTIMIZERS, people full of repressed meanness and greed, looking to move in on the fortune he'd collected.

(beat)

The REASON for these role reversals was to confront a lingering idea that when older persons are subject to abuse or financial exploitation that they themselves have somehow probably played a ROLE in it. According to Marla, it was this IDEA that made it somehow too complex for prosecutors to have any success in the courts.

(beat)

When I looked further into where Marla came to this idea, I found out that for years she'd been working with local groups and others around the province to create a new set of laws to protect older persons from being exploited and, even though she and they had actually had SOME success in getting some new laws on the books in Detroit, not even one serious prosecution had taken place in the years.

(beat)

Again, Marla blamed this situation on the lingering IDEA that older people's lives, histories, and relationships were too complicated to be dealt with by the courts.

(beat)

So that's basically it, like I said. That's how Marla came to the idea of creating a kind of Christmas Carol in reverse and me, having a background in what you might call this kind of socially active theater, I became curious enough to set out FOLLOWING what she was doing.

(beat)

To make the production of her new version of A Christmas Carol happen, and this kind of thing really DIDN'T happen in St. Gabriel, Marla was using the influence she had not only as a judge's wife, but as a well known actor and stage director to secure a rehearsal space and assemble a cast.

(beat)

This cast signed on to collectively rewrite, rehearse, block, and put on the play within the span of two months, roughly between the beginning of November and the second week of December.

(beat)

Over the span of this six weeks, I followed EACH of the cast members, observing and participating in what they were doing.

(beat)

There are maskers and real spirits only SOME can see, and Marla was becoming one of them.

#### FRAME SHOP - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Marla enters a frame shop where Lisa is in the back. She waits a minute until Lisa appears. Marla studies the woman she suspects has been sleeping with her husband, as Lisa tries to not seem awkward.

LISA

Hi, can I help you?

MARLA

Yes, hi. I wanted to check if a



frame was ready. The name is Marla  
Larson.

Lisa leafs through the work orders and finds Marla's job.

LISA

No, I'm sorry. It's not done yet.  
It'll be ready Friday.

MARLA

Okay, that's fine. Just walking by  
so I thought I'd check on it.

LISA

Okay, anything else?

MARLA

No, that's it. Thanks.

FREEZE FRAME

NARRATOR

Now that I think of it, I see I  
might have left you with the  
impression this is just a story  
about a small town play and THAT  
would have been a mistake.

(beat)

While even I myself wasn't able to  
see it for a while, this story is  
much more about a place where  
USERS play GAMES with serious  
things, like suicide and the  
murder of children.

INT. PAM'S HOUSE - DAY

Pam comes home. Her son NATHAN WELLS is heard romping in  
the background.

PAM  
(shouting)  
Nathan? Hang up your coats. Did  
you hear me?

NATHAN (O.S)  
(shouting)  
Yes momeeeee.

Pam picks up a PACKAGE on her kitchen counter, under  
letters from the day before. It is from Germany but with  
no return address. She puts it back down.

CUT

CUT

CUT

EXT. DOORWAY OF LISA'S HOUSE - DAY  
Mike steps onto the stoop of the house of LISA (BIRKEN)  
BRANNIGAN (his ex-wife and ex-house). He pauses, looking  
around and noticing a CAR parked down the street. He's  
seen it before but can't place it. Looking down, he sees  
a PACKAGE on the porch and picks it up. It is addressed  
to him and seems to be postmarked from Germany, just like  
the other three. He rings the DOORBELL and a SMALL DOG  
begins barking inside. LISA comes to the door, wearing  
shorts and a T-shirt - like bedclothes.

LISA  
Brianna had to get some things  
from her room.

There is a pregnant silence.

MIKE  
(uncomfortably)  
Okay.

LISA  
Did you get off work early today?

MIKE  
Yeah, a few minutes.

LISA  
I saw you wandering around the  
fountain when I was driving home.  
What were you DOING?

MIKE  
Just waiting for an appointment to  
start, killing some time.

LISA  
Okay. It looked kind of STRANGE  
driving by.

Mike looks annoyed, but Lisa just shrugs her shoulders.

MIKE  
I was sort of scouting out a scene  
for a role I'm playing.

LISA  
In the Christmas play?  
While Mike speaks, Lisa's little dog is barking inside  
behind her.

MIKE  
Yeah. Some of the people from the

cast are putting together...

LISA

(interrupting Mike to yell at the barking dog)

Shut up Mitzi!

MIKE

(starting again)

I was saying some of the people from the cast are working on a new play and one scene there's something about the underground pump house for the fountain. I was just looking at where the entrance to it was.

More pregnant silence as Lisa looks over her shoulder back into the house.

LISA

(distracted)

So, are you planning to actually BREAK INTO the tunnel under the fountain, like take a crowbar to it in the middle of the night... or does somebody have a key, or...?

MIKE

(sarcastically)

No, I'll probably just use a blow torch. Could you check...

Mike looks down noticing their daughter BRIANNA has been quietly standing at the door, listening. He glares at LISA without answering.

MIKE

Hey sweetie, you all ready to go?

The little girl smiles and nods. As she comes out the door, Mike starts to turn away holding her hand but LISA stops him.

LISA

What's that?

MIKE

What?

LISA

The package in your hand.

Mike hands the PACKAGE to LISA. She takes it, reads his name on it, seeing other stuff in German on it, looks him in the eye, and shoves it back. She steps back and shuts the door.

POV as Mike walks to his car with BRIANNA. He is staring at the CAR he noticed before.

INT. LISA'S BATHROOM - DAY

A man, JACK WELLS, is in LISA'S SHOWER. We do not see him. Lisa is brushing her teeth.

LISA

I asked Mike about what he was doing at the fountain.

JACK (O.S.)

And?

LISA

He said he was researching a role for a play they're doing.

JACK (O.S.)

A play set in the park?

LISA

No, the fountain, or the room under the fountain where the water pumps and stuff are. I don't know.

JACK (O.S.)

And what about it?

LISA

That's what he was doing, looking at the entrance to the tunnel leading to it. There are like metal doors in the ground.

JACK (O.S.)

THAT'S interesting. Did he say what that has to do with the Christmas play?

LISA

No, but you can be sure it's something weird. One of Mike's THINGS I guess. But that not enough to make him crazy or dangerous, right?

JACK (O.S.)

All that depends on the judge and a lot of OTHER things, like I said before. Just keep taking notes, there seems to be something odd there for sure.

(beat)  
Did he say how much admission  
they're going to charge for the  
play under the fountain? How many  
people can be seated there? Four,  
five?

Lisa is getting ready to enter shower.

LISA  
No idea, maybe you could ask him.

JACK (O.S.)  
(howling like a wolf)  
Maybe later, but for now let's  
give it up for the Wolf Man. A  
oooooo!

Lisa draws back the shower curtain part way.

JACK (O.S.)  
OH yes!

INT. CAFE - DAY

MARLA  
I think ONE way, maybe the best  
way to make Tammy work for you is  
to study someone like her.  
(beat)  
Do you know Mike's ex-wife Lisa.

PAM  
Yes, a little. But wouldn't that  
be a little weird seeing Mike and  
I ...

MARLA

(awkwardly)

Actually, no. I think your emotional investment and, well, the curiosity anyone would have

(beat)

I think that gives the right context. That's the right frame of mind to understand the character. You can handle it, right. Maybe, well, you know, it's BETTER to know

(beat)

at least I'd be that way...

INT. A MOVING CAR - DAY

NARRATOR

As a part of my time with the cast members on Marla's play, I spent a lot of hours hanging around a guy I'm calling Thys Kruge. We had actually come to know one another a few weeks before I met Marla while I was doing some work for the Defense Ministry.

(beat)

My work was related to the area of the Defense Ministry HE worked with as employee of a private defense contractor, but that's something I really can't get into now.

(beat)

Suffice it to say that by day Thys worked as some kind of human resources middle man in selling surplus military hardware to US and overseas buyers, and by NIGHT he was a local theater actor mainly known in local theater



circles for playing Scrooge in the annual production of A Christmas Carol.

(beat)

This year again, Thys had been cast by Marla in the role of Scrooge, or actually THIS time in the role that Marla was BASING on Scrooge.

(beat)

While I kept urging his to talk about the play and his character, it became clear that Thys himself wanted to use his time with me to think out loud about his personal, and what I was afraid were ALSO his PROFESSIONAL views of the world. A great deal of this world view SEEMED to revolve around the supposedly great conspiracies surrounding the One Ten Society.

(beat

When he first started talking about the 110 Society I had to stop him and and tell him I'd never heard of it.

(beat)

When I told him this he immediately began acting as suspicious as he seemed amused.

(beat)

I'm pretty sure he didn't BELIEVE I didn't know all about the 110 Society, but he just went talking about it anyway, even if for no other reason than to hear himself talk.

INT. CAFE - NIGHT

THE FIRST THREAT TO GABRIEL, THE MESSENGER WORSHIPPED AS THE STATE was the play about elder abuse [using rehearsal

space scenes cut with later shots with narrative].  
Reaction shots are dispersed throughout as each person speaks.

These CAFE discussions are first done ad lib, then refined into tighter dialogue.

MARLA explains that they are going to actually be starting something that will help prevent and prosecute elder abuse in their community.

PAM wants to know how it will WORK. How will the play affect what people do in their jobs, or families and other places? Or do they not know yet?

MARLA says she thinks they don't know yet, really. But theater has a way of increasing or ENRICHING awareness so I think that what we do will hopefully be able to be utilized and absorbed by many of people who may be most able to affect change. In truth, MARLA does know, in that it's about one, real case.

PAM want to know if they would INVITE such people to the play, or INCLUDE them in their remake? Or are they going to video-record it and put it on DVD, have people working in this area USE it for training and so on.

MARLA thinks all are great ideas, and all are possible but, at this stage, the process itself should just serve to be taking everyone in the right direction. Their main goal is to create more understanding and awareness of what's happening to older people and what the current systems are basically failing to do.

PAM asks if she means there's something in the process ITSELF that's going to make what they do different from just a reworking of a play, and MARLA confirms this. There's something in this particular process that helps make this happen.

Mike explains how it's a unique opportunity that MARLA is has experience in theater AND the issues of elder abuse.

INT. A MOVING CAR - DAY

NARRATOR

Thys explained the 110 Society to me by first telling me that in just about every community, all

across the country--and he'd heard that since the war it'd been in Germany and Japan too, but that was ANOTHER story, he said--that every community possessed some version or another of a special, OFFICIAL, printed copy of an old book written by George Washington.

(beat)

Although he didn't know the exact title of the book, I found out later there IS actually a book called Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior in Company and Conversation, and THAT'S what he was talking about.

(beat)

IN these OFFICIAL copies of that book, Thys explained, and I'm not sure if the official copies are any different from the one's you can easily buy yourself, there are a hundred and ten RULES that the 110 Society members follow.

(beat)

When I asked if he could NAME any of the rules of civility, he said he couldn't really CITE any of them just then, but they weren't hard to find referred to here and there.

(beat)

Thys said these rules went by different names. He had heard them called "The GW One Hundred and Ten," or "The One Hundred Ten," but most people, he THOUGHT, just called them and the society itself "The One Ten."

(beat)

Now that I think of it, and I've been thinking a lot about my time with Tys since what HAPPENED, I

THINK I was having a hard time controlling the look on my face when I was with him.

(beat)

I guess my skills as both an interviewer and a politician had been dormant for a few years by then, and maybe my will to use them had faded. More than once during our conversations, as if he'd forgotten he'd done this so many times, he would look at me and say something like "Is that look you're giving me because you don't understand, or because you think I'm crazy?"

(beat)

Then he'd pause and say that he didn't care, REALLY.

#### INT. A CAFE - NIGHT

They then begin discussing the setting.

The setting for the adventure is their very own town of Saint-Gabriel and state of Michigan today.

In 1837 Saint-Gabriel was a newly chartered and quickly growing town, and this was at the very same time of one of the greatest financial crises in American history.

All over the Midwest, local banks and other concerns tied to communities like St. Gabriel had been selling securities to finance the construction of roads and other infrastructure, and this money was mainly coming from foreign sources, like England.

Right within the beginning of the second part of Dickens' story, before the first spirit appears, where Scrooge wakes up and thinks it's twelve noon, he starts going on about how if time did not work properly then he would never be able to profit from those who owe him money. He says something like his whole business would amount to nothing more than what he calls A MERE UNITED STATES SECURITY.

Scrooge was actually very proud of the fact that he

DIDN'T invest in securities from places like Saint Gabriel, even though at the time it was the second biggest and most prosperous city in a large, growing new US state. Scrooge was proud of himself because everyone around him who took part in this American investment back then, many of them in London, lost all their money when communities like St. Gabriel backed out and went insolvent.

So one of Scrooge's great investment decisions might have very well been to NOT help make St. Gabriel what it became back then and in part what it is today. And we can use this fact, just injecting the idea into our play that he knew a group of fellow Londoners who foolishly invested in St. Gabriel, lost a lot, and this made it possible for Scrooge to ruin them by buying them out. The group then begins to discuss the characters they are creating.

#### INT. A MOVING CAR - NIGHT

##### NARRATOR

When I asked Thys where the 110 rules of civility came from, he told me it was "supposed to be CLEAR where they came from." These one hundred and ten rules, if you're to believe the STORY, were supposedly written down by George Washington HIMSELF, a kind of RECORD of how the general did things, how ALL great statesmen and citizens should do things.

(beat)

On the other hand, Thys explained, there have been people who claim to have proved that these one hundred and ten rules were nothing more than Washington's schoolboy grammar exercises that were assigned to students in Washington's time. They were a

common way for kids to practice their penmanship.

(beat)

Thy went on to say that these one hundred and ten rules are EXACTLY THE SAME as another set of rules written by French Jesuit priests some one hundred years before Washington was born. They were written in French and translated into English at some point, ending up as one of Washington's homework assignments, and it was from there they became what they are today.

#### INT. A CAFE - NIGHT

We are watching the group around the table for a moment from outside before we hear them inside.

Mike explains that first, each of them is creating a NEW, CONTEMPORARY character out of one the characters already in the play. And each of them, except Marla, is committed to acting the role each is creating.

#### INT. A MOVING CAR - NIGHT

NARRATOR

Thys went on explaining that it even though it was FRENCH Jesuits, the main thing to know about The One Ten is that since the great financial crisis of 1837, civil AUTHORITIES of each community and each state have enshrined A COPY of these rules in some secure location, AND these LOCATION is SUPPOSED to be KNOWN BY ALL in

each area, but SPOKEN ABOUT by NONE.

(beat)

When I laughed at this, I remember Thys laughing too but I think not knowing WHY I was laughing, but maybe thinking I was thinking how odd this whole thing sounded.

(beat)

But then, maybe sensing there was more to my laughing that he couldn't know, he stressed that he was just telling it as he'd LEARNED it, and that he wasn't pretending to fully UNDERSTAND it.

(beat)

Thys explained to me that he knew A LOT about the French history of our region and that he'd even gotten a Masters degree in History.

(beat)

He'd said he'd always read a lot, and these kinds of things interested him.

(beat)

As it turned out, and not really all that surprising, one of Thys' main interests in reading history was learning everything he could about the English resistance to the French in North America

(beat)

and in MICHIGAN in particular.

(beat)

Looking back now, out of all the things Thys told me about the mysterious 110, I think those about its great SECRECY were probably the most strange.

(beat)

In the END, he told me that when it came to the 110, it all seemed

to come down to three groups, that was in HIS experience at least.

(beat)

The first group was made up of those people were those who knew about The One Ten. The second were made up those who DIDN'T know about them. And the third were those who "can't SAY."

(beat)

When it came to the most basic purpose of THE 110 BOOK ITSELF, Thys explained it was BASICALLY there as a set of reminders of how to be CIVIL.

(beat)

By being civil in these ways, it was supposed to better prepare us all, and especially those in positions of authority, to better handle any real or potential social crises, like financial crises or whatever that might affect a particular community or province.

(beat)

Thys attributed the HISTORY of this to the American Financial Crisis of 1837. That's where it CAME from.

(beat)

When I asked him if such a book really existed to this day, enshrined SOMEWHERE in every community, for some reason he at first looked puzzled, but I never found out why.

(beat)

Since it got started in 1837, as he understood it, there had been a few communities and maybe even a few provinces that, for whatever reason, had either abandoned this



practice of enshrining The One Ten or maybe even simply FORGOTTEN about it. BUT, he said he'd urge me to focus not on The One Ten's LOSING their power but rather the fact that they seem to be GAINING power.

(beat)

Before I could ask him what he meant by the 110 GAINING power, he went on without a beat. He said there was more and to hold on.

(beat)

Here and there, in more and more places, THESE days at least, or so it seemed to him, The One Ten were routinely being accused by someone or another of being a sort of SECULAR BIBLE or some series of COMMANDMENTS that might conflict with either the teaching of Jesus or the principles of egalitarianism, no less.

(beat)

But DESPITE all this stuff, from their being Washington's penmanship homework to some of the controversy, The One Ten could still be found in OTHER places, outside of community archives. Thys said you could see them being ACTED OUT in churches, business organizations, the military, in colleges and universities, and other places. Actually, they seem to play big role in these places, as far as HE was able to see.

(beat)

When I asked if a copy of the 110 was stashed somewhere in our own town of St. Gabriel, he said there was one in the pump house, under the fountain in the town square.

OMITTED

INT. A CAFE - EVENING

Mike notes that while there's a good deal of freedom in what they are doing, it also has boundaries that make it more a story about THE CHARACTERS than Dickens' original story itself. Also, since we know so little about the play's characters, we have a lot of room to invent them, fill them in.

The center of it all is the character of Scrooge who, in our case, is a retired auto worker named GENE CARTER. THYS, who is not there, will be playing him, instead of playing Scrooge as he has so many times in that last few years.

GENE is then described a bit. Actors discuss his looks, etc.

INT. A MOVING CAR - NIGHT

NARRATOR

By this time in my life and experience, I'd seen guys like this come and go; people who were supposedly playing the role in their jobs of securing the population from a series of threats, but who were really only securing their own people's means of existence.

(beat)

While Thys may have thought these threats he perceived were also dangers to the State. they were never a danger to THE STATE, but just to its MESSENGERS.

(beat)

Over my time with Thys, while my frustration and anger with his strange obsessions like the One Ten had become just a part of our being together, what kept me coming back was the chance to see the cracks in this odd persona, or at least what I thought was a persona and what I thought were cracks in it, not really knowing or being ABLE to know a lot ABOUT him personally.

(beat)

On one hand, it really bothered me that someone like Thys had the job he had, no doubt with a top secret security clearance and all the power above or beyond the average person that COULD involve. But I guess what REALLY bothered me was the profound distrust I had for him, kind of stemming from the idea, like I said, that all of his nonsense could've been just AN ACT.

(beat)

Really, I had no way of knowing if Thys WAS acting and more important, WHY, IF he was, he was going to such lengths in his performance NOT JUST WITH ME but with basically everyone AROUND him in his time off work. There was something about him, whoever "HE" was. Like I said, there were CRACKS, at certain times in him supposedly being himself with me and others.

These cracks would at one and the same time, first, show a glimpse of someone with a life much too rich in experience to be so strange, kind of stupid and one

dimensional. And then, maybe at the same time, they would SEEM to show someone celebrating a kind of ignorance with which he was only fooling a few others like himself.

(beat)

Whatever it was, even though I felt he owed it to me to be straight, and who wouldn't, right, I NOW think, though, that he'd long lost any notion or ability to judge for himself what being straight like this would even amount to, let alone to act on it.

(beat)

Now what I knew what The One Ten WERE, he told me the second time we talked about it, a lot of that was more common knowledge. But there was also ANOTHER side to em that WASN'T so well known.

(beat)

You see, he explained, while most people, as HE saw it, and that's how he ALWAYS seemed to preface things, while MOST people, as HE saw it, were not aware The One Ten were a set of rules and most would probably not be able to actually name of any of the rules, there were SOME people who supposedly could not only name MANY or ALL one hundred and ten rules, but who were also following some sort of SECULAR PATH the rules laid out. These people consistently take part in rituals and organizations that in many different ways secretly BREAK each of these rules in order to hold and use power.

(beat)

He said THOUGHT I'D like THAT, both mocking me and distancing

himself from me while himself  
being civil, I guess.

(beat)

One key to using The One Ten for  
power was to supposedly be able to  
have a sufficient number of  
affiliations with people, and have  
the right relationships to have  
the access and ability to  
SELECTIVELY break any of the one  
hundred and ten rules when it  
suited you. The people who were  
best at using the rules in this  
way even went so far as to use The  
One Ten to exclude others with  
less power who break one or more  
of The One Ten. They exclude these  
people even when the people being  
excluded don't know they have  
broken any rule or even know that  
any such rule ever existed.

(beat)

When I asked if I myself were one  
of these people being excluded,  
he became oddly serious, acting as  
if he were being candid, saying  
that since he had needed to  
explain The One Ten to me, then I  
MUST have been, and he supposed  
still WAS, one of these people.

(beat)

While I'm still not sure if I  
should be ASHAMED for having done  
it, I remember laughing out loud  
at this, really not believing what  
I was hearing, or maybe not  
knowing WHAT to believe other than  
that this idea was just as dumb as  
it was crazy.

(beat)

But still, you have to remember,  
and I even have to remind MYSELF  
now, that I'm still pretty sure

Thys was doing all this for his OWN sake, as an ACTOR, a USER, or whatever. I really think he thought I really knew ALL ABOUT the One Ten, and I was "a part of it," whatever that meant to him.

(beat)

On the other hand, saying this, I'm even seeming stupid and crazy to myself. I mean, IS there really a One Ten Society? IS it real? I mean, there I was KNOWING Thys was not able to be straight not only with me but with himself, and I wasn't being straight with MYSELF either. In fact, I'm not straight with anyone when I'm doing my work, really. Is ANYONE? I'm not sure I have any idea.

(beat)

As I laughed in his face at being marked as an excluded person by the real powers that be, Thys was looking right back at me with a strangely serious, if not angry look.

(beat)

"You CAN laugh at this idea," I remember him saying straight faced. "It IS funny. But it's also NOT. You know what I mean?"

(beat)

I think it was at that moment I REALLY began to resent this guy. I really began not just to take a real interest in, but to play a real ROLE in his fate, and in how all his CRAP was going to play out.

(beat)

I was satisfied I had found a real user to play with.

INT. A CAFE - EVENING

Mike explains that the modified characters they make up may be based on themselves or on their actual friends, acquaintances, and relatives, alive or dead, who may be more or less in fictional disguise.

One example might be one's mother becomes the character Mrs. Cratchit.

INT. A MOVING CAR - NIGHT

THE SECOND THREAT TO GABRIEL, THE MESSENGER WORSHIPPED AS THE STATE of Marla's scheming [using Lisa and Tom/Tammy - Brian to show conspiracy] [my reliance on Thys, his quitting and dying, and I had been wondering why I was his confessor.

THYS (O.S.)

After taking on whole other attitude towards Tys, it didn't take long for our conversations to reveal more than what I had at first expected. Now that I'd taken an interest and began playing my OWN role as user, something I always in one way or another can't help but end up doing, I could see Thys changing, as they ALL do, becoming more troubled.

The questioning, the second guessing that I knew the play would deliver to most, if not all the cast members, would have the most effect on HIM.

(beat)

Marla's Christmas Carol Group had all seemed to have become involved in something else altogether DIFFERENT from The One Ten. He supposed I'd probably noticed that already.

(beat)

When I told him I didn't know what he was talking about again, he said something like "NO?! REALLY? Then I guess you're not interviewing the right people my friend."

(beat)

It seemed that Marla had introduced this group to something Thys mysteriously called a "PROCESS."

(beat)

Marla and Mike actually invited Thys to take part, even though he said he told them he had real reservations on what it would produce. After that, Marla says they began calling him "This Year's Scrooge."

(beat)

Kinda funny, HE said, because he played Scrooge EVERY year.

(beat)

Yeah, sure. Thys agreed to act in it, but for some reason he thought was really clear to me, even though I said it wasn't, HE wasn't going to get involved in the writing of the adaptation.

(beat)

Marla's IDEA, Thys explained, and he said he didn't know WHERE this idea was going, or if he WANTED to know, her IDEA was to do that old thing of a play within a play that exposes some kind of conspiracy.

(beat)

Basically like Hamlet, he said.

(beat)

Because I hadn't seen anything like this "process", and I'd been following them for weeks by then,



I asked for more on this, and Thys began by telling me it was complicated.

(beat)

As it turns out, there was a local guy named Jon Birken. He was about 29 a few years before when his wife ran off to some other province leaving him with their 8 year old son named Cody.

(beat)

Thys had known the dad Jon for a few years, along with his half brother Danny Wells, but he just dodged the question of how he knew them, and I didn't push it.

(beat)

Although Thys said he hadn't known about it until a few days before he told me but it turned out Jon's mother, Eveyln Birken, had been petitioning Marla's husband the judge for custody of Cody. Evelyn had been claiming Jon had become mentally unstable, violent, and a danger to her grandson Cody.

(beat)

It appears, though, that Larson hadn't taken her seriously and wasn't planning to give custody to Evelyn, and Thys thought it was possible that part of Larson's decision had to do with the fact that Evelyn had basically abandoned her husband, FRANK, Jon's dad. For some reason she was refusing to take any responsibility for FRANK now that he'd developed some kind of disability, maybe like Alzheimer's disease. While Thys didn't KNOW this to be true, he admitted, well, YOU know, as usual he said

he KNEW things, so OKAY, it seemed to really be the case.

(beat)

So, what ended up having happened is that one night Jon seems to have put Cody to bed and, after the boy had fallen asleep, Jon went into the bedroom, lay down next to Cody, shot the boy in the head, covered the boy and then pulled the covers over his own head, turning the gun on himself.

(beat)

BUT, it hadn't ENDED there.

(beat)

While Thys didn't think that she NORMALLY would have done ANYTHING, the grandmother Evelyn NOW seemed to be quietly organizing a campaign to impeach Tom Larson from the bench, AND it seemed to be clear that a local lawyer named Jack Wells, who used to be married to Evelyn many years ago, was USING her niece LISA to PUSH Evelyn further into what she was doing so Wells could take Larson's place in the next election.

(beat)

Hearing this, it was then I realized I had found not only one, but a NEST of users. And where there was one nest, I knew there were usually one or more others. In the end, whether Thys and Marla were scheming together or, if both were playing EACH OTHER, is something I still can't say. Either way, the end was basically set.

INT. A CAFE - EVENING

MARLA shuffles A FEW PAGES and clears her throat, having a sip from her DRINK.

She tells them she is putting together a remake of the character of the Wife of Scrooge's Nephew Fred. The name of this character is ALLISON CARTER, who is GENE CARTER'S niece.

MARLA explains she is kind of basing her character on a woman who comes to clean for us on Thursdays. She was talking to this woman about her aunt who is 82 and needs help. Her cousin helps her aunt with a variety of things everyday or so and when she takes the aunt's checkbook to the store to buy her things she also buys food for herself and her kids and takes that home. When MARLA acted upset by this she seemed confused, as if this was perfectly okay. MARLA had to tell her it is definitely not okay, and her cousin needs to stop.

So now MARLA'S really not sure what she should do. She's known the housekeeper for several years and so on. But what if it was MARLA herself alone in a few years and the housekeeper was helping her do more than her agency was paying her for, and what if MARLA was not in position to compensate her, maybe even know or appreciate what she was doing for her? 'Will she steal from ME or other she works for?' asks MARLA.

INT. A MOVING CAR - NIGHT

THYS (O.S.)

Besides Marla, Thys also talked to me about the others in the group.

He described Pam Wells was a nice young woman. She'd been raising her son on her own for years.

(beat)

Pam also had a job as a secretary with the local office of the Defense Ministry, in the same building Thys worked out of.

(beat)

While I didn't make much of it at

the time, Thys told me that Marla's son David worked for the military too, and he'd been seeing him around town at that time, on leave he supposed.

(beat)

Among those on the cast, Pam was the only one who hadn't actually been in A Christmas Carol with them all the year before, and Thys didn't believe any of them even knew her until recently, although HE'D KIND OF known her for years.

(beat)

The way Thys described it, Pam just kind of dropped into the group after Mike Brannigan started encouraging her to take part. It was Mike, who had a THING going with Pam, who convinced Marla to include her.

(beat)

When I asked if Pam was related to Jack Wells, the local attorney looking to unseat Marla's husband, the judge, he explained that Pam USED to be married to DANNY Wells, Evelyn Birken and Jack Wells' SON.

(beat)

Danny, like I said before, was the half-brother of Jon, the one who killed his son and himself.

Though she never had anything to do with them really, that made Pam the ex-daughter-in-law of Evelyn, the ex-sister-in-law of Jon and the ex-aunt of the boy Cody.

(beat)

As if this weren't enough, but not so unusual for a town the size of St. Gabriel sometimes, Mike's ex wife Lisa, the one supposedly scheming to oust Tom Larson from

the bench, was Pam's ex-cousin-by marriage, if one can even BE such such a thing.

(beat)

While you probably wouldn't guess, Mike seemed to have the least going on and, unless you saw him there riding around on his lawn mower, it was hard to believe he worked as grounds keeper at a local cemetery.

INT. A CAFE - EVENING

PAM explains she is reworking Scrooge's housekeeper, Mrs. Dilber. Her name is TAMMY CARTER. She's another niece of GENE CARTER, and she's is a spiritist, like an expert at conducting seances and all that. PAM is making it so TAMMY may in fact be behind the summoning of the first spirit and the next three spirits. [Marla pushes changes on this part at some point.] Just a minute ago, when PAM was talking, says MARLA, she started imagining the niece as a daughter-in-law named ALLISON CARTER, and Allison having a role to play here too. She could be somehow involved with TAMMY in staging GENE'S night of haunting. As far as Elder Abuse goes, PAM sees TAMMY as someone who actually works to protect GENE by scaring him, by teaching him lessons in this way. Does that make sense, wonders PAM?

PAM supposes this could bring up questions like are TAMMY and ALLISON engaged in some kind of abuse, or are they actually preventing GENE'S own self neglect?

INT. A MOVING CAR - EVENING

THYS (O.S.)

The next time we met, I began to see Thys was becoming more unraveled.

There was this idea OUT THERE, he told me, and he believed the idea was GROWING, that this process Marla was using was somehow out to

replace The One Ten. Thys SAID he supposed these rumors, like most of these things, were all really far fetched. The FACT was, he said, people who spread this kind of stuff around were missing the point ENTIRELY. This process really had no particular fixation at all on The One Ten ITSELF. Instead, it was the Nound Spooks that were its enemies, or the Nound Spook CULTS.

(beat)

When I asked what he knew of this mysterious process, he said all he knew was that for the most part, up until recently at least, those with power like Marla had had little or no time or need to care about anything LIKE it.

(beat)

But, in the last several years he'd seen things change to the extent that there WERE some people even saying this process was some kind of global conspiracy having to do with the Freemasons and all that, like they were one hundred and ten actual people or their secret rituals, or some such thing.

(beat)

Then there were OTHERS, Thys explained, who thought The One Ten was the foundation of globalism, the post-war trans-Atlantic alliance. Then, too, as if this weren't enough, there were still others who somehow believed both at once.

(beat)

When I looked him in the eye as if to ask what he thought he just

shrugged his shoulders, all he  
said was "Fucking CRAZY right?"

INT. A CAFE - EVENING

Mike tells him his character is Topper, a friend of Scrooge's nephew Fred. This character's name is BRIAN WELLER. Mike was first thinking Brian was a guy who is maybe somehow working against the best interests of GENE, kind of in an indirect way by helping build a system for his friend Fred to succeed in USING his uncle GENE in a campaign against the welfare system. 'You know the scene near the end when the Gentlemen collecting for charity in his office who he turned away earlier on but then later promises them money?' says Mike. 'I see Brian as sort of intervening in that and directing the money to their cause through himself, making him able to get more power over the system, putting himself on their board of directors and stuff. Mike says he then thought they might have to add a whole scene to the play to make it possible though. 'Can we do that?' Mike asks.

MARLA says she doesn't know, and that it is a good question.

INT. A MOVING CAR - NIGHT

THYS (O.S.)

When I asked Thys to explain how what he was calling the Nound Spooks FIT INTO the 110, Marla's process, or those kind of things he liked to go on about. He explained that both were really nothing economic, for or against business, individual liberty, or any of THAT stuff, as he put it.

(beat)

They weren't about the market and not about those who set up politics to tend to it, and all

that. Instead of all that, these societies were really ALL ABOUT the NOUND SPOOKS, the spookISM.

(beat)

As a word of confession here, I have to say I'm always amazed at how people like Thys understand these figures they call the NOUND SPOOKS, the NOUND SPIRITS, and the wide range of other things and descriptions. Whatever the problem, it was never about the material production or its means, but about the whole SPIRIT of the place, or what the spooks had DONE to it.

(beat)

And Thys thought it was really nothing NEW either. He said it must have been living there dormant since maybe 1837.

(beat)

When I asked what the Nound Spooks had to do with 1837 and now, he said HE thought it was like the Spooks EVOLVED.

(beat)

This, I have to say, was what I thought to be his most amusing notion, nonetheless in that it is partially TRUE.

(beat)

I remember Thys saying that while he would have liked to think those who know power don't go for such stuff, that they take this spookism for what it is, RECENT events in his own experience seemed to indicate otherwise.

(beat)

When I asked him to elaborate on this, he said that most of his life things seemed safer, more



predictable. There were basically two sides, and each played against all too obviously constructed extremes, one against socialism or communism and the other against fascism, capitalism or whatever. But that wasn't the case anymore. NOT, ANY, MORE man. The only constant was change, he said.

(beat)

Cry me a fucking river.(beat) Thys had no IDEA he was being tested. Was he going to step up or cry ME a fucking river?

#### EXT. CAFE PARKING LOT - EVENING

As the meeting breaks up, Mike and Pam leave the theater and goes to his CAR. While in the PARKING LOT they see what appear to be MASKED FIGURES at a distance, passing under STREETLIGHTS on the main street.

The Nound Spirits are the maskers, the representatives, the agents of a messenger, nothing more and nothing less.

#### INT. A MOVING CAR - EVENING

THYS (O.S.)

As I tried dig deeper into how Thys understood of this process that he said Marla's group was following, Thys became for oddly excited than I ever seen up t that point. You see, he said, what was coming next were the DREAMS.

(beat)

THEIR dreams, all of their dreams,  
would all begin MIXING TOGETHER,  
some with music, some frantic,  
peaceful, like waves of releasing  
laughter, absurd laughter moving  
through Christmas parties and into  
the streets.

(beat)

Like Mardi Gras, like a masquerade  
is how he explained it.

(beat)

When I asked how he knew about  
their DREAMS, he looked me in the  
eye in his odd way and explained  
there were things HE KNEW.

Like he KNEW they would see him,  
or someone like him in a dream.  
He knew that he or that a person  
like him in each of their dreams  
would also be each one of them,  
his or herself.

(beat)

When he asked me how that was for  
a prediction, I asked him again  
how he could know such a thing

(beat)

He told me I wasn't supposed to  
ASK how he knew.

(beat)

He couldn't say, and I needed to  
learn that. Seeing no real  
response from me on this crazy  
crap, he went telling me that even  
though this would happen, that  
they would see him or someone like  
him, they'd still just be DREAMS.  
And like ALL dreams, they'd be  
WRONG.

(beat)

Dreams aren't RIGHT, that's how he  
put it.

(beat)

He said I could just forget

looking for symbols and all that,  
and he was more right than he  
knew.

That wasn't what mattered here, at  
least when it came to talking  
about the process.

(beat)

Dreams give you nothing in  
themSELVES, he explained. He  
wondered how he should he put it.

(beat)

It's like you have to act them  
out, or be acting ALONG WITH THEM,  
with the people or things in them.

And you have to APPLY SYSTEMS to  
them,

(beat)

like the process the group is  
using. Then they'll somehow give  
you something that's RIGHT instead  
of wrong. Then they'll become  
right.

(beat)

Anticipating my NEXT question, he  
explained that there actually WAS  
a system that would make these  
dreams right. You see, he said,  
that was in the process, right  
THERE, one thing it could do.

(beat)

Looking at Marla's Christmas Carol  
group though, Thys said he really  
doubted if any of these PARTICULAR  
people would ever realize this--  
that the process could even do  
this.

(beat)

These maskers all play dress up  
for those like me, and for all of  
us, but they don't SAY they do.

(beat)

Those like me are everywhere  
amongst them, brought into

everything. There is no science or religion that is not mixed with us.

(beat)

If you were wondering who becomes what are called Nound Spirits, I can tell you that it's most likely not anyone like you or them, and neither you nor anyone should want to be one of them, stuck in the process of transformation.

(beat)

They too are with limited liability, but only in their imitation of those like me and, in the end, not really.

(beat)

You see, only the Nound Spirits are godlike, not them. Only they inspire secrets. They need them to perform fear of them, and those who don't are not fearless, but fools, disconnected from (recognizing?)knowledge/ power like Scrooge or Gene, who see them as strange visitors.

(beat)

All in all, I have to say here that I was really quite intrigued, if not impressed not with what Thys was calling "the process," because there was no such thing, but by his idea of a system to make dreams right.

(beat)

While I would have never suspected it early on, he seemed, at least in some sense, to be onto me and my own work as a user. The game was clearly afoot, but HE of course couldn't be the winner.

INT. FRAME SHOP - DAY

LISA

Hi, here for your picture? Larson,  
right?

MARLA

Yes.

LISA

It's right here. You pre-paid so,  
it's all yours. Thanks.

MARLA

Okay, great. Thanks.

INT. LISA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Lisa is watching TV as the PHONE rings. She answers it.  
We see Tom Larson on the other end for a moment, and then  
do not see him again until the end of the conversation,  
hanging up.

All CUs.

LISA

Hi.

(beat)

Nothing, watching TV. Are you  
thinking about me? Is that why you  
called?

(beat)

Only thinking?

(beat)

Okay. I was wondering if you were  
getting my calls.

(beat)

Really. I wish. Mike's at your party, so I'm here at home with Brianna.

(beat)

I don't know.

(beat)

You can come over HERE.

(beat)

What do you KNOW? What are they doing?

(beat)

It's about The One Ten right?

That's what I've heard.

(beat)

AROUND, I dunno. What else did your hear?

(beat)

From Marla?

(beat)

Elder Abuse awareness? What's that?

(beat)

Sounds strange. I don't get it.

(beat)

Maybe.

(beat)

Do you think Marla knows?

(beat)

About WHAT? About US.

(beat)

Yeah.

(beat)

It's all kind of freaking me out, to be honest. Something strange is going on. She was in the frame shop to day to pick up that picture.

(beat)

No, something strange IS going on.

(beat)

I don't care. Why don't you come over for once.

(beat)

You can park down the street. The street's a dead end and no one come down it.

(beat)

What's so urgent? I'm needing you. Don't you want to come over?

(beat)

Can't you just skip out?

(beat)

I know it's your party, but it's really MARLA'S party right? Just come over for a while and then go back.

(beat)

Make an excuse. Are you out of ice yet?

(beat)

Okay. Okay. Mhmm. Call, okay?

(beat)

Bye.

#### INT. A PARKED CAR WATCHING THE FOUNTAIN- NIGHT

THYS (O.S.)

The REASON Thys thought Marla's group wouldn't really succeed was, like most of us, their lives and abilities were too limited by apprehension, peer pressure, how they'd learned to behave in order to be accepted for who people thought they were.

(beat)

Thys said he suspected in one way or another they'd all get spooked, as he put it, and this new play would become like a diversion, a sort of a way to feel they were doing something after they'd actually stopped doing ANYTHING.

(beat)

He thought the play would keep them hidden within entertainment, something fictional, a kind of safe place they were used to and that they NEEDED.

(beat)

But, then again, he admitted that maybe THEY were right. Maybe they knew HIM better than he knew THEM. He was, after all, "This Year's Scrooge."

(beat)

While Thys said it had been nice to be invited into the group, he said, his hope was they wouldn't need him. And they really didn't WANT him, he said, if they were smart. He complicated things. He fucked them up and ruined them with what e saw as his good intentions.

(beat)

Thys said he knew they'd all heard about Cody's MURDER, but since he hadn't heard from any of them he doubted if any of them had any idea he knew Jon and Cody.

(beat)

When I asked if it bothered him a lot, he said it did and ADDING to that, the fact that no one knew where his older BROTHER Danny was was even worse.

(beat)

Thys said he was having nightmares, curious and weird, all of them with an orange toy handgun, like one of the investigators found in the boy Cody's hand.

(beat)

He'd heard the thing about the toy



gun through some police grapevine,  
he said, something I thought  
strange. But they didn't release  
that information to anyone  
outside. They sealed that kind of  
stuff. He never actually saw it.

(beat)

Then, he said, there was this  
crazy-assed letter Jon was writing  
still up on his computer and  
laying in the printer, his so  
called, well-researched FINDINGS  
about how taxes and some covert  
NATO POLICE STATE was somehow  
making his life unliveable,  
stealing his freedom and poisoning  
Cody with ideas against freedom.  
He wrote that he knew SOMEDAY SOON  
he would need to take a stand,  
when THEY finally came for them  
both.

(beat)

Thys went on, becoming more upset  
as he spoke. He apologized, saying  
he'd been asking himself, non  
stop, what the hell happened with  
Jon. You'd think after 40 years  
doing what I do... he began, but  
stopped himself there.

(beat)

Thys said he kept asking himself  
what the hell was HAPPENING in  
this place? What did he do, DIDN'T  
he do?

He still didn't really know.

(beat)

I just listened, more curious than  
ever to see the end of this play  
I'd become so involved in.

INT. A SMALL BASEMENT-LIKE ROOM - NIGHT

All are in pump house under fountain. We see Mike holding a THIN RED BOOK but we cannot hear them talking.

GMBH

Of all drama, the libertarian rebellion is always the most obvious and droll kind of such a performance, of sacrifice.

(beat)

I have watched it play out time and time again, and Jon Birken was no different from anyone else, really. Are THEY coming for these people? Well, their THEY are all THEM, and they ARE coming, for THEMSELVES. Now, when I FIND one of them who ISN'T coming for his or herself, that's when things get interesting.

(beat)

Was Thys one of these people? As it turns out, no. But that's not to say I didn't learn something here.

EXT. A PARKED CAR - NIGHT

LISA is also watching the fountain, parked in darkness, on a cell phone.

LISA

Marla probably tells him everything, talking about it all the time.

(beat)

I really don't like it. You know?

It's too weird to have both Mike  
and Marla still hanging around  
each other, talking all the time.  
I thought the end of the last play  
would be the end of that.

JACK (O.S.)

Yeah, but don't worry, it'll be  
over soon.

Another, third voice interjects.

THYS (O.S.)

NO, it WON'T ..., at least soon  
enough for YOU.

JACK (O.S.)

What?  
(beat)  
Who the hell is THAT?

LISA

I DUNNO.

JACK (O.S.)

(angrily and  
suspiciously)  
Is there someone there WITH you  
Lisa?

LISA

No, he's somewhere else, listening  
in on the line.

JACK (O.S.)

Who IS this?

THYS (O.S.)

You heard what I said, counselor,  
YOU FUCK, and you can just think  
about who this IS.

A beep and a silence.

INT. CAFE - NIGHT

Mike and PAM have find a park bench after MARLA and Mike have gone home.

MIKE

So that's where we are at this point. The custody hearing is in two weeks. We'll see, I guess.

PAM

Did you know Danny and I went through a divorce too? Most people in the family don't.

MIKE

Seriously?

PAM

Mhm.

MIKE

So, I guess you know all about all the paperwork and the meetings all too well then.

PAM

Yeah, I suppose it was different since he was over there and I was here.

MIKE

Yeah, I can imagine.

Mike's cell phone begins ringing and he answers it. It is Lisa.

MIKE

Yep?

(beat)

She's spending the night at my mom's.

(beat)

Somewhere Lisa.

(beat)

SOMEWHERE. What's it matter? Are you writing a book?

(beat)

She's already in bed by now.

(beat)

Yeah.

(beat)

Okay.

(beat)

Hold on, wait a minute. You know when you call me it's still the 0723 number. You said you'd get that changed.

(beat)

BECAUSE, when you call people they think I'M calling them, or I'm trying to get ahold of them.

(beat)

No, I told you before, YOU need to change it. It's not my phone anymore.

LISA hangs up on Mike. There is a moment of silence as Mike realizes she's no longer on the line.

MIKE

Sorry about that.

PAM

I KIND of know how it is.

MIKE

Then you REALLY know how much it sucks, I think.

There is a silence as they both take bits of pie.

PAM

You mind if I ask why you two split?

MIKE

You know her, right. She's Danny's cousin, or HALF cousin...

PAM

Not very well really. I remember seeing you two at a family thing just after Brianna was born. But I never really talked to her.

MIKE

The key point to know is that she's a tramp. She can't help it really.

PAM

(awkwardly)

Hmm.

(beat)

Have you had a chance to take a longer look at the process stuff?

MIKE

(sipping his drink)

A bit, yeah. Mhmm.

PAM

Have you seen the stuff about the Nound Spooks?

MIKE

Yeah, I did, but I didn't quite get what it's supposed to be about. What do YOU think?

PAM

I know it sounds strange, but you know the weird dreams we both had with people in masks and the orange kids guns?

MIKE

Yeah.

PAM

That's why I brought up the process stuff. What we've been experiencing are the Nound Spooks. That's what they ARE. That's what the process is about in some way, making sense out of such nonsense like in our dreams or imaginations.

MIKE

It's about interpreting our DREAMS?

PAM

No, that's not really IT.  
Cut to outside-in shot of the the two still talking and fade.

INT. MARLA'S MANSION - NIGHT

MARLA is reading her husband TOM'S cell phone call list when he TOM comes into the kitchen. In the cell phone, are a few missed calls from what reads out as Mike BRANNIGAN's number.

INT. A NURSING HOME - DAY

The poem The Windows by french poet Stephane Mallarmé  
plays incorporated into music or visual as we see THYS OR  
GENE BIRKEN at a window.

Las du triste hôpital, et de  
l'encens fétide  
Qui monte en la blancheur banale  
des rideaux  
Vers le grand crucifix ennuyé du  
mur vide,  
Le moribond surnois y redresse un  
vieux dos,  
Se traîne et va, moins pour  
chauffer sa pourriture  
Que pour voir du soleil sur les  
pierres, coller  
Les poils blancs et les os de la  
maigre figure  
Aux fenêtres qu'un beau rayon  
clair veut hâler,  
Et la bouche, fiévreuse et d'azur  
bleu vorace,  
Telle, jeune, elle alla respirer  
son trésor,  
Une peau virginale et de jadis !  
encrasse  
D'un long baiser amer les tièdes  
carreaux d'or.  
Ivre, il vit, oubliant l'horreur  
des saintes huiles,  
Les tisanes, l'horloge et le lit  
infligé,  
La toux ; et quand le soir saigne  
parmi les tuiles,  
Son œil, à l'horizon de lumière  
gorgé,  
Voit des galères d'or, belles  
comme des cygnes,  
Sur un fleuve de pourpre et de  
parfums dormir  
En berçant l'éclair fauve et riche



de leurs lignes  
Dans un grand nonchaloir chargé de  
souvenir !  
Ainsi, pris du dégoût de l'homme à  
l'âme dure  
Vautré dans le bonheur, où ses  
seuls appétits  
Mangent, et qui s'entête à  
chercher cette ordure  
Pour l'offrir à la femme allaitant  
ses petits,  
Je fuis et je m'accroche à toutes  
les croisées  
D'où l'on tourne l'épaule à la  
vie, et, béni,  
Dans leur verre, lavé d'éternelles  
rosées,  
Que dore le matin chaste de  
l'Infini  
Je me mire et me vois ange ! et je  
meurs, et j'aime  
— Que la vitre soit l'art, soit la  
mysticité —  
À renaître, portant mon rêve en  
diadème,  
Au ciel antérieur où fleurit la  
Beauté !  
Mais, hélas ! Ici-bas est maître :  
sa hantise  
Vient m'écœurer parfois jusqu'en  
cet abri sûr,  
Et le vomissement impur de la  
Bêtise  
Me force à me boucher le nez  
devant l'azur.  
Est-il moyen, ô Moi qui connais  
l'amertume,  
D'enfoncer le cristal par le  
monstre insulté  
Et de m'enfuir, avec mes deux  
ailes sans plume  
— Au risque de tomber pendant  
l'éternité ?

Translation in subtitles

Weary of the dull hospital and  
rank fumes  
Rising into the banal whiteness of  
the curtains  
Toward the large bored crucifix of  
the empty wall,  
The dying dissembler straightens  
his old spine

He drags himself and goes, less to  
warm his rotting body  
Than to see the sunlight on the  
stones, to glue  
The white hairs and bones of his  
gaunt face

To the windows that a clear sun  
ray tries to bronze.

And his mouth, feverish and greedy  
for the blue azure,  
As once when young it inhaled its  
treasure,  
A virginal skin and of long ago!  
soils  
With a long bitter kiss the tepid  
panes of gold.

Drunk, he lives, forgetting the  
horror of the holy oils,  
The infusions, the clock, and the  
inflicted bed,  
The cough; and when evening bleeds  
along the tiles,  
His eye, on the horizon gorged  
with light,

Sees golden galleys, beautiful as  
swans  
Sleeping on a river of crimson and  
of fragrance

Rocking the rich tawny flash of  
their lines  
In a great apathy charged with  
remembrance!

Thus seized with disgust for man  
with his blunt soul,  
Wallowing in contentment, where  
only his appetites

Eat, and who insists on fetching  
this filth  
To present it to the woman  
suckling her little ones,

I flee and cling to all windows  
which open inside  
From where one turns one's back to  
life, and, blessed,  
In their glass, washed by eternal  
dews,  
Gilded by the chaste morning of  
the Infinite

I look at myself and see me as an  
angel! and I die, and I love  
— May the glass be art, may it be  
mysterious—  
To be reborn, wearing my dream as  
a crown,  
In the anterior sky where Beauty  
flowers!

But alas! Here-below is master:  
its obsession  
Sickens me at times even in this  
safe shelter,  
And the impure vomit of Stupidity  
Forces me to stop up my nose  
before the azure

Is there a way, O Self who knows  
bitterness,  
To break open the crystal insulted  
by the monster  
And to escape with my two  
feathered wings  
— At the risk of falling through  
eternity?

EXT. A MOVING CAR - DAY

Marla is driving and passes a motel, slowing down a bit to look for Tom's car on a whim. Surprised at seeing Pam's car, she turns around and waits across the street out of view.

After a while she sees Pam emerge and get into her car, but no one is with her, and the parking lot is now empty.

INT. GENE'S WORK SHED - DAY

Gene is shown working in his work shed as Mike narrates.

MIKE (V.O.)

Before getting started, one thing needs to be made very clear. Gene's father was dead. There is no doubt in anyone's mind about that. The register of his burial was signed by all the proper parties. The old man had given up the ghost.

(beat)

Now, having said this, I don't mean to say I know for sure what

it really means to give up the ghost. I suppose the most obvious meaning is that his spirit had separated from his body, and that being alive kept them together. But, then again, to give something up means to let it go, or to kick a habit, to move on, and to give someONE up is to surrender him or her to the authorities. In the end, the wisdom of our ancestors is in that saying, and who are any of us here to do anything to really question those kinds of things. Basically, things like this are traditional, kind of like the 110. So, like I said, suffice it to say Gene's father had given up the ghost. And I'd urge you to take that for all its worth.

(beat)

Did Gene know his father was dead? Of course he did, in some real sense. But at the same time it's also true that his father was in a state of crisis, and that seemed, at least in this case, to not be mutually exclusive with being dead.

(beat)

How could it have been any other way, really? Gene and his father were like close friends, partners in crime, as the saying goes. One could say Gene was his dad's SOUL executor, his SOUL administrator, his SOUL signer, his SOUL residuary legatee, his SOUL friend, and maybe in truth, his SOUL mourner. In reality, even Gene himself wasn't so torn up by the sad event, but he was a good son on the day of the funeral,

giving his best words to the  
memory of his father.

INT. CAFE - NIGHT

MARLA

(looking at script)

Sorry Mike, can I say

(beat)

I think we need to change some of  
the language here.

(beat)

That's okay. Go on.

(beat)

Later.

MIKE

The mention of his father's  
funeral brings me back to the  
point I started from. There was no  
doubt that Gene Sr. had given up  
the ghost. This must be distinctly  
understood, or nothing really can  
come of this story. If we were not  
clearly convinced that King Lear  
had not in some sense given up the  
ghost and was in crisis from the  
early part of the play onwards,  
there would be nothing more  
remarkable in his sound and fury  
than there would be in any other  
old man, behaving in odd ways to  
literally astonish his daughters'  
weak minds.

(beat)

Why do this, bring in King Lear  
and all that?

MARLA

Is it okay for now if we just go  
with it and I'll explain later?

MIKE

Okay..., sure.

INT. GENE'S WORK SHED- DAY

MIKE (V.O.)

Near the side entrance to the work shed his father had long ago painted and hung a sign and Gene had never taken it down. There it hung, years afterwards, above the main tool bench: G & G.

(beat)

As he sat there in the work shed, Gene Jr. could hear the cars that sped by his house go wooshing and sloshing up and down the road, their windows up, the heat blasting, and wipers wiping away the windshield slush. The clock on the wall had just clicked on four, but it seemed to be getting dark already. It hadn't been light all day really, and lights were on in the windows of the house some 30 yards from the shed. The light the house gave off came through the shed window with milky smears upon the palpable grey air.

(beat)

The door of Gene's work shed was always left open so he might see that WOMAN coming through the glass of the storm door. She seemed to stay in the house most of the day but would then show up unexpectedly at almost any time. Gene was always cold, but the woman seemed to always not be bothered by the cold. When she

showed up, she always seemed to be dressed like it was summer, like she didn't feel the cold.

(beat)

As he stared out the window, he seemed to be lost in thought.

#### INT. REHEARSAL SPACE - NIGHT

Theater stage set is both Tammy and Allison's house with a glass storm door, but two different chairs, a different side table, and background.

With Gene, it's always a mix of behaviors that might at one time contradict the emotion or distract from it.

MARLA

Hello. Happy Happy!

She puts her arm around him and hugs him from behind. Gene pats her head.

MIKE (V.O.)

Gene's daughter-in-law comes upon him so quickly that this was the first he knew of her being there.

#### INT. GENE'S WORK SHED - DAY - CONTINUOUS

GENE

Yeah RIGHT.

ALLISON

Awe c'mon. I know you don't MEAN that.



THYS

I sure as hell do. Happy Holidays!  
What've YOU got to be so happy  
about? You work for the  
government?

ALLISON

Come on. What's up with you being  
such a dark cloud? Do YOU work for  
the government?

GENE

SURE. Yeah, right. That's a good  
one. I WISH.

ALLISON

Don't get upset Dad. It's okay.  
I'm just pulling your leg.  
(beat)  
What you doin'?

THYS

What am I supposed to do when I  
live around people like that?  
Happy Halloween my ass! What's it  
to you people except a chance for  
more time off?

INT. REHEARSAL SPACE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

MARLA

Awe come on! Really?

THYS

I'll have my own Happy  
Halloweendays, and you all can  
have yours. Good enough?

MARLA

So you don't want to do ANYTHING  
this year?

THYS

No, how about let's not and say we did. Let the government take care of it.

MARLA

There's a lot of things the government does wrong, but I think it does SOME good too. Right?

Gene's niece TAMMY, who had been listening in the DOORWAY, applauds.

PAM

Yeah, you tell him!

THYS

Let me hear any more of YOUR crap and you'll celebrate losing your job.

PAM

You can't fire me, I have a contract.

THYS

Really? Are you a LAWYER?

INT. GENE'S WORK SHED - DAY - CONTINUOUS

ALLISON

Don't be bent out of shape. Come on! You'll be up at the house and at Tammy's tonight, right.

GENE

(feeling somehow guilty)

I've got stuff to DO. See you later.

ALLISON

I'm not asking for anything FROM you, we can be friends right?

GENE

(smiling)

Could ya get LOST for Christ's sake!

ALLISON

I'm sorry you're being so stubborn today. We never had any kind of fight, did we? I'm asking you because we want you there, and I'm not gonna get in a bad mood, no matter what you say.

GENE

How about 'Merry Disappearance?'

ALLISON

And a crappy New Year?

GENE

Yes. Get out.

ALLISON leaves the work shed. She stops just outside the door to say hi to Gene's niece TAMMY and attorney MARK WENSLER. Tammy seems much more friendly than usual.

THYS

(reading)

What the hell is THIS now, another one with her hundred and whatever bucks a week, and a husband and family, talking about a Happy Halloweendays.

INT. REHEARSAL SPACE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

MARLA

As she leaves, TAMMY and MARK enter.

MIKE

Hi, I'm Mark. Mr. Carter, right?

THYS

(reading)

My dad's been dead for years.

MIKE

We're hoping Gene Sr.'s support of progressive causes runs in the family. We understand your a longtime union brother.

MARLA

When it came to causes, Gene and his dad had been two kindred spirits. This guy he was looking at was right about that. But hearing the ominous word progressive, Gene frowns, shaking his head.

BRIAN

(a bit perturbed, but polite)

You don't care much for the union anymore?

THYS

I don't care about a LOT of shit, since you're asking me. I don't do Happy Holidays, and I can't afford to make the government merry merry. I pay taxes for the government and all that, and they

cost enough. Those who have done  
crap have to deal with them, not  
me.

MIKE

Yeah, I hear you. That's okay. How  
do you like your new SUV?

THYS

It's none of my business.  
(beat)  
It's enough for anyone anyMORE to  
deal with his own business, and  
not to mess around with other  
people's lives. I'm always busy  
with mine. So, see you later, I  
suppose.

MARLA

Seeing clearly that it would be  
useless to pursue their point at  
that particular moment, Mark and  
Tammy whisper to one another and  
leave without saying goodbye. Gene  
goes back to work feeling good  
about how he stood up to the  
government people just then.

INT. A MOVING CAR - DAY

THYS

As the days went on, Thys told me  
he really wasn't sure what to MAKE  
of Marla at times and that was why  
he'd basically decided to just ACT  
in the play.  
(beat)  
SOME things, like the way she  
thought she was directing it as  
part acting guru was more than  
kind of odd to him.

(beat)

When I asked him to explain, he said to take Pam for instance.

Marla first started encouraging her to more deeply EXPLORE the character by studying the ex-wife of her current boyfriend on the cast, Mike Brannigan, the ex husband of Lisa, the niece of Evelyn and Frank Birken, who was working with Evelyn against Tom Larson.

(beat)

Thys said Marla then began telling him that she was concerned Pam was getting too much into the role and it was worrying her.

#### INT. ALLISON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

MIKE (V.O.)

Gene goes up to the house and sits in front of the TV to have his usual lonely dinner.

(beat)

He's sitting in a lounge chair as Allison is fixing dinner. He's awake but also as if in a dream.

Show all of the objects mentioned below. Show all of these images as Gene gets up and moves around.

Until recently, Gene had lived in the house that his daughter in law Allison and his son Nick now live in by themselves. He'd raised a family there and then lived alone with his wife until she died a few years before and his son and daughter-in-law moved in.

Transition with a slow flash and a moment of watching Gene, then hold on back door, then Gene gets up and walks toward it.

Now, the fact is that there was nothing at all odd about the BACK DOOR. It's also in fact odd that Gene hadn't given one thought to his dad since he was last mentioned during Tammy's visit to the work shed that afternoon. This being the case, anyone would really be pressed to explain how it happened that Gene, having his hand on the handle of the back door, saw in the glass, without its changing in any way, didn't see, HIMSELF, but HIS FATHER instead.

(beat)

It wasn't well lit as the other objects in the house, but it had a dismal light about it, like a bad lobster in a dark cellar. It wasn't angry or ferocious, but Gene felt as if it was looking at him as his dad used to look at him, kind of studying, judging, wondering. Though its eyes were wide open, they were perfectly motionless.

This, and its livid color, is what is making it horrible, but its horror seems to be in spite of the face and beyond its control, rather than a part of its own expression.

As Gene focuses on this phenomenon, he can again see it as the reflection of his own face too.

Gene is shaken up. His blood has become conscious of a terrible sensation he hadn't known since he'd been a baby. He puts his hand upon the DOOR LOCK, slides it aside, and walks out onto THE PATIO.

He pauses for an undecided moment before he closes the door behind him, looking cautiously back through it into the house, as if he half-expects to be terrified with the sight Gene Sr. actually standing there. But there is nothing on either side of the door, except the glass from the other direction. He steps back inside the doorway and

closes the door with a big thud.

THE SOUND OF THE DOOR CLOSING resounds through the house like thunder. Every room above and every can and bottle on every shelf seems to have a separate sound of its own. As he listens to the continuing resonating of the sound, he walks through all the rooms of the house to see that all was okay.

LIVING ROOM, BEDROOM, BATHROOM. All are as they should have been. Nobody under the table, nobody under the SOFA, the CEILING FAN on low, SPOON AND A BOWL OF JELLO ON THE TABLE BESIDE HIS CHAIR. OLD CHAIR, SIDE TABLE, TV, another living room CHAIR.

Now satisfied, he closes the DOOR to the garage, and locks himself in, double-locks himself in, which is not his usual thing to do. Now secured against any surprise, he takes off his shoes, puts on his slippers and sits down in front of the TV to eat his jello.

A rerun of a police show is on, but he can't extract the least sensation of warmth from understanding it.

Before long, he finds himself studying Allison's PIG COLLECTION on the nearby bookcase. If each smooth figure had been a blank at first, with power to shape some picture on its surface from the disjointed fragments of his thoughts, there would have been a copy of his FATHER'S FACE on every one.

He begins to drift off to sleep. As his head sinks back in the chair, his glance happens to rest upon an OLD DIGITAL CLOCK, its readout so small he had not been able to see it for years. Now asleep and dreaming, it is with great astonishment, and with a strange, inexplicable dread that as he looks, he sees these numbers begin to scroll backward and forward. Its alarm begins beeping as do all in the house.

MIKE (V.O.)

This lasted half a minute, or so,  
but it seemed like an hour. The  
alarms ceased as they had begun,  
together. Then came a banging  
noise, out in the garage,  
(beat)

Sound of banging can.

as if some person were beating on



a hollow can. Gene then remembered  
to have heard that ghosts in  
haunted houses did things like  
this. Poltergeists!

The back door opens with a banging sound, and without a  
pause, the figure of Gene's father comes on through the  
door and passes into the room before his eyes. Upon its  
coming in, the sound of the TV goes mute as if to say I  
know him! My father's ... ghost! and then comes on again,  
but at a low volume.

The same face, the very same. His dad. Though he stares  
at the phantom through and through, and sees it standing  
in front of him, though he feels the chilling influence  
of its death-cold eyes, and notices of a plastic mouth  
guard in his father's mouth he had not observed before,  
he is still incredulous, and fights against his senses.

GENE

Hey!

(as if to startle the  
ghost, to get its  
attention)

What do you WANT?

GENE'S FATHER

(taking out his  
plastic mouthguard  
and repeating Gene's  
tone)

What do I WANT? I want ALOT!

That's what I want. What do YOU  
want?

INT. REHEARSAL SPACE - NIGHT

The members of the cast are all in their regular clothes,

but standing, reading their lines and narrating.

THYS

I'm asking who ARE you?

MIKE

No say, ask me who I WAS.

THYS

Who WERE you then? Are you supposed to be some kind of ghost?

MIKE

(lamentingly)

I USED to be your friend, your dad.

MIKE

The ghost stands across from Gene, staring.

MIKE

You don't really believe me, do you?

THYS

No, I don't, really. I gotta be honest.

MIKE

So, seeing you clearly don't believe your eyes AND your ears, what DO you believe Gene?  
(beat)  
Well...?

THYS

I don't know.

MIKE

Why DON'T you believe them then?

THYS

I dunno. I suppose because a lot of things can make you goofy, see and hear things. Too many medications? Not enough. You know, overdose.

INT. ALLISON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Gene is sitting in chair.

GENE

You see this bottle of pills?

GENE'S FATHER

Yeah, I see it.

GENE

You're not looking at it.

GENE'S FATHER

(impatiently)

I can see it anyway. What ABOUT it?

GENE

Well! All I've gotta do is swallow a few of these and I'll be seeing all kinds of things I suppose.

Image of a trembling BOY in a chair, terrified by his father.

At this, Gene's father lets out a frightful cry and bangs his EMPTY METAL CAN with such a dismal and appalling noise, that the boy holds on tight to his chair to save himself from losing it.

Gene diverts his eyes.

INT. REHEARSAL SPACE - NIGHT

THYS

For Christ's sake! What is it you

WANT from me? Can you just TELL me please.

MIKE

OKAY, smart guy. I want you to tell me if you, Gene, believe I'm REAL or NOT?

THYS

Yes, I do. I have to. But WHY?

MIKE

WHY is that everyone is a Visitor and that Visitors need to in one way or another walk abroad among his fellow men, to travel far and wide, and if the Visitor in him does not do this in life, it is, HE is condemned to do so after death. He is doomed to wander through a world in pain and sorrow, seeing what he can do nothing about, but might have been able to have been able to do.

MARLA

Again the spectre raises a cry, and bangs its CAN and wrings its shadowy hands.

THYS

(looking him up and down)

Why are you all tied up like that?

MIKE

I'm wearing ropes that I wove in my life. Aren't they NICE? I made them of my BEING, fiber by fiber, and yard by yard. The world I created around me. I spun each fiber of my own free will, and I wore them inside like organs and

outside like a skin. Their fibers,  
their weave is my life, twisted  
lie by lie, pretence by pretence,  
rumor by rumor, misusing power and  
trust. Is this skin, is this...  
PATTERN, this FEEL, is it strange  
to you?

INT. ALLISON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sitting in a chair, Gene trembles more and more as he touches the fibrous rope, running its frayed ends through his fingers as they emerge from his skin.

INT. REHEARSAL SPACE - NIGHT

MIKE

You GOD damn well know it doesn't.  
It's not as full, as heavy, and as  
long as this years ago. You've  
worked on it even more since. It's  
your obsession the same way it was  
mine.

MARLA

Gene glances around him on the  
floor, expecting himself to be  
surrounded by some fifty or sixty  
yards of ROPE, but can't see any.

THYS

Dad, can you tell me something  
else? Make it make some more  
sense. I ...

MIKE

I don't have any sense to give but  
none. You get me? Sense comes from  
other places, far away. And you  
learn it from OTHER ministers, to

other kinds of men. Why do you think you have the ABILITY to understand things, living like you do. Did the TV somehow convince you of this self delusion?

(beat)

(resigned)

Fact is, I can't tell you what I would really like to tell you. That's for sure. I can really only tell you one more thing. I can never rest. I can never stay put. I can never be anywhere for very long. Before, my Visitor never really made it beyond our work shed. In life my Visitor never went out beyond the narrow limits of our little world here, and our TV, but now long nights on the road always lie ahead of me.

MARLA

Gene had a habit, whenever he was brooding on something, to put his hands in his pants pockets. He was doing that then, pondering what the Ghost had said, but without lifting up his eyes.

INT. ALLISON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

GENE'S FATHER

(solemnly)

Gene, you need to give me up.

GENE

To give up the Ghost?

His father, on hearing this, lets out another cry, and clanks its can furiously.

GENE'S FATHER

(furious)  
God DAMN IT! LISTEN to me!

GENE  
But you were always telling  
riddles, dad. You know, I was  
just...

GENE'S FATHER  
RIDDLES. Riddle this Gene!  
(beat)  
I never realized what a riddle  
WAS. The common welfare isn't a  
puzzle. It was THE STATE Gene. THE  
STATE was my riddle. Everything I  
ever did, my whole life wasn't  
without meaning, it was a lie, a  
DAMNED JOKE full of FALSE meaning.  
If there is a God, this is HIS  
riddle. This is the challenge  
we're here left to solve. Is THAT  
something you can understand?  
It holds up its thick ROPE at arm's length, as if that  
were the cause of all its unavailing grief, and flings it  
heavily upon the ground again.

LOOK AT ME GENE. Do you know why I  
sat there watching TV with my eyes  
turned away fixed on flickering  
images, and never turn them to  
that God I REALLY worshipped?  
Was there anything I could have  
done that mattered, as I RANTED on  
about freedom and NONSENSE I had  
no GUTS, BRAINS, sinewy FIBER to  
learn to make right?  
XCU of his father in Gene's face. The boy begins shaking.

INT. REHEARSAL SPACE - NIGHT

MARLA  
Gene was very much dismayed to

hear his father's ghost talking  
like this, and began to quietly  
shiver in fear.

INT. ALLISON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

GENE'S FATHER

Listen to me, for Christ's sake!  
My time's almost up. This is  
SERIOUS.

BOY GENE

I will. Just don't get mad. C'mon.  
PLEASE. I'm...

GENE'S FATHER

I'm here to give you a serious  
warning. You still have a chance  
of escaping what's happened to me.  
A chance and hope that I'm trying  
to make possible for you, THROUGH  
YOU.

GENE

You were always a good dad to me.  
I know that. You live on through  
me, I wanted you to know I know  
that.

GENE'S FATHER

(flustered)

I don't know ANYTHING and I don't  
want to HEAR that. I don't need to  
live through you, I need to DIE  
through you, to DIE.

(beat)

The only way for you to see this,  
the only way I can SEE TO this is  
that you need to be haunted, by  
three OTHER Visitors than me.

(beat)



That's right. I've got you  
ATTENTION finally, huh?

GENE

Is that how I'm supposed to avoid  
what will happen to you, what you  
just told me about?

GENE'S FATHER

Yes. That's right. It's the one  
chance to kill me, MY one PATHETIC  
chance to die through you.

Gene's father starts to turn away, distracted, anxious to  
leave.

GENE

But wait a minute  
(beat)  
I can't  
(beat)  
How can I DO that? What does that  
even MEAN, I mean, and WHY,  
what's, I'm...

GENE'S FATHER

Without these Visitors coming, you  
will definitely end up joining me  
and following me down the road I'm  
on, drifting through space and  
time.

(beat)

Listen, (lowering his voice) the  
first Visitor will come tonight,  
at one.

(beat)

Then, the second one will come the  
next night at the same time. The  
third the next night at midnight.

Don't expect to see me any more,  
and make damn sure, for your own  
sake, and for me, make sure you  
remember what you need to do.

Okay?

GENE

To give up the ghost.

GENE'S FATHER

(amused)

Yes. To give up the DAMNED ghost.

GENE

To give up on you.

GENE'S FATHER

(flustered, agitated  
and desperate)

To SURRENDER me. To TURN ME IN.

Turn me OVER.

Gene then decides to take a chance and raise his eyes again, and finds his father standing there, with his ropes wound over and around his arm.

The ghost walks backward from him and at every step it takes, the back door opens a little, so that when the ghost reaches it, it is wide open. His father asks Gene to come closer, and he does. When they are within two paces of each other, his dad holds up its hand, warning him not to come any closer.

Gene stops, not so much in obedience as in surprise and fear. He sees nothing but his own reflection in the door glass. Gene begins to notice confused noises in the air, incoherent sounds of anger, lamentation, and regret, shouts inexpressibly sorrowful and accusatory. The ghost, after listening for a moment, joined in the cursing and floated out upon into cold night.

INT. ALLISON'S LIVING ROOM

Gene goes to the glass door, desperate in his curiosity.

He opens it and looks out.

SPFX

MIKE (V.O.)

The air is filled with PHANTOMS,  
wandering here and there restless,  
and in a hurry, and cursing,  
complaining, demanding as they go.  
Every one of them is wearing ropes  
like his dad. Some few (they might  
be guilty coalitions) were tied,  
even woven together, but none were  
free. Many had been personally  
known to Gene in their lives.

(beat)

He had been quite familiar with  
one old ghost, a SOCIAL WORKER who  
cried piteously at being unable to  
make a difference with a poor  
woman holding an baby, whom it saw  
below sitting on a doorstep,  
locked out by her abusive husband.  
The misery with them, charity  
volunteers, activists,  
organizers, was clearly that they  
sought to interfere for good in  
human matters but had lost the  
power for ever.

(beat)

Whether these creatures faded into  
mist, or mist enshrouded them, he  
couldn't tell, but they and their  
voices faded together, and the  
night became as it had been when  
he had earlier walked from the  
work shed.

There is a flash and Gene is sitting again. He tries to  
say 'Fucking crazy' but is stopped at the first syllable,  
looking at the clock and thinking he saw it said twelve.

MIKE (V.O.)

As was often the case, Gene had lost track of time. It couldn't have been possible that he'd slept through a whole day and far into another night.

(beat)

It also wasn't possible anything had happened to the sun and it was twelve noon.

(beat)

The idea began alarming him as he groped his way to the front window. He had to rub the frost off with the sleeve of his shirt before he could see anything, and could see very little then. All he could make out was, that it was still very foggy and extremely cold, and that there was no noise of cars passing, and making their usual stir, as there sure would have been if night had come upon day and taken possession of the world.

(beat)

This was a great relief, because his US savings bonds wouldn't amount to much if there weren't any days to count by.

INT. REHEARSAL SPACE - NIGHT

Only a few live in fear of these spirits. Most have come to live with them, accept them, if only in forgotten dreams. Most do not see how they themselves imitate me by showing fear of and trust in the Nound Spirits. Most don't recognize them. Most simply see

the person and not the spirit (and not the ancestor, and not the elder) (thus the same voice?).

The group discusses leaving this part about savings bonds in. Is it due to the 110, or...?

MIKE

Gene went to back to his chair again and thought it over and over, but couldn't make anything of it. The more he thought, the more perplexed he was, and the more he tried not to think, the more he thought.

(beat)

His father's Ghost bothered him beyond words. Every time he resolved the situation within himself, after telling himself that it was all a dream, his mind tipped back again, like a pendulum in slow motion, to the place where he had begun, and he would come the same problem to be worked all through. Was it a dream or wasn't it?

GENE seems to be awake from this dream state. The team discusses how the spirits are really the real people, the exploiters, and others.

MIKE (V.O.)

Gene remained in this state until the clock had passed three quarters more, remembering all of a sudden that his father had warned him of a visit when the clock struck one.

(beat)

He told himself he wouldn't fall asleep until the hour had changed

and, considering that, like his father, he couldn't any more go to sleep than go to Heaven, this was perhaps the smartest thing he could do.

(beat)

The next fifteen minutes were so long that more than once he convinced himself he must have dozed off and missed the it moving.

A HOME RETURN CRISIS ensues here. Gene begins feeling anxiety that he must get home to help his father. His father needed to be turned in, to heaven. He needed to be given up to God. My father, who art in heaven...  
The sound of GENE'S heart beating faster.

Click!

THYS

A quarter past.

Click!

Half-past!

Click!

A quarter to.

Click!

It was time!

He speaks before the hour ticks off, which it now does with a deep, dull, hollow, melancholy thud. Suddenly A

LIGHT flashes up in the room and a figure appears on the other side of THE STORM DOOR.

Gene finds himself face to face with the unearthly Visitor.

The Visitor, named Pinka, is a strange figure like a very familiar cartoon character, yet not so like a cartoon as like a witch, viewed through some supernatural medium. Its hair, which hung about its neck and down its back, was black and plastic. The ARMS were very long and manly, the hands the same, as if its hold were of uncommon strength. On its head was a feed cap. They speak through the STORM DOOR.

GENE

You're the Visitor my dad told me was coming.

VISITOR ONE

Yes, you remembered you were having visitors tonight uncle Gene.

MARLA (V.O.)

Though its lips did not move, its voice was clear as if they did.

GENE

Who, and what are you?  
The Visitor takes off its FEED CAP.

VISITOR ONE

I am PEEN-KA, a Visitor passing...Bye! PASSED. Bye!

GENE

Where?

VISITOR ONE

No, past YOU.

MARLA (V.O.)

Maybe Gene couldn't have told anybody why, if anybody could have

asked him, but he really wanted to see the Visitor in its feed cap, and asked it to put the cap back on.

VISITOR ONE

And mess up my marvelous hair?

GENE

What are you going to do? What's your reason for being...

VISITOR ONE

Your HEALTH, and WELFARE.

Gene is now seated again as the Visitor puts out its strong hand as it speaks, and clasps Gene gently by the arm. It gestures 'Get up and walk with me.'

MIKE (V.O.)

It wouldn't have been any use for Gene to plead that the weather and the time of night weren't any good for walking around outside. His chair was warm, and the outside thermometer was dropping. The grasp, though gentle as a woman's hand, wasn't to be resisted. He stood up, but seeing that the Visitor was making towards the back door, he held on to be kind of dragged along.

GENE

We've gotta watch it. I'm not too steady on my feet and I'm liable to fall.

VISITOR ONE

Just hold my hand there, and you'll be okay. I've got ya.



EXT. TAMMY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

GENE

I grew up here in this place.

CU of Tammy with mask on top of her head.

The Visitor stares at him mildly. Its gentle touch, though it had been light and instantaneous, appears still present to the old man's sense of feeling. He is conscious of a thousand smells floating in the air, each one connected with a thousand thoughts, and hopes, and joys, and cares long, long, forgotten. Gene's lip is trembling and there seems to be a tear on his cheek.

OMITTED

ACT 2B - TEMPO INCREASES

EXT. A PARKED CAR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

GMBH

Thys was clearly pointing a finger at Pam, more than suggesting she was more than she seemed.

(beat)

He told me how Pam had followed Lisa one day and stumbled upon a secret meeting with Tom Larson in the apartment Jon and Cody had lived in. (beat)

While SHE was supposedly telling THYS this for whatever reason, I suspected HE was ALSO painting the same picture of Tom, Lisa and Pam to Marla.

(beat)

Strange too was that even though

he has made his speech about not wanting any part in creating the play with the group, he seemed to have been eager to jump in to help write Tammy's party scene, and he even worked with the set builders to recreate his own living room as Tammy's.

EXT. AN APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY - CONTINUOUS

I even once considered that Thys was actually collecting information on Pam and that Tom Larson and Lisa were playing along to help him to get that done, but I think that shows more the state of mind I was in than anything real.

EXT. AN APARTMENT - DAY - CONTINUOUS

THE THIRD THREAT TO GABRIEL, THE MESSENGER WORSHIPPED AS THE STATE all of characters as suspects [this is where the story begins]. Who killed Jon. Cody and Thys? Can a documentary kill? A play? Well, only in a certain sense... but it is the State, the god - and we are all caught up in its drama/dreama, inescapably. This danger (ACT 2B) will be with flashbacks to earlier scenes.

Pam goes to the apartment, placing what looks like a kid's sticker (actually a microphone) on the door and adjusting a device attached to the smart phone, and listening with an ear bud as she walks away.

EXT. & INT. ALLISON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The moment Gene's hand is on the door, a strange voice calls him by his name telling him to come in.

VISITOR TWO

Come on in! Come in! Get to know us for God's sake. Take a load off.

MIKE (V.O.)

Gene entered timidly and hung his head. He wasn't the grouchy Gene he had been anymore, and though the Visitor's eyes were clear and kind, he didn't like looking into them.

VISITOR TWO

You've never seen me like this before, have you?

GENE

Nope. I really can't say as I have.

VISITOR TWO

You haven't been hanging out with the younger crowd lately I guess.

GENE

I don't think I have. Do you have many of those people here?

VISITOR TWO

More than two thousand.

GENE

That's a lot of people to cook for.

Allison gets up, smiling.

THYS

Take me where I'm supposed to go.  
I had to go last night and I  
learned some things I'm working on  
now. What's going on tonight?

VISITOR TWO

C'mon, take hold of my hand.

MIKE (V.O.)

And perhaps it was the pleasure  
the good Visitor had in showing  
off this power of hers, or else it  
was her own kind, generous, hearty  
nature that led them straight to  
the dining room because that's  
where she went, taking Gene with  
her.

The group talks about Allison's housing situation, Gene's  
son Nick, and so on.

EXT. A MOVING CAR - NIGHT

THYS

At this point, Thys said he didn't  
just have regrets, but real  
RESERVATIONS about not just  
Marla's effect on the others, like  
what Pam was doing, or however she  
might be imagining it, but real  
problems with Marla herself.

(beat)

Thys said there were things  
involved that were much more  
complicated, much more INTRACTABLE  
than he was SURE Marla was aware  
of.

(beat)

He of course couldn't SAY what  
they WERE and, again, I'm just  
saying what he SAID, and so much  
of THAT was an act.

INT. REHEARSAL SPACE - NIGHT

MIKE

Then up rose Nick, Allison's husband, Gene's own son, dressed down in a cotton T-SHIRT, but clean, and he laid down the TABLE CLOTH.

MARLA

Where's Ellie?

MIKE

She's not staying. Tammy took her back with her when she left.

MARLA

Why? She's supposed to have dinner here.

MIKE

Nick doesn't like to see his wife disappointed, even if it was only in joke, so he pulls Ellie out from behind the CLOSET DOOR the girl runs into Allison's arms.

MARLA

And how did Ellie do today?

MIKE

Great, better than ever. Somehow she gets thoughtful, sitting by herself in front of the TV so much at home, I think, and she comes up with the strangest things you ever heard. She told me earlier that she hoped the people saw her in the church because she was disabled and it might be nice to

them to remember who made lame  
beggars walk and blind men see.

MIKE

Ellie's active little footsteps  
were heard coming across the floor  
and she was back before another  
word was spoken.

(beat)

Nick made the gravy and mashed the  
potatoes with incredible vigor. He  
sweetened up the apple-sauce and  
Ellie laid the napkins by the  
plates. Nick sat Ellie beside him  
in a tiny corner at the table and  
finished setting chairs. After the  
dishes were set, they all sat  
down.

MARLA

Well, Happy Holidays to us.  
Ellie sits very close to Nick's side. Nick holds her  
withered little hand in his own as if he loved the child  
and wished to keep her by her side and he dreaded that  
she might be taken from him and Allison.

GENE

Is she still with us?

VISITOR TWO

Yes, but I'm worried about her.

GENE

No, come on. Please.

VISITOR TWO

It's not your problem, you have  
enough to worry about. You're  
busy, right?

MARLA

Gene hangs his head to hear his  
own words quoted by the Visitor,

and is overcome with penitence and grief, though he does not quite know why.

VISITOR TWO

It's really not a simple situation with her.

(beat)

She really needs someone to advocate for her with the state, and the courts. It's just not good enough to complain about paying taxes for them and be generally dissatisfied with things.

MIKE

Gene feels ashamed from the Visitor's rebuke and, now trembling, casts his eyes down to the ground, but then raises them again in flash hearing his own name.

MARLA

Thanks grandpa Gene for making all this possible.

MIKE

Yes, I wish I really had him here. I'd give him a piece of my mind to chew on. Some government rations, as it were.

MARLA

Nick... Ellie...

MIKE

It should be Christmas Eve. That's when we're supposed to make toasts to the health of stingy, hard, unfeeling bastards. Right dad? Just like Scrooge. You know it, right? Nobody knows it better than

us I'm thinking.

MIKE

Gene just sits there, unaware he is being talked about.

MARLA

Come on, please. Just stop. Please?

MIKE

That's alright. I'll drink to all self-righteous bastards FOR all of us, not for the BASTARDS because they do enough on their OWN, right. A Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year! I hope they'll be very merry- happy. How's that?

MIKE

With a repressed smile, Allison drinks the toast after him. It's the first of their proceedings which has no heartiness in it. Ellie drinks last, but she doesn't finish it.  
(beat)  
Gene is the grand lord of the family.  
Even though he is kind of there, the mention of his name in conjunction wit Scrooge casts a dark shadow on their dinner.

INT. TAMMY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

TAMMY has picked up GENE and brought him to a party at her house. MARK and BRIAN are both there. They come in the door and we see them from outside as they are greeted.



INT. REHEARSAL SPACE - NIGHT

MIKE

It was a much greater surprise to Gene to recognise the place as his own niece's, and to find himself in a DRY, GLEAMING ROOM, with the Visitor standing smiling by his side, and looking at that same time at his niece, her smiling with approving affability.

MIKE

Ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha! If you should happen, by any unlikely chance, to know a woman with a better LAUGH than Tammy, all I can say is, I want to know her too. Introduce her to me, (looking at PAM) and I'll cultivate her ... acquaintance.

MIKE

It is a fair, even-handed, noble adjustment of things, that while there is infection in disease and sorrow, there is nothing in the world so irresistibly contagious as laughter and good-humour. When Tammy laughed in this way, holding her sides, rolling her head, and twisting her face into the most extravagant contortions, Brian laughed just as heavily. And their assembled friends, being not a bit unreserved, roared out lustily.

MIKE

Ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha, ha!  
He said the holiday was total bullshit, really, I swear to God.

INT. TAMMY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

TAMMY

(drunk)

More shame on him then, I suppose.

MIKE (V.O.)

Tammy was very pretty, VERY pretty. With a dimpled, surprised looking, capital face, a ripe little mouth, that seemed made to be kissed as no doubt it was, all kinds of good little dots about her chin, that melted into one another when she laughed, and the sunniest pair of eyes you ever saw in any little creature's head.

(beat)

Altogether she was what you would have called provocative, you know, but satisfying, too. Oh, perfectly satisfying!

TAMMY

He's a funny old guy, that's for sure, and not as good to be around as he could be. But that's nothing new. So, hey, what goes around comes around n'shit, so I don't have anything to say against him

(beat)

right now.

(beat)

You KNOW he's loaded Mark. At least you keep telling me he is.

MARK

And... what about it? His money isn't any use to him. He won't be doing any good with it. He can't make himself comfortable with it.

He doesn't even have the satisfaction of thinking he is ever going to help you or Ellie with it.

TAMMY

I still don't trust him, or him and Allison. But really, I feel sorry for him. I couldn't be angry with him if I tried. The one who really suffers from his moods is himself. Like this afternoon when he got it into his head to not like us, and he wouldn't come to our party. What are the consequences? Not much, right.

MARK

Right, I think he's not missing much. He seems happy and I ...

TAMMY

(interrupting)

Well I'm DAMN glad to hear you admit it because I don't have ANY faith in some people to have a good time. Like YOU, Mark.

(beat)

(looking at Brian)

So go on Mark. He never finishes what he begins to say. He's such a funny guy.

It was their turn to laugh now, at the notion of Tammy, now way more than half in the bag, getting Gene to the party. But being thoroughly good-natured, and not caring a lot about what they were laughing at, Tammy eggs them on passing the bottle. As they do, many come to Gene and hug him or shake his hand.

But they don't devote the whole evening to the bottle.

After a while they play different games.

First is blind-man's bluff. Mark fakes it, peeking under the blindfold. It is a done thing between him and Brian and that the Tammy knows it. The way he goes after a

FRIEND OF TAMMY in the BLACK DRESS is an outrage on the credulity of human nature. Knocking down a side table, tumbling over the chairs, bumping up against the kitchen table, smothering himself among the curtains, wherever she goes. He always knows where the lacey friend is. He doesn't every really try to catch anybody else. If you fall up against him (as some of them do) and stand there, he makes like he's trying to grab you but instantly have slips off in the direction of the black dress. Tammy's friend often cries out that it isn't fair and it really isn't. But when at last he catches her, when, in spite of all her slippings away and her rapid flutterings past him, he gets her into a corner where there is no escape, then his conduct is the wildest. His pretending not to know her, his pretending that it is necessary to touch her, and further to assure himself of her identity by pressing a certain ring upon her finger, and a certain chain around her neck, is out of control. Though she tells him what she thinks of all this, when another blind man is set loose, they become very confidential together, behind the curtains.

Tammy doesn't do the blind-man's bluff, but just makes herself comfortable in a LARGE CHAIR with a FOOTSTOOL, in a snug corner where the Visitor and Gene are close behind her.

When a game of How, When, and Where starts, that makes her jump up. In this game Tammy beats her friends hands down, and they were sharp girls too, as Mark could have told you. There might be twenty people there, young and old, but they all play, and so does Gene, for, wholly forgetting about the interest he had in what was going on, that his voice makes no moving sound in their ears, he sometimes comes out with his guess quite loud, and very often guesses right, too.

The Visitor is so happy to find him in this mood and watches him with such happiness when he begs like a boy to be allowed to stay until the guests leave. But this, the Visitor said could not be done.

GENE

They're starting a new game. One  
half-hour, c'mon, only thirty  
minutes.

MIKE (V.O.)

It was a game called 'Yes and No,' where Tammy had to think of something, and the rest had to find out what it was, she only answering their questions with a Yes or No, as the case may have been. The rapid fire of questioning to which she was exposed revealed that she was thinking of an animal, a live animal, rather a disagreeable animal, a savage animal, an animal that growled and grunted sometimes, and talked sometimes, and lived in London, and walked about the streets, and wasn't made a show of, and wasn't led by anybody, and didn't live in a menagerie, and was never killed in a market, and was not a horse, or an ass, or a cow, or a bull, or a tiger, or a dog, or a pig, or a cat, or a bear. At every new question that was put to her, Tammy burst into a fresh roar of laughter, and was so inexpressibly tickled that she was obliged to get up off the sofa and stamp.

INT. TAMMY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

TAMMY'S FRIEND

I have it! I know what it is! I know what it is!

TAMMY

What IS it then, c'mon?

TAMMY'S FRIEND

It's Gene!

And Gene it certainly was. While everyone loves Tammy's performance, some object that her reply to the question if it was a bear should have been a yes, in that the no they had gotten was enough to have diverted their thoughts from Gene supposing they had ever had any tendency that way.

MARK

Gene's been a lot of fun, that's for sure, and I think it would be downright ungrateful not to drink to his health. Here is a glass that says  
(beat)

(pretending to listen  
to the glass)

'Yaay Uncle Gene!'

'Yaaay, Uncle Gene!' they all join in.

TAMMY

A Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year to the old guy, bore, bear or whatever he is. He'd not gonna take it from me, but he's getting it anyway. Uncle Geeene!

FLASH

EXT. A ROADSIDE ALONG AN OPEN FIELD - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Mike is walking along a TRASH STREWN ROADSIDE in Kosovo with a man who is BOTH an Albanian friend and his brother, two men interchangeably seen as they walk.

MIKE (V.O.)

I'm walking along with my brother who lives in California and we're talking about my mom and then I'm

talking to a friend I know from  
when I was in the Army in Kosovo,  
and he's telling me we need to  
meet some people at the big  
swimming pool there.

(beat)

Then there we are in a HUGE PARK  
throwing a FRISBEE, and then

INT. A ROOM IN A GUESTHOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

I'm sleeping in a GUEST ROOM in  
town, being awakened by a CALL TO  
PRAYER and a ROOSTER and I just  
want to sleep but can't.

INT. MARLA'S MANSION - DAY - CONTINUOUS

MIKE (V.O.)

Then I go out of the room and down  
the stairs and I'm at Marla's  
house, at a PARTY, like maybe a  
Christmas party, I guess. Some  
PEOPLE are kind blurry, but I know  
them, who they are. And I'm doing  
all kinds of things at the party.

As he listens to a man talking to him, Mike is nodding,  
anxiously looking around.

BLURRED MALE FIGURE

If things don't change soon,  
nobody'll be working and then  
nobody'll be able to buy anything.  
That's why you can't raise taxes.  
It's hard to be in business, I'm  
not sure if I'll have to lay  
people off before long. At home

we're trying to lower our carbon footprint, there are lots of things I'd never thought of and I've been learning about since things started turning bad. But if we raise taxes, and then we can't attract business, it's gonna get even worse.

Mike is dancing with A WOMAN who is both PAM and MARLA, but neither exactly. They are dancing in formal style, in sweeping motions and, as they talk, unheard, he notices she is looking at him strangely now and then. As they pass back and forth in front of a MIRROR he is seeing her dancing with three persons (or is it the same person), wearing each of the THREE HALLOWEEN MASKS.

Conversations of guests are overheard.

GUEST ONE (WEARING KAHT MASK)

They'll be running everything soon, or running everything BADLY, and nobody will be working except those in the government.

GUEST TWO (WEARING SCHWEINRITER MASK)

I'm just saying they're not doing what they need to be doing to find the Arabs right here who are terrorists.

As Mike walks with A WOMAN through the party, A PERSON turns from the SCHWEINRITER masked figure into the PINKA masked figure. The woman he is with has the orange plastic TOY HANDGUN attached to her dress like a pin. Many others passed are blurry. There is a sexual tension



as they both steal away for a moment of passion.

EXT. A RESTAURANT/CAFE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

We see the group at the table and then focus on Pam as she begins to talk.

EXT. AN OPEN CITY LOT - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Pam is walking in the ruins of an urban neighborhood in a vast urban LANDSCAPE of lots.

PAM (V.O.)

I'm lost in something like an airport dream, you know, needing to be at the airport or being there and really desperately needing to get to a plane. But no matter what I do I can't seem to get there.

(beat)

And I'm walking with someone I don't know and there's music playing and I'm just loving the music, and I feel happy, like laughing inside but, I'm also crying inside, like a lost child, can't find my way to the airport. It's weird, good and not good.

As she walks through the urban scene above, Pam is accompanied by a RAPPER, rapping the words from EMINEM'S STAN, listening to it as well. For a minute Pam is happy

to be lost in the song, in her head, then not. The Rapper shows her an orange plastic TOY HANDGUN.

RAPPER

Nobody's gonna mess with us see.  
You know what I'm saying.

PAM

(feeling free)  
Yeah.

INT. CAFE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

PAM

(looking at Mike, and  
then at Marla)

It's like I knew joy was in the  
place where I needed to be but  
couldn't get to, at least right  
then. That place seemed to also  
be Marla's party. But then I'm  
there, at the party, and I see  
people I somehow know but then I  
have to leave after talking to one  
person because I have to go back  
into the streets.

(beat)

But while I'm walking toward that  
person I somehow know, I'm feeling  
really awkward, like I'm somehow  
being rude because I don't know  
the right way to act.

INT. MARLA'S MANSION - DAY - CONTINUOUS

PERSON IN MASK

(Pam is listening  
uneasily and  
nodding, trying to

be friendly, but in  
distress)

It's a Coalition for Peace that  
meets separately from the  
Progressive Coalition. We meet  
the first Thursday of the month in  
the United Congregational Church  
downtown. You should come.

There is a song, and the woman starts to sing along with  
it.

UNMASKED WOMAN

Do you know his song?  
(the woman looks  
away, bored)  
I LOVE it.

The woman starts singing the song again.

EXT. A LAKESIDE - DAY

We see each of the following scenes roughly as Marla  
describes them.

MARLA (V.O.)

I'm walking with a man who is both  
my father and a stranger. We're  
walking by a lake, looking for my  
son David, but it's like David's  
still a boy and not now.

(beat)

Like Pam said, I'm feeling like  
either sorrow, or joy, or somehow  
both could just break out of me at

any moment, but I also feel I should be getting to my Christmas party.

(beat)

As I went on walking I felt SO GOOD and happy to be with my dad again. He died seven years ago in Florida. And then, after I don't know how long, near the water's edge I see a see-through, shiny, orange plastic TOY HANDGUN on the ground, like a squirt gun I guess. Somehow I think it's David's and I start to feel anxiety, but I'm still happy to be with my father who is and isn't the person I'm with.

CUT

CUT

We see the following things roughly taking place as Mike describes them.

MIKE (V.O.)

It's kind of like I'm in college again, hanging out with the guys I was in a band with. And I was riding a BIKE around inside, and then playing with the BAND, doing a warm-up song, jamming with them, really IN it, you know, lost in it, like you can get sometimes.

INT. A BUILDING - DAY - CONTINUOUS

As we listen to Mike's narrative, we see a figure wearing a KAHT MASK is standing in a room and sees something at a distance, the figure zooms towards it pounding to stop before a MIRROR. In the mirror we see Mike.

MIKE

And then I'm in a big room  
somewhere and I see something at a  
distance, and like in a fast  
action film clip I zoom towards it  
pounding to stop in front of a  
mirror, seeing myself in it.

INT. LARSON MANSION - DAY - CONTINUOUS

MIKE (V.O.)

From there the dream becomes  
stranger in that I'm in Marla's  
house and I'm in a room looking at  
a GROUP of people who I'm sure I  
know, but they're all blurry. And  
I want to see them but can't. I  
hear them talking and I'm  
thinking, YEAH, FUCK The One Ten.  
If they can do it, so can I, so  
can everybody. I'm excited, but I  
know I have to get to the show  
where the band is playing, and  
they need me there.

(beat)

Then, I'm walking around Marla's  
house again I come upon a group of  
people, and I can tell they don't  
like me because I'm in this band  
and look the way I do.

(beat)

I see myself in a window and I'm

wearing this MASK, like a pig, and  
I start moving, making motions in  
the reflection of the window to  
some vague music.

(beat)

Then some guy, one of the guys who  
doesn't like me being in a band  
comes and squeezes my shoulder and  
asks "Are you alright Mike?" He's  
smiling, but kind of  
condescending, humoring me, making  
fun of me. And I just turn to him  
and keep moving making strange chu  
chu sounds, like an instrument, a  
snare drum or something, and I'm  
smiling inside the mask.

I'm elated as I keep making that  
sound and moving. Then, I take a  
few shuffle steps back, reaching  
into my inside jacket pocket and  
produce a kind of kid's plastic  
orange gun. It kind of feels good  
in my hand, with my finger on the  
trigger. And I'm just standing  
there, still moving.

(beat)

It's totally absurd, and strange.

## INT. ROOM WITH RECORDER/PHONE

GMBH

I hear they found Thys dead  
somewhere weeks later, but as to  
the details, I can't say.

(beat)

All anyone really seemed to know  
is that he'd disappeared two weeks  
before the show was scheduled to  
open and rumor was that the police  
were pretty much sure he killed  
Jon and Cody from a letter he

left.

(beat)

I myself was able to step into the role of Gene, and that worked out well, really. Marla had backed off from the Hamlet, play within a play thing as much as was possible at that stage.

(beat)

What is it that Jon did, what COULD be have done to get Thys to kill him AND Cody in cold blood like that? If you need the answer to THAT question, YOU know, I'm afraid you'll be disappointed.

(beat)

Fact is, you can't say Thys killed Jon and Cody, really that anyone killed anyone else, or, you can SAY it, but it's not completely the case. Someone is always in some way liable for things like that, but no one IS the CAUSE. As thing stand, everyone seems to die or tries to transform in hands like my own. Like countless others, I helped lead Jon and Cody into dangerous spheres of influence and Thys followed them there. Also don't forget they each tried to do away with me. To say they WERE me.

And it doesn't matter if they were only pretending. They're ALL pretending, but sometimes... it just gets to be too much. No one is me and everyone tries to transform through me. They shouldn't, and they don't NEED TO, but they do. But while they do this, they still can't say HOW they do it, how I do it, how they all come for themselves like they

do and, like I said, if someone thinks "they" are coming for them, then HE SHE IS COMING FOR HIS OR HERSELF.

(beat)

Since Thys transformation or death, if you will, whatever, and this is actually UNUSUAL for me, I keep remembering him telling me how Marla, Pam and Mike would see him, or someone like him in their dreams. He of course had no idea it wasn't just them, but everyone would do the same, and they HAVE for a long TIME. In a sense, Thys keeps annoying me from beyond the grave. I think the back story is that he, like Gene, somehow failed his own father, or SOMEONE, and has joined him or her drifting through time and space.

FLASHBACKS TO SCENES WITH HIS DAD.

You've probably heard the phrase "suicide by cop." What is called suicide by cop is only one EXTREME example of the way they, or you ALL die, using those like me to become a sacrifice and ending up sacrificing themselves to me, somehow at least, if only to be put away in a cell or be remembered as a case to be learned from. They, or you ALL really, seem to not be able to help becoming a symbol of the weakness, inability and strength that lies in my not being human, inhuman, and being with limited liability.

(beat)

But listen, don't let this process of becoming a sacrifice, becoming a symbol fool you or distract you. Don't forget that you don't die



like you so often think you do,  
and you don't LIVE in the way you  
like to think either. You, THEY  
are moving along a continuum that  
has no beginning and no end,  
transforming, however slowly and  
imperceptible it may be into some  
strange, unknown creature in  
nature, who occasionally might  
visit its former home in secret.

(beat)

Do I mourn their deaths? Well,  
YES, I do. But, it's a fact their  
fates could be WORSE too. They  
could be like me, a messenger,  
watching themselves have only  
negative effects on people and  
lacking any real power over how  
people interpret the messages they  
deliver.

(beat)

These people, YOU, if you're one  
of them, I sometimes can see no  
end to their worshiping those like  
me, messengers, not knowing,  
unable to fully appreciate the  
origin of our messages, not having  
any clear realization this origin  
is THEM. No matter how things  
change in the world, they remain  
unaware I am delivering messages  
they've sent to themselves,  
sometimes in the very skeletons of  
their cells, the very fibers,  
their fates and destinies, self  
sent and undelivered messages not  
from the past or the future, but  
from time immemorial, from time  
out of time.

(beat)

The only glimpses beyond me are  
laughter, ecstasy, ripping a hole  
in the fabric of their mise-en

scenes, like when they see certain masked figures in the light.

(beat)

But, then AGAIN, how many people have laughed at maskers shortly before those behind the masks have killed them? Laughing at the Nound Spirits, finding amusement in them, goes ALONG WITH being fearful of them. Both reactions are not only justifiable, but natural, as natural as then being SLAUGHTERED by the maskers, like pigs.

(beat)

For a long time I've been fascinated how I inspire imitation, watching them act like me and sacrificing to me under the guise of what are called the Nound Spirits.

(beat)

I've watched them play Schweinriter dictating as they work, line by line, boundary by boundary. I've watched them play Pinka secreting fashion, and the cosmos. And I've watched their dramas of KAHT, being enlightened and reasoning, all with limited liability.

(beat)

I also noticed some of them watching the Coyote, the one they don't know or can't say they know.

(beat)

What I'm about, REALLY about, is basically simple, in the end. I'm about FRANK BIRKEN, acting on his behalf, and the OTHERS were in the way of us all. In the end, I made the story, the play, the whole reason for getting involved MEAN

something. I made it WORK.  
(beat)  
I'm pretty sure...

CUT

INT. A THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

Out of one room, a Phantom Visitor slowly, gravely, silently, approaches. In the very air through which this Visitor moves it seems to scatter gloom and mystery. It is shrouded in a KAHT MASK which conceals its head, its face, its form. If it weren't for this, it would be difficult to detach its figure from the others mulling about the room, and separate it from the darkness by which it was surrounded.

He feels it is tall and stately when it comes beside him, and that its mysterious presence fills him with a solemn dread. He knows no more, for the Visitor neither speaks nor moves.

THYS

Are you the next Visitor?

The Visitor doesn't answer, but just points downward with its head.

Are you gonna show me the things  
that haven't happened, but will  
happen now?

The lower portion of the mask is contracted for an instant in its folds, as if the Visitor is inclining its head. That is the only answer he receives.

Although well used to ghostly company by this time, Gene is afraid the silent shape so much that his legs tremble beneath him, and he finds that he can hardly stand when he gets ready to follow it. The Visitor pauses a moment, like it was observing Gene's condition and giving him time to recover.

But Gene is all the worse for this. It thrills him with a vague uncertain horror to know that behind the dusky mask there are ghostly eyes intently fixed upon him, while he,

though he stretches his own to the utmost, can see nothing but a spectral hand.  
Gene squints at the empty eyes looking through the eye holes of the mask.

THYS

I gotta tell ya, I'm more afraid  
of you than any of the others.

(beat)

But, you know, I know you're here  
to help me with my dad.

(beat)

Can't you say ANYTHING to me?

(beat)

PLEASE?

It gives him no reply. It seems to be staring straight ahead of them.

Go on! I'll follow you. I'm afraid  
I don't have much time. You know,  
I have to get home...

MARLA

The Phantom Visitor moves away and  
Gene follows.

(beat)

They hardly seem to enter the city  
as it seems to spring up around  
them and encompass them in its own  
act. But there they are, in the  
heart of it, on the main street,  
amongst the shop windows.

(beat)

The Visitor stops beside one  
little knot of policemen and  
lawyers. Seeing that the Visitor's  
hand is pointed to them, Gene  
moves in closer to listen to them  
talking.

(beat)

No, says one cop, I don't know  
much about it, either way. I only  
know he's there.

MIKE

'How long ago was it?'

MIKE (V.O.)

A few weeks ago, I think.

MIKE

'What was the matter with him?'

MIKE

I dunno. Maybe a stroke or something?

MARLA

Gene is at first inclined to be surprised that the Visitor should attach importance to this conversation that seemed so trivial. But feeling assured that they must have some hidden purpose, he concentrates on what it was likely to be.

(beat)

This conversation could hardly be supposed to have anything to do with what had happened to his father. That was the past, and this Visitor's area was the Future.

(beat)

Gene also couldn't think of anyone immediately connected with himself to whom it would apply. But whoever they applied to it had to have something in it to help him with his dad. He tried to soak up every word he heard and everything he saw.

(beat)

MIKE

They leave the busy scene and are then in a place where Gene had

never been before.

INT. AN APARTMENT - NIGHT

This is the same apartment from the opening scene and the one Lisa uses for her trysts with Tom Larson. It is the apartment of Lisa's late cousin Jon Birken who murdered his son and committed suicide in the bedroom. Since Jon's death, Lisa has taken over the mortgage on the apartment and is paying for it with Frank's money. She uses it as a meeting place for her other affairs as well.

MARK

(sarcastically)

You know, we couldn't have met in a better place. Sweet memories.

Come in. Hold on, I'll shut the door.

(beat)

Geeze. There's still more stuff in this place than I would have expected.

(beat)

But I like the Halloween getup. Your idea?

MARLA (V.O.)

Tammy sits down in a flaunting manner on a chair, her elbows on her knees, and looking with a bold defiance at the other two.

TAMMY

You know, every person has a right to take care of their own selves and their families, right?. God knows Gene and my aunt always did the first, but SCREW the second.

BRIAN

Okay, but don't sit there staring into space as if you're having second thoughts.

TAMMY

AM I? Is that what I'm doing?

BRIAN

Looks like it but, okay then, whatever right. Who's the worse off for this, and who's better? Those are the only real questions, at least as I see it.

TAMMY

Yes, right.

BRIAN

Maybe nobody should say it, but the truth is that if he'd been even decent to the people who cared about him, he'd have had somebody to live with him now.

TAMMY

Yeah, that's true. I really do so much for him, even now. Allison just drives him crazy, as far as I can see.

BRIAN

Right, I was saying earlier I wish it was a little MORE really, and it should have been, I still think, if I could have found it all.

An account of Gene's assets are laid out by Brian who writes down the sums he came up with on a piece of paper for the other two to see, and then adds them up into a total.

That's my estimate and I wouldn't expect to turn up any more.

As they sit grouped around their papers, in the scanty light afforded by the room's lamp, Gene views them with a detestation and disgust which could hardly have been greater though they had been obscene demons, marketing the corpse itself.

MIKE (V.O.)

'Wow!' laughs Tammy when Mark, producing a plastic bag with money in it, tolls out their loot on the table. He tells them this is the end of the cash itself, that's it. Gene had stashed it away from everyone away when he was alive, to profit whatever fools came along by chance to find it after he died. But now, as it turns out, THEY'RE those fools.

POSSIBLY SUPERIMPOSE ALL THE FOLLOWING SCENES ON THE STAGE IN THE FORMS OF FROZEN STILLS. ALSO SUPERIMPOSE EDISON SCENES BEHIND THEM.

INT. AN APARTMENT - NIGHT

Gene recoils in terror, because the scene has changed, and now he is almost touching a bed, a bare bed on which he imagines beneath a sheet something, or things were lying covered up.

The room is very dark, too dark to be looked around in with any accuracy, though Gene glances around it in obedience to a secret impulse, anxious to know what kind of room it is. A pale light, rising in the outer air, falls straight upon the bed, and on it, plundered and bereft, unwatched, unwept, uncared for he imagines the body of a man, of a boy.

STOP AND START DIALOGUE SHIFTS.

Gene glances towards the Phantom. Its steady gaze is fixed upon the bed. He imagines covers are so carelessly adjusted that the slightest raising of them, the motion of a finger upon his part, would disclose the face. He thinks of it, feels how easy it would be to do, and longs to do it, but has no more power to pull the covers than



to unmask the Visitor at his side.

Gene moves to the window, looking down into the parking lot. The poem returns. It is the same window scene, repeated.

No voice pronounces these words in Gene's ears, but still he hears them when he looks at the bed.

MIKE (V.O.)

Las du triste hôpital, et de  
l'encens fétide  
Qui monte en la blancheur banale  
des rideaux  
Vers le grand crucifix ennuyé du  
mur vide,  
Le moribond surnois y redresse un  
vieux dos,  
Se traîne et va, moins pour  
chauffer sa pourriture  
Que pour voir du soleil sur les  
pierres, coller  
Les poils blancs et les os de la  
maigre figure  
Aux fenêtres qu'un beau rayon  
clair veut hâler,  
Et la bouche, fiévreuse et d'azur  
bleu vorace,  
Telle, jeune, elle alla respirer  
son trésor,  
Une peau virginale et de jadis !  
encrasse  
D'un long baiser amer les tièdes  
carreaux d'or.  
Ivre, il vit, oubliant l'horreur  
des saintes huiles,  
Les tisanes, l'horloge et le lit  
infligé,  
La toux ; et quand le soir saigne  
parmi les tuiles,  
Son œil, à l'horizon de lumière  
gorgé,  
Voit des galères d'or, belles  
comme des cygnes,  
Sur un fleuve de pourpre et de

parfums dormir  
En berçant l'éclair fauve et riche  
de leurs lignes  
Dans un grand nonchaloir chargé de  
souvenir !  
Ainsi, pris du dégoût de l'homme à  
l'âme dure  
Vautré dans le bonheur, où ses  
seuls appétits  
Mangent, et qui s'entête à  
chercher cette ordure  
Pour l'offrir à la femme allaitant  
ses petits,  
Je fuis et je m'accroche à toutes  
les croisées  
D'où l'on tourne l'épaule à la  
vie, et, béni,  
Dans leur verre, lavé d'éternelles  
rosées,  
Que dore le matin chaste de  
l'Infini  
Je me mire et me vois ange !  
et je meurs, et j'aime  
— Que la vitre soit l'art, soit la  
mysticité —  
À renaître, portant mon rêve en  
diadème,  
Au ciel antérieur où fleurit la  
Beauté !  
Mais, hélas ! Ici-bas est maître :  
sa hantise  
Vient m'écœurer parfois jusqu'en  
cet abri sûr,  
Et le vomissement impur de la  
Bêtise  
Me force à me boucher le nez  
devant l'azur.  
Est-il moyen, ô Moi qui connais  
l'amertume,  
D'enfoncer le cristal par le  
monstre insulté  
Et de m'enfuir, avec mes deux  
ailes sans plume

— Au risque de tomber pendant  
l'éternité ?

GENE

This place is for creeps. I won't  
forget this BELIEVE me. Let's go  
now, please.

Still the Visitor seems to be staring at a paper on the  
table where Mark and Brian are sitting.

INT. A THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

THYS

(squinting at a  
document)

I understand you, and I want to  
know who it will be. Where do I  
sign?

MARLA

Tammy points to the signature line  
of a document giving Tammy Power  
of Attorney over his affairs.

THYS

I can't see ANYthing good  
connected with a death or that  
dark room we just left. IS there?

MIKE

The Visitor leads him out the door  
down stairs unfamiliar to his feet  
and as they go along, Gene looks  
here and there to find himself,  
but nowhere is he to be seen. They  
leave in Tammy's car for Allison's  
house.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

MARLA

Quiet. Very quiet. The once noisy little kids are as still as statues in one corner, and sit looking at one BOY, who has a book in front of him.

MIKE (V.O.)

Where had Gene heard those words? He hadn't DREAMED them. The boy must have read them out as he and the Visitor stood over the threshold. Why did he not go on?

MARLA

The boy lays his work on the table, and puts his hand up to his face.

INT. A ROOM - DAY

ELLIE

The color hurts my eyes.

TAMMY

(mean)

The COLOR? Aw, poor Ellie!

INT. ALLISON'S HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

NICK

They're better now, again. Maybe I wouldn't talk about your eyes to your mother when she picks you up. Okay?

The doorbell rings.

Ope, look there's your mom at the door.

Ellie hurries out to meet Tammy.  
Still life - Vanitas. Tammy sits down at the table and is very cheerful with Nick and Allison. She looks at the stuff on the table, and praises Ellie for helping.

NICK

Was the nursing home made up well  
for the party this afternoon?

TAMMY

Yes. I wish you could go later. It  
would have done you some real good  
to see how nice a place it is all  
decorated up for the party. But  
you'll see it a lot. I told him  
you could walk there on Sundays.

Cut to Nick's blank reaction.

Allison, whose been listening, breaks down all at once.  
She can't help it. If she could have helped it, she and  
her father-in-law would have been farther apart, perhaps,  
than they were.

She leaves the room, and goes upstairs into THE ROOM  
ABOVE, which is lighted cheerfully, and hung with  
Christmas DECORATIONS. There is A CHAIR set close beside  
the WINDOW that Ellie uses to look for he mom, and there  
are signs of some one having been there lately. She sits  
down in it, and when she thinks a little and composes  
herself. She is reconciled to what had happened, and goes  
down again quite happy to sit with Nick and Tammy at the  
table.

TAMMY

I bumped into Mark Wensel in the  
street today, and seeing that I  
looked a little down, you know, he  
asked me what was bothering me.

(beat)

When I told him about Uncle Gene  
moving to the home, he said he was  
really sorry about it and really  
sorry for me because he thought I  
was a good niece to Uncle Gene.  
How he knows that, I don't know.

ALLISON  
(distracted)  
Knows what?

TAMMY  
How much I helped Uncle Gene.

ALLISON  
Everybody knows that, I think.

TAMMY  
I hope so. He said he was sorry  
about Ellie too. If he can be of  
help to me in any way, he said to  
come see him.

ALLISON  
I'm sure he's a good guy. Both  
Nick and I really appreciate how  
he helped you do the papers to let  
us live here.

TAMMY  
It's really your and Nick's house  
NOW.  
Allison gives Nick an odd look.

INT. A THEATER STAGE - NIGHT

THYS  
Something tells me our time is up.  
I know it, but I don't know how I  
know. Tell me who that was I  
imagined there dead?

MARLA  
The Visitor stops. The eyes seem  
to be pointed elsewhere.

THYS

The house is over there. Why are you looking away from it?

MIKE

Moving again and wondering why and where they were going, Gene accompanies the Visitor until they reach a cemetery. Here, then the poor man, the boy, the THING whose name he had now to learn, lay underneath the ground.

(beat)

The Visitor stands among the graves staring down one of them. Gene moves towards it trembling. The Phantom is exactly as it had been, but he dreaded that he sees new meaning in its solemn shape.

THYS

Before I get closer to that stone you're looking at, answer one question. Okay?

(beat)

Are these things that are gonna happen or just things that just MIGHT happen?

MARLA

Still the Visitor stares downward to the grave by which it stood.

MIKE

The Visitor was immovable as ever.

MARLA

Gene creeps towards it, trembling as he goes, and reads the name on the stone. The fresh grave of Gene's younger son, and grandson.

(beat)

Is that what was lying in the bed?

MIKE

The eyes seem to move from the grave to him, and back again, the Visitor now saying something indecipherable.

THYS

No, don't do that.

MARLA

The gaze is still there.

THYS

(pleading, frustrated)  
Listen to me. I'm not the person I was. I won't be the person I had to be without these visits. Why show me this if I am beyond all hope, you KNOW...?

MARLA

For the first time the mask appears to shake.

THYS

Can you somehow PROMISE me I can still change things?

(beat)

I can turn him in. I'll turn him over, give him up.

(beat)

I'll do what all the Visitors made me realize I can do, and should do.

MARLA

In his agony, he grabs the Spectre's hand. It tries to free itself, but Gene is strong and holds on. The Visitor, stronger yet, breaks free.

(beat)



Holding up his hands in one last  
prayer to have his fate reversed,  
he sees an alteration in the  
Visitor's face. It has shrunken,  
collapsed, and dwindled down into  
a normal face.

THYS

I can give him up.

INT. A THEATER STAGE/NURSING HOME - DAY  
Vanitas 'ha ha' music.

THYS

I don't know what to do.  
(laughing and crying  
in the same breath)  
I feel light as a feather, happy  
as a clam, drunk as a god-damn  
SKUNK.

MARLA

He had shuffled into the nursing  
home lounge, and was now standing  
there, out of breath.

MIKE

Really, for a man who had been out  
of practice for so many years, it  
was a splendid laugh, a most  
illustrious laugh. The father of a  
long, long line of brilliant  
laughs.

THYS

I don't know what day of the month  
it is. I don't know how long I've  
been with the Visitors. I don't  
know anything. I'm like an ape.  
But I don't care. I'd rather be an  
ape.

MARLA

Shuffling to the door, he opened  
it and stuck his head out.

No fog, no mist, clear, bright,  
jovial, stirring, cold, cold,  
piping for the blood to dance to,  
Golden sunlight, Heavenly sky,  
sweet fresh air, and all the hills  
echo-ed.

THYS

(talking to a boy in  
Sunday clothes who  
was at the party)  
What day is it today?

MARLA

What? said the boy, a bit scared  
by Gene but trying not to show it.

THYS

What's today?

BOY

Christmas?

MIKE

It's Christmas! said Gene to  
himself. I haven't missed it. The  
Visitors have done it all, two  
months in one night. They can do  
anything they like. Of course they  
can. Of course they can.

Gene moves around the party, happy, stopping to speak to  
a teenage girl.

THYS

Is your husband here?

MARLA

'My DAD?' she says.

THYS  
Where is he?

MARLA  
He's in the dining room.

THYS  
Thank you. He knows me.  
(with his hand  
already on the  
kitchen door)  
I'll go in here.

MIKE  
He turned it gently, and poked his  
face in, around the door. They  
were looking at the table (which  
was spread out in great array).  
The young workers are always  
nervous on such points, and like  
to see that everything is right.

THYS  
Hello!

MARLA  
Oh my God, the nurse started. Gene  
had forgotten for the moment,  
about her sitting in the corner  
with the footstool, or he wouldn't  
have done it, on any account.

INT. NURSING HOME - DAY

NURSE  
Why bless my soul! Who's that?

GENE  
It's me. Gene. I decided to come  
to the party. Can I come in?

NURSE

Let him in! Hi there Gene.

Gene's father stands beside him hollering, protesting,  
demanding to be turned in, given up, but he goes unheard.

A home return crisis ensues.

GENE

Excuse me, but I need to go home  
because my father needs me to be  
there and...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

OMIT

INT. A THEATER - NIGHT

TAMMY

Hello. Happy Happy!

She puts her arm around him and hugs him from behind.  
Gene pats her head.

MIKE (V.O.)

Gene's niece comes upon him so  
quickly that this was the first he  
knew of her being there.

GENE

Yeah RIGHT.

TAMMY

Awe c'mon. I know you don't MEAN  
that.

GENE

I sure as hell do. Happy Holidays!  
What've YOU got to be so happy  
about? You work for the  
government?

TAMMY

Come on. What's up with you being  
such a dark cloud? Do YOU work for  
the government?

GENE

SURE. Yeah, right. That's a good  
one. I WISH.

TAMMY

Don't get upset Uncle Gene. It's  
okay. I'm just pulling your leg.  
(beat)  
What you doin'?

Evelyn Birken in an interview with reporter in studio as  
Lisa and Mike look on from the wings.

Maybe the camera pulls away to reveal stage and Marla.