

clybourne park

Bruce Norris

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Act I (1959)

Russ.....(white, late 40's)
 Bev.....(married to RUSS white, 40's)
 Francine...(black, 30's)
 Jim.....(white, late 20's)
 Albert.....(married to FRANCINE, black, 30's)
 Karl.....(white, 30's)
 Betsy.....(married to KARL, late twenties)

Act II (2009)

Tom (played by the actor who played)....Jim
 Lindsey.....Betsy
 Kathy.....Bev
 Steve (married to LINDSEY).....Karl
 LenaFrancine
 Kevin (married to LENA).....Albert
 Dan.....Russ
 Kenneth.....Jim

The set is the interior of a modest three-bedroom bungalow, 406 Clybourne Street, in the near northwest of central Chicago. There is a sitting room with front door access, a fireplace with an oak mantelpiece, and a separate dining area with built-in cupboards. At the rear of the dining area a swinging door leads to a kitchen. A staircase leads up to a second floor, and beneath it, another door leads down to a basement. There is a hallway and a bathroom door as well.

Note: In the original production, the actor playing Jim and Tom also played the role of Kenneth. In some subsequent productions a separate actor was hired to play the role of Kenneth alone.

Act 1

(September, 1959. Three o'clock, Saturday afternoon. The house is in disarray. Cardboard boxes are stacked in corners. Some furniture has been removed, shelves emptied. Pictures have been removed from the walls and carpets have been rolled and stood on end. Not far from the fireplace, RUSS sits alone reading a copy of National Geographic. He is dressed in pajama top and chinos, socks, no shoes. On a table next to him sits a carton of ice cream into which, from time to time, he dips a spoon. Music plays softly on a radio next to him.)

(After some time, BEV descends the stairs carrying linens to place in a cardboard box. As she packs, she stops to look at RUSS.)

BEV You're not going to eat all of that, are you?

(He turns down the radio.)

RUSS (with his mouth full) Whaddya say?

BEV What ice cream is that?

RUSS Um. (looks at the carton) Neapolitan.

BEV Well, don't feel compelled to eat that.

RUSS (shrugs, barely audible) Going to waste.

(He turns the radio back up and FRANCINE enters from the kitchen, wearing a maid's uniform. RUSS remains in the foreground as BEV joins her.)

FRANCINE (to BEV) So, if it's all right I'm just going to put these candlesticks here in the big box with the utensils.

BEV That is what I would do, yes, but you do mean to wrap them first?

FRANCINE Oh, Yes ma'am.

BEV Oh. Now: Francine: I was wondering about this chafing dish, which we have practically never used.

FRANCINE Yes ma'am.

BEV Do you own one of these yourself?

FRANCINE No, I sure don't.

BEV Because I do love to entertain though for the life of me I can't remember the last time we did. But still, it does seem a shame to give it away because it's just such a nice thing, isn't it?

FRANCINE Oh, yes it is.

BEV And it just looks so lonely sitting there in the cupboard so: I was wondering if this might be the sort of thing that would be useful to you?

FRANCINE Ohhhh, thank you, I couldn't take that.

BEV (re: chafing dish) See how sad he looks?

FRANCINE You don't want to be giving that to me.

BEV Well, nonetheless I'm offering.

FRANCINE No, I don't think I should.

BEV Well, you think about it.

FRANCINE But thank you for offering.

BEV You think about it and let me know.

FRANCINE Yes ma'am.

BEV And do put some paper around those.

FRANCINE Yes ma'am.

(FRANCINE goes into kitchen. BEV returns with more to pack, passing RUSS.)

BEV That's a funny word, isn't it? Neapolitan.

RUSS (turns off radio) Funny what way?

BEV What do you suppose is the origin of that?

RUSS Uhhh... Naples, I imagine.

BEV *Naples?*

RUSS City of Naples?

BEV Noooo.

RUSS Of or pertaining to.

BEV That would not be my first guess.

RUSS Yup.

BEV *I* would think it had something to do with *neo*, as in something *new*, and then there's the *-politian* part which to me would suggest a *city*, like *metropolitan*.

RUSS Could be.

BEV Meaning *new city* or something to that effect.

RUSS (shrugs) Told you what *I* think.

BEV Because a person from Naples, I mean they wouldn't be called, well, not *Napoleon*, obviously. I guess that was already taken! (laughs, then serious) On the other hand, you *do* say *Italian*. But *cities*, though, and specifically ones that end in *S*, because there must be a rule of some sort, don't you think? Help me think of a city other than *Naples* that also ends in *S*?

(Pause.)

RUSS Uh-hh -

BEV Oh fiddle. Um.

RUSS Des Moines.

BEV Not a *silent S*.

RUSS Brussels.

BEV All right. There you go. And how do we refer to them?

RUSS Belgians.

BEV But, the people from the *city*.

RUSS Never *met* anyone from Brussels.

BEV But there has to be a word.

RUSS Look it up.

BEV Where?

RUSS Dictionary?

BEV But it's not going to say this is the capital of Belgium and by the way the people who live there are called -

RUSS Give Sally a call.

BEV She won't know that.

RUSS She and Ray went to Paris.

BEV So?

RUSS *Close* to Brussels.

BEV Sally never knows those sorts of things.

RUSS Oh. Oh.

BEV What?

RUSS Parisians.

BEV What about them?

(FRANCINE returns with more packing.)

RUSS Paris ends in S.

BEV But - It's not *Brusselsians*.

RUSS Or Nice.

BEV I'm serious.

RUSS Got the "S" *sound*.

BEV But not *Nicians*. Like *Grecians*.

RUSS No, no. *Nicoise*.

BEV I know that, but -

RUSS Know that salad your sister makes?

BEV But that's *French*

RUSS It's a French *city*.

BEV I understand, but, I'm saying how would we say, in *Eng-* ? Well, now I don't remember the original question.

RUSS Brussels.

BEV No no.

RUSS Des Moines?

BEV No.

RUSS Naples.

BEV *Naples*. And I don't think *Neopolitan*. How would that become *Neopolitan*?

RUSS Muscovites.

BEV What?

RUSS People from Moscow.

BEV Well, I give up, because that's just *peculiar*.

RUSS (chuckles at the word) *Muscovites*.

BEV (the same) I wonder if they're *musky*.

RUSS (savoring the sound) *Musss-covites*.

BEV (coming up with one) Cairenes!

RUSS *That* is a strange one.

BEV I'm telling you, that's what they're called!

RUSS I'm not disputing.

BEV But why *Cairenes*?

RUSS (shrugs) Dated a girl named *Irene*.

BEV Or *Congolese*? (FRANCINE exits again.)

RUSS That, too, is correct.

BEV So why don't we say *Tongalese*?

RUSS Or *Mongolese*.

BEV No, *Mongol-oid*.

RUSS No no, that's different.

BEV Oh, you're right.

RUSS That's uhhh, you know, that's -

BEV No, I know.

RUSS (tapping his finger on his temple) The thing with the -

BEV (doing the same) Like the Wheeler boy.

RUSS Right. The one who -

BEV Bags the groceries.

RUSS Right.

BEV (beat, then:) But that's nice, isn't it, in a way? To know we all have our place.

RUSS There but for the grace of God.

BEV Exactly.

(Pause. RUSS breaks it with:)

RUSS (pronouncing grandly, with a sweep of his hand) Ulan Bator!

BEV What?

RUSS (an exact repeat) Ulan Bator!

BEV What are you doing?

RUSS (once again) Ulan- !

BEV Stop it. Tell me what you're doing.

RUSS Capital of Mongolia.

BEV Well, why would I know that?

RUSS (shrugs) National Geographic.

BEV Oh oh. Did you change the address like I asked you?

RUSS What do you mean?

BEV For the National Geographic.

RUSS The address?

BEV Oh, *Russ!*

RUSS Me?

BEV I *asked* you.

RUSS You did?

BEV I asked you *fifteen times*.

RUSS When?

BEV I said don't forget the change of address for the magazine and you promised me that you would, you promised me *specifically*- (cont'd.)

RUSS (overlapping) I did it last week.

BEV (continuous) - that you would see to it so I - Oh.

RUSS Pulling your leg.

BEV I see.

RUSS (a gentle imitation) Oh *Russ!!*

BEV Maybe people don't *like* having their leg pulled.

RUSS I was just - I was - Okay.

(Pause.)

BEV And are you going to bring that trunk down from upstairs?

RUSS Yup.

BEV Thought you said after lunch.

RUSS Sort a two-person job.

BEV And you really want to wear those clothes all day?

RUSS Hadn't really thought about it.

(A silence passes between them. RUSS scratches his elbow).

BEV But you know, you *are* a funny person. I was telling Francine - I ran into Barbara Buckley at Lewis and Coker's and Barbara said that Newland told her a funny joke that you told at Rotary last year.

RUSS That I told?

BEV About a man with a talking dog?

RUSS (shakes his head) Thinking of Don Lassiter.

BEV No, It was you.

RUSS Don's the one with the jokes.

BEV You know jokes. You tell jokes.

RUSS A talking *dog*?

BEV And Barbara said does Russ not go to Rotary anymore? Apparently they all keep saying where's Russ? (a beat, then) Not that I care one way or the other but it does seem that you used to enjoy going and I don't see why that, of all things, should have to change - (cont'd.)

(RUSS shifts in his chair.)

BEV (continuous, quickly) - and please don't say *what's the point*, Russ. I hate it when you say that. Because for that matter - (cont'd.)

RUSS (overlapping) I wasn't going to say -

BEV (continuous) - what's the point of *anything* enjoyable, really? - (cont'd.)

(Phone rings. FRANCINE enters.)

BEV (continuous) - Why not just sit in a chair all day and wait for the end of the world but *I* don't intend to live the remainder of my life like that and I think you could take notice of the fact that talking that way *frightens* me.

FRANCINE (phone) Stoller residence?

RUSS (quietly, to BEV) Not trying to frighten you.

FRANCINE Who may I say is calling, please?

RUSS (to BEV, quietly) Ulan Bator.

FRANCINE Excuse me, Miz Stoller?

BEV Who is it?

FRANCINE Mister Lindner wanting to talk to you.

RUSS (with a groan) Ohh for the love of -

BEV (to FRANCINE) Tell him I'll call him back.

RUSS Not one thing it's another.

FRANCINE (phone) Mister Linder, she wonders if she can call you back?

BEV (overlapping FRANCINE, to RUSS) I only mean that people are concerned about you - (cont'd.)

RUSS (overlapping) Well, what's the *nature* of the concern?

BEV (continuous) - and I don't see the point of *spurning* their good intentions.

RUSS Gee whiz I'm just reading a magazine.

FRANCINE (to BEV) Says he's calling from a pay phone.

RUSS (to FRANCINE) Just say we're occupied.

BEV No, I'll take it, thank you Francine. (to RUSS, as she crosses) I'm just repeating what Barbara said. (into phone) Hello?

RUSS (to himself) Barely know the woman.

BEV (phone) No no no, it's just, we're in a state of disarray, Karl.

RUSS Somehow I *spurned* her.

(As FRANCINE returns to the kitchen, the front door opens and JIM sticks his head in. He is a youthful minister - wears a clerical collar under his jacket.)

JIM Ding dong?

RUSS (seeing JIM, not rising) Oh. Uh, hey, Bev?

JIM May one intrude, he politely asked?

RUSS (to BEV) Jim's at the door.

BEV (seeing JIM, she mouths silently to him) Oh, oh, oh! *Come in!! Come in!!* (into phone) Karl, I can't hear what you're saying.

JIM Russ, my friend, I am crossing the threshold!

RUSS Hey Jim.

JIM (looking around) Holy Toledo Jiminy Christmas.

RUSS Bev's on the phone.

JIM Hate to be the one to break it to ya, buddy, but somebody made off with yer stuff!

RUSS Kinda discombobulated.

BEV (phone) Oh, Karl, I don't think so, not today.

JIM (to RUSS) S'not the big day, is it?

RUSS (to JIM) No no. Monday.

BEV (phone) No, it's just, Russ is a little under the weather.

JIM Piece of advice. Watch out when you start lifting things. Learned that the hard way last month.

RUSS (preoccupied with BEV) Izzat right?

JIM (to RUSS) Ohhhh *yeah*. Judy says Jim, I gotta have me this spinet piano, a task which naturally falls to *me* - (cont'd.)

BEV (phone, overlapping) Well, if it's absolutely necessary.

JIM (continuous) - and there I am with this thing halfway up the front steps and me *underneath*. And of course, it's not the *weight*, you know. It's the *angle* - (cont'd.)

BEV All right, Karl. (hangs up)

JIM (continuous) - which is why they tell ya to bend the knees.

BEV (re: JIM) Well, will you look what the cat dragged in?

RUSS (to BEV, re: the phone call.) What was that about?

JIM Bev, I am *trying* to bestow the pearls of my wisdom upon this man.

RUSS (to JIM) No no, I was listening.

BEV Oh, isn't it just a *jumble* in here, all of this?

JIM S'what I was saying to Russ, said somebody cleaned ya out!

RUSS Not coming here, is he?

BEV Oh, I don't know. You know Karl.

JIM Karl Lindner?

RUSS Bev?

JIM Ohmigosh. Ya got a look at Betsy lately?

BEV (eyes wide) Oh, I *know*.

JIM Give that girl a *wide berth*.

BEV Jim, can I get you some iced tea?

RUSS (to BEV) Maybe call back and ask him to come later.

BEV It was a pay phone. (to JIM) Oh oh oh oh oh! I know! Now wait. Now Jim: I am going to ask you a question:

JIM Huh-oh!

BEV (to RUSS). And don't help him. (to JIM) Now: I want you to tell Russ what you think the word *Neapolitan* means.

RUSS (to JIM) She thought -

BEV *Shhhhhhh!!!* You're not allowed to say.

JIM Well, that'd be your basic vanilla, strawb-

BEV No no. The *derivation*.

RUSS I *told* her what I th-

BEV (to RUSS) *Shhhhh!!!*

JIM Uh, think it's *Naples*, isn't it?

BEV Ohhhhh *phooey*.

JIM Or *Napoli*, as we like to say.

(FRANCINE enters)

BEV You two are *cheating*. And then- well, Russ's in a funny mood... he keeps going (trying to do what RUSS did) *Oo-lan Ba-tor!*

JIM Whatzat, capital of Nepal?

RUSS Mongolia.

JIM Mongolia. So then what's the *Nepalese* - Do ya say *Nepalese*?

BEV (chuckles, slaps RUSS's arm) I hope it's not *Ne-politan!*

RUSS Kathmandu.

BEV Oh, well, I don't even know why you two know these things.

FRANCINE Miz Stoller?

JIM Knowledge is power, Bev.

BEV Then I choose to remain *powerless*. (to RUSS) Do it again.

RUSS Do what?

BEV How you said it.

RUSS No.

BEV *Do it*, Russ.

RUSS No.

BEV Do it for Jim.

RUSS Bev?

BEV *Why not?*

RUSS Sorry, Jim.

BEV Why for me but not for him?

RUSS Well, for one thing, 'cause it's not *funny*.

FRANCINE Excuse me, I'm fixing to go, so if you need something else?

BEV Oh. Yes. One thing. Francine, you remember that big trunk that's upstairs?

RUSS No no no no. Bev?

BEV She doesn't mind.

RUSS Just told you I'm doing it.

BEV You said it's a two person job, and here's two of you right here.

RUSS Well, what's the emergency?

JIM (to BEV) I *would* offer my services - (cont'd.)

BEV (overlapping) Oh no no no no no.

JIM (continuous) - but I am under doctor's orders, believe it or not.

FRANCINE Well, I'm just needing to leave by three-thirty.

BEV (resigned) All right.

RUSS Francine? / am going to move the gol-darned trunk.

FRANCINE Yes, sir.

BEV (to JIM, mock-private) That's what I get for trying.

(FRANCINE exits. Discomfort.)

JIM (to RUSS) Soooo -

BEV Did you get any lunch, Jim? Do you want some - ?

JIM No no no no no.

BEV Since I guess we're *cleaning out the larder* and Russ seems to be eating every last thing in the icebox, so you'll have to fight him for the ice cream.

JIM Not for me.

RUSS (shrugs) Well, ya know. Can't pack ice cream in a suitcase.

(BEV finds this hilarious)

BEV (beside herself) *In a suitc-* (to JIM) *Did you hear what he just said?*

JIM (chuckling as well) Man's got a point!

BEV (slaps RUSS's shoulder) *How do you think of those things?* Ice cream in a-

JIM Not unless you're moving to the North Pole!

(BEV laughs harder)

BEV Thank goodness we're not moving *South!*

JIM *That'd* be a mess. No question.

(BEV and JIM stop laughing, sigh. More discomfort, then:)

JIM No question.

BEV (jumping up) Well, I'm going to see what we *do* have.

(BEV exits into the kitchen, leaving RUSS and JIM alone.)

JIM Whaddya, coming down with something?

RUSS Who?

JIM Bev said "under the weather".

RUSS Me?

JIM And here ya sit in your PJ's –

RUSS No no no no no. I'm - Took the day to - Truck coming, so -

JIM I gotcha.

RUSS Coupla days off.

JIM Playing hooky.

RUSS No no.

JIM Bev's your alibi.

RUSS Just giving her a hand with stuff.

JIM And you are hard at work, as I see.

RUSS (smiles a little) No. I just.

JIM Kidding you.

RUSS I know. I - I - Yup.

JIM Woulda come to your aid there, only I'm dealing with a little, uh, issue.

RUSS Oh yeah?

JIM Piano I told ya about?

RUSS Right?

JIM Didja ever....(lowers voice)... ever need a *truss*? Have to wear one of those?

RUSS Uhhhh.... Don't recall.

JIM Oh, you'd recall it if you did.

RUSS Guess not, then.

JIM Then you are a *fortunate* man.

RUSS I hear you.

JIM Bend the knees or suffer the consequences.

RUSS Yup.

(Brief pause.)

JIM So, *Monday*, you said.

RUSS Yup.

JIM Off to the hinterlands.

RUSS Monday it is.

BEV (calling from off) Jim, was that a yes or a no on the iced tea?

JIM (calling back to her) Uhhh, I would not say no to that.

BEV (same) Russ?

(RUSS shakes his head.)

JIM (same) I believe Russ is declining your gracious offer.

BEV (same) I thought as much.

(Pause.)

JIM *Monday*.

RUSS Indeed.

JIM Head 'em up. Move em out.

RUSS Yup.

JIM And when ya start that Glen Meadows office?

RUSS Monday after.

JIM How about that.

RUSS Yup.

JIM And how's that shaping up?

RUSS Oh, boy, now. That's a nice setup.

JIM I betcha.

RUSS And *spacious*, that's the thing. And *carpeted*? And I got a look at that office they're putting me in. Tell you what I thought to myself, I thought what the heck do ya do with all this space? *Corner* office. Windows two sides. But the space is the primary - That is just an... *extravagant* amount of space.

JIM Elbow room.

RUSS Other thing is, once we get situated up in the new place. The time it takes? Driveway to the parking lot? Know what that's gonna take me?

JIM Five minutes.

RUSS Six and a half.

JIM Close enough.

RUSS Timed it. Door to door.

JIM Roll outa bed and *boom*.

RUSS And Tom Perricone. I don't know if you know Tom. Colleague of mine. Now, he's going to relocate to that same office and they live right down here offa Larabee. You know what *that's* gonna take him on the expressway?

JIM That's a drive.

RUSS Thirty-five minutes. And that's no traffic.

JIM Well, Judy and I are sure gonna miss having you two around.

RUSS Well... Yeah.

(Awkward pause.)

JIM (lowers voice, secretively) And how's Bev doing?

RUSS Oh, you know. Bev loves a project.

JIM Keep her occupied.

RUSS The *mind* occupied.

JIM What, does she worry a lot?

RUSS No. No more than -

JIM About you?

RUSS Me? No.

JIM Ya seem good to me.

RUSS I meant - you know how she gets.

JIM Sure.

RUSS Overexcited.

JIM I can see that.

RUSS Worked up over things. Minor things.

JIM Things like?

RUSS Oh, you know.

JIM Not calling yourself a *minor thing*, are you?

RUSS (beat, slightly irritated) No, I didn't - I meant things like -

JIM (chuckles) Do *you* consider yourself a *minor thing*?

RUSS Jim, I didn't - Well, actually, in the grand scheme of things I don't think any one of us is, uh... particularly - did Bev *ask* you to come over?

JIM Nope.

RUSS I mean, good to see you. Great to see you.

JIM I mean, we *ran into* each other coupla days ago. Got to talking.

RUSS Uh-huh.

JIM Little about you. Since she cares about you.

RUSS Right. Right.

(RUSS looks for BEV.)

RUSS 'The heck's she's doing in there?

JIM Everybody cares about you, Russ.

RUSS Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Yup. Well. Tell ya what I think. And I'm not a psychiatrist or anything but I do think a lotta people today have this tendency, tendency to *brood* about stuff, which, if you ask me, is, is, is - well, short answer, it's *not productive*. And what *I'd* say to these people, *were* I to have a degree in psychiatry, I think my advice would be maybe, get up offa your rear end and *do* something.

JIM Huh.

RUSS Be my solution.

JIM Uh-huh.

RUSS Of course, what do I know?

JIM I think you know plenty.

(Beat. RUSS looks toward kitchen.)

RUSS (calling) Hey, Bev?

JIM Like, I think you know your son was a good man, no matter what. Hero to his country. Nothing changes that.

RUSS Yup yup yup.

JIM And I also think you know that sometimes talking about things that happen, painful things, maybe -

RUSS Uh, you don't happen to have a degree in psychiatry *either*, do you, Jim?

(JIM stares.)

RUSS No? Just checking.

JIM We all suffer, you know. Not like you and Bev, maybe, but -

RUSS But, see, since what *I'm* doing here is, see, since I'm just minding *my own* business - (cont'd.)

JIM (overlapping) But it doesn't hurt -

RUSS (continuous) - sorta seems to *me* you might save yourself the effort worrying about things you don't need to *concern* yourself with and furthermore - (cont'd.)

JIM (overlapping) He's in a better place, Russ.

RUSS (cont'd.) - if you *do* you keep going on about those things, Jim, well, I hate to have to put it this way, but what I think I might have to do is... uh, politely ask you to uh, (clears his throat) ... well, to go fuck yourself.

(Pause.)

JIM Not sure there's a polite way to ask that.

(RUSS rises to exit.)

RUSS (embarrassed) Okay? So.

JIM I just can't believe Kenneth would've wanted his own father to -

RUSS (maintaining his calm) Yup. Yup. So, you can go fuck yourself okay?

(BEV enters with JIM's iced tea.)

BEV So wait. So if it's *Napoli* in Italian, then wouldn't adding an "E" before the "A" just seem superfluo- What's happening?

JIM Bev, I believe I will hit the road.

BEV What are you -? Russ?

RUSS Going upstairs.

BEV What happened?

JIM Not to worry.

BEV (to RUSS) What did you do?

JIM Another time.

BEV (to RUSS) Come back here.

JIM (overlapping, to BEV) No no. Russ made his feelings clear - (cont'd.)

BEV (overlapping, quietly to RUSS) Why are you being like this?

JIM (continuous) – in no uncertain terms.

RUSS (to BEV) Going up, now.

JIM Terms maybe more appropriate for the *locker room* than the –

BEV (to JIM) I *told* you so. I *told* you what it's like. And he uses these ugly words in other people's presence (to RUSS) and I'm not some kind of *matron*, but what in the world is wrong with *civility*?

RUSS Honey? I am not going to stand here with you and Jim and discuss... (cont'd.)

BEV (overlapping) Well, you're being *ugly*, and I don't like *ugliness*.

RUSS (continuous) ...*private* matters, matters that are between me and the memory of my son –

BEV (to JIM, overlapping) I think his *mind* has been affected, I really do.

RUSS (continuous, overlapping) - and if the two of you want to talk about Kenneth on your *own* time, if that gives you some kind you *comfort* -

BEV And what's wrong with *comfort*? Are we not *allowed* any comfort anymore?

RUSS Well, Kenneth didn't get a whole lotta comfort, did he?

BEV He was *sick*, Russ! And for you to use nasty words to Jim -

JIM Nothing I haven't heard before.

RUSS (moving upstairs) Changing my shirt.

JIM I was in the service, too, you know.

RUSS (bitter laugh) Oh right. And tell me again. How many people did *you* kill?

BEV *Oh, for god's sake, stop it!!*

RUSS Sat behind a *desk*, didn'tcha? Goddamn *coward*.

(The doorbell rings. All stand in silence. BEV covers her mouth. At the front door, we can see ALBERT peer through a small window.)

ALBERT (from off) Hello?

(And still no one moves.)

ALBERT Anybody home?

(BEV looks to JIM, who opens the door.)

JIM Afternoon.

ALBERT (to JIM) Uh, how d'you do? I'm just here to -

BEV *Francine? Albert's here.*

FRANCINE (calling, from off) *Yes ma'am. I'm coming.*

BEV She's on her way.

ALBERT Thank you, ma'am.

(RUSS turns and exits up the stairs. JIM does not know whether to invite ALBERT in or not. He turns to BEV. BEV turns back to ALBERT)

BEV Albert, would you like to wait inside?

ALBERT Uh. All right, thank you, ma'am.

BEV I bet it's warm out there, isn't it?

ALBERT Ohhh, yes it is.

BEV Can I offer you some iced tea?

ALBERT No. Thank you, though.

BEV Well, I'm sure she'll be right along.

JIM Thank you.

(ALBERT sits near the door, but within earshot of JIM and BEV)

JIM (whispering because of ALBERT) I think maybe it's time for me -

BEV (rapidly, whispering) Oh please don't go, please don't, I just don't want to be alone with him right now. It makes me feel so alone - (cont'd.)

JIM (overlapping) You're not alone.

BEV (continuous) - the way he sits up all night long. Last night he was just sitting there at three in the morning - (cont'd.)

JIM (overlapping) I know. I do.

BEV (continuous) - and I say to him say don't you feel sleepy? Do you want to take a Sominex, or play some cards maybe, and he says *I don't see the point of it* as if there has to be some grand justification for every single thing that a person -

(And now she notices ALBERT rising and heading for the door.)

BEV (to ALBERT) - Wait. Yoo-hoo?

ALBERT (having overheard) S'all right.

BEV Something wrong?

ALBERT No no.

BEV She said she's on her way.

ALBERT I can wait outside.

BEV (calling off) *Francine?*

FRANCINE (from off) *I'm coming.*

BEV There she is.

(FRANCINE enters in street clothes, with a two large bags of hand-me-downs, She stops to put on her earrings.)

FRANCINE I'm sorry. I guess I'm moving a little slower than usual.

BEV And here's Albert waiting so patiently, If only I had *door-to-door service like Francine!*

FRANCINE So, I'll see you Monday, then.

BEV Albert, isn't this place just a *catastrophe*?

ALBERT Oh, yes it is.

BEV (to ALBERT) I tell you, I don't know *what* I would do without a friend like Francine here, and on a *Saturday*, I mean she is just a treasure. What on earth are we going to do up there without her?

ALBERT Well, I trust ya'll can sort things out.

BEV (to FRANCINE) Oh, and maybe Monday we can see about that big trunk, why don't we?

FRANCINE We'll make sure and do that.

BEV I'd do it myself but I'm not a big strapping man like Albert here.

JIM Afraid I've gotta exempt myself -

BEV Oh no no no no no. Francine and I can manage.

ALBERT What's it, a trunk, you said?

FRANCINE (with a shake of the head to dissuade ALBERT) A footlocker.

ALBERT Where's it at?

BEV No no no no no we just need to bring it down the stairs.

ALBERT I don't mind.

BEV Oh, thank you, but no.

FRANCINE (to BEV) But definitely Monday.

ALBERT These stairs, here?

BEV Oh no no no - I mean, it wouldn't take but two minutes.

FRANCINE (to BEV, re: her bags) It's just I got these things here to take care of.

ALBERT I can put them in the car.

JIM Oh, got yourself a car?

ALBERT Yes sir.

JIM (looking out) Whatzat, a Pontiac?

ALBERT Yes, sir.

FRANCINE (significantly, to ALBERT) It's just that I'm afraid we're going to be late.

ALBERT (not getting it) Late for what?

FRANCINE The place we gotta be?

ALBERT The *place*?

FRANCINE Remember?

ALBERT (to FRANCINE) The - What're you -?

FRANCINE (to BEV) I'm sorry.

ALBERT (to FRANCINE) Said two minutes is all.

FRANCINE (quiet, pointedly) Well, I've got my *hands* full.

ALBERT I just said I can put them in the -

FRANCINE (testily, as they start to go) *I* can put them in the car. *I* can do that.

BEV Did you get the chafing dish?

FRANCINE No ma'am, thank you, though.

ALBERT (to BEV and JIM) Be right back.

(ALBERT opens the door to reveal
KARL LINDNER, about to ring the bell)

KARL (an oddly formal and uncomfortable-seeming man) Ah. Unexpected. Uhhh...?

BEV Hello, Karl.

KARL (relieved) Ah, Bev. Voila.

ALBERT (to KARL, squeezing past) Excuse us, if you don't mind?

KARL (to ALBERT, formally) Not at all. After *you*, sir.

(KARL makes way for ALBERT and
FRANCINE to pass.)

ALBERT (to FRANCINE, as they exit, barely audible) What is the *matter* with you?

KARL (from the door, seeing him). Ah. Jim, too. Hello, lad.

JIM Karl.

BEV (unenthusiastically) Come on in, Karl.

KARL Uhhh.... (as if working out a puzzle) Yes. *Could* do that. However, You'll recall, Bev, that Betsy currently happens to be, uh, how shall we say - ?

BEV Ohhh, is it almost that time?

KARL Uh, point *being*, that she did accompany me.

BEV What do you - you mean she's in the *car*?

KARL She is.

BEV Well, for heaven's sake, Karl! Don't leave her out in a hot *car*.

KARL Well, that was my thinking.

BEV Bring her *in* with you.

KARL Will do.

BEV Of all *things*.

KARL (as he goes) Back in a flash.

(As KARL exits again, RUSS descends the stairs in a clean shirt and shoes. BEV and JIM allow him to silently pass by them. He walks to the chair and collects the ice cream carton.)

BEV You changed your shirt.

(RUSS continues into the kitchen without responding. As soon as he is gone:)

JIM (quietly) Bev.

BEV (whispering) I know I'm being silly. I know I am, but - (cont'd.)

JIM (overlapping) Not at all. Not in the least.

BEV (continuous whisper) - it's just that after two and a half *years* you'd think that with *time*, because that's supposed to be the thing that helps, isn't it? A little bit of time - (cont'd.)

JIM (overlapping) A great healer.

BEV (continuous whisper) - and I thought with the new job and the move I thought somehow he would start to let go of -

(RUSS returns from the kitchen. BEV goes silent. He goes to a door beneath the stairs, opens it, pulls a string to turn on a light, and exits.)

BEV (calling after him) Where are you going, the basement?

RUSS (from off) Yup.

BEV Are you looking for something?

RUSS (farther) Yup.

(The front door opens. KARL escorts his wife BETSY, who is eight months pregnant, and who also happens to be totally deaf.)

KARL Here we are, then.

BEV Oh, *there she is!*

BETSY Hehhyoooh, Behhhh. (tr. Hello, Bev.)

BEV (over-enunciating for BETSY's benefit) Well just *look* at you! My *goodness*. You are just the biggest *thing*.

BETSY Ah nohhh! Eee toooor. Ah so beee!!! (I know! It's true. I'm so big)

KARL Took the liberty of not ringing the bell.

BEV Betsy, you know Jim.

JIM Indeed she does.

BETSY Hah Jeee. (Hi Jim)

(JIM shows off his sign language skills to BETSY, finger-spelling the last word.)

BEV Oh, well, now look at *that*. Look at them go. What is that about? Somebody translate!

BETSY (laughing to KARL) Huhuhuh!! *Kaaaaa!!*

JIM (chuckling along) Uh-oh! What did I do? Did I mis-spell?

(BETSY signs to KARL.)

KARL (chuckles) Uh, it seems, Jim, that you, uh, told Betsy that she was expecting a *storm!!*

BEV *No!* He meant stork! You meant *stork*, didn't you?

BETSY (pantomimes umbrella) Ahneemah-umbrayah! (I need my umbrella!)

(All laugh)

BEV Her *umbrella!* (to BETSY) I understood that!

KARL Have to check the weather report!

BEV A *storm*, I'm going to tell that to Russ.

JIM (conceding his mistake) Must have rusty fingers!!

(All chuckle.)

BETSY (to KARL, asking for translation) Kaaaah?

KARL (speaks as he signs) Uh, Jim says *his fingers are rusty*.

(BETSY laughs and covers her mouth)

BEV See? She understands.

BETSY (to JIM, imitating washing hands) Jeee, mehbbe yew neeee sooohh!! (Jim, maybe you need soap!)

(More polite laughing.)

<p style="text-align: center;">BEV</p> <p>(explaining to JIM) <i>Soap</i>. For the <i>rust</i> on your -</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">JIM</p> <p>(to BEV) No, I understood.</p>
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(RUSS emerges from the basement, carrying a large shovel.)

KARL And there's the man himself! Thought he'd absconded!

BEV (to RUSS) The Lindners are here.

BETSY Hehhyoooo, Ruuuuhhh. (Hello, Russ.)

RUSS Betsy. (to BEV) Ya seen my gloves anywhere?

KARL (re: the shovel) Tunneling to China, are we?

RUSS (to BEV) Pair of work gloves?

BEV (to KARL) Do you know I just got through saying how Russ and I never entertain and here it is a regular neighborhood social!

KARL Well, we shan't be long.

BEV Karl, do you suppose Betsy would like a glass of iced tea?

KARL (she does not see him) Bets- ? (to BEV) Point to me.

BEV (to BETSY, over-enunciated) *Betsy, look at Karl.*

(BETSY looks at KARL)

KARL (to BETSY, signing simultaneously) *Bev wants to know if you want some iced tea to drink?*

BETSY Ohhh, yehhhpeeee. Dahhnyoo, Behhh. (yes please, thank you, Bev)

RUSS (to BEV) Know the gloves I'm talking about?

BEV Well, Karl's here. I thought you were going to talk to Karl.

(FRANCINE and ALBERT have entered and started up the stairs).

RUSS (seeing ALBERT and FRANCINE) 'The heck's going on?

BEV Nothing. Now, we two girls are going to the refreshment stand, so you boys'll have to manage on your own.

KARL Have no fear.

BEV (while exiting, as before) *So how are you feeling, Betsy? Are you tired?*

BETSY Noooo, ahhhh fiiieeee, Behhhh, reeeee. (No, I'm fine, Bev, really)

(BETSY and BEV exit to the kitchen)

KARL Now, Russ, Bev tells me you're indisposed, and normally I'd - (realizes) Ah. Not *contagious*, is it?

RUSS Is what?

KARL Hate for Betsy to, uh, come into contact with any -

RUSS Not contagious.

KARL Can't be too careful. Or possibly one can. Anyway, hate to commandeer your Saturday afternoon here, *a man's home*, as they say, but, as we haven't seen your face at Rotary of late I thought I might - (cont'd.)

RUSS (overlapping) What's on your mind, Karl?

KARL (continuous) - intrude upon the sanctity of - what'd you say?

RUSS What's on your mind?

KARL Ah. Well. Firstly - May I sit?

RUSS Yeah, yeah.

JIM Karl, I will be taking my leave.

KARL Not on my account?

JIM Parish business.

KARL Uh, well, truth to tell, Jim, we might actually benefit from your insight, here?

JIM (looks at watch) Uhhhhh -

KARL If it's not pressing?

JIM Actually-

KARL Not to usurp your authority, Russ. Your castle. You are the king.

RUSS What's on your mind?

KARL (as he sits on a box) Is this safe?

RUSS Anywhere.

KARL No breakables? And Jim?

JIM (sits, looking at RUSS) Uhh... minute or two.

KARL Good. Good good good. So.

(BEV opens the kitchen door)

BEV Iced tea for you, Karl?

KARL Ah. Problem *being* that I *do* have some sensitivity to the cold beverages, so my question would be is the tea *chilled*, by which I mean has it been *in* the Frigidaire?

BEV (enduring him) No, Karl.

KARL Then, if I might have a serving *minus* the ice? That would suit me fine.

BEV All right, Karl. .

(BEV closes the door)

KARL Anyway Russ, if you don't mind, I will proceed directly to, dare I say, *the crux*. So. First and foremost, as far as matters of *community* are concerned, I've always maintained –

(BEV and BETSY enter from the kitchen with glasses of iced tea.)

BEV All right, you boys.

KARL (panicky about BETSY) What's -? Is something -?

BEV (handing KARL his tea) She's *fine*, Karl.

KARL Is that tea, she's drinking?

BEV Yes, Karl.

KARL Slow sips. Small sips.

BEV All right, Karl.

(BETSY and BEV sit at the dining table, away from the men. They begin to communicate via pad and pencil.)

RUSS You were saying?

KARL (glasses off, mops brow) Tad overwrought, I suppose. (lowers voice) What with Betsy's condition, but...well, given our history of two years ago, I don't know, Russ, if you knew the details of that.

RUSS Some, yup.

KARL And Jim: Source of great comfort for us during all of that. (beat, then to RUSS) It was the umbilical cord. Nature of the problem.

RUSS I knew that.

KARL Wrapped around the... (indicates his neck) Exactly. So, no one at fault. No one to *blame*. But these tragedies do come along. As you and Bev well know.

JIM What're you hoping? Boy or girl?

KARL Ah, no. Touch wood. No tempting fate.

JIM There you go.

KARL (back to RUSS) Not to compare *our* little... setback... to what the two of you endured, but -

RUSS Something about a *crux*?

KARL Right you are. Well: To backtrack. I take it, Russ, you're aware that the Community Association, meets the first Tuesday of each month? And as I'm sure you know, Don Skinner is part of the steering committee. And somehow it came to Don's attention at this late juncture that Ted Driscoll had found a buyer for this house and I have to say it *did* come as something of a shock when Don told us what sort of people they were.

RUSS What sort of people are they?

(Beat. KARL stares at RUSS)

KARL Well. (chuckles) Uhh.... Huh. I suppose I'm forced to consider the possibility that you actually don't *know*.

RUSS Don't know *what*?

KARL Well, I mean. That they're colored.

RUSS Who are?

KARL The family. It's a colored family.

(Pause.)

KARL So: I contacted the family-

JIM Wait wait wait.

KARL (to RUSS) You're saying Ted never bothered to tell you?

RUSS We, uhh... sort of gave Ted free rein on the -

JIM I don't think you're right on this one, Karl.

KARL Oh, but I am. Oh, I've spoken with the family.

RUSS Bev?

JIM On the *telephone*?

KARL Oh, no. As a matter of fact, Betsy and I've just come directly from... (beat, for effect) well, from *Hamilton Park*.

BEV (to RUSS) What is it?

RUSS C'mere a second.

KARL Now, Russ: You know as well as I do that this is a progressive community.

BEV (to RUSS as she joins them) What's he talking about?

KARL If you take the case of Gelman's grocery: That's a fine example of how we've all embraced a different way of thinking -

RUSS Slow down a second. Bev, get Ted Driscoll on the phone.

BEV (to RUSS) What for?

RUSS Karl says. Karl is *claiming* -

KARL Russ, I have met *personally* with the family, and -

BEV What family?

RUSS He claims this family. The family to whom Ted sold the house.

KARL It's a colored family.

(Pause. JIM shakes his head.)

JIM (to KARL) Sorry, don't we say *Negro*, now?

KARL (irritated) I say Negro. - (cont'd.)

JIM (overlapping) Well, it's only common courtesy, and I'm -

KARL (continuous) - I say them *interchangeably* - (cont'd.)

JIM (overlapping) - not trying to tell you how to conduct your business.

KARL (continuous) - and of course I said *Negro* to them – No I think we both know what you're doing.

JIM And furthermore, I don't think Ted would pull a stunt like that.

KARL Yes. We all admire Ted. But I don't think any of us would accuse him of putting the community's interests ahead of his own.

BEV Oh, this is ridiculous.

KARL And I don't think any of us have forgotten what happened with the family that moved onto Kostner Avenue last year. Now, Kostner Avenue is *one* thing, but *Clybourne* Street -

BEV Waitwaitwait. Karl, are you *sure*?

KARL I was sitting with them not two hours ago.

BEV But isn't it possible that they're...I don't know, *Mediterranean*, or-?

KARL Bev, they are *one hundred percent*. And I don't know how much time any of you have spent in Hamilton Park, but Betsy was waiting in the car and I can tell you, there are some *unsavory* characters.

RUSS Karl?

KARL But, in the case of Gelman's: I think there was some mistrust at first, having been Kopeckne's Market for such a long time, but in the end of all Murray Gelman found a way to *fit in*.

BEV And they hired the Wheeler boy.

JIM Is he the one with the - ? (indicates his head)

BEV He's the - you know. (does the same)

KARL And *fitting into* a community is really what it all comes down to.

(A very loud *THUMP* from upstairs)

RUSS The heck is going *on* up there?

KARL Now, some would say change is inevitable. And I can support that, if it's change for the better. But I'll tell you what I *can't* support, and that's disregarding the needs of the people who *live* in a community.

BEV But don't they have needs, too?

KARL Don't who?

BEV The family.

KARL Which family?

BEV The ones who -

KARL The *purchasers*?

BEV I mean, in, in, in, in *principle*, don't we *all* deserve to - shouldn't we *all* have the opportunity to, to, to -

KARL (chuckles with amazement, shakes his head) Well, *Bev*.

JIM In *principle*, no question.

KARL But you can't *live* in a principle, can you? Gotta live in a *house*.

BEV And so do they.

KARL Not in *this* house, they don't.

JIM But here's the real question:

KARL And what happened to *love thy neighbor*? If we're being so principled.

BEV They would *become* our neighbors.

KARL And what about the neighbors you already *have* Bev?

BEV I care about them, too!

KARL Well, I'm afraid you can't have it both ways.

RUSS Okay. Assuming-

BEV Wait. Why not?

KARL Well, do the boundaries of the neighborhood extend indefinitely? Who shall we invite next, the *Red Chinese*?

(ALBERT has tentatively come to the bottom of the stairs, jacket off.

JIM But the key question is this:

BEV No. Why *not* have it both ways?

KARL Darling, I came to talk to Russ.

ALBERT (from the stairs) 'Scuse me, ma'am?

BEV Why not, if it would *benefit* someone?

JIM But *would* they benefit?

BEV If we could make them our *neighbors*.

KARL But they won't be *your* neighbors, Bev. *You're* the ones moving away!

JIM The question is, and it's one worth asking:

ALBERT Sorry to bother you?

RUSS (taking charge) Okay. Let's *assume* your information is correct.

(Then suddenly, a large green Army footlocker comes sliding down the stairs with a noisy *thumpeta-thumpeta-thumpeta-thump*. ALBERT jumps out of the way.)

ALBERT	FRANCINE	BEV	RUSS
<i>Sorry, sir, my fault!</i>	(top of the stairs) <i>That</i>	Oh oh oh. What	<i>Aw, for crying</i>
That was me. That	<i>was my fault! I'm sorry!</i>	happened? Is ev-	<i>out loud! What</i>
was all my doing.		eryone all right?	the heck is
the			
			matter with peo-
			ple? <i>Bev, darn</i>
			<i>it all!!</i>

BEV (to RUSS) Why are you shouting? Everything's *fine*, so - (cont'd.)

RUSS (overlapping) Well, what did I *tell* you? (cont'd.)

BEV (continuous) - please don't do that, they're just trying to *help*

RUSS (continuous) I *told* you I'd do it. You heard me plain as day.

BETSY Eeeen *ahhhh* hurrhhh daaaaaa! (Even *I* heard that!)

KARL (to RUSS and BEV) Little *mishap*, is it?

ALBERT Little trouble making the corner, is all.

FRANCINE (now downstairs) I'm sorry. It's heavy and I lost my gr-

RUSS (to ALBERT) Just leave the darn thing where it is.

BEV	KARL	JIM	ALBERT
We can't leave it there.	May one be of assistance?	Lend you a hand, if I could, but -	What should we -? would you prefer it if I -?

RUSS (to ALBERT) Just, just, just, just *leave* it.

BEV But it's blocking the way.

FRANCINE No ma'am, I can step over

ALBERT It's all right. I got her.

(ALBERT helps FRANCINE climb over the box that now blocks the stairs.)

KARL Anyway, let's not drag this out *ad infinitum*.

(RUSS, fed up, rises and exits to the basement, slamming the door behind him.)

BEV (overlapping) Russ, *don't*.

JIM (to KARL) One second, if I might? (to FRANCINE) Sorry. Uh, *Francine*, is it?

FRANCINE Yes sir?

JIM Francine, we've just been having a little conversation here, and I was wondering if maybe we could spare us a couple of minutes of your time?

KARL What good does that do? Go next door. Talk to the Olsens. Talk to those who stand to lose.

JIM (ingoring him, to FRANCINE) I want to pose a little hypothetical to you. What if we said this: Let's imagine you and your husband here, let's say that the two of you had the opportunity to move from your current home into a different neighborhood, and let's say that neighborhood happened to be this one.

FRANCINE Well, I don't think that we would, financially -

JIM But for the sake of argument. Say you had the wherewithal. Would this be the sort of neighborhood you'd find an attractive place in which to live?

(FRANCINE hesitates)

BEV Oh, this is so sil-

FRANCINE It's a very nice neighborhood.

JIM (to FRANCINE) No, I'm asking, would the two of you - Would your fam- I assume you have children?

FRANCINE Three children.

JIM Oh, super. So, with your children, might this be the sort of place, bearing in mind that they, too, would stand to be affected- ?

BEV This is confusing things! It's confusing the issue!

FRANCINE (to JIM) It's a *very lovely* neighborh-

JIM No, be honest. We want you to say.

BEV (to FRANCINE) I think what Jim is asking, in his way -

ALBERT He means living next to white folks.

BEV I - I - I - I - well, yes.

(Pause.)

FRANCINE Well -

BEV Francine and I have, over the years, the *two of us* have shared so many wonderful - (to FRANCINE) - Remember that time the *squirrel* came through the window?

FRANCINE (smiling, indulging BEV) Yes I do.

BEV That was just the silliest - the two of us were just *hysterical* weren't we?

KARL (pressing ahead, to FRANCINE) Think of it this way.

BEV (to the others) We still laugh about that.

KARL I think that you'd agree, I'm assuming, that in the world, there exist certain *differences*. Agreed?

FRANCINE What sort of differences?

KARL That people *live* differently.

FRANCINE (unsure) ...Yes?

KARL From one another.

FRANCINE I agree with that.

KARL Different customs, different... well, different *foods*, even. And those diff- here's a funny - my wife Betsy, now, Betsy's family happens to be Scandinavian, and on holidays they eat a thing known as *lutefisk*. And this is a dish, which I can tell

you... (he chuckles) ...is *not* to my liking *at all*. It's... *oh* my goodness, let's just say it's *gelatinous*.

- BEV (indicating for him to stop) Karl?
- BETSY (to BEV) Whaaaaa sehhehh? (what did he say?)
- BEV (over-pronouncing for BETSY) *Lutefisk*.
- BETSY Whaaaaaa ?
- BEV *Lutefi*- Karl, can you tell her?
- KARL (holds up a finger to BETSY) In a moment.
- BEV (taking up her pad) I'll write it down.
- KARL (to FRANCINE) So, certain groups, they tend to *eat* certain things, am I right?
- FRANCINE I've never had that dish.
- KARL But, for example, if Mrs. Stoller here were to send you to shop at Gelman's. Do you find, when you're standing in the aisles at Gelman's, does it generally strike you as the kind of market where you could find the particular foods *your* family enjoys?
- FRANCINE It's a *very* nice store.
- JIM (interposing) What if we were to say *this*:
- FRANCINE Mr. Gelman's a nice man.
- (BEV hands BETSY the pad of paper)
- KARL But, I mean, your *preferred* food items, would such things even be *available* at Gelman's?
- ALBERT Do they *carry* collards and pig feet?
- (FRANCINE shoots a look at ALBERT)
- ALBERT 'Cuz I sho couldn't shop nowhere didn' sell no pig feet.
- (Pause. All stare at ALBERT.)
- JIM Well, I think Albert's being *humorous* here, but-
- BETSY (having deciphered BEV's handwriting) Ohhhh, *loo-fee!* (*Lutefisk*). (to BEV) Ah *lye loofee!* (I *like* *Lutefisk*.)
- JIM But I will say this -
- FRANCINE (to KARL) I like spaghetti and meatballs.

(KARL quiets BETSY.)

JIM - You do find differences in modes of *worship*. If you take First Presbyterian. Now, that's a church down in Hamilton Park and I've taken fellowship there and I can tell you, the differences are notable.

BEV Jim?

JIM Not a *value* judgment. Apples and oranges. Just as how we have our organ here at Saint Thomas, for accompaniment, whereas at First Presbyterian, they prefer a piano and, occasionally... (chuckles)...well, *tambourines*.

BEV What's wrong with tambourines?

JIM Nothing *wrong*.

BEV I *like* tambourines.

JIM I like tambourines as much as the next person.

(RUSS returns from the basement. He is calmer.)

KARL Well, let me ask this. (to BEV) Excuse me. (to FRANCINE) Francine, was it?

FRANCINE Yessir.

KARL Francine, may I ask? Do you *ski*?

FRANCINE Do I - ?

KARL Or your husband? Either of you?

FRANCINE Ski?

KARL Downhill skiing?

FRANCINE We don't ski, no.

KARL And this is my point. The children who attend St. Stanislaus. Once a year we take the middle schoolers up to Indianhead Mountain, and I can tell you, in all the time I've been there, I have not *once* seen a colored family on those slopes. Now, what accounts for that? Certainly not any deficit in ability, so what I have to conclude is that, for some reason, there is just something about the pastime of skiing that doesn't appeal to the Negro community. And feel free to prove me wrong.

RUSS Karl.

KARL But you'll have to show me where to find the skiing Negroes!

RUSS *Karl!*

BEV Can we all modulate our voices?

RUSS It's sold, Karl. The house is sold.

KARL I understand that.

RUSS The ink is dry.

KARL And we all understand your reasons and no one holds that against you.

RUSS Truck's coming on Monday.

KARL Fully aware.

RUSS And that's all there is to that.

KARL *However.* (beat) There is *one* possibility.

RUSS Nope. Nope.

KARL If you'll hear me out.

RUSS Don't see the point.

KARL Because we went ahead and made a counter-offer to these people.

BEV Who did?

KARL The Community Association.

BEV An offer on *this* house?

KARL Very reasonable offer.

BEV (baffled) But, but, but, they just *bought* it, Karl!

KARL As opposed to the amount for which *you* offered the property, Russ, which was *far* below the assessor's value - (cont'd.)

RUSS (overlapping) Well, we're entitled to *give* it away if that's our prerogative.

KARL (continuous) - for this type of residence, all of which is neither here nor there, since the family *rejected* our offer. *However*:

BEV (to RUSS) Why are we even *talking* about this?

KARL Don *has* pointed out to me, that, as the seller of the property, you do have a sixty-day option to place it in receivership with the transacting bank to indemnify yourself against liability. Now, that's generally with *commercial* properties, but in this instance - (cont'd.)

RUSS (slowly, overlapping) Nope. Nope. Nope. Nope. Nope.

KARL (continuous) - I think that, inasmuch as Ted *deceived* you about the buyers, that the bank *could* still halt the sale and it would be a simple - (cont'd)

RUSS (overlapping) Karl?

KARL (continuous) - matter of a signature, if I could finish?

RUSS Prefer it if you didn't.

BETSY Kaahhhh?

BEV And for all we know this family could be perfectly lovely.

KARL Well, that's hardly the point, is it?

BEV Maybe it's a point to consider.

KARL (with a chuckle) Bev, I'm not here to solve society's problems. I'm simply telling you what will happen, and it will happen as follows: First one family will leave, then another, and another, and each time they do, the values of these properties will decline, and once that process begins, once you break that egg, Bev, all the kings horses, etcetera - (cont'd)

BETSY (overlapping) Kaahhh?

KARL (continuous) - and *some* of us, you see, those who *don't* have the opportunity to simply pick up and move at the drop of a hat, then *those* folks are left holding the bag, and it's a fairly *worthless* bag, at that point.

BEV I don't like the tone this is taking.

RUSS (to KARL) Okay. Tell you what.

KARL And let's imagine if the tables were turned. (re: FRANCINE and ALBERT) Suppose a number of *white* families started marching into *their* commun- ? Well, actually that might be to their *advantage*, but –

RUSS *Karl.*

KARL - you do see my point.

RUSS Need you to stop now.

KARL Sorry. (beat) Maybe not handled with the -

RUSS It's all right.

KARL - utmost delicacy.

RUSS But maybe time to let it drop.

KARL Didn't mean to turn it into a public referendum. (beat) But you do understand –

RUSS No no no no no. That's it. You hear me? Done. All done.

(Pause. In the near distance a church bell begins to ring.)

JIM (quietly looking at his watch) Is it four o'clock?

KARL Well, Russ, if I might -

RUSS Nope. Nope.

KARL If I could just say this:

RUSS No. Karl?

KARL Well, if you'd let me -

RUSS No. No more.

KARL Uhhh... (chuckling) *Bev?* I get the impression your husband is telling me I'm not permitted to *speak*.

RUSS Don't think it's a good idea.

KARL Well, Russ, I'm going to ask you at least to keep an open -?

RUSS *Karl!* What'd I just ask you?

KARL Well, I think you're being a tad unreasonable.

RUSS Well, *I* think we've reached the end of this particular discussion.

KARL Is that right?

RUSS Afraid it is.

KARL Just like that.

RUSS Just like that.

(Another pause.)

KARL Then what about this:

RUSS *Karl!?*

KARL Well, I believe the Constitution endows me with a *right* to speak.

RUSS Well, then you can go and do that in your own home.

(RUSS crosses and opens the front door for KARL to exit.)

KARL *Bev....?* (laughs) He's not being serious, is he?

RUSS Karl?

KARL (laughs) Am I being *silenced*?

RUSS Not going to ask you again.

KARL Well, this is a new experience for me.

RUSS So be it.

KARL Bit like the Soviet Union. (laughs) I am truly surprised.

RUSS Well, *surprise*.

KARL And a little disappointed.

RUSS Sorry to disappoint you.

KARL (shakes his head) A real shame. For all concerned.

RUSS Well, that's the way things go sometimes.

KARL Apparently so.

RUSS Anyway. Appreciate you stopping by.

KARL I see.

RUSS Betsy, too.

KARL Very well.

BETSY Kaaaaahhhh?

RUSS Okay then? Okay.

(Silence. KARL stands and looks to BETSY. The two of them slowly exit through the open door, RUSS quietly closing it as they go.)

BETSY (quietly, before the door is closed) Kaahhh, whaah happaaahh?

FRANCINE (carefully) Miz Stoller, if we're done talking here?

JIM (rising) Yes, you know, I think / will take this opportunity -

(But KARL abruptly returns, BETSY following.)

KARL However:

JIM (quietly) Karl, don't.

KARL (very slowly) I *don't* imagine that... this particular family are *entirely* aware of *why* they've found such an agreeable price for the property. Don't suppose they know *that* aspect of it, do they? And let's say someone was to *inform* them of those facts. Let's say *that* was to happen.

RUSS (chuckles dangerously) Really don't know when to quit, do ya?

KARL Because I think that might be an interesting conversation to have.

FRANCINE (beat, then to BEV) So I'll be seeing you on Mon -

RUSS (maintaining control) Well, Karl? You go ahead and do what you think is right, but I'll tell you one thing. What you're going to do right *now* is - (cont'd.)

KARL (overlapping) Well, I have a responsibility to the community as a whole. I can't afford to - (cont'd.)

RUSS (continuous) - you're going to take yourself right through that door and out of this house.

KARL (overlapping, continuous) - simply pursue my own selfish interests.

RUSS (maintaining calm) Man, what a son of a bitch.

BEV Russ, *don't*.

RUSS (to KARL) If you honestly think I give a rat's ass about the god damn - (con'td.)

JIM (overlapping) Okay. Okay.

RUSS (continuous) - what, ya mean the *community* where every time I go for a haircut, where they all sit and stare like the goddamn grim reaper walked in the barber shop door? *That* community? (cont'd.)

KARL (overlapping) My wife is two weeks away from giving birth to a *child*.

RUSS (continuous) Where, Bev stops at Gelman's for a quart of milk and they look at her like she's got the goddamn plague? That the community I'm supposed to be looking out for?

KARL A community with *soon-to-be children*.

JIM The Apostle Matthew -

RUSS (to JIM) Oh no no no. *I'm* talking now.

BEV (to FRANCINE and ALBERT) I am ashamed of every one of us.

BETSY (tugging at KARL's sleeve) Kaaaaaah?

KARL Betsy, Wait in the car.

RUSS Well, you go right ahead and you tell those folks whatever you want, Karl. And while you're at it why don't you tell 'em about everything *the community* did for

my son. I mean *Jesus Christ*, Murray Gelman even goes and hires a goddamn *retarded* kid, but *my boy*? Sorry. No work for *you*, bub.

- JIM People were frightened, Russ.
- RUSS (contemptuous) Ahh, of *what*? He was gonna *snap*? Gonna go and kill another bunch of people? Send him off to defend the goddamn country, he does like he's *told* only to find out the kinda sons-of-bitches he's defending?
- BEV (forthright) He did not do the things they claimed he did. He would never –
- RUSS *Ah, Jesus, of course he did, Bev! He confessed to what he did!* Sit around all day with your head in the sand, it doesn't change the facts of what he *did*.
- BEV Not to innocent people in that country. And not to women or children. I mean, maybe he lost his temper in a -
- RUSS *Ah, for Christ's sake. What do you think happens in a goddamn war?* They told him to *secure the territory*, not go knocking on doors asking *permission*. And if he was man enough to admit what he did, maybe you oughta have the decency to do the same damn thing.
- BEV (turning to FRANCINE for support) You remember. Francine remembers what he was like.
- (RUSS makes a sound of disgust and goes to the footlocker. Under the following, he unlocks and opens the lid.)
- BEV How he loved to read and think. That's just the kind of boy he was, wasn't it?
- FRANCINE Yes ma'am.
- BEV (to FRANCINE) And the drawings? The most realistic drawings. I think a lot of people didn't realize -
- KARL Bev, it was never my intention to stir up... (cont'd.)
- BEV Ohhh, no, I think maybe it was.
- KARL (continuous)...such acrimonious feelings, but there is a situation, which –
- BEV Well, maybe if you had known my son a little better. If anyone had taken the time, the way that Francine took the time -
- (RUSS has produced an envelope from the footlocker. He steps forward removing the letter - on yellow legal paper.)
- RUSS Here you go, Karl. Let's all read a little something, shall we?
- BEV What are you -?

RUSS (reading) *Dear Mom and Dad.*

BEV (realizing) *Stop it!!!*

RUSS (reading) *I know you'll probably blame yourselves -*

BEV (standing, losing it completely) *Russ, stop it stop it stop stop stop it!!!!*

JIM
Russ. Don't.

KARL
(to RUSS) I think you're unstable,
Russ. I really do.

BEV (turning back to JIM) *You see what this is like? You see? (to RUSS) Well, I refuse to live this way any longer!!*

(She goes into the bathroom and slams the door behind her.)

RUSS (starting over, calmly) *Dear Mom and Dad.*

JIM Russ?

RUSS *I know you'll probably blame yourselves for what I've done -*

JIM Need you to calm down.

RUSS And *you* can go fuck yourself.

KARL Well, *that* is over the line, mister. That is not language I will tolerate in front of my wife.

RUSS (beat, then:) She's *deaf*, Karl!! Completely - (waving to BETSY, fake-jolly) Hello, Betsy! Go fuck yourself!

(BETSY smiles, waves back.)

RUSS So here's what I'll do for you, Karl: Make ya ten copies of this you can hand 'em out at Rotary. Or better yet. Put it in the newsletter. Rotary news: Kid comes back from Korea, goes upstairs and wraps an extension cord around his neck. Talk *that* over at the lunch buffet next week.

BETSY (barely audible) Kaahhh?

RUSS And Francine walking in at nine in the morning to find him there. You be my guest, Karl. You go ahead and tell those people what kind of house they're moving into and see if *that* stops 'em, because I'll tell you what, I don't care if a hundred Ubangi tribesman with a bone through the nose overrun this goddamn place, 'cause I'm *through with all of you*, ya motherfucking sons of bitches. *Every one* of you.

(All stand in silence. We can hear BEV crying from behind the bathroom door. RUSS slowly folds the letter. Finally:)

JIM Maybe we should bow our heads for a second.

RUSS (advancing on him) Well, maybe I should punch you in the face.

(RUSS moves toward JIM, who, in backing away, inadvertently tumbles backwards over a box, toppling a floor lamp as he goes.)

ALBERT
Whoa whoa whoa
whoa *whoa!!*
alla

KARL
Easy now. Easy
does it...careful-

BETSY
Kaahh!! Waaahhhh
happneee!?

FRANCINE
What in god's name
is *wrong* with

Betsy, go! Betsy?

you people? (to ALBERT) Stay out of out of it. Don't. Just stay out -

(BETSY runs out the front door. ALBERT puts his hand on RUSS's shoulder)

ALBERT (puts his hand on RUSS's shoulder) Hang on. Let's be civilized, now.

RUSS (whirling on ALBERT) Ohoho, don't you touch *me*.

ALBERT Whoa whoa whoa.

RUSS Putting your hands on *me*? No *sir*. Not in *my* house you don't.

JIM (gritting his teeth as he copes with his hernia) I'm all right.

FRANCINE (to ALBERT) What the hell d'you think *you're* doing?

ALBERT Who're you talking to?

FRANCINE Who do you *think*?

KARL (to RUSS, as he helps JIM to his feet.) Very manly, Russ Threatening a *minister*.

ALBERT (to FRANCINE) Why're you talking to me like th- ?

KARL (to RUSS) Very *masculine*.

(KARL and JIM exit out the front door.)

FRANCINE (to ALBERT) I think they're *all* a buncha idiots. And who's the biggest idiot of all to let yourself get dragged into the middle of it? Whatcha gonna be now, the big *peacemaker* come to save the day?

(KARL sticks his head back in.)

KARL (through the open door) You're mentally unstable, Russ!

FRANCINE (to ALBERT) Let 'em knock each other's *brains* out, for all I care. I'm done working for these people two days from now, and you never worked for 'em at *all*, so what the hell do you care *what* they do? And now I am going to the goddamn *car*.

(FRANCINE exits. During the marital squabble, RUSS has returned the letter to the footlocker and dragged it out through the kitchen. ALBERT is now left alone in the middle of the room. He stands idly for a moment, then moves to right the overturned floor lamp. As he does, BEV enters from the bathroom, blowing her nose.)

ALBERT (seeing BEV) It's all right. Nothing broken.

BEV (trying to be composed) Oh oh oh don't mind that. But thank you so much.

ALBERT No trouble.

BEV And do let me offer you some money for your help.

ALBERT Oh no ma'am, that's all right.

BEV Ohhh, are you sure?

ALBERT Yes, ma'am.

BEV (finding her purse) Well, here, then. Let me at least give you fifty cents.

ALBERT No, now you keep your money.

BEV Or, how about dollar? Take a dollar. I don't care.

ALBERT Ma'am?

BEV Or take two. It's just money.

ALBERT Happy to help.

BEV Or take something. You have to take something.

ALBERT No ma'am. But -

BEV What about this chafing dish? Did you see this dish?

ALBERT Well, we got plenty of dish -

BEV Not one of these. Francine told me. (cont'd.)

ALBERT Well, that's very kind of you, but -

BEV She said you didn't have one and somebody should take it and - (cont'd.)

ALBERT (overlapping) But we don't *need* it, ma'am.

BEV (continuous) - make use of it, so if you let me just wrap it for you.

ALBERT (finally raising his voice) Ma'am, we don't *want* your things. *Please*. We got our *own* things.

(Pause. BEV is shocked.)

BEV *Well*.

ALBERT (gently) Trying to *explain* to you.

BEV Well, if *that's* the attitude, then I just don't know what to say anymore. I really don't. If that's what we're coming to.

ALBERT Ma'am, everybody's sorry for your loss.

BEV (holding back tears, nobly righteous) You know, I would be.... So *proud*. So *honored* to have you and Francine as our neighbors. *And* the two children.

ALBERT Three children.

BEV Three chil- We would.... Maybe we should *learn* what the other person eats. Maybe that would be the solution to some of the - If someday we could all sit down together, at one big table and, and, and, and.... (trails into a whisper, shakes her head)

ALBERT Evening, ma'am.

(ALBERT goes. BEV is left alone. After a moment, RUSS enters to fetch the shovel. He carries a pair of work gloves. Seeing BEV, he stops, unsure of what to say.)

BEV Where'd you find the gloves?

RUSS Under the sink.

BEV And where are you going to dig the hole?

RUSS Under the, uh.... What's that big tree called?

BEV The crepe myrtle.

RUSS Under that.

BEV Kind of late now, isn't it?

RUSS (shrugs) Do it tomorrow.

(He leans the shovel against the wall.
Pause. He stands idly, apologetically.)

RUSS Kinda lost my temper.

BEV (nods, then) Well, that's what happens. As we know.

(He slowly moves to sit in the chair he
sat in at the start of the act, then looks
back at BEV.)

RUSS Know what I did the other day? Up there at the house?

BEV What?

RUSS Driveway to the office. Timed it. Know how long that's gonna take me now?

BEV Five minutes?

RUSS Six and a half.

BEV Well, you'll have a leisurely breakfast.

RUSS Read the paper. Cup of coffee and *bang*.

BEV Hmm.

RUSS Five-oh-seven, right back at your doorstep.

BEV And what'll I do in-between?

(RUSS is caught off-guard)

RUSS I, I, uhhh... Well, gee, I guess, whatever you... Any number of...

BEV Things.

RUSS Projects.

BEV Projects.

RUSS To keep ya occupied.

BEV I suppose you're right.

(He turns on the radio. Music. He looks
back at BEV, who stares into space.)

RUSS (feebly, with a little sweep of the arm) Ulan Bator!

(BEV smiles vaguely. The lights slowly
fade. End of Act 1.)

Act 2

(September, 2009. Three o'clock, Saturday afternoon. There is an overall shabbiness to the place that was not the case fifty years earlier. The wooden staircase railing has been replaced with a cheaper metal one. The oak mantelpiece and most of the woodwork have been painted over several times, the fireplace opening is bricked in, linoleum covers large areas of the wooden floor and plaster has crumbled from the lath in places. The kitchen door is now missing, and we can see through to an exterior door. The front door stands propped open.)

(Lights rise to find six people facing each other in a rough circle. To one side, STEVE and LINDSEY with KATHY, and to the other KEVIN and LENA with TOM, all dressed in generic casual clothes for a weekend afternoon. It is warm, and some have iced drinks. LINDSEY is visibly pregnant. They sit upon improvised seating - crates, abandoned furniture, etc. STEVE, LINDSEY and KATHY study xeroxed documents while the others watch. Finally:)

TOM	Everybody good?
LINDSEY	I'm good.
STEVE	Good by me.
KATHY	Go for it.
TOM	So, I guess we should start right at the top.
STEVE	Question?
TOM	And I know we all got questions.
STEVE	The terminology?

TOM So let's go one at a time: Steve.

STEVE The term *frontage*?

TOM Right.

STEVE *Frontage* means?

LINDSEY Where are we looking?

STEVE First page.

TOM *Frontage* means - (deferring to KATHY) Did you want to - ?

KATHY (to STEVE) Means the portion facing the street.

TOM Thus, *front*.

STEVE (to TOM) Portion of the *property*?

KATHY (to STEVE) Of the structure.

STEVE (to TOM) Or portion of the *structure*?

TOM The *facade*.

LINDSEY (to STEVE) I'm not seeing it.

KATHY (to LINDSEY) Second paragraph.

TOM Bottom of the page.

STEVE Where it says "minimum recess of frontage"?

TOM Meaning, distance *from*.

KATHY From the edge of the *property*.

TOM Exactly.

STEVE Is what?

TOM Is the "recess".

STEVE Not the *frontage*.

TOM (to STEVE) The frontage is what you're measuring *to*.

LINDSEY Got it.

STEVE I'm confused.

LINDSEY And "edge of the property" means as measured from the *curb*?

KATHY Correct.

TOM Not from the *sidewalk*?

KATHY From the curb.

TOM Uhh - I'll check, but I don't think that's right.

KATHY Up to and including.

TOM But the sidewalk falls under the easement.

KATHY Right?

TOM So if it's part of the easement then it can't be part of the property, *per se*.

KATHY (shaking her head) By definition the property is inclusive of the easement. The easement is legal passage *across* the property.

TOM I don't think you're right.

KATHY So, my understanding has always been-

KEVIN Sorry, but - Does any of that really *matter*?

STEVE It might.

KEVIN I mean, I don't see how any of that really - (cont'd.)

STEVE (overlapping) The language?

KEVIN (continuous) - impacts the outcome of the specific problem that -

STEVE But *I* don't want to get in a situation where we *thought* we found a solution only to have it turn out we're screwed because of the *language*.

TOM Wait.

LINDSEY (to STEVE) The language is clear to *me*.

TOM (easily) And who's being *screwed*?

STEVE No no no.

TOM No one's *screwing* any-

STEVE I didn't mean like *screwed over*, I meant like maybe we *screwed ourselves*.

KEVIN But how does that address the *height* issue?

TOM The elevation.

STEVE (to TOM) But if the elevation is *conditional* on the perimeter, right?

TOM That's the idea.

STEVE If I'm reading correctly?

LINDSEY But the perimeter isn't changing.

STEVE But we're saying if it *could*.

LINDSEY But we've established that it can't.

STEVE But let's say it *did*.

LINDSEY But I'm saying it won't.

STEVE But I'm saying *what if*?

LINDSEY But I'm saying *what did we discuss*?

(KATHY's cell Phone rings.)

STEVE (to LINDSEY, with an easy laugh) Okay, but do you have to say it like that?

LINDSEY Like what?

STEVE In that *way*?

LINDSEY What *way*?

KATHY (looking at her phone) It's Hector. I'd better -

STEVE (apoloquizing to KEVIN & LENA for LINDSEY) Sorry.

LINDSEY (to KEVIN & LENA) Did I say something in a *way*?

LENA Not that I noticed.

KATHY (answering phone) Hi, Hector.

STEVE (explaining to KEVIN & LENA) The architect.

LINDSEY Who really oughta be here.

KATHY (phone) No, we're doing it now. No, we're here at the house.

KEVIN (to LINDSEY) Well, if you'd rather wait and do this when he *can* be?

STEVE No no no.

LINDSEY (to STEVE) Well, I think we both know what's going to happen. (cont'd.)

LINDSEY
(continuous) He's going to go completely ballist- I'm just telling you
other

STEVE
I don't give a - And, I believe he's working for *us*, right? Not the

	what to expect.	way around.
KATHY	(phone) No, we're here with - (to TOM) Tom, I forgot your last name.	
TOM	Driscoll.	
KATHY	(back to phone) Driscoll. So, Tom Driscoll and the people from the neighborhood thing. Property-owners.... thing.	
LINDSEY	(to STEVE & LENA) And can I just say? I am in <i>love</i> with this neighborhood.	
KEVIN	Great neighborhood.	
LINDSEY	<i>Totally</i> great.	
KATHY	(into phone) Well, that's what we're trying to prevent.	
LINDSEY	And the thing for me is? My current commute? Which is slowly eroding my soul?	
KEVIN	(to LINDSEY) How far ya coming from?	
LINDSEY	(pointedly) <i>Glen Meadows?</i>	
KEVIN	(wincing) Ooof.	
LINDSEY	Exactly. And if you work downtown?	
KEVIN	Where downtown?	
LINDSEY	(do you know it?) Donnelly & Faber?	
KEVIN	On Jackson, right? Donnelly & - ?	
LINDSEY	Yeah, Jackson east of -	
KEVIN	Yeah, I'm across the street.	
LINDSEY	Where?	
KEVIN	You know the big red building?	
LINDSEY	I eat lunch in that building.	
KEVIN	Capital Equities?	
STEVE	You're kidding me.	
KEVIN	I kid you not.	
LINDSEY	(to KEVIN) And from <i>here</i> to downtown is like, what, five minutes?	
STEVE	(to KEVIN) Ya ever meet Kyle Hendrickson?	

KEVIN I *work* with Kyle Hendrickson.

KATHY (phone) No, but I do think you're being a *little* paranoid, because we're not going to let that happen.

LINDSEY (to KATHY) Lemme talk to him.

KATHY *I'm* not going to let it happen.

LINDSEY Kathy.

KATHY Wait. Lindsey wants to -

LINDSEY Lemme do it. (taking phone) Hector?

KATHY (rolling her eyes) I'm obviously not equipped to deal with -

LINDSEY (on phone) I thought you were in Seattle.

STEVE (to KATHY) What's the problem?

KATHY Tell you later.

LINDSEY (soothing) No no no no. Kathy's here. Kathy's not going to let that -
(LINDSEY starts to exit.)

STEVE (to the others) *Spaniards*.

LINDSEY (whispering to the others) Two seconds.
(LINDSEY exits out the front door.
Pause. The others wait.)

KEVIN (to STEVE) *Spaniards*?

STEVE Architect, ya know.

KEVIN Spanish.

STEVE Temperamental.

KEVIN Toro toro.

STEVE Exactly.

TOM Seemed cool to me.

STEVE You talked to him?

TOM On the phone, yeah.

STEVE He's a good guy.

(Little pause. Then, small talk.)

KATHY We were in Spain last year.

KEVIN S'that right?

KATHY Me, my husband. Spain, Morocco.

STEVE (explaining to KEVIN) I just meant - with all the paperwork and everything? And then we add *him* into the mix?

KEVIN I hear you.

STEVE Cooler heads, ya know.

KEVIN Prevail.

STEVE Right.

(Little pause. Then, more small talk.)

KATHY Spain's fantastic. We did four days in Barcelona. Saw the what's-it-called? The cathedral? Big, crazy - ?

TOM Sagrada Familia.

KATHY That. Which I loved. Likewise the food. Which I would happily eat every day for the rest of my life.

KEVIN Paella.

KATHY Then Morocco. To whatsit. To Marrakech. Which - I don't know how you feel about *heat*? But oh my god. And they keep giving you *hot tea*. Like, how refreshing. And some theory about how you're supposed to *sweat* in order to feel *cool*, which you'll have to explain to me sometime.

TOM (to himself) Hot in *here*.

LENA *Very* hot.

KATHY *And*. To top it off. I don't want to bore you with the whole ugly saga *but*: When they tell you not to eat the produce? Take heed.

KEVIN Like Mexico.

KATHY Because if you ever need to know where to find a doctor at two in the morning in the capital of Morocco when your husband is doubled over with *dysentery* - ?

KEVIN Whoa.

KATHY Gimme a call.

(Little pause. All look at door.)

TOM (re: LINDSEY's absence) Said two seconds.

KEVIN (to KATHY, indicating himself and LENA) Went to *Prague* last April.

KATHY (to LENA) Oh, I *love* Prague. Prague is beautiful.

KEVIN Very pretty.

KATHY The architecture?

KEVIN That bridge?

KATHY And it's small, is what's nice. So you can do it all in a couple of days.

KEVIN And then from there to Zurich.

KATHY Never been to Switzerland. (with a laugh) But I like the cheese!

LENA (formally) Can I - ? I'm sorry. I didn't mean to - but I was hoping I could say something to everyone, if you don't mind?

(All stare at LENA.)

LENA As long as we're stopped?

KATHY	KEVIN	TOM
No. Do. By all means.	Go ahead.	Yeah yeah, please.

LENA All right, well... (clears her throat) Um, I just feel like it's very important for me to express, before we start getting into the details-

STEVE Sorry, but - Maybe we should wait for Lindsey? Don't you think? If it's something important? Otherwise -

KEVIN (to LENA) Do you mind?

STEVE Wind up repeating yourself.

TOM (to LENA) That okay with you?

LENA It's fine with me.

STEVE But, hold that thought.

LENA I will.

(Little pause. TOM drums his fingers.)

STEVE Meanwhile -

TOM Meanwhile maybe we should look at page three?

KATHY Maybe we should.

TOM Catch her up when she - (to STEVE) - if that's cool with you guys.

STEVE S'cool with me.

TOM Good.

KEVIN Let's do it.

TOM Just 'cuz I gotta be outa here by like four.

STEVE Forge ahead.

KATHY Page three.

TOM Middle of three.

KATHY Section two.

TOM Roman numeral two.

STEVE (aside to KATHY, quietly) Rabat, by the way.

TOM (beat) Whadja say?

STEVE Nothing.

KATHY Couldn't hear you.

STEVE The capital.

TOM Of what?

STEVE Morocco. She said Marrakech.

KATHY It *is* the capital.

STEVE No.

TOM I'd've said Marrakech.

STEVE Rabat.

KATHY I don't think you're right.

STEVE No, it is.

KATHY But possibly.

STEVE Definitely. Anyway.

TOM Anyway -

KATHY Or, wait. Is it *Tangiers*?

STEVE Nope.

KATHY Why am I thinking Tangiers?

STEVE Dunno.

KATHY Maybe we just *landed* in Tang- Or wait, no we didn't.

KEVIN (to STEVE) *What's* the capital?

KATHY I know what it is. Tangiers was the *old* capital.

STEVE Umm... no?

KATHY The *historic* capital.

(LINDSEY returns.)

LINDSEY So sorry.

KEVIN Everything all right?

LINDSEY (returning KATHY's phone) It's fine. It's just, he said he was going to be in Seattle so we went ahead and scheduled this without him and now he's feeling a little proprietary - Anyway. Blah blah.

TOM So, we skipped ahead.

LINDSEY Great.

TOM To page three?

KATHY Middle of three.

TOM And since I think we'd all basically agree that -

STEVE (to LINDSEY) Hey. (to TOM) Sorry. (to LINDSEY) What's the capital of Morocco?

LINDSEY The what?

STEVE The capital.

LINDSEY What are you talking about?

STEVE Of Morocco.

LINDSEY Why?

STEVE Quick. Just -

LINDSEY I have no idea.

STEVE Yes you do.

KATHY (explaining to LINDSEY) I said Marrakech.

STEVE (to KATHY) No no, Let her - LINDSEY Marrakech, yeah.

STEVE No. *Rabat*.

LINDSEY Whatever.

KEVIN (explaining to LINDSEY) Trying to figure out what it was.

LINDSEY Why?

STEVE She said she went to the capital of Morocco -

LINDSEY So?

STEVE - and it's not the capital.

LINDSEY (with a shrug) Maybe they changed it.

STEVE Who?

LINDSEY The Moroccans.

STEVE To what?

LINDSEY Whatever it is now.

STEVE Which is *Rabat*.

LINDSEY Okay.

TOM So -

KATHY Oh, wait. You know what it is? It's *Timbuktu*.

STEVE ...nnnnnnno?

KATHY The old capital. The historic - (tapping her temple) That's why I – because it was part of our package.

STEVE Um. Timbuktu is in *Mali*.

KATHY But the *ancient* capital.

STEVE Yeah. Of *Mali*.

LINDSEY I thought Mali was in the Pacific.

STEVE (baffled) In - ?

LINDSEY Where do they have the shadow puppets?

STEVE (sputtering) Are you talking about *Bali*?

KATHY Same difference.

STEVE Uhhhh, *no*? The *difference* - (cont'd)

LINDSEY And who *gives* a shit, any -?

(DAN has entered through the kitchen door. Work clothes, mustache, chewing gum. He lingers at a distance.)

STEVE
(continuous) - is that they happen to be *three distinct count-*
interrupt any
tries so, I guess *I* give a shit -
(cont'd.)

LINDSEY
(continuous) Steve. Steven.
It's whatever you want it to
be, okay?

LENA
I'm sorry. I don't
mean to
one, but -

STEVE (continuous, lowering his voice, to LINDSEY) - and could you possibly not talk to me like a *child*?

LENA (in the clear) Excuse me?

(All turn to LENA)

LENA I was hoping to say something, if I could?

STEVE (remembering) Oh oh oh.

TOM Right. (to LENA) Sorry. (to LINDSEY) Lena had wanted to mention something and it sounded kind of important so -

KEVIN (to LENA) But you don't gotta ask *permission*.

LENA I'm trying to be polite.

LINDSEY We're totally rude.

KEVIN No, you're not.

LINDSEY It's my family. Irish Catholic, you know? *Blarney*.

KATHY (raising a hand) Please, my husband? Half-Jewish half-Italian.

KEVIN Is that right?

KATHY Get a word in edgewise.

KEVIN I believe that.

KATHY Anyway. Lena.

LENA Thank you.

STEVE (a quiet sidebar) Yeah?

DAN (privately) So okay. So, we're, uh, digging that trench back there, ya know?

STEVE Yeah?

DAN Out in back?

STEVE Yeah?

DAN For the conduit line?

STEVE Yeah?

DAN Know what I'm talking about?

STEVE Yeah?

DAN 'Cuz before you hookup that line you gotta bury that conduit?

STEVE Yeah?

DAN And so in order to dig that trench we gotta take out that tree, right?

STEVE Right?

DAN Dead tree back there?

STEVE Yeah?

DAN 'Cause those roots, they go down like maybe eight feet?

STEVE Yeah?

DAN Which is why we're taking out that tree?

STEVE Right?

DAN Didja know that thing is *dead*?

STEVE (risng) Hey. Maybe we should - (to the others) Sorry. You guys go ahead and -

DAN Whoops.

STEVE (to DAN) No no. It's just - two things at once.

KEVIN We can wait.

STEVE No no no. You guys keep - (to DAN) You wanna show me?

DAN Lemme show ya.

STEVE Lemme take a look.

DAN Show ya what we're dealing with.

(DAN & STEVE exit out the back door.)

DAN (overheard to STEVE, as they exit.) Tell ya one thing though, it is *hot* out here.

(LENA fans herself. A little pause, then:)

LINDSEY Now I don't remember what we were - ?

TOM Page three.

LINDSEY *Right.*

KATHY Middle of three.

TOM So. Knowing as we do that the height continues to be the sticking point - and by the way, the reason the petition was drawn up this way in the first place - I mean, nobody wants to be inflexible, but the idea was to set some basic guidelines whereby *if*, say, the height is the problem, like it is here, then one option would be to reduce the total exterior volume, like your husband was saying. And that's the rationale behind the table at the bottom of the page. So what those figures mean, essentially, is that, with each additional foot of elevation beyond the maximum limit, there'd be a corresponding reduction in volume. And the numbers are based on the scale of the *original* structures, which is relatively consistent over the twelve-block radius, and of which this house is a fairly typical example. Now:

KATHY Except we know they're *not*.

TOM Not what?

KATHY Not consistent.

TOM Saying *relatively*.

KATHY A lotta variables.

TOM We know that.

KATHY (beginning a list) The size of the lots, for starters?

TOM Right, but -

KATHY The year of construction?

TOM Right, so the hope was that, by establishing a couple of regulations up front, hopefully we avoid this kinda situation in the future, 'cause, obviously, it's a pain in the ass for everybody. Now, assuming the Landmarks Committee passes this part of the petition next week -

KATHY *Assuming.*

TOM Safe assumption.

KATHY And if the Landmarks Committee really wants to pick that fight with the Zoning Department that is *their* business, but that's a matter of *if and when*.

TOM (to LINDSEY) Why is this confrontational?

KATHY Because somebody might've raised these issues when the plans went to the Zoning Department five months ago.

LINDSEY Kathy.

KATHY I mean, no one had any objection back *then*.

LINDSEY Can I say? We *talked* about renovation. We discussed it. Because these houses are so charming and I know it's a shame - but when you figure in the crack in the sub-floor and the cost of the lead abatement - and in a market like this one? It just made more sense to start from scratch.

(TOM's cell rings. He tries to ignore it.)

TOM Right. *But*: the Owners Association has a vested interest - Kevin and Lena call me up last month, they say Tom, we've got this problem, these people are planning to build a house that's a full fifteen feet taller than all the adjacent structures - (cont'd)

<p>LINDSEY Nooo... <i>fifteen</i>? Is that right?</p>	<p>KATHY It's exactly what the block is zoned for, Tom.</p>
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TOM (continuous) - and I think we'd *all* agree that there's a mutual benefit to maintaining the integrity- (glances at his phone.) - the *architectural* integrity -

LINDSEY Wanna get that?

TOM - of a historically significant - god damn it - neighborhood. (answering) Yeah?

(STEVE returns, as TOM talks on the phone, leaving the kitchen door open.)

TOM (into phone) Yeah, okay, but don't call *me* with that in the middle of a Satur- ? Well, then give it to Marla. Because it's Marla's *account*. Well, where the fuck is Mar- ? (to the others) Sorry.

(TOM crosses the room to take the call.)

STEVE What's happening?

LINDSEY I don't know.

LENA You know, it might be a good idea if we all turned off our phones.

LINDSEY Excellent idea.

KEVIN (to STEVE) Get your problem solved?

STEVE Did what?

KEVIN Out back.

STEVE Yeah, I dunno. They hit something.

LINDSEY What something?

STEVE I dunno.

LINDSEY Something dangerous?

STEVE I dunno.

LINDSEY Is it going to *explode*?

STEVE It's not - (to KEVIN) - We're putting in a koi pond, and there's a filtration system that has to hook into to the municipal - anyway, they ran into some kind of - whatever. So whatzit, page three?

KEVIN But maybe wait for Tom?

STEVE (with a laugh and a shrug)standing right *there*.

KEVIN If we're getting into the legal stuff?

LINDSEY I agree.

KEVIN 'Cuz, I'm not a lawyer.

STEVE I'm not a lawyer.

LINDSEY But, Kathy's a lawyer.

STEVE (re: TOM) And he's the one with the time issue.

KEVIN Long as we're out by four.

STEVE (okay, but) It's three-thirty.

KATHY We'll be done by four.

LINDSEY (to KEVIN & LENA) Sorry about all this.

STEVE Crazy.

(All turn vaguely to TOM, who gestures apologetically and mouths "Sorry". LENA sighs, fans herself.)

KEVIN (small talk) When's the baby due?

LINDSEY Oh. Um, November.

KEVIN In time for turkey.

LINDSEY I know.

KEVIN Boy or girl?

(STEVE is about to answer.)

LINDSEY No no no. I don't want to know. Ask Steve. Steve saw the ultrasound. (fingers in ears, eyes closed) La la la la la la la la la....

(STEVE mouths the word "boy", then touches LINDSEY's knee.)

LINDSEY (fingers out of ears, eyes open) ...la la la - either way as long as it's healthy.

KEVIN Knock wood.

LINDSEY But something tells me it's a girl.

(Pause. Feet tap. KATHY takes out her phone, dials a number, listens.)

LINDSEY (to LENA) You guys have kids?

LENA Three.

LINDSEY Wow.

LENA Mmm.

LINDSEY How great for you.

LENA Yes.

LINDSEY Congratulations.

LENA Thank you.

(KATHY starts to check messages.)

STEVE (beat, then to KEVIN) So Kyle Hendrickson?

KEVIN (remembering) Kyle Hendrickson.

STEVE Kyle Hendrickson - *who*, may I add, kicked my ass in the tenth grade?

LINDSEY *Who* is this?

KEVIN (laughing) Wait wait wait. *Little* Kyle Hendrickson - ?

STEVE Like the *one* solitary black dude in my entire high school.

KEVIN Kicked *your* ass?

STEVE *Publicly* kicked.

KEVIN Kyle Hendrickson's like, what? Like five-*two*?

LINDSEY Wait. *When*?

STEVE (to KEVIN) Five-five. J.V. Wrestling team. Tenth grade.

KEVIN I think that might officially make you -?

STEVE A pussy?

KEVIN Think it might.

LINDSEY (to STEVE) *Who* are you talking about?

STEVE Okay. Remember I ran into a guy?

LINDSEY No.

STEVE Remember last week? I said a guy from middle school?

LINDSEY No.

STEVE I was meeting you downtown - oh, and he told me the *joke*?

LINDSEY Right?

STEVE The joke I told you?

LINDSEY I don't remember.

STEVE The joke about - well, neither do I, at the moment but it was a joke we both thought was funny?

LINDSEY Okay?

STEVE Anyway. *That* guy: *That* is Kyle Hendrickson. Who *he* works with.

LINDSEY (to LENA) Glad we cleared *that* up.

STEVE Oh oh oh.

LINDSEY What?

STEVE Wait.

LINDSEY What?

STEVE Wait.

LINDSEY *What*?

STEVE The joke. It's about a guy? Remember? Guy who goes to jail?

LINDSEY No.

STEVE White-collar criminal goes to jail, remember? And and and they put him in a cell with - ?

LINDSEY (realizing, privately to STEVE) *Oh oh oh.* No.

STEVE What?

LINDSEY Hm-mm.

STEVE *What?*

LINDSEY Let's - (changing subject, to LENA) How old are your kids?

STEVE (to LINDSEY) Whatsamatter?

KEVIN (to LINDSEY) Nine, ten and twelve.

LINDSEY *Wow.*

STEVE (to LINDSEY) What's your problem?

LINDSEY Steve.

STEVE I was telling the joke.

LINDSEY Later.

STEVE You said remind me what joke -

LINDSEY Okay.

STEVE (laughing) But now I'm not *allowed* to tell it?

LINDSEY (quietly) Stop a second.

STEVE (to KEVIN) Anyway. Two guys stuck in a jail cell -

LINDSEY *Steven?*

LENA (finally having had enough) I'm sorry, and I don't mean to keep interrupting but can somebody please explain to me what it is we're *doing* here?

(Pause. TOM turns. All feel the chill from LENA)

TOM (quietly into phone) Just send me the fucking document.

(KATHY and TOM discreetly hang up.)

LENA I mean, I know I'm not the only person who takes the situation seriously and I don't like having to be this way but I have been sitting here for the last fifteen minutes waiting for a turn to speak - (cont'd.)

(All overlap, quietly chastened.)

	TOM	KEVIN	LINDSEY	KATHY
	Hey. Sorry 'bout That.	No one's taking <i>turns</i> .	I'm so sorry. I really am.	Well, Tom was on the phone, I thought.

LENA (continuous) - and meanwhile it seems like nothing is even remotely getting accomplished

LINDSEY I agree.

(A truck horn sounds outside.)

KEVIN (to LENA) So go ahead and say what you -

LENA (with a tense smile, to KEVIN) And could you please not tell me when to - ?

KEVIN I'm not telling -

LENA (continuous) They were having a conversation and - (cont'd.)

KEVIN (overlapping) And now they stopped.

LENA (continuous) - I try not to intrude - (cont'd)

KEVIN Just being friendly.

LENA (continuous) - on other peoples' conversations when they're in the middle of them. (to the others) I'm not trying to be unfriendly.

LINDSEY No, it's us.

KEVIN No it's not.

LINDSEY No, it is.

KEVIN You're being friendly.

LENA I'm being friendly.

LINDSEY (to KEVIN, re LENA) She's being friendly.

STEVE I'm being friendly.

KEVIN If anybody's not being friendly -

LENA Well, maybe the *friendly* thing to do would be for us to respect each other's time, would that be all right?

STEVE LINDSEY KATHY TOM
 Yeah. Sure. Yes. Totally. Was it me? Was it? Sorry. Really.

LENA Thank you.

(All murmur quietly.)

STEVE LINDSEY KATHY TOM
 (to KEVIN) Was I So glad someone ‘Cuz, seriously, No, you
 guys? has the balls to I thought we’d
disrespectful? was my fault. finally say it. stopped. That was me.

(Horn sounds again.)

LINDSEY (to LENA) Anyway.

LENA Anyway. All right. (taking her time) Well... I have no way of knowing what sort of
 connection you have to the neighborhood where *you* grew up?

(Horn again. STEVE turns.)

LINDSEY (to STEVE, rapid whisper) *Just shut the door. Just shut the fucking -*

(STEVE jumps up and exits to shut the
 kitchen door.)

LINDSEY Sorry. (continuing LENA’s last line) The neighborhood where - ?

LENA And some of our concerns have to do with a particular period in history and the
 things that people experienced here in this community *during* that period -

(STEVE returns to the circle, sits.)

STEVE (whispering to LENA) Sorry.

LENA - both good and bad, and on a personal level? I just have a lot of *respect* for the
 people who went through those experiences and still managed to carve out a
 life for themselves and create a community despite a whole lot of obstacles?

LINDSEY As well you should.

LENA Some of which still exist. That’s just a part of my *history* and my *parents’* history
 - and honoring the *connection* to that history – and, *no one*, myself included,
 likes having to dictate what you can or can’t do with your own home, but there’s
 just a lot of *pride*, and a lot of *memories* in these houses, and for some of us,
 that connection still has *value*, if that makes any sense?

LINDSEY Total sense.

LENA For those of us who have remained.

LINDSEY Absolutely.

LINDSEY (to LENA) Look, I for one - I am really grateful for what you said, but this is why we sometimes feel defensive, you know? Because we *love* this neighborhood.

STEVE We do.

LINDSEY We completely do, and we would never want to to to to carelessly -

STEVE Run roughshod.

LINDSEY - over anyone's - And I totally admit, I'm the one who was resistant, especially with the schools and everything, but once I stopped seeing the neighborhood the way it *used* to be, and could see what it is *now*, and its *potential*?

LENA Used to be what?

LINDSEY What do you mean?

LENA What it "used to be"?

STEVE (helpfully, to LENA) What *you* said. About the *history* of - ?

LINDSEY *Historically*. The changing, you know, demographic - ?

STEVE Although *originally* - (to LINDSEY) - wasn't it German, predominantly?

KATHY German and Irish.

STEVE Depending how far back you -

KATHY It's funny, though. Even though my *father* was German - but back when *they* were living here -

LINDSEY Wait, did I know this?

KATHY I told you that.

LINDSEY In this neighborhood?

KATHY (to KEVIN & LENA) They went to church at St. Stan's! Isn't that crazy?

KEVIN Is that right?

KATHY (to KEVIN & LENA) This is the late fifties. (laugh) My father was a "Rotarian"! But my *mother* - (to LINDSEY) She was deaf? I told you that?

LINDSEY KEVIN
That I knew. Awwww, that's a shame.

KATHY (to KEVIN) Thank you. It was congenital. But then she got pregnant with me and they moved out to Rosemont, anyway, *her* family, they were *Swedish*.

STEVE (to KEVIN & LENA) There was a great article two weeks ago - I don't know if you saw this - about the history of the changing, uh, ethnic -

LINDSEY Distribution.

LENA Oh, I should read that.

STEVE - of the neighborhood and how in the seventies, eighties, how that was followed by a period of - of - of - of - of rapid -

KATHY Decline.

LINDSEY No - Not - No

STEVE Of *growth*. Of *growing*.

KATHY I don't mean *decline* -

KATHY - I mean there was *trouble*.

LINDSEY Not *trouble*, she didn't mean -

KEVIN There was trouble.

LINDSEY *Economic* trouble.

KEVIN Drugs are trouble.

KATHY That's what I'm saying.

KEVIN Violence is trouble.

KATHY (vindicated) Exactly.

LINDSEY And the violence as an *outgrowth* of the criminalization of those drugs.

KEVIN (re: himself and LENA) 'Cuz ya know, the two of us wuz both crackheads.

(A frozen moment, then:)

STEVE That's funny. I know (laughs) I'm kidding but you're kidding but just that was the perceiving with you. tion at the -

LINDSEY No, come on. Don't say that. Really. Even as as a joke.

KATHY I know you're joking, but that is exactly what people *thought*.

KEVIN ding you. I'm

STEVE (to LINDSEY) - he's *being funny*.

LINDSEY I know he was, and it was funny but when people are systematically *dehumanized* - If you've been placed in some faceless, institutional -

KATHY (explaining to KEVIN & LENA) The projects.

LINDSEY - I mean, like it or not, that kind of environment is not conducive to - to - to - to -

KEVIN That's true.

LINDSEY the formation of *community*.

KATHY Horrible.

KEVIN Tough place to grow up.

LINDSEY With the effect on *children*?

KEVIN On anyone.

LINDSEY And to take what had been a pros – well, not prosperous, but a solidly middle-class, um – ?

STEVE Enclave.

LINDSEY And then *undermine* the entire economic -

STEVE Infrastructure.

LINDSEY - by *warehousing* people inside of these -

STEVE But that's the thing, right? If you construct some artificial *semblance* of a community, and then isolate people *within* that - I mean, what would be the definition of a *ghetto*, you know? A *ghetto* is a place, Where - (cont'd.)

LINDSEY (overlapping, to STEVE) But who *uses* that word? I don't.

STEVE (continuous) - where, where, where people are *sequestered*, right? (to LINDSEY, defensively) The *definition*, I'm saying.

LENA Well, *my* family –

STEVE Like Prague. If you think of - (pedagogically) Okay: Prague had this ghetto, right? A Jewish ghetto?

LENA (thanks for the lecture) We've been to Prague.

LINDSEY Ohmigod. Prague is *beautiful*. (KEVIN wiggles his hand) I loved Pr- you didn't love it?

KEVIN Prague's *crowded*.

KATHY And the food sucks. Or is that just me?

STEVE But I'm saying, It's not like, one day all these Jews were sitting around Prague, looking at the Real Estate section, going, "*Hey here's an idea! Let's all go live in that ghetto!*" Right?

(A beat where they all avoid STEVE's comment. Then:)

LINDSEY (to LENA) When were you in Prague?

LENA Last April.

KEVIN First Prague, then Zurich.

LINDSEY I want to go back.

KEVIN (to STEVE) You ski?

(A laugh erupts from LINDSEY)

LINDSEY (re: STEVE) *Him?*

STEVE You mean - like *downhill?*

LINDSEY *That* I'd like to see.

KEVIN Ever been to Switzerland?

STEVE (to LINDSEY, defensive) I can *ski*. I *have* skied.

LINDSEY Get that on video.

STEVE Why is that funny?

LINDSEY (trying not to laugh, to KEVIN) Sorry.

STEVE Seriously. What is it about the idea of me skiing that you find so highly, uh - ?

LINDSEY Anyway.

STEVE - *risible?*

KEVIN (to STEVE) I just meant, you like to golf, you go to *Scotland*. And if you like to *ski*?

LINDSEY (still laughing) Just trying to picture it.

STEVE Gratuitous.

TOM (re-focusing the others) Annnnnnyway.

LENA
Yes. Maybe we
can't
should try to stick to
because I was
the topic at hand.

LINDSEY
Okay. Tom's right.

Let's get it togeth-

er.

KATHY
(to KEVIN) I

ski

born with weak
ankles. Anyway.

LINDSEY (to TOM) *Where* were we?

TOM Page three.

LINDSEY Uggh. You're kidding.

TOM Nope.

LINDSEY How can we still be - ?

TOM I dunno.

LINDSEY How is that possible?

TOM (glancing at watch) And it is now....quarter to four.

LENA I'm sorry for taking time.

LINDSEY No. What you said was *great*.

LENA And I wasn't trying to *romanticize*.

LINDSEY You didn't.

LENA Nothing *romantic* about being poor.

LINDSEY But, it was your *neighborhood*.

KATHY (to LENA) Wait, what street?

LENA Offa Larabee.

KATHY My parents lived on Claremont!!

KEVIN Ya'll would've been neighbors.

LENA But I didn't mean to make it about my personal *connection* to the house. It's more about the *principle*.

KEVIN But you can't *live* in a *principle*.

LINDSEY You had a personal connection?

KEVIN To the house.

LINDSEY To *this* house?

KEVIN (to LINDSEY) Her aunt.

LENA I don't want to - let's not.

KEVIN Lived here.

STEVE Wait. *Who?*

LENA Sort of beside the point, but yes.

KEVIN *Great* aunt

LENA On my mother's side.

KEVIN S'Not important.

LINDSEY That we should be concerned about?

KEVIN No no no no no.

LENA Just that - there'd *been* a family. Who had a son who'd been in the Army.

KEVIN Korea, maybe?

LENA And who, well, a few years after he came back from the war -

KEVIN Killed himself.

LINDSEY (beat) Oh my god.

KEVIN Yeah.

STEVE Wow.

LINDSEY *Oh* my god.

KEVIN Sad.

STEVE Wow.

LINDSEY Oh my god.

LENA Which my great aunt didn't know at the time.

LINDSEY Oh my god, that is just -

LENA Though I assumed you *did*.

STEVE Umm, no?

LINDSEY That is just - just - just - Wait. And they went ahead and *sold* the house to - ?

LENA Mm-hmm.

STEVE Wow.

LINDSEY Without *telling* her that? Because nobody ever told *us* that.

KATHY Well, they *wouldn't*, would they?

KEVIN (dismissive) Fifty years ago.

LINDSEY (to KATHY) But *legally*, I mean, don't you have to *tell* people that?

KATHY Not if you want to sell it.

LENA It was something like he'd come back from the Army. And he'd been accused of something.

KEVIN Killing people.

LENA Innocent people.

KEVIN Killing civilians.

LENA And then - you know.

STEVE But you don't mean, like like like like... (laughs) like *here in this very* -?

LENA No - I mean, not *where we're sitting*.

KEVIN Upstairs, wasn't it?

LINDSEY (freaking out) I - I - I - I -

STEVE (touching LINDSEY) Breathe.

LINDSEY (pushing STEVE'S hand away) Stop it.

LENA I mean, the version I was told was, that he went upstairs.

KEVIN Hanged himself.

LINDSEY (standing, walking away) Okay. *No*. No, I'm sorry, but that is *wrong*.

STEVE (following her) Where are you going?

LINDSEY That is just - *No*. To sell someone a -a - a *house*, where - ?

STEVE Whatsamatter?

(STEVE and LINDSEY exit to the kitchen, from where we clearly hear:)

LINDSEY *No*. There should be a *law*. And I don't care *how*, okay? I don't want to know *how* he did it or in *what room* - Because I'm sorry, but that is just something that, from a legal standpoint, you should have to *tell* people!

KATHY (calling to LINDSAY) It's not.

LINDSEY (sticking her head in, to KATHY) *Well, it fucking well should be*.

STEVE Hey. Hey.

LINDSEY (privately, to STEVE) And now I have this horrifying *image* in my head?

STEVE (to LINDSEY, laughing) But why d'you have to make such a big *deal* outa -?

LINDSEY Uh, it *is* a big deal, Steve. If your *child* - if *our family* is going to *live* in a house where - ?

STEVE (laughing, to the others) I mean, it's not like he's still *hanging* up there!

LINDSEY (losing her shit, to STEVE) It's not *funny, okay?!! It's not funny to me, so why are you acting like an asshole?!!*

(The kitchen door bangs open and DAN noisily enters.)

DAN (calling out) *Okay.* Show ya whatcha got.

(He drags a large trunk – the same trunk we saw in Act 1, covered with mold and dirt - into the middle of the room.)

DAN So that's your problem right there. (coughs a couple of times) S'cuse me. And I tell ya one thing: Yank this up from down there, take a look at it, you know the first thing I'm thinking to myself? You know what I'm thinking? *Buried treasure.* Like Spanish doubloons or something and I know you're thinking Dan ya crazy bastard but I tell ya what. I know a guy.

(He joins the circle.)

DAN (coughs again) S'cuse me. This guy. Last summer he's taking out a septic system - this house out in Mundelein. He's sitting on top of his backhoe. All of a sudden *clang*. And this guy's not exactly the sharpest tool in the box, if ya know what I mean, but he goes down in there about five, six feet with a chain and a winch – swear to god – ya know what he pulls out from down there? He stands back. He takes a look - (without stopping) - You're in the middle of something.

STEVE Sorta.

DAN My bad.

STEVE No no.

DAN Bull in a china shop.

STEVE It's cool.

DAN According to my wife.

STEVE Oh yeah?

DAN As well as a couple other names not suitable for mixed - Anyways.

STEVE Thanks

DAN (re: the trunk) I'll just leave this here for ya.

STEVE Thank you.

DAN Need me to open it, you lemme know.

STEVE Great.

DAN Problem, though. (indicating the large padlock) Problem's this puppy right here. Now the deal is: I got a saw. Take a hacksaw you could maybe saw it off but whatcha really want is a pair of bolt cutters and I don't think I got any bolt cutters, so.

STEVE Ah, well.

DAN 'Cause you never know. Turns out to be fulla Spanish doubloons we'll haveta split it six ways, huh?

LINDSEY (to DAN, taking over) Sorry.

DAN Whoops.

LINDSEY I don't know your name.

DAN (extending hand) Dan.

LINDSEY Hi Dan.

DAN Dan or Danny.

LINDSEY Great.

DAN *Daniel* when the wife gets pissed.

LINDSEY But listen -

DAN No no no no no no I gotcha.

LINDSEY If you wouldn't mind?

DAN Middle of your thing and I come barging right into -

LINDSEY Thank you.

DAN But you findya some bolt cutters you'll be in business.

LINDSEY We will.

DAN (an idea) Hey, ya know what? Hang on a second.

(DAN heads to the back door. As he does:)

TOM So I'm just going to push ahead, if that's okay?

DAN (calling out the door, top of his lungs) *Ramirez!!!*

TOM 'Cause we still got seventeen pages to cover -

LINDSEY (to all) And I'm sorry I lost my shit. No, I did. But I think we're both wound a little tight right now with the baby and the house and the money and everything -

DAN (same) *Ramirez!!*

LINDSEY - and then to top it all off, we get sent this petition in the mail, you know, and suddenly our entire lives are thrown into chaos at the very same moment that - I mean, the demolition was scheduled to start on Monday and unless we get this resolved which I want as much as anyone then what do people expect?

DAN *Ram-!!!* Ah, screw it.

(DAN gives up, exits.)

TOM (continuing) So: Couple of options. One, as we said, is reducing the height -

KATHY (adamantly) *No*. Tom, I'm sorry, but you can't just call an architect at the eleventh hour and snap your fingers and say can you completely redesign an entire -

LINDSEY It's a little late in the day for that.

LENA (to LINDSEY) I'm sorry you're upset.

LINDSEY I'm not upset. I'm not.

KATHY And may I remind everybody that these guys are under no obligation, legal or otherwise -

TOM (from a document) Okay. Here's the wording from the City Council, and I quote: "In recognition of the *historic* status of the Clybourne Park neighborhood, and its distinctive collection of *low-rise single-family homes*- (cont'd.)

LINDSEY	KEVIN	TOM
Aren't we a single family? <i>intended</i>	Hey. Hey. Every-	(continuous) -
	thing's cool.	<i>to house a community of working-class families</i> ".

LINDSEY And you know, the thing is? Communities change.

STEVE They do.

LINDSEY That's just the reality.

STEVE It is.

LENA And some change is inevitable, and we all support that, but it might be worth asking yourself who exactly is *responsible* that change?

(Little pause.)

LINDSEY
I'm not sure what you - ?

KEVIN
Wait, what are you trying to - ?

LENA I'm asking you to think about the motivation behind the long-range political initiative to change the face of this neighborhood.

(Another little pause)

LINDSEY	STEVE	KEVIN
What does that mean? (to STEVE) Do you know what -?	(to LENA) Wait, say that again?	The long-range <i>what?</i>

LENA I mean that this is a highly desirable area.

STEVE Well, we desire it.

LENA I know you do.

LINDSEY Same as you.

LENA And now the area is *changing*.

KATHY And for the *better*, right?

LENA And I'm saying that there are certain economic interests that are being served by those changes and others that are not. That's all.

STEVE (suspiciously) And... *which* interests are being - ?

LENA (systematically) If you have a residential area, in direct proximity to *downtown*?

STEVE Right?

LENA And if that area is occupied by a particular *group*?

STEVE	LINDSEY
Which group?	(to LENA) You know what? We're talking about <i>one house</i> .

LENA (to LINDSEY) I understand that.

STEVE Which group?

LINDSEY A house for our *family*?

STEVE Which group?

LENA That's how it happens.

LINDSEY In which to raise our *child*?

STEVE No no. Which group.

LENA It happens one house at a time.

STEVE Whoa whoa whoa. Okay. Stop right there.

LINDSEY What are you doing?

STEVE No. I'm sorry, but can we just come out and say what it is we're actually - ?
Shouldn't we maybe *do* that? Because if *that's* what this is really about, then...
jesus, maybe we oughta save ourselves some time and and and and just... say
what it is we're really *saying* instead of doing this elaborate little *dance* around it.

(Dead stop. All stare at STEVE)

STEVE Never mind.

KATHY *What* dance?

STEVE I - I - I - I shouldn't have - whatever.

LENA (parsing his meaning) So... you think I haven't been *saying* what I *actually* - ?

STEVE (laughs) Uhhh.... Not to my way of thinking, no.

LENA Well, what is it you *think* I'm - ?

STEVE I - I - I ... (laughs incredulously)...like we don't all *know*?

LINDSEY / don't.

STEVE Oh, *yes you do*. Of *course* you do.

KEVIN Well, maybe you oughta *tell* us what *you* think she was saying.

STEVE Oh oh, but it has to be *me*?

LENA Well, you're the one who raised the question as to - (cont'd.)

STEVE (laughs, overlapping) Oh, *come on*. It was *blatant*.

LENA (continuous) - the sincerity of my speech.

LINDSEY What the fuck, Steve?

STEVE You know what? Forget I said it.

LINDSEY You didn't *say* anything.
whole -

LENA Oh no, I'm *interested*.

STEVE Let's forget the

STEVE (continuous) - Okay. Okay. If you really want to - It's... (tries to laugh, then, sotto)
...it's *race*. Isn't it? You're trying to tell me that that... (to LENA) That implicit in
what you *said* - That this entire conversation... isn't at least *partly* informed - *am*
I right? (laughs nervously, to LENA) By the issue of ... (sotto) of *racism*?

(beat, then)

LINDSEY

STEVE

(to STEVE) *Are you out of your - ?* (to LINDSEY) And *please* don't do that
 (to LENA) I have no idea where this repeated- to me, okay? I've asked you
 is coming from. ly.

LENA Well, the *original* issue was the inappropriately large *house* that - (cont'd.)

STEVE (to LENA, overlapping) Oh, come *on*.

LENA (continuous) - you're planning to build. Only, *now* I'm fairly certain that I've been called a *racist*.

STEVE But I didn't say that, did I?

LENA *Sounded* like you did.

STEVE (to KEVIN) Did I say that?

KEVIN Yeah, you kinda did.

STEVE In what way did I say that?

KEVIN Uh, *somebody* said racism.

STEVE *-Cism! -Cism! Not - cist!!*

KEVIN Which must originate from *somewhere*.

STEVE And which we all find totally reprehensi-

KEVIN So - are *you* the racist?

STEVE Can I just - ?

KEVIN Is it your wife?

KATHY Don't look at *me*.

STEVE Look:

KEVIN 'Cause, by process of elimination -

STEVE Here's what I'm saying:

LINDSEY What *are* you saying?!

STEVE I'm saying: Was race *not* a factor -

LINDSEY (re: STEVE, exonerating herself) I don't know this person.

STEVE Were there *not* these differences -

LINDSEY *What* differences!?! There's no -

STEVE (to LINDSEY re: LENA) Okay: She walks in here, from the very beginning, with all these *issues*...(cont'd.)

LENA (overlapping) About your *house*.

STEVE (continuous)...and I'm only asking whether, were we not, shall we say - ?

LINDSEY You're *creating* an issue. *Where none exists*.

STEVE Oh oh oh you *heard* what she *said*. She as much as claimed that there's some kind of, of, of *secret conspiracy* -

LENA Oh, it's not a *secret*.

KEVIN	LENA	STEVE
(to LENA) Ohh, <i>c'mon</i> .	(to KEVIN) Oh, please	<i>There. Thank you.</i>
Are you <i>seriously</i> - ?	don't be purposely <i>naïve</i> .	<i>Now you see what I'm -</i>
?		

LENA This has been under discussion for at least *four decades* now - (cont'd.)

KEVIN (overlapping, to LENA) *You can't prove that*.

LENA (continuous) - at the highest institutional levels of - (to KEVIN) - *oh, don't act like you don't know it's true*.

STEVE (to LENA) What, and now we're the evil invaders who are -

LINDSEY (to STEVE) *She never said that!!!!*

STEVE - appropriating your *ancestral homeland*?

LINDSEY (to STEVE) This, this, this - No. I'm sorry, this is the most *asinine* - (to LENA and KEVIN) *Half of my friends are black!*

STEVE (sputtering) *What!?!?*

LINDSEY (to STEVE, as to a child) As is true for most *normal* people.

STEVE Name *one*.

LINDSEY *Normal* people? Tend to have *many* friends of a diverse and wide-ranging -

STEVE You can't name *one!*

LINDSEY Candace.

STEVE (beat, then) Name another.

LINDSEY *I don't have to stand here compiling a list of -*

STEVE You said *half*. You *specifically* -

LINDSEY Theresa.

STEVE *She works in your office!! She's not your "friend".*

LINDSEY *She was at the baby shower, Steve! I hope she's not my enemy!!*

TOM Well, this is all fascinating -

STEVE (to LINDSEY) Name another.

TOM And while I'd love to sit here and review *all* of American History *maybe* we should concentrate on the plans for your *property* -(cont'd)

STEVE (overlapping)Yes!! Yes!! (cont'd)

TOM (continuous) - which *had* been the *original* topic of the convers -

STEVE (overlapping, continuous) The history of America *is* the history of private property.

LENA That may be -

STEVE Read De Tocqueville.

LENA - though I rather doubt *your* grandparents were *sold* as private property.

STEVE (to KEVIN & LENA) Ohhhhhh my *god*. Look. Look. Humans are *territorial*, okay?

LINDSEY (to STEVE) Who *are* you?

STEVE This is why we have *wars*. One group, one *tribe*, tries to usurp some *territory* - and now *you guys* have *this* territory, right? And you don't like having it *stolen away* from you, the way white people stole everything else from black America. *We get it*, okay? And we *apologize*. But what *good* does it do, if we perpetually fall into the same, predictable little euphemistic tap dance around the topic?

KEVIN You know how to tap dance?

STEVE *See? See what he's doing?!!*

LINDSEY Maybe quit while you're ahead.

STEVE *No*. I'm sick of - *No*. Every *single word* we say is - is - is *scrutinized* for some kind of latent - Meanwhile you guys run around saying n-word this and n-word that and *whatever*. We all know *why* there's a double standard but I can't even so much as repeat a fucking *joke* that *the one black guy I know told me* -

KEVIN *So tell the goddamn joke.*

STEVE Not *now!!*

KEVIN If you feel so *oppressed*, either go ahead and *tell it* -

LINDSEY (to STEVE) Do *not*.

KEVIN - or maybe you could *move on*.

LINDSEY (with finality) *Thank you!*

LENA Well, I want to hear it.

KEVIN (to LENA) Ohh, *don't* not interested?
LENA (to KEVIN) Why not? You're not interested?
LINDSEY No. Trust me. It's offensive.

STEVE (to LINDSEY) Of course it's *offensive* - (cont'd.)

LINDSEY (overlapping) To *me*. Offensive to *me*.

STEVE (continuous) - that's the whole point of the - How? How does it offend *you*?

LINDSEY Because it's disgusting and juvenile and traffics in the worst possible type of obsolete bullshit stereotypes.

LENA (beat, then:) Well, now I *gotta* hear it.

KEVIN No no no no no. Aww, *c'mon*.
STEVE No. I can't.
LINDSEY Not while I'm in the room

LENA (to KEVIN, re: LINDSEY) Well, she says it's so offensive, and I have no way of knowing if she's right, and if I don't ever *hear* it, how will I ever *know*?

(KEVIN sighs, throws up his hands.)

STEVE Um, you know what? I don't even remember it now.

LENA Two men in jail, you said.

KATHY Oh, I know this one.

LINDSEY (a warning) *Steven?*

LENA Wasn't that it? Two men...?

STEVE I - Okay. So there's - *Look, it's not even my joke, okay?!!* It was told to me by Kyle Hendrickson, who, for what it's worth, happens to be -

LENA Black.

STEVE Right.

LENA So the white man goes to jail.

LINDSEY (to STEVE) *I can't believe you actually intend to - !!* Fine.

STEVE Anyway.

LINDSEY Knock em' dead.

STEVE Goes to jail for... you know. Embezzlement. Something. Little white guy. And he's put in a jail cell with this....uhhh...

LENA With a black man.

STEVE Big black guy.

LINDSEY (appalled) And why "*big*"? (cont'd.)

STEVE (overlapping, to LINDSEY) I am repeating, *verbatim*, a joke - (cont'd.)

LINDSEY (continuous) Why does it have to be "big"? What does that reveal about your subconscious - ?

STEVE (conituous) - in the precise manner in which it was told to *me*.

LENA Little white man.

LINDSEY (head in hands) Oh god.

LENA Big black man.

STEVE In the... yeah, so they... um, slam the cell door... behind him, I guess, and the black guy turns to the white guy, black guy goes, "Okay, I'm gonna give you a choice. While you're in here with me, you can either be the mommy, or you can be the daddy". And the white guy thinks for a second and he goes, "uh, well, um, I guess, if it's up to *me*, then, I guess I'd have to say *I'd* prefer to be the daddy." (clears his throat) And, the black guy goes, "Okay, well then bend over 'cause Mommy's gonna fuck you in the ass".

(Long pause. No one laughs or smiles.
They simply nod or shake their heads.
Finally...)

KATHY That's not the one I was thinking of.

STEVE (academically) So: Is that "*offensive*"?

LENA
No.

LINDSEY
Are you ins- ?!?!?

STEVE (to LINDSEY) To *you*. How is it offensive to *you*?

LINDSEY I don't think it's *me* you should be *asking*.

LENA No, the problem with *that* joke, see, is that it's not *funny*.

LINDSEY No shit.

STEVE (to LINDSEY) *You laughed when I told it to you!!*

LENA And had it been a *funny* joke -

STEVE *So?!!* You think I'm "*offended*"? I can do this all day. What's long and hard on a black man?

LINDSEY *How is this happening?!!*

KEVIN I don't know, Steve. What *is* long and hard on a black man?

STEVE First grade. Are you "*offended*"?

KEVIN Nope.

STEVE Neither am I.

LINDSEY You *can't be* offended, you *moron* - (cont'd.)

STEVE (astonished laugh)I *can't*?

LINDSEY (continuous) - because you've *never* been politically marginalized, unlike *the majority* of people in the world - (cont'd.)

STEVE (overlapping) How can a *majority* be *marginal*?

LINDSEY (continuous) - and, by the way, *all women, everywhere*, and it's your classic white male myopia that you're blind to that basic fact.

LENA Why is a white woman like a tampon?

(All turn to LENA. Pause.)

LINDSEY Why is what?

LENA It's a joke.

KEVIN (to LENA) No no no no no no -

LENA You told a joke, now *I'm* telling one: Why is a white woman - (cont'd.)

KEVIN (overlapping) Baby, don't.

LENA (calmly, continuous to KEVIN) - and please don't *baby* me. You've got three babies at *home* -(cont'd.)

KEVIN (publicly, overlapping) Good night. I wash my hands.

LENA (continuous, privately) - if you need to *pacify* someone. (to the others) So:

STEVE (raising a finger) Uhh.... can you repeat the set-up?

LENA Why...

STEVE ...is a white woman, right... ?

LENA ...like a tampon?

(STEVE looks around. No one else answers, so:)

STEVE Um, I don't know, why?

LENA Because they're both stuck up cunts.

(Pause. Again, no one laughs or smiles. KEVIN shakes his head.)

LINDSEY (even) Wow.

LENA But I hope you're not *offended*.

STEVE (academically, *not* laughing) See, *I* find that funny.

LINDSEY Do you.

KATHY Well, *I'm* offended.

STEVE *Oh, you are not.*

LINDSEY And how does it always comes back around to *the women*?

LENA (innocently) It was just a joke.

STEVE *Exactly!!*

KATHY An extremely *hostile* joke.

LINDSEY Directed at me.

KATHY And in what way am I *stuck up*, exactly? You mean, because I worked my ass off putting myself through law school, that makes me *stuck up*?

STEVE It's a joke about a *tampon!!*

KATHY And maybe there's a difference between being *stuck up* and being *intelligent*.

STEVE (to KATHY) *You don't even know the fucking capital of Morocco!!!*

KATHY (insulted) Ohhhhhhh....kay.

STEVE And you know something? If there's anyone here who's being *marginalized* by the tide of history - You don't exactly see *me* sitting in the White House, do you?

LINDSEY *Thank the Lord.*

STEVE But you don't see *me* wetting my pants and acting all "offended".

KATHY (to LINDSEY, as she packs her things.) You know, I think maybe I'm *done*.

STEVE No. You want to know what offends *me*? How about the neighborhood the two of us are living in right now? Bunch of white suburban assholes still driving

around with the yellow ribbon magnets on their SUVs in support of some bullshit war. *That's* the kinda shit that offends *me*.

KEVIN Why does *that* make them assholes?

(Pause.)

STEVE Why does what?

KEVIN Said assholes have yellow ribbons on their SU -

STEVE I didn't say that.

KEVIN Yeah, you did, you said -

STEVE I said "*with*" the magnet, not, you know, "*by virtue of*".

KEVIN So, it's not the *magnet* makes you the asshole?

LINDSEY (to KEVIN) You have one on your car?

KEVIN I have three of 'em.

STEVE Three.

KEVIN Three.

LINDSEY Three?

LENA Three.

STEVE Three.

KEVIN One for each member of my family serving overseas.

STEVE Great.

(Beat.)

KATHY (to STEVE) I have the pink one for breast cancer.

KEVIN So maybe I'm a *triple* asshole, but -

LINDSEY (fake-whisper to KEVIN) *I think we know who the asshole is.*

STEVE Wow.

LINDSEY (finishing off STEVE) Well you're being an *idiot*. And in case you hadn't noticed, the rest of the world has begun a more sophisticated conversation about this topic than you apparently are qualified to participate in at this incredible moment in history. I mean, I used to *date* a black guy. *So what?* I mean, *seriously*. *Steve. Wake up.*

(The same church bell that we heard in Act one begins to ring. Pause. TOM looks at his watch.)

TOM (claps hands together) And it is now four o'clock.

STEVE (privately, to LINDSEY) When did you date a black guy?

TOM So: Final thoughts? Lena?

LENA No.

TOM Kev?

KEVIN I'm good.

TOM Anybody?

KEVIN Very informative.

LINDSEY Well, I want to say this: I want to say I feel angry. And I'm basically kind of hurt by the implication that's been made that, just because we want to live as your neighbors and raise a child alongside yours, that somehow, in the process of doing that, we've had our ethics called into question. Because *that* is hurtful.

LENA (calmly) No one has questioned your *ethics* at all.

LINDSEY Well, I wish I could believe you.

LENA No, what we're questioning is your *taste*.

(The others rise to leave.)

<p style="text-align: center;">TOM</p> <p>Kathy? I will call you when the petition goes through.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">LINDSEY</p> <p>Well, <i>that</i> was insulting.</p>
--	--

KATHY Thank you.

TOM Tuesday at the latest.

LINDSEY Wait, what's wrong with our *taste*?

TOM (putting on sunglasses) Kev?

KEVIN Right behind you.

LINDSEY No. What is so *egregious* about the design of our *house*?

KEVIN (to LENA, who is about to respond) No no no no no. Let it go.

(LENA exits.)

KATHY (to LINDSEY) Sweetie, I've got a thing but I'll call you tomorrow.

TOM (to LINDSEY and STEVE) And you guys got my number if you want to talk?

STEVE Yep.

(TOM is gone, with a thumbs-up. KATHY follows close behind. At the same time, DAN enters from the kitchen carrying a pair of bolt cutters. The others ignore him.)

KEVIN (to LINDSEY and STEVE) So, uhh... good luck with your house. And maybe ya'll can just communicate with Tom from here on out. But, anyway, uhh... (with a wave)... ya'll enjoy the rest of your evening.

(KEVIN and LENA politely exit through the open front door. STEVE and LINDSEY stand silently for a moment, then:)

DAN (holding up the bolt cutters) Uhhhhh....?

LINDSEY (quietly) Wow.

STEVE Wow is right.

LINDSEY Amazing.

STEVE (but not quietly enough) And for the record? *That woman* is the cunt.

(And instantly KEVIN is back through the front door)

KEVIN (advancing on STEVE) Wait a second - *what'd* you say?

(All hell breaks loose.)

LENA	KEVIN	STEVE	LINDSEY
(following KEVIN) Just leave it a- you. lone. Let 'em be. the pressure. I don't care what kinda bullshit they think, all I want to do is go home and now and take the we all just longest shower of my life.	Whattya think I'm <i>deaf</i> or something? thing? Standing right there on your your front doorstep- Oh no, I <i>heard</i> you loud and clear. I'm and clear, I'm just just giving you the the opportunity to repeat it to my <i>face</i> ... (cont'd.)	(innocently) What? What? What? I did- n't...Hey, hey, hey, <i>whoa. Back off</i> , man. What is your fucking problem, dude? I did- n't do anything to you <i>or</i> to her so why can't you <i>chill</i> ?	(to KEVIN) No no no no - I told It's we're both under a huge amount of pressure and yes he acted like an idiot but could maybe <i>step off</i> , please?

(KEVIN and LENA exit. By this point, DAN has succeeded in opening the trunk.)

STEVE (continuous from above) Fine by me.

LINDSEY Do you have the keys?

STEVE I mean, God forbid my needs should ever come before the *baby's*.

LINDSEY You really want me to choose between you and the baby?

STEVE Oh, I'm secondary.

LINDSEY Cause that's an *easy* one.

STEVE Correction: *Tertiary*.

(As LINDSEY & STEVE continue to argue, a bespectacled young man in a military uniform descends the stairs, unnoticed and oddly out of place. This is KENNETH, played by the actor who played TOM. He carries a yellow legal pad and a transistor radio. Oblivious to the scene around him, he takes a seat by a window near the front door. As DAN removes a yellowed envelope from the trunk. LINDSEY and STEVE prepare to leave as the bickering continues.)

LINDSEY Or maybe you don't *want* the baby.

STEVE Oh! That's funny. I didn't know I had a *choice*.

LINDSEY Oh, you had a choice.

STEVE If only I'd *known*.

LINDSEY And you *chose*.

STEVE And what were the options, again? Oh that's right. A) *Let's have a baby*.

LINDSEY Which you *chose*.

STEVE Or B) *I'm divorcing you*.

LINDSEY But *you* chose A.

STEVE A for Arm-twisting.

LINDSEY Do you have the keys?

STEVE B for *Blackmail*.

LINDSEY (from outside) *Do you have them or don't - ?*

STEVE (from the door) *YES! YES I HAVE THE GODDAMN - What, you think someone's gonna rob this place?*

(DAN turns to see them exit.)

STEVE Help yourselves. Fuckin' shithole.

(STEVE slams the door. DAN looks around with no acknowledgment of KENNETH.)

DAN (to the empty house) Hello? (he waits for a reply) *Hello?*

(He sits on the trunk, opens the letter.)

DAN (reading to himself) Dear Mom and Dad.

(Lights change. Music begins to play from KENNETH's transistor radio, not unlike the very beginning of the play. It is early morning, 1957. Dim light filters through the window, barely illuminating KENNETH. He bends over his legal pad, writing, as BEV slowly descends the stairs, dressed in her robe and slippers. She stops near the bottom.)

BEV (bleary-eyed, confused) Kenneth?

(KENNETH turns down the volume on the radio.)

KENNETH Hmm?

BEV What are you doing down here?

KENNETH Writing a letter.

BEV Did your father leave already?

KENNETH (looks outside) I don't see the car.

BEV What time is it?

KENNETH Don't know.

BEV I overslept.

KENNETH Yup.

BEV (yawning) I don't know why I was up so late. I was up half the night and the house was so quiet and your father was sound asleep but for some reason my mind was just racing and it took forever to fall asleep.

KENNETH Go back to bed.

BEV (finally focusing) Oh, look how you're dressed up. Why are you all dressed up like that?

(KENNETH stares, doesn't answer)

BEV Kenneth?

KENNETH Job interview.

(A key turns in the front door. It opens and FRANCINE enters in her street clothes with a scarf tied around her head. She carries a wet umbrella.)

FRANCINE (sleepy) Morning.

KENNETH Morning.

BEV Morning, Francine.

FRANCINE Morning.

BEV Oh, is it *raining* out there?

FRANCINE Sprinkling a little.

BEV I didn't even notice. Well. It's good for the grass.

(She stands at the bottom of the stairs, as FRANCINE crosses past her and up the hallway. BEV hesitates.)

KENNETH Aren't you going back to sleep?

BEV (pensive) Oh, I will. I'm just about to.

(For a moment, she stares into space, then turns to KENNETH.)

BEV But you know, I think things are about to change. I really do. I know it's been a hard couple of years for all of us, I know they have been, but I really believe things are about to change for the better. I firmly believe that.

(KENNETH waits. BEV turns and starts back up the stairs.)

BEV You have enough light, there?

KENNETH Uh-huh.

BEV (as she ascends) Well, don't hurt your eyes.

(She is gone. KENNETH turns the radio back up, resumes writing. DAN continues to read. The lights slowly fade as the music concludes.)

End of play.