

A Beautiful New City

by

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People

TONY Raft *EARLY 40s*

PAUL Gallagher *40*

MARY Raft *early 60s*

JANE Sabatini *18*

MICHAEL Gallagher *37*

STEVIE Moore *25*

GINA MAE Sabatini *38*

DIAN Black *35*

ROLLY Moore *50*

Place

Urban landscape. In the distance mostly glass. The rest is worn concrete, bare—and filled with a minimum of set pieces as required.

Note*Intermission*

should be placed between Scenes Six and Seven.

Scene One

Late evening.

Highrise office. A desk. A working chair. A lounging chair. A model of an apartment on the desk.

PAUL Gallagher and TONY Raft are staring at the model. Both are wearing suits. TONY is immaculate and drinking heavily. PAUL is coming undone, sweating swaying, and not drinking anything.

TONY

This is the future.

PAUL

Shit.

TONY

What?

PAUL

I think my ulcer is acting up.

TONY

Since when do you have an ulcer?

PAUL

Since the last time I worked for you.

TONY

I guess you think that's funny.

PAUL

Not really. I've gotta go lie down somewhere.

TONY

Stay put. I wanna show you the specs here.

PAUL

It'll have to wait.

TONY

No that's no good. This is time sensitive. Just try to focus. It's important. Please. Don't make me beg.

PAUL

Don't make you what?

TONY

It was just an expression.

(Paul thinks)

PAUL

Okay. But make it fast.

TONY

Right. Okay, first the big picture. 4000 square feet.

PAUL

It looks smaller.

TONY

It is smaller. Notice the alcove outside the entrance. Four units share the alcove, right?

PAUL

But you add the size of the alcove to the total size of each unit.

TONY

Right.

PAUL

That's pathetic, Tony.

TONY

It's an essential lie. 4000 square feet is the essential minimum. Okay it's touchy. We'll talk about it later. Could say it's 3500 plus. We'll see. Anyway look at the layout. Look at the kitchen. It's part of the international series. This one is Japanese. We call it the Samurai. Look at the layout. It screams cold hearted efficiency. This is a kitchen for people who are deadly serious about their food.

PAUL

Hurry up. I'm think I'm going to vomit.

TONY

It's the primary living space we're not sure about. It's big enough, right?

PAUL

Yeah, I guess so.

TONY

Bright enough too. Remember this is all southern exposure here. So what's the problem. Look at it. Come on get it there with your brain. Feel it. Throw it around. This is important.

PAUL

Maybe it's all right. It looks all right.

TONY

Forget the model. Just put yourself inside the model suite. You're sitting in the primary living space. Maybe you're a man, maybe you're a woman. Who gives a shit.

PAUL

I've got to sit down.

PAUL *sits*

TONY

Good. That's good. Now close your eyes... You're sitting in the primary living space, and the sales guys have left you alone. You've got a coffee. You've got the brochures. You've done that stuff, the reading, the talking... now you're alone... And it comes up into the front part of your brain. Two million bucks. Is this place worth that much money. Forget the southern exposure, the state of the art security system, the pools, the sauna, the weight room, the diet room, the committee room, the convenience store, the liquor store, the personalized parking space. Forget the Italian tiles in the bathrooms. Forget the fucking bathrooms altogether. All three of them. Forget the Samurai kitchen, the generationally conceived bedrooms, the solarium, the atrium. Forget everything except

the primary living space. Because that's the ticket, that's where it happens, that's where you...live. So ask yourself, are you going to be pleased, are you going to feel good about spending two million dollars on what is essentially four bare eggshell-surfaced goddamned walls?!

PAUL *groans. Clutches his stomach. Pulls up his knees. Rocks. Falls over on to the floor.*

PAUL

I think it ruptured! You gotta...get me to a hospital.

TONY

For a ruptured ulcer. Does that even happen?

PAUL

Please!

TONY

Okay. But first answer my question. Come on. This is important. (*kneels in front of PAUL*) I've got a dream for this city. It's a beautiful dream. But it's expensive. People have to pay for it. All you have to do is answer my question and I'll get you some help.

PAUL

No.

TONY

No what?

PAUL

No...wouldn't pay two million.

TONY

Really? Shit. No. Okay that's honest. Yeah I knew that anyway. So you'll fix it. Right?

PAUL

Yeah. But first I need you to--

TONY

Right. The hospital. Okay. (*goes to desk; picks up phone*) So what was it-two months ago-you said you'd never work for me again. I knew you didn't mean it. (*pushes a buzzer*)

Who's this. Oh hi Mom. Where's Joanna. *(looks at his watch)* So soon? Well could you do me a favour, Mom. Dial 911. Tell them we need an ambulance. No I'm fine. It's Paul. Well I think it's just gas. But he thinks it's his heart.

PAUL

Ulcer... I think it exploded.

TONY

That's just ridiculous *(to phone)* Tell them he's been poisoned... No that's ridiculous too. Tell them it's an anxiety attack.

PAUL

Jesus. It's not anxiety. If you tell them that they won't come.

TONY

(to phone) Tell them it's his heart. *(hangs up)* I wanted to say heart right at the beginning. We could have saved a lot of time. Truth is I know it's an anxiety attack. I know anxiety when I see it. In fact, if I don't see it I get a little anxious myself. You look better. How do you feel. I think you look better. You know, when I first came here one of the first things I noticed was a lot of anxiety.

PAUL

Yeah you have that effect on a lot of people.

TONY

What? No...I'm talking about something that was already here. There's an anxiety in this city that's almost like a natural resource. Actually I guess it's in most cities. You know what I think it comes from? A fear of poor people. A deep fear that eventually there's going to be... well, you know....

PAUL

What, a revolution?

TONY

A revolution? Come on. Don't be ridiculous. But there might be... unrest. Enough unrest to make people even more anxious than they already are. And that will be the time for a major entrepreneurial move. That day is close at hand, guy. And we need to be ready.

MARY RAFT *comes in. she is a striking fashionably dressed woman. Calm forceful expression.*

MARY

The ambulance is on the way. How is he doing.

TONY

Great. Aren't you, Paul.

PAUL

No.

MARY

He seems to be in genuine pain.

TONY

I never said he wasn't in pain. But pain's not necessarily a serious thing. Other than the pain, he's great. Aren't you, Paul.

PAUL

No, you asshole. No!

TONY

Calm down, guy. Don't talk like that in front of my mother. She'll think we don't get along.

MARY

Shut up for a moment, Tony. Is there something I can do for you Mr. Gallagher until the ambulance gets here.

PAUL

No.

TONY

By the way Paul, have you met my mother.

MARY

Think before you talk, Tony. I just arrived last night. And I've never been here before.

TONY

Oh yeah, that's right. Tell him what you think of the city, Mom. It's beautiful isn't it.

MARY

I don't believe this is the proper-

TONY

Paul designed a lot of the buildings here. Some of the most dazzling structures in this place came right out of his brain.

MARY

I have to go now. I'm late. I have a meeting. A meeting about something you should have taken care of a long time ago, Tony. I'm sorry, Mr. Gallagher. I hope it's nothing serious.

TONY

He'll be fine.

MARY leaves

TONY

So whatya think?

PAUL

About what?

TONY

I bet you never pictured me with a mother.

PAUL

No I did. But she had scales.

TONY

Good for you. You're talking like a real prick. You'll be fine. You know why she's here? She wants to watch me in action. Get closer to my dream. She never thought I'd amount to much. But everything I am I owe to her.

PAUL

Have you told her that.

TONY

My mother was born in a police state. It formed her personality in a lot of ways. I got my dream for this city from the part of my mother that's still under siege. It's based on family. Family and safety. Everything indoors. My motto is "No more strangers in your life." What do you think of it.

PAUL has passed out.

Paul. Paul? Hey Paul. Come on. Come on, Paul. Paul. Hey hey Paul (*sings*) Hey hey Paul. (*smiles*). Come on. Wake up. Come on, Paul. Hey come on. Really. Come on, Paul.

Blackout.

Siren.

Scene Two

Early evening

A hospital room. One bed.

JANE SABATINI *is changing the bed. She wears the uniform of a hospital volunteer. She is slim, angular.*

After a moment, PAUL GALLAGHER comes on in a wheelchair. He is wearing a bathrobe over pajamas.

JANE

There you are. I thought you got lost.

PAUL

I did.

JANE

You should have wanted for an orderly. This is one of the biggest hospitals in the world.

PAUL

It's also one of the worst designed. Nothing seems connected except for those dreadful underground tunnels. And they all seem to lead to the morgue. Half the people down there look like they're been discharged and they just can't find their way out.

JANE

Finished. So you want me to help you up.

PAUL

I can manage. *(gets into bed slowly)*

She is putting the dirty linen in a canvas bag. When she finishes that she begins to arrange his pillows and blankets.

JANE

Did the x-rays show anything.

PAUL

Why should they tell me. They're my intestines. But the x-rays belong to the doctor.

JANE

Ulcers. That's what everyone says. The nurses, I mean. No one thinks it's cancer... Oh, I'm sorry. I'm not supposed to say cancer. Oh, said it again. Sorry.

PAUL

That's all right.

JANE

No it's on your mind now isn't it. How can it not be. I said it twice. My mother would kill me.

PAUL

Your mother works here?

JANE

No my mother works at Bargain Harold's. But her real job is witchcraft.

PAUL

I'm sorry?

JANE

She's descended from generations of witches. I was one too, but my father made her take my powers away at birth. I'm kinda glad. The power is awesome but it kinda removes you from the rest of the world. Puts you in opposition. Like when I told my mother I was doing this work here, she was totally against it. She thinks everyone who works in a hospital does more harm than good.

PAUL

Maybe she's right.

JANE

I try to help.

PAUL

Oh. Yes, I'm sorry. You do.

JANE

You look weird. What's wrong. You in pain?

PAUL

Yes!!

JANE

That was a bit hostile. I don't blame you. You're sick. You're entitled. My mother is hostile and she's healthy as a horse. Witches never get sick. Oh they die. But it's like someone just pulls a plug on them. They're immune to every virus known to science.

PAUL

Listen...are you being serious?

JANE

About my mother? Oh yeah. I know it sounds crazy. But I've seen her in action. She once turned a cat into a raccoon.

PAUL

You saw that.

JANE

No, but she wouldn't lie about it. She never lies. When I'm telling people about her I just ask them to keep an open mind. There are people in this world who turn things into other things all the time. Not many people see them at work, that's all! Listen maybe I shouldn't be telling you this. I mean this is a hospital for God's sake. But if they can't find out what's wrong with you here, maybe you could go see my mother.

PAUL

So that she can turn me into a raccoon.

JANE

Nah. She just did that because she was in a snit. She usually confines herself "keeping the power lofty."

PAUL

So what's that mean exactly. She's some kind of faith-healer?

JANE

Actually it has nothing to do with faith. You don't have to believe in anything. What my mother does is teach people how the world really works. The "simple ugly truth," she calls it. She says when they understand what that is, they get better.

PAUL

Couldn't you just tell me the simply ugly truth and save me a trip.

JANE

It's different for each person.

PAUL

What's yours.

JANE

I'm not supposed to tell. If you press me I will. I'll do just about anything to keep people happy. Oh well there it is, I've just told you.

PAUL

Told me what.

JANE

My simple ugly truth. Now if you want to know what yours is, I'll tell you how to get in touch with my mother.

MICHAEL Gallagher comes in. He is wearing work clothes. Carrying several large rolls of papers.

MICHAEL

Oh. You look all right. I was scared, boy. I was scared you'd look like death.

PAUL

Hi...

MICHAEL

What?

PAUL

I said hi.

MICHAEL

Yeah, hi.

PAUL

What's wrong with you ?

JANE

He doesn't like hospitals. They scare him.

PAUL

Just about everything scares him these days... Jane. This is my brother, Michael.

JANE

Hi.

MICHAEL

Is he all right, really?

JANE

I don't know. (to PAUL) I'll be back in awhile. (*leaves*)

MICHAEL

Why doesn't she know if you're all right.

PAUL

She's a volunteer. She's not a nurse.

MICHAEL

So should I go ask a nurse.

PAUL

Or you could ask me.

MICHAEL

Oh, yeah. Well how---

PAUL

I don't know either.

MICHAEL

That sounds serious. If they're keeping something from you it could be serious. I don't want you to worry. But maybe you should get prepared for the worst.

PAUL

Okay.

MICHAEL

I'll come back later.

PAUL

You just got here.

MICHAEL

Yeah but you look tired.

PAUL

I thought you said I looked all right.

MICHAEL

I was lying. You look really bad. What's wrong with you. Oh that's right, you don't know.

PAUL

What are those drawings?

MICHAEL

Look. This is business. I shouldn't have brought them. You don't really want to look at them, I know. But...

PAUL

Is it stuff from Tony Raft.

MICHAEL

Yeah.

PAUL

He put me in here you know.

MICHAEL

Really?

PAUL

Well that's what I think. The stress from all his bullshit. I don't think we should work for him anymore. He's a crook.

MICHAEL

Not technically. Technically he's okay.

PAUL

All right, he's a good crook. He's the best in his field.

MICHAEL

You think all developers are crooks.

PAUL

No. I think they're all sharks. Raft is a crook.

MICHAEL

But not technically all right. Let's keep that straight. We need his business.

PAUL

Do we? Do we still need him.

MICHAEL

Oh yeah. No doubt. He's kept us so busy the last 10 years we never got a chance to develop new clients.

PAUL

You were supposed to work on that.

MICHAEL

Well I tried. But I was too busy.

PAUL

We could try again.

MICHAEL

Too risky. He's our ticket. I've got a mortgage. I've got kids to educate.

PAUL

I don't.

MICHAEL

Yeah. You've got nothing. You're lucky in a pathetic kind of way. Listen I'm sorry. But maybe you really should look at these drawings.

PAUL

The condo.

MICHAEL

What?

PAUL

The primary living space needs re-doing. That's what he was killing me with last night.

MICHAEL

No. That was a just a tease. I fixed that for him this morning first thing. He was just screwing you around.

PAUL

I don't get it.

MICHAEL

Well at your last meeting you told him to die and go to hell forever. The condo thing was just his way to get the two of you communicating again.

PAUL

Communicating? You should have heard him. I think he's finally gone over the edge.

MICHAEL

That could be true, but the important thing is he's giving us this. (*holds up the drawings*) The big project. The mall.

PAUL

What mall?

MICHAEL

You know, *his* mall.

PAUL

Oh Jesus. Not again.

MICHAEL

This time for real. He's got an opening at city hall. He smells a possible go ahead.

PAUL

No way. No way are they going to let him build that ridiculous thing down there. Do they know it's going to be underwater?

MICHAEL

That's what they like about it. It'll be a first.

PAUL

And when it doesn't work, a last.

MICHAEL

Not if we design it. (*unrolling the plans on the bed*)

PAUL

He's already designed it. I've seen it.

MICHAEL

No. It's changed. He's brought in structural engineers. They made improvements.

PAUL

You mean they've made it safe?

MICHAEL

So he says. He wants us to take his basic notions. And do our own design. All these are here are primitive renderings. We've got carte blanche to make changes. I figure the job is worth 3,000,000 to us.

PAUL

There's a pan under my bed.

MICHAEL

A what.

PAUL

A pan. I'm going to vomit.

MICHAEL

No. Are you serious.

PAUL

Get it.

MICHAEL

I think you're getting carried away here. What's that on your mouth. My God. It's blood.

PAUL

(feels his mouth; looks at his hand) Jesus. I'm hemorrhaging.

MICHAEL

Paul. What's wrong with you. Can't you stop that.

PAUL

I'm going to throw up.

MICHAEL

This is serious isn't it. This really is serious. Okay, should I get someone. Yeah. I'll get someone. A doctor, or someone like that. Hold on. *(runs off)*

PAUL

You forgot the pan. *(groans)* Oh, Shit. I'm dying here. *(leans over the bed; wretches)*

Blackout

Scene Three

Near midnight. TONY's office.

MARY is sitting at the desk. Going through a set of account books.

TONY is pacing.

TONY

He's got some kind of mysterious disease. They've got him quarantined. It sounds spooky. Maybe we should check ourselves into a private clinic. I can't afford to get sick now. I'm about to succeed beyond anyone's wildest imagination.

MARY

Tony. There's something I've been meaning to ask you... Are you on drugs.

TONY

Mom., come on. I've got a dream. A vision. I'm hopped-up sure but--

MARY

Just asking.

TONY

If I look worried a little its because I need Paul Gallagher. He's my point man. He's an award-winning architect. Did I tell you that.

MARY

No.

TONY

Well it's true. City Hall loves him. If he's involved with my mall it's a definite go.

MARY

What about his brother.

TONY

Michael? Michael's good. But he's never won an award. I tell you the people in this city love awards. Now if Paul dies maybe we could arrange to have Michael win an award—but all that takes time—

MARY

Tony. These books won't do. (*closes them*)

TONY

No, they're good books, Mom. They're set up right. Just like Dad taught me.

MARY

Times have changed. Audits have changed. These books are primitive. The categories are too wide. The time frame—

TONY

Don't make me paranoid about the books, Mom. I don't need that right now.

MARY

I'm tell you. If you're smart you'll listen.

TONY

Okay. I'll bring someone in. Someone new. That's it! We'll get Paul a new doctor. A genius. He needs a genius.

MARY

Tony. Sit down. We have to talk.

TONY

We're taking.

MARY

Sit down!

TONY *sits*, MARY *stands*.

I have to tell you something, Tony. We're unhappy. We...that is, the family is concerned about your operation here. We feel...that you've lost focus.

TONY

Oh no I-

MARY

You seem to have forgotten the basic intention of our family in this area of our endeavours. That is...to make lots of money. Very fast with very little grief. Your underwater harbourfront mall is an example, perhaps the example of something we do not want.

TONY

But Mom, the mall is mine. I invented it. It's unheard of.

MARY

It's fanciful and and maybe even stupid.

No, no. it's just ahead of it's time. It'll make history.

MARY

We don't care to make history, Tony. We only care to make money. Quietly. The mall is a dead project!

TONY

(stands) Oh no please don't-

MARY

Sit!

TONY *sits*.

Now on to other business. The real purpose of my visit. (goes to desk; picks up hone; buzzes) Get in here. (walks to TONY) Being... obsessed with certain things like you are, you have failed to notice a problem which has arisen for us here. A low-level mismanagement of our resources. It, of course, must be stopped.

Stevie Moore *comes in. He is a young, wiry, nervous man. Leather jacket. Jeans.*

This is Mr. Moore. You can call him Stevie. Mr. Moore this is my son Tony. Tell him what you told me last night.

STEVIE

How much. I mean I told you a lot.

MARY

Tell him about the taxi business.

STEVIE

Sure. Well there's a—He doesn't seem to be listening.

MARY

Tony. Pay attention.

TONY

Sorry Mom. (lifts his head)

STEVIE

There's a man in the east end who's supposed to be working for you people. He was hired on as a shipper in one of your import export shops. The trade there is drugs

MARY

Pharmaceuticals, Mr. Moore.

STEVIE

Yeah, whatever. The thing is, he's in business for himself now. He's doing this incredible curbside business out of taxis. He's got a dozen drivers and a few dispatchers working for him and he's moving a lot of merchandise.

MARY

Our merchandise.

TONY

He's stealing the stuff from our warehouse?

STEVIE

Nah. He's better than that. He's diverted the pipe line. Somehow he's getting his own supply under your name. He's getting big too.

TONY

You know him?

STEVIE

Yeah. I know him. He's my dad.

MARY

Mr. Moore has, with great personal sacrifice, offered to help us put an end to this activity. You, Tony, will give this matter your full attention. Starting now. You will work with Mr. Moore and come up with a plan to solve this problem expeditiously. Quietly, I'm going to my hotel now. Keep me informed. Goodbye, Mr. Moore. Thank you.

STEVIE

You didn't tell him about the money.

MARY

He doesn't pay you. I do. When it's done. (leaves)

Pause

STEVIE

Okay. I gotta tell you one thing. I can't waste him. He's my dad, right. I can arrange a few things for you, but it's gotta stop before death. Okay?

TONY

Have you ever wanted a place where you could do all your shopping indoors. Then when you finished shopping have dinner, or even a picnic or a roller coaster ride or a free ceramics' lesson...and never get rained on.

Blackout

Scene Four

Bargain Harold's. The checkout area. A few bins of merchandise behind the cashier's desk.

Paul is looking through the bins. Picking at things. Looking closely at others.

He is wearing an overcoat buttoned to the collar. He looks awful.

GINA MAE Sabatini is standing by the cash register. Looking at PAUL suspiciously. She is a robust-looking woman in her late 30s. She is wearing a smock and corduroy trousers. Reading glasses on a chain around her neck. No jewelry. Nothing remotely strange in her appearance.

DIAN BLACK comes on. She is a police detective. She is wearing fashionable cloth suit. Carrying a light-weight top coat over her arm.

DIAN

Hi there.

GINA MAE

Hello.

DIAN

I'm looking for Mrs. Sabatini.

GINA MAE

That's me.

DIAN

My name is Dian Black. I'm with the police department.

((takes out her ID holds it up.))

GINA MAE

Is this about the robbery last week?

DIAN

No... No I'm looking for someone. Rolly Moore. He's your brother-in-law, right?

GINA MAE

Well my husband is dead. I thought that would sever the connection. But I guess not..

DIAN

Can you tell me where I can find Rolly.

GINA MAE

I'm going to be honest with you, Dian. I can. But I won't.

DIAN

This is important, Mrs. Sabatini.

GINA MAE

My brother-in-law is a crook. He keeps company with other crooks. Some of them have very little regard for human life. If I assist you, one of them might come after me with malicious intent and I would be forced to alter his genetic construction.

PAUL drops a can of cut-rate salmon on the floor. They both look at him.

PAUL

I didn't hear anything. I wasn't listening. It just slipped.

GINA MAE

I hope you didn't dent that can. That's good salmon. Priced to give poor people a good taste of the stuff. Limited supply. Check. See if it's dented, will ya.

DIAN

Your brother-in-law is wanted by the police, Mrs. Sabatini?

GINA MAE is still staring at Paul.

GINA MAE

You, Sir. Have you tried simple aspirin for your condition. I don't believe in much. But simple aspirin is a genuine miracle drug.

PAUL smiles. Turns around.

DIAN

Mrs. Sabatini?

GINA MAE

Yes, Dian?

DIAN

I was saying that Rolly Moore, your brother-in-law, is wanted by the police. You could be in trouble if you impede us.

GINA MAE

Well I'm certainly not going to impede you,. I'm just not going to help you. You're very well dressed for a policewoman, Dian. What part of the force are you with?

DIAN

The part that's looking for your brother-in-law. Tell you what, how about I give you some time to reconsider co-operating with us. Trust me, it would be in your best interest.

GINA MAE

You could visit me at my home next time. Come early and have breakfast. Do you have the address.

DIAN

Yeah.

GINA MAE

Any morning except Wednesday. That's when I volunteer at the food bank.

DIAN

Yeah okay. *(smiles oddly)* Goodbye

GINA MAE

Goodbye, Dian.

DIAN leaves. Shaking her head. Pause/

Can I help you, sir.

PAUL

Are these work socks really three pairs for two sixty-nine.

GINA MAE

You bet.

PAUL

That's amazing. (*brings them to the cash*)

GINA MAE

That's all?

PAUL

Yes. Oh I'll take one of these pens. (*picks one out of a container on her counter*)

GINA MAE

Bic pens. The original Bic pen. Not one of those copies. Best buy for your money on the market. All this month you get three for the price of two.

PAUL

Oh. Great. (*takes two more*)

GIN MAE

So have you tried aspirin?

PAUL

What? No I... haven't. But--

GINA MAE

Actually now that I see you up close I can tell you're beyond the powers of aspirin.

PAUL

Really?

GINA MAE

Oh yes. You're very sick. I have to tell you this. It's my duty in a way. You're probably dying.

PAUL

Can you help me.

GINA MAE

Why would you ask me that?

PAUL

Your daughter sent me.

GINA MAE

Which one. I've got five of them.

PAUL

Jane.

GINA MAE

Jane's the best. The others all left home. I never see them. And they're really young. They all got away from me as soon as they hit puberty. If Jane sent you I'll try to help. But it might be hard on you.

PAUL

The simple ugly truth.

GINA MAE

We'll have to talk. Get to know each other. I'll have to pose some questions. Set up experimental situations. See how you respond. Time's the thing. I take my work very seriously.

PAUL

Of course. Matters of the spirit... I understand.

GINA MAE

No I wasn't talking about that. My work here. I love this place. You know there are some real and true bargains in this store. People who don't have much money can get by real fine if they shop here.

PAUL

The socks are a terrific bargain. Good work socks are important. You can wear them all year round. You can wear them at home instead of slippers.

GINE MAE

We'll get along fine.

PAUL

I hope so.

GINA MAE

I mean if I can keep you alive.

(punches the cash register)

PAUL

Yeah...I'm feeling pretty weak. I've got this pain. It starts over here and then it moves to-

GINA MAE

That'll be three dollars and forty-nine cents... Do you want a bag?

Blackout

Scene Five

An alley. A large mount of green garbage bags.

GINA MAE *and* PAUL. GINA MAE *is wearing an old battered fur coat. And a toque.* PAUL has a similar toque on his head. PAUL is leaning against a wall. GINA MAE is nudging the garbage bags with one of her feet.

GINA MAE

I'd sure like to know what these people are throwing out. One person's garbage is another person's meal.

PAUL

This isn't much of a restaurant. I took a look when we passed the window. I'm not sure I'd eat their stuff from a plate let alone a garbage bag.

GINA MAE

You'd eat it all right. If you were hungry enough. The way you're going you might find that out pretty soon.

PAUL

What makes you say that.

GINA MAE

Listen you're an educated man, a professional, with a lot of money, good connections, a strong support system. But don't you believe any of those things will stop the slide into living hell once you're seriously started. All I'm saying is you could have started.

PAUL

I'm sick. I'm not sliding into hell.

GINA MAE

Maybe it's the sliding that's making you sick. We'll see. How are you feeling now.

PAUL

Fine.

GINA MAE

Don't lie. Lying won't help.

PAUL

Okay. Lousy. I feel lousy.

GINA MAE

But at least your head is warm. You need all the heat you can get.

PAUL

Then why are you making me wait around this alley.

GINA MAE

First things first. A bit of life is going to unfold here in a while. Besides I never said you shouldn't get fresh air. Just keep the head covered. Pull it down over the ears.

He does.

Do you like that toque. It looks good on you.

PAUL

Yes. Thanks. How much do I owe you.

GINA MAE

Three fifty-nine. You can pay me later. 20% wool. First wash, in cold water please. Expect a bit of the dye to run. After that, clear sailing. It's from Taiwan. I love the place. Taiwan clothes are the best in the world for practical people with low incomes. Help me sort through this garbage.

PAUL

Why.

GINA MAE

Just curious. Just like to see what they're throwing out. Truth is, I'd love to go through all the garbage in this city. But you hardly ever get the chance. People see you and they jump to conclusions. Call you names. Make you appointments with social workers. Come on.

PAUL

I'd rather not.

GINA MAE

Okay. I'll do it alone. (*rips open a bag*) Sure. Look at that. I hope they die without the assistance of painkillers. Bread. It's all bread. Probably just a bit stale. Good God, some of it's even whole wheat. (*holding a couple of slices*) Want a bite?

PAUL

Ah, no thanks.

GINA MAE

Okay, but if you don't taste it you don't get the purest kind of outrage. (*takes a bite*) This is edible! I'm mad as hell!!

PAUL

I thought no one is supposed to know we're here.

GINA MAE

Okay. But these people get paid a visit. Put them on the list...I've got it in my pocket.

PAUL

What?

She produces a small pad and pen.

GINA MAE

The list... Here. (*hands pad and pen to him*) Put their name and address down. I'll continue the search.

Paul *is writing*. GINA MAE *is going through another garbage bag*.

No surprise. No surprise. Oh here's something I didn't expect.

PAUL

What are you?

GINA MAE

What kind of question is that?

PAUL

I'm not sure. Are you... a witch. Jane says you turned a cat into a raccoon.

GINA MAE

Maybe the cat did most of the work though. That was joke. The cat story is just family lore,
Suddenly a car's headlights turn into the alley. Above the headlights the glow of a taxi's light.

PAUL

Jesus. What's that.

GINA MAE

They're here. Okay, just listen to what gets said. Make a note of anything that strikes you as important. If things get nasty run like hell

Car door opens. Closes. Three figures in front of the headlights.

PAUL

Excuse me, are we in a dangerous situation here.

GINA MAE

Probably

The three figures are advancing.

PAUL

They're coming this way.

GINA MAE

That's the general idea. How are you feeling.

PAUL

What?... Ah. Nothing. I'm feeling nothing.

GINA MAE

No pain?

PAUL

No.

GINA MAE

That's good. That's real good.

We can make out the three figures. JANE, STEVIE and ROLLY Moore. ROLLY is a seedy-looking man around 50. Wearing jeans, a baseball jacket, and old cowboy hat. Carrying a cardboard box.

Stop, right there. Are you all right, Jane.

JANE

I'm fine. Mom.

GINA MAE

Come to me, dear. You two goofballs stay where you are.

JANE *walks toward* GINA MAE.

STEVIE

Hey, who are you calling goofballs?

GINA MAE

Well there's just the two of you so....

JANE

(*close to GINA MAE*) Ah, Mom. Have you been going through this garbage.

GINA MAE

Never mind that. Did they give you a hard time.

JANE

Stevie tried to get tough. I deaqlt with it. Hi. Mr. Gallagher. How are you feeling?

GINA MAE

He's a new man. Now you go stand next to him, honey. If things get perverse he'll protect you.
(to PAUL) Won't you.

PAUL

I'll try my best.

JANE *goes over next to PAUL.*

What's she mean if things get perverse.

JANE

It's just an expression, I think.

GINA MAE

We're dealing here with pure slime here. I'm just saying stat alert. Okay, goofballs. Your turn.

The two men advance quickly.

STEVIE

Now listen you crazy bitch. You keep calling us names and I'll get ugly.

GINA MAE

You get any uglier and your face will fall off.

ROLLY

Why you always insulting the boy, Gina Mae. He never did a thing to you.

GINA MAE

He breathes, Rolly. Tell him to stop breathing and we'll get along fine.

ROLLY

You wanted us here. We're here.

STEVIE

But do we know why. We don't know shit. The slut wouldn't tell us. We're here on good faith.

GINA MAE

If you call my daughter a slut again I promise you'll wake up tomorrow in a tree eating chestnuts. And it'll seem real natural, if you know what I mean.

ROLLY

She can do it, Stevie. Keep quiet.

STEVIE

Ah bullshit.

ROLLY

You want to be a squirrel? She's talking about turning you into a goddamn squirrel. So be quiet.

STEVIE

Total bullshit.

ROLLY

Jesus boy I'll hit you. *(hits him)* I'll hit you again. *(hits him)* I'll kick you too. *(kicks him)*

STEVIE

Ah shit Dad, when you say "I'll hit you" you're not supposed to hit me eh. It's supposed to be like a warning.

ROLLY

I was nervous. I'm very nervous in this situation. You can understand that can't you Gina Mae.

GINA MAE

Hand over that box.

He does.

Here, doll.

JANE takes it. Opens it.

Is this your merchandise, Rolly.

ROLLY

Yeah. I put in a good sampling, just like Janie told me to.

GINA MAE

Well, honey?

JANE

Lots of pills. Different colours. Some meth I think.

ROLLY

Take it. It's all yours. All you had to do was ask for chrissake.

JANE

She doesn't want it, fool. She was just making sure that's what you're up to.

GINA MAE

Rolly. You're taking my dead husband's family name and dragging it through puke. If you brother was alive he'd break your neck.

ROLLY

I'm just doin' business, Gina Mae.

GINA MAE

There's plenty of other business you can do. You can always go back to stealing cars.

JANE

Mom, don't tell him that.

GINA MAE

Whatya expect me to do. Tell him to be a brain surgeon? Car theft is just a major annoyance. Everyone's insured. It's the next best thing to a victimless crime.

ROLLY

That's a young man's game. I haven't got the legs anymore.

GINA MAE

You're touching me with your poison, Rolly. I've warned you before. Keep your poison really close to you and your kid. Don't let it spread into the human race. Do you remember that warning.

ROLLY

I do Gina Mae. It's just that I saw an opening and I felt I had to take it.

GINA MAE

Drugs are out, Rolly. Got it?

ROLLY

If you say so.

STEVIE

Hey. Come on. Get serious. She says no and you nod like a dog. If we wanna sell this stuff we'll sell it.

GINA MAE

He doesn't learn, does he Rolly. He was a mean stupid little boy, and he hasn't learned a precious thing.

ROLLY

I try to teach him, Gina Mae. (*whacks STEVIE a few times, really fast*)

GINA MAE

You should have been sterilized.

ROLLY

Maybe you're right.

STEVIE

Okay. That's enough. Here's a warning from me. Butt out. We came here outta family courtesy. You had your say. It doesn't mean shit to us. So keep your nose out of our business or I'll have some people burn your house down. I...awh...awk...awh...awk... (*very bird-like now*) awh! awk! awk!

GINA MAE

I changed my mind. I thought he'd make a better crow than a squirrel... Look on the bright side, Stevie. The change takes time, but by tomorrow morning you'll be able to fly.

STEVIE *pulls a gun. Aims it at GINA MAE. Then the gun hand turns until the gun against his own temple.*

ROLLY

Please, Gina Mae. He's my old kid. The only one I've got to look out for me in my old age. Don't do it. We'll stop. I promise.

GINA MAE

That's all I ask. *(takes the gun from STEVIE'S hand)* Say thank you.

STEVIE

Awk!

GINA MAE

Come on , now. Use your words,

STEVIE

Aww...th... anks...

GINA MAE

You're welcome... Now get out of my sight.

STEVIE *backs away in horror. Then turns and runs off.*

ROLLY

Thank you Gina Mae...

He starts off

GINA MAE

Rolly?

He stops

ROLLY

Yes Gina Mae.

GINA MAE

I've decided to help you change your life. I've failed to do it before because you repulsed me so much I couldn't stand to be with you. But your slide is out of control. Make the necessary arrangements. You're moving in with me and Jane.

ROLLY

I'm sorry, Gina Mae. I don't think I understand what you're talking about.

GINA MAE

It's simple. I'm going to reconstruct you. I'm going to turn you into a decent useful human being.

ROLLY

Really? Can you do that.

GINA MAE

It'd be easier to turn you into a squirrel, but I've got to try.

ROLLY

What about Stevie.

GINA MAE

Stevie's beyond help. Stevie lives in the dark hole. Now go make your arrangements, Rolly.. Okay?

ROLLY

Yes Gina Mae. I will. I'll just go tell Stevie he's on his own. Okay?

ROLLY runs off.

GINA MAE

I might have bitten off more than I can chew.

Door slams. Lights back up. Turn. Are gone.

Are you all right, doll?

JANE

I'm fine, Mom.

GINA MAE

How about you, Paul.

PAUL

I... I...

GINA MAE

Pain back?

PAUL

You...you said I was going to see some life going on. Drug dealers with guns. Talking like crow. That's real life?

GINA MAE

Well forgetting trhe crow thingf for the moment... The rest is what gors on out here. Get used to it.

PAUL

I don't want to get used to it.

GINA MAE

You've got no choice. It's either that or you die.

PAUL

How is all this connected to my illness.

GINA MAE

Tell him honey.

JANE

You tell him, Mom.

GINA MAE

Nah. He thinks I'm weird. He'll believe it, coming from you.

JANE

Paul?

PAUL

Yes.

JANE

You've been living like a fool... You've lost touch with the genuinely complex nature of reality. All your friends think alike, talk alike, want the same things...

GINA MAE

It's true.

PAUL

Well ...it might be true. It's never occurred to me. But-

JANE

We both knew this about you as soon as we saw you. You're dying from a false simplicity. You've you've denied the power of the complex life force and it's killing you

PAUL

Okay. Yes. That almost makes sense... But the pain is real. And the blood. It comes out of my nose, mouth. It's in my urine. I'd see a specialist but what part of the body are we talking about here. I mean suppose I go see a urologist and the stuff starts dripping out of my ears.

GINA MAE

Oh good God, man. Stop resisting it. It's as plain as the nose on your face... It's staring you in the eyes. It's here. Take it. Use it.

PAUL

What?

GINA MAE

The simple...ugly...truth... There's life right here on earth and you're not part of it. Listen to me. If you don't get better you won't be able to work, you won't have any money, soon you won't have any friends. You'll be on welfare. They'll cut you off welfare. You won't be able to eat properly. You won't have a place to live. No clothes. You'll sleep in doorways... In the winter you'll freeze.

PAUL

Jesus... that's awful. That's terrifying.

GINA MAE

Good boy. Jane, how do you like our new hats?

JANE

I like them a lot, Mom.

GINA MAE

Would you like one. They come in black, blue, and maroon.

JANE

Get me a blue one.

GINA MAE

I'll get you a blue one. And a maroon one. I get a discount, remember.

JANE

Thanks.

GINA MAE

No problem I love you, doll.

JANE

I love you too Mom.

Blackout

Scene Six

Early Evening. TONY's office. TONY and MICHAEL.

TONY is standing, leaning forward, hands behind his back. Staring at a large plexiglass covered model. . The roof is sort of like a green glass turtle shell. Inside are very brightly coloured little constructions. A roller coaster. A waterfall. Etc. Etc.

MICHAEL is pacing. Gesturing. Talking as much to himself as to TONY.

MICHAEL

So he's disappeared. Sucked into the vortex. No one's seen him. None of his friends...not that he has many. And of course he lives alone, so who's to check up on him anyway. But he used to make the odd contact with humanity. A restaurant owner. His doorman. His chess partner. So he's disappeared. But it wasn't that hard to do. I'm worried. He could be really sick. Depressed. Maybe dead. Do you have police contacts?

TONY

None that I'll use for something like this. It's trivial.

MICHAEL

Come on. He's my brother.

TONY

I had a brother once. He disappeared under mysterious circumstances too. I was advised to forget him. I'm giving to you that same advice.

MICHAEL

I'll be honest... I need him. Financially, I mean. He's the star. I'm worried I can't make it without him.

TONY

You're probably right. You know the last time I saw my brother alive, he and my Mom were having a vicious argument... I really don't want to dwell on this subject.

MICHAEL

Do you know how many cars there are in my family. Five. Five cars. And they all have to be replaced every two years. The wife, the kids, they've come to expect it. I'll be honest. I'm terrified of my wife and my kids. They're monsters of consumption. You have to keep their desires well fed.

TONY

(looks at Michael for the first time) Are you heavily insured. I've heard plenty of stories about guys like you getting into money trouble, then getting offed by their families for the insurance. First thing to do is cancel all your policies.

MICHAEL

I'll keep that in mind. I mean I'm not going down without a fight, you know. I've still got my talent.

TONY

Talent isn't enough. You don't have a reputation.

MICHAEL

Can you get me work.

TONY

Why should I. What have you done for me lately. Did you help me redesign my mall.

MICHAEL

I'll be honest. It can't be redesigned. It's poorly conceived. You have to start from scratch... I'm sorry... I'm being honest.

TONY

Why? Why all of a sudden are you being honest. Your future is on the line here. This is the time you should be licking boots.

MICHAEL

I thought you'd admire me for it. I figured you were the kind of man who really respects a man for being honest when the chips are down.

TONY

Well you're wrong. I think you're being stupid. The stupidity thing outweighs the honest thing here. You're stepping on my dream. I'll be honest with you now. I want to smack you in the face. I want to pick up that phone and arrange to have you killed... I'm not sure I won't do it, either.

MICHAEL

Maybe I wasn't really being honest. Maybe I was just being unimaginative. I mean maybe you're ahead of your time. Maybe I just have to forget all my training, open up my head...look at the design again.

TONY

Look at it now.

MICHAEL

Okay... Okay now is good. Yeah. Okay.

He walks over. Looks at it.

TONY

Well?

MICHAEL

It works. On some basic level it works. It has...

TONY

Audacity.

MICHAEL

Yes. And something else...

TONY

A spirit of adventure.

MICHAEL

Look...I'm sorry. I have to be honest. I won't be really honest. Just enough to clear the air. And then we can move on... It's...it's almost impossible to pull off. But wait! Almost impossible is a starting point. Let's think of it that way. Let's build on it... I can do it. Leave it with me. Give me a month.

TONY

24 hours. I have to move fast.

MICHAEL

Pressure. No, that's okay. Pressure can be a good thing. I'll think of it as a test.

MARY *comes on.*

MARY

Oh my God. What's that. (*pointing at the model*)

TONY

Garbage. It's yesterday's news. I'm tossing it out. Michael and I were just talking about how stupid it is. Right?

MICHAEL

Oh... Yes. It's one of the stupidest things I've seen in my entire-

TONY

Yes. So it's garbage. It's on its way to the incinerator. Michael's taking it. Take it now, Michael.

MARY

Leave it where it is for now... You're Michael Gallagher aren't you.

MICHAEL

Yes. And you're?

TONY

My mother.

MARY

I have some news about your brother, Mr. Gallagher.

MICHAEL

Is he all right.

MARY

No. No he's not. He's in deep trouble. (*picks up the phone: buzzes*) Get in here. (*puts the phone down*) That photograph of your brother you gave to Tony...I had it copied and distributed to some of our employees...I was worried, you see. I was behaving like a concerned citizen. Nothing more. Some of our employees cover a lot of ground in their work for us. Your brother was seen.

STEVIE *comes in.*

STEVIE

Okay. I'm in. What do I do now.

MARY

Shut up. Sit down. In a moment I'll ask you to talk. When you've finished talking you'll shut up and sit down again.

STEVIE

I like you. You make things clear. I like that.

She points to a chair. STEVIE sits.

MARY

First things first. Michael...may I call you Michael.

MICHAEL

Yes.

MARY

I apologize in advance. I'm about to be brutally frank. I made enquiries. I know all about you. You're in debt up to your earlobes. (to TONY) He owes to a bank, to his father-in-law, to a finance company, to a loan-shark-

TONY

A loan shark? Michael that's stupid.

MICHAEL

It's the monsters of consumption. They drove me to it.

MARY

He owes hundreds of thousands. He can be bought. Buy him. Do it now. I need him to help me with his brother.

TONY

Michael. I'm going to outline a contract for you now. A contract which will seal your employment to my family. We the employer will secure all your indebtedness and give you a very generous salary. You the employee will swear an oath of secrecy and do whatever we ask. Failure to comply with your obligations in this contract will result in you immediate death.

MICHAEL

Really? Oh...well, I...don't think I'm ready for this. This sounds like pretty heavy stuff. I need some time. What do you mean...I mean what would you be asking me to do.

TONY

Details like that are forthcoming only after the swearing of the oath.

MICHAEL

I see. Well I just don't think I'm the kind of-

MARY

(to TONY) Sweeten the offer.

TONY

Michael. Look at me. Come here. Closer. That's it.

They're eye to eye.

I mean what I'm about to say. Look at my eyes. You'll see for yourself. Ready? Good... Take my offer or you'll never have another gainful day of employment as long as you live. I'll make sure of it.

MICHAEL

I thought she told you to "sweeten" the offer.

TONY

Michael. Just agree to it, okay.

MICHAEL

Yeah, Okay. I'll sign

TONY

No signatures. A handshake is good enough.

They shake.

Now shake my mother's hand.

He does.

MARY

Welcome to the family business, Michael.

STEVIE

What about the oath.

MARY

Shut up! (to MICHAEL) We'll assume you've already said the oath silently and clearly to yourself.

MICHAEL

And I have. I really have.

MARY

(to STEVIE) You. Stand up.

STEVIE

You bet. (*gets up*)

MARY

Tell them the story about your father and what happened in the alley. Nothing more. Not about the drugs in the jockey's saddlebags. Not about the hooker in the alderman's limo. Not about your girlfriend Shirley. Gold help her. Just the alley and your father. And use none of your filthy language. Now speak.

STEVIE

I'm nervous now. You've made me nervous. Sometimes I just swear. I can't help it. It just comes out. It's my aunt. She's been mucking around in my head. I think she mighta pried something loose.

MARY

Get on with it.

STEVIE

Okay. It's...it's this... It's my dad. He's heavier into his ripoff than ever. I went to see him like we agreed. I told him "dad this is a warning. These people asked me to ask you to stop" I told him I'm just a fuck-fuh-freakin' messenger. He laughs. He pats me on the head, he tells me not to worry. Says he's getting big. Says soon he'll be big enough to deal with any hassles. I back off...I tell him that's cool. He's my dad I tell I'm with him all the way-

MARY

Into the alley!

STEVIE

Yeah. We're in the alley. My cousin brought us there. My cousin's a slut. I hate her! Okay I'm sorry. Is slut a bad word really- I'm sorry. We're in the alley to meet my aunt. I wonder why. I don't know. I know shit at this point. (*looks at MARY*) But my dad seems scared. Stuff gets talked about. I'm startin' to put the pieces together. My aunt is the brains. She's pulling my dad's strings like he's a dummy without a prick... a dick... A weenie? Anyway my aunt's got plans. She's going to take over the hookers, the drugs all the stuff this certain big business is running now- I guess that's you people, eh? I mean I didn't know you had that much going on. I'm impressed. I'm really fuh-fuh-freakin' impressed.

TONY

Just continue.

STEVIE

My aunt. She's going to take it over pure and simple. She's got inside info. Then I notice him. Up against a wall. A funny hat on his head. He looks familiar. At first I think he looks like a teacher I once had. Then I remember that teacher's dead. So who is this guy. His face is talking to my brain. My brain knows him. Then I remember the picture your mother gave me. It's him. Okay. My brain works!

(no response)

STEVIE

The guy in the hat says some really ugly things about you people then tells me to beat it because he's got stuff to talk to my dad about... So I do. But I've got the picture. They're the competition. My dad's a dickless dummy and my aunt and the guy in the hat are the big shits. Okay I had a choice then. I coulda gone either way. But I decided. I'm with you guys. And you know why?

TONY

Because you're a gutless little pile of vomit.

MARY

But his brain works, Tony. It's a little brain, and it works very slowly but it works well enough to comprehend the inevitable. You should be sitting down now, Mr. Moore.

STEVIE *sits*.

TONY

Do you believe his story, Mom.

MARY

I don't see that it matters. Just the possibility that it's true is enough to require us to take action.
(to MICHAEL) Did your brother ever talk to you about our family's extended business operations.

MICHAEL

No ma'am.

MARY

But of course you'd both heard rumours.

MICHAEL

Yes ma'am, we had.

MARY

(to TONY) It wouldn't have been too difficult for Paul to obtain information from some of our people. They saw him with you all the time. They could have assumed he was one of your confidantes.

TONY

Only the stupid ones, Mom.

MARY

But we have a lot of stupid people working for us these days, Tony. Gross pathetic stupidity is everywhere. Right Mr. Moore?

STEVIE

I've gotta deal with it every day.

MARY

Thank you Mr. Moore. That is all. Wait outside.

STEVIE *stands*.

STEVIE

Outside the door? Or outside in the street?

MARY

Outside the door will do.

He leaves.

Tony. When we've finished with that young man, when he's completely betrayed his father and the rest of his family and helped us destroy them-I want you to have his vocal chords cut. He'll be allowed to live. But silently, please.

MICHAEL

Is that how your family treats its employees.

MARY

He never had a contract Michael. He's just an itinerant dayworker.

TONY

How do you want this handled, Mom.

MARY

Well father to son didn't get us anywhere. Let's try brother to brother next.

MICHAEL

Okay. Look. I'll talk to him. If it was Paul that kid was talking about maybe he's just flipped out or something. I'll try to get him to back off for you.

MARY

Yes. Begin by talking. A resolution by negotiation is always best. However, be prepared to take action if negotiations break down. Tony will describe the action to which I am referring. And I'll leave Stevie Moore behind as a spiritual advisor... Goodbye for now. *(starts off)* And by the way Tony. *(stops)* See to it that that model really does get destroyed. It's only blurring your vision. I need you to see things perfectly clearly. Don't make me have to punish you too, Tony. Understand?

TONY

Sure do, Mom.

MARY

Underwater mall. Ridiculous. *(leaves)*

TONY

Okay. Things are complex now. We've got to play it very smart. We'll start with the model.

MICHAEL

I'll have it destroyed.

TONY

No way. It's my dream. It's my monument. It's the essential ingredient in this city's radiant future.

MICHAEL

You heard her. She thinks it's ridiculous.

TONY

That's just because I haven't had the right opportunity to sell her on it. But until I do, until she's on board, I'm going outside the family on this. That's a very very dangerous thing to do. But it's important to my internal life. Okay. So we help Mom. We put down the revolt. But we continue with the mall. I'm going to be asking a lot of you Michael. Remember your oath?

MICHAEL

Who is that to...? The oath?

TONY

Me.

MICHAEL

Not your mother?

TONY

Her too.

MICHAEL

So just tell me. Am I breaking my oath to her by helping you with the mall.

TONY

If we're smart it won't matter.

MICHAEL

She scares me. I don't want to upset her.

TONY

Solve the problem with Paul. She'll love you like a son.

MICHAEL

Is that how she loves you. Like a son?

TONY

I *am* her son. What kind of question is that. If you're implying I'm afraid of her, you're right. But that's normal. Weren't you afraid of your mother?

MICHAEL

No.

TONY

Oh... Well maybe you should have been. Maybe you wouldn't be in the mess you're in now.

MICHAEL

I seem to be caught. I feel caught. This is new. I've never felt like this before. Oh sometimes my family makes me feel this way, but I figured I could just disappear if they really started giving me the gears. I guess there's no way I could just disappear from you people.

TONY

No. There's not. (*picks up phone*) Joanna, put Mr. Moore on the line for me. (*pause*) Get in here, asshole. (*puts phone down*) Okay. First things first. We put down the revolt.

STEVIE *comes in.*

Do you know where to reach these people you were talking about.

STEVIE

Ah fuck. He's fucking asking me if I know where my own fucking family-

TONY

Hey! Hey! Hey!! When we're together only one of us talks like that. Only one of us uses that kind of language. And it isn't you scumbag, so who the fuck is it.

STEVIE

It's you.

TONY

Right! Have you got a gun.

STEVIE

I've got five guns.

TONY

(mocking) "I've got five guns!" I'm not asking to look at your model airplanes, slim dick. I'm asking you if you're armed.

STEVIE

I'm armed. *(takes out a pistol)* Good enough?

TONY *takes out a gun twice the size from a desk drawer.*

TONY

It'll have to do... Let's go. My time is money.

He starts off. Reaches STEVIE. Puts his arms around him.

What's your time, slime.

STEVIE

Nothin'. My time is nothin'.

TONY

Good boy. Come on Michael.

MICHAEL

I'm scared, Tony.

TONY

We're all scared, guy. It's a scary business. But we have to keep this city under our control. We have to show the way to the future.

MICHAEL

I can't move. I'm paralyzed.

TONY

Do me a favour will you, puke face.

STEVIE

Yes, sir.

TONY

If my friend here doesn't make a move to follow me out the door in two seconds. Blow his head off.

STEVIE

Yes, sir.

TONY *starts off*. STEVIE raises the gun. *Points it at MICHAEL*.

MICHAEL

(takes a step) Thanks. That helped.

TONY *gets in the middle. Puts his arm around them both*.

TONY

Everything's going to be fine. Little problems have to be fixed so we all have time to dream. Have visions. Do you ever have visions, ass-wipe.

STEVIE

All the time, sir.

TONY

Ah, you fucking liar. I love you. Really I do. You make me feel glad I'm alive and I'm not you. *(to MICHAEL)* You gotta love him for that.

They're gone.

Blackout.

Scene Seven

A small bare room in a police station. Just a table and one chair.

ROLLY is sitting in the chair. Drumming his fingers on the table top. A half empty coffee cup in front of him. DIAN is sitting on the edge of the table. Looking up at the ceiling.

A moment passes.

ROLLY

Am I under arrest... Am I? ... Am I under arrest? Look, police stations make me nervous... I'm pretty nervous now... If that's what you were wondering... If that's the purpose of all this... Okay, it worked... I mean we've been sitting here for two hours. You haven't said a thing. I've asked you maybe a hundred times if I'm under arrest...you haven't said a word.

DIAN takes her purse from her shoulder. Takes out a pack of gum

DIAN

Would you like a piece of Trident sugarless gum.

ROLLY

Sure.

She hands him a piece. Takes one herself. They chew for a while.

ROLLY

So is that all you're going to say.

Long pause.

DIAN

What else do you want me to say.

ROLLY

Well you're supposed to ask me questions. You know, grill me. Or you could answer my question. Am I under arrest.

DIAN

Actually it would be more interesting if you told me how you feel. Do you feel like you're under arrest.

ROLLY

Sure. I sure do. But you're supposed to tell me. That's the law. And you're supposed to tell me why.

DIAN

But suppose we haven't make up our minds yet.

ROLLY

About what? About if I'm under arrest?

DIAN

Or why. Or maybe there are a number of things we haven't made up our minds about. We're faced with a richness of possibilities here.

ROLLY

Whatya mean. I mean it's good that you're talking. But whatya talking about. You're not talking like a cop. You're talking weird. Go get me a cop who talks like a cop.

DIAN

They're all dead.

ROLLY

What?

DIAN

All the cops who talk like cops. They died.

ROLLY

Okay let's stop talking for a while.

DIAN

Fine

Long pause.

ROLLY

You're making me real nervous, lady. If I get much more nervous, I won't be any good to you. I'll have a seizure or something. I'm older than I look.

DIAN

How old do you think you look. That's always an interesting question. Answer that one.

ROLLY

Hey are you one of those rogue cops. Are you outta control. Are you working without supervision.

DIAN

I have a supervisor. He talks like me. He taught me everything I know. How old do you think I look. I could go get my supervisor. You could tell me how old you think *he* looks.

ROLLY

You're talking like a person who's got no reason to be in a hurry. Those kinda people make me nervous. They have lots of time to plan their alibis. Okay I'm nervous on a whole new level now. I hope you're happy. Did you put drugs in my coffee. Are you waiting for the drugs to work.

DIAN

Let me tell you something about myself.

ROLLY

I'm expected somewhere, you know. People will be getting suspicious. If you kill me and drop my body in an alley, suspicions will be aroused... Everyone knows I'm just a petty thief. I've never done anything to deserve that kind of treatment. They'll rule out the mob. You'll be investigated.

DIAN

I'm single. I'm 35 years old. I have a degree in sociology. I'm not afraid of death.

ROLLY

Why'd you say that.

DIAN

It's true. All of it.

ROLLY

The last part. Why'd you tell me you weren't afraid of death.

DIAN

I thought you might want to know. You were talking about it. It was on your mind. It was on both our minds, I guess. In sociological terms, that's called "shared concern."

ROLLY

Look. Whose death are we talking about here.

DIAN

Whose do you think.

ROLLY

Okay. Look. I told you. You won't get away with it. I think you're bluffing anyway. I know cops. They bluff. Why the hell won't you tell me what it is you want to know.

DIAN

It would be more interesting if you figured out what it is you want to tell us.

ROLLY

Yeah?

DIAN

In the meantime... You said you know cops. I find that interesting. When was the last time you had any contact with them.

ROLLY

Them? The family?

DIAN

No. Cops. What family. Yours?

ROLLY

I'm confused. I'm drugged, right? You're not really talking weird. I'm just hearing weird.

DIAN

As for cops. Well times have changed. Methods have changed to keep up with the times. Not being afraid of death is now the basic requirement.

ROLLY

That's a threat for sure. I may be drugged but I'm not stupid. Okay. You want to know about the family. I'll tell you.

DIAN

You can tell me anything you want. There'd be no problem with that. I don't think it would conflict with the basic requirement.

ROLLY

Okay I'm gonna make a wild guess about what you're talking about here. Am I doomed. No matter what I say, am I doomed.

DIAN

Do you feel doomed.

ROLLY

Yeah. I kinda do. And I'll tell you something.

DIAN

Tell me anything you want.

ROLLY

I don't want to die... I've got a chance for rehabilitation. My sister-in-law is a witch or something. She's gonna remake my personality. In a month or so I could be a useful citizen. It's true. And I was really looking forward to it. I was on my way to her house when you nabbed me.

DIAN

You mentioned the mob earlier. I meant to tell you I found that interesting.

ROLLY

I could talk about the mob. I could do that.

DIAN

Then after that, there was some confusion about a family. I might be interested in some clarification on that... Would you like me to put some more drugs in your coffee first.

ROLLY

You put drugs in my coffee?

DIAN

I thought you knew. You said you knew.

ROLLY

Are they dangerous.

DIAN

One of them.

ROLLY

One of them? Jesus. How many kinds did you put in. Jesus am I gonna die. How much of that drug can a guy take before he dies.

DIAN

I'm not sure. Do you want to find out. It could be interesting. Come on. Let's go for it. (*picks up the coffee cup*)

ROLLY

What the hell is wrong with you lady. Give me back that cup. (*Grabs it*) You've weirded me right out. You're weirding me right to death. Jesus. Get me help. Get me someone to talk to I can understand.

DIAN

I could do that. But it wouldn't solve the time problem.

ROLLY

What's the time problem.

DIAN

The dangerous drug in your coffee. It takes some time to kill. That gives us some time to stop it, I guess.

ROLLY

You really can't get away with this.

DIAN

I really can. And for one basic reason. Because out of all the people I know, and all the people you know, there's no one who really gives a shit about what happens to you.

ROLLY

Jesus. That's the only thing you've said to me so far that makes any sense. And it was a really crappy. Totally depressing. I think you might not be human. In my drugged and weirded-out mind I'm seeing you as a space monster. I gotta tell you that. But I'm dying aren't I. I'm delirious... Oh Jesus.

DIAN

Offer me some clarification about the mob and about that family you mentioned. That is, if you really want to.

ROLLY

If I do, will you save me.

DIAN

I think there's still time.

ROLLY

Really?

DIAN

There's a chance. Go for it. Go for your chance. But make it interesting.

ROLLY

I want to live. I want to be a new person! I want to offer you clarification! I do! Really!

DIAN

Go for it! Come on! Go for it!!

ROLLY

Okay! I know plenty! There's a really big family with really big-

DIAN

Wait. Hold that thought. I have to get a stenographer. *(leaves)*

ROLLY looks around. Nervously. Looks in coffee cup.

ROLLY

(shouting off) Come on. Hurry up. Hurry up for chrissake! I'm running out of time here!!

Blackout.

Scene Eight

A small area in a corner of GINA MAE's old house.

Two old armchairs.

PAUL is sitting in one of the chairs. A bowl of fruit on his lap. Eating a banana. GINA MAE is sitting in the other chair. JANE is sitting on the floor between her mother's legs. GINA MAE is playing absent-mindedly with JANE's hair.

PAUL

So it's nice here. What do you call this. A den?

GINA MAE

No I call it a corner. Do you see any walls. We're just sitting in a corner of the living room here.

PAUL

Sure. But it looks made, somehow. Set apart for a special purpose.

GINA MAE

It's the only place these two chairs would fit.

PAUL

But it's nice. I feel comfortable.

GINA MAE

Eat your banana.

PAUL

This is my third. I'm usually not too keen on bananas.

JANE

They contain potassium. Maybe you have a potassium shortage.

GINA MAE

That's possible. But the really important thing about bananas is that they're comforting. They're a relaxing food to eat. It's partly because of the texture. Partly because you have to eat them slow. If you eat them fast you could gag and choke to death. When you finish your banana eat an orange. There're seedless clementines. You buy them by the box. Five ninety-nine if you shop around. I recommend them.

JANE

Vitamin C.

GINA MAE

Sure. But mostly the colour. The colour and the cool feeling of the juice combine for a positive experience.

PAUL

The grapes look good.

GINA MAE

Save the grapes. Grapes are for when you need to feel aggressive. You can eat them fast. Get really worked up. Do some real damage to people.

PAUL

Oh. Well I've never felt to the need to hurt anyone.

GINA MAE

How about yourself?

PAUL

Yeah. I've been thinking a lot about suicide.

GINA MAE

I'm glad you brought that up. Of course I provided the opportunity, but I'm glad you took it.

JANE

Depression. I read somewhere that depression kills more people than cancer.

GINA MAE

Depression is tricky. Drugs can help. But all I can offer is a better way of thinking . Better experiences. (to PAUL) Eat an orange.

PAUL

Yeah.

GINA MAE

Tell me a couple of things about yourself. Have you ever been married?

PAUL

Never.

JANE

In love?

PAUL

I was in love once... with someone I wanted to marry. She left me because she thought I was more in love with my work. That's what she said. I think she really left me because she realized my work was the only increasingly thing about me.

GINA MAE

Tell me more about your work.

JANE

An architect is a tremendous thing to be.

GINA MAE

Does he look like he feels tremendous. Be more specific with your enthusiasm, Jane. Put time, place and circumstance together with at all times. Almost certainly he'd feel tremendous if this were ancient Greece.

PAUL

My early work was all about self expression. Very arrogant. But I didn't make much of a connection with the public. Later I made an effort to be more accessible. More useful. That was satisfying for a time. Now it's almost meaningless. My work was my life. And I've come to hate my work and most of the people who derive any use from it. I build places where people can live. But I don't much like the people who live there. I don't know why. I've met some of them. They're not evil. I'm not crazy about the way they dress, but that can't be it. I kept thinking if I could figure out why I didn't like them, I could start building them better places to live. I was working on it when I got sick.

JANE

When you get really successful you get depressed sometimes. I read an article at the hospital. It's called "attainment of goal depression."

PAUL

I used to get that every time I finished a project. This is something else. Bigger. Worse...or you know...maybe we shouldn't rule out a disease. No offense, but maybe I really should be going to other doctors.

GINA MAE

I'm not against that. If you're still alive, in say a week, but you're not feeling better, go see a doctor. In the meantime let's talk about money.

PAUL

Money?

GINA MAE

Yeah. How much you got?

PAUL

On me?

GINA MAE

On you. In the bank. In investments. What's owed to you. The whole picture.

PAUL

I don't know. My condo is worth about \$800,000, maybe more. Then in the bank, all the rest...maybe a total of two million.

JANE

That's amazing.

PAUL

I mean that's not all liquid but--

GINA MAE

How the hell did you wind up with that much money. Were you born into it?

PAUL

My father was a mechanic. I ... just worked for it.

JANE

Hard I bet.

PAUL

Yeah. Everything I have I think I deserve...

GINA MAE

Give it all to me.

PAUL

If...you need some money I'd be glad to help out. We could think of it as payment for helping me, letting me stay here---

GINA MAE

Yeah. Sure. Think of it any way you want. And keep a little to live on. But I want all the rest. Make the arrangements tomorrow. Put your property on the market. Visit your bank. Visit your stock broker. Make the arrangements. I'll help you if you want. So will Jane.

JANE

Please Mom. You're embarrassing him. He thinks you're serious.

GINA MAE

Truth is, I don't think for sure if his problem is that he has all that money and it's doing him no good. All I'm saying is let's find out.

PAUL

If I gave it to you, what would you do with it.

GINA MAE

Give it away. Spread it around in some places where it could be used. You could help me. So you'll make the arrangements?

PAUL

I'll think about it.

JANE

You will?

PAUL

Yeah. I mean I'm not making any promises.

GINA MAE

Neither am I. I'm just giving you an option.

A knock on the door.

JANE

I'll get it (*leaves*)

PAUL

So basically you're a do-gooder, right.

GINA MAE

Basically so are you. I mean you're a human being. Basically human beings want to do good. You have to believe that. Even if it makes you feel a little stupid. I mean what's the alternative. I'll tell you. The alternative is ugly. It's the ugliness without the truth. If you know what I mean.

PAUL

I almost do know what you mean. Maybe I'm running a fever.

JANE

(*comes in*) He's got a visitor.

MICHAEL *comes in.*

MICHAEL

Hi... Oh man, you look awful. What's happening to you. You're looking worse every time I see you.

PAUL

Oh, well actually I feel a bit better since I got out of the hospital.

MICHAEL

You're kidding yourself. You need help. Let's go.

PAUL

Thanks anyway. I think I'll stay here for awhile.

MICHAEL

No you can't do that. You don't understand.

GINA MAE

Excuse me. We haven't been introduced.

PAUL

Michael is my brother. Michael this is Mrs. Sabatini. She's-

MICHAEL

I know what she is. How the hell did you ever get mixed up with her. Don't you know who you people are messing around with. She's got you toying with death. I mean, come on, Paul. If you wanted to lead a life of crime at least you could have kept your suit on. The point is there are other ways.

PAUL

Michael. What are you doing here. And what the hell are you talking about.

MICHAEL

I cut a deal. You come with me right now, you sever your connection with these crooks and you'll be forgiven-

JANE

Who the hell are you calling crooks, mister.

MICHAEL

Well it must be you, right. Shit they're crooks. And they're morons.

PAUL

I'd be careful what you say, Michael.

GINA MAE

(standing) Very very careful. You're upsetting me.

MICHAEL

Oh God, they're sensitive. They're crooks. They're morons. And they're sensitive. Look, we haven't got any more time, Paul. I have to get you out of here right now.

PAUL

Why?

MICHAEL

I can't say. *(looks at his watch)* We've got less than two minutes. Something awful's going to happen.

GINA MAE

He's right. I can feel it.

PAUL

(stands) Whatya mean something awful?

MICHAEL

It's not my fault. The monsters of consumption made me vulnerable.

STEVIE *bursts in.*

STEVIE

Okay. The clock's running assholes. *(to MICHAEL)* Didn't you tell them.

MICHAEL

You told me not to tell them.

STEVIE

I told you not to tell them until it was time to tell them. Which is now. So go ahead. Tell them. Unless you want part of a murder rap.

GINA MAE

Are you behind this Stevie.

STEVIE

I told you not to mess with me. I told you I'd get back at you. I told you . You're lucky I feel a duty to warn you. *(to MICHAEL)* Tell them for chrissake!

MICHAEL

It's going to blow up! They've wired the whole house with explosives!

STEVIE

Okay, assholes. You're warned. Fair's fair. I warned you cause you're family. I did my duty.
(runs out)

He is gone.

PAUL

Michael, what the hell are you doing blowing up people's houses.

MICHAEL

What are you doing pushing drugs and pimping for hookers. I don't know. Maybe there's a ugly gene in the family that's been lying dormant for centuries.

PAUL

This is a mistake.

MICHAEL

Tell that to Tony Raft's mother.

PAUL

What's she got to do with it.

MICHAEL

I swore an oath. I'm gonna be like a son to her. Do you realize what that means. I'm scared shitless.

GINA MAE is pacing madly. Humming loudly.

GINA MAE

Paul, take my daughter out of here.

PAUL

Sure. As soon as I find out why this is happening.

MICHAEL

There's no time. There's only 20 seconds left... Holy shit. 20 seconds. I've gotta get out of here-

JANE

Mom.

MICHAEL

Jesus! My feet... won't move.

MICHAEL *is squirming hard.. Trying to move.*

JANE

Can't you stop it, Mom.

GINA MAE

Too late. Get going, Paul.

PAUL *drags JANE off.*

MICHAEL

Holy shit. My feet won't move. (*looks at his watch*) We've got less than 20 seconds and my feet won't move! I gotta get going. Please someone, help me get going.

GINA MAE gives him a violent push.

MICHAEL

Thanks...

He runs off

JANE *runs back on.* PAUL *follows her.*

GINA MAE

We're running out of time. I want my daughter out of here!

PAUL *is pulling JANE out.*

JANE

You too, Mom! Please! Please! Mom! You too!

PAUL

Come on, Gina Mae.

JANE

Oh please Mom!

GINA MAE

Get her out of here, Paul. Do it now!

PAUL *throws JANE over his shoulder. Leaves. GINA MAE looks around.*

GINA MAE

I was born here. This was my mother's house. My grandmother's house... People who destroy this house are going to have to pay.

(picks up the fruit bowl. eats some grapes)

Blackout.

Explosion.

Scene Nine

Mid-evening.

TONY's office.

MARY *is sitting behind the desk. A light meal in front of her. DIAN is leaning on the side of the desk. Pounding it with an open hand.*

DIAN

Now listen, lady. I've warned you! Don't try to intimidate me with that tone of voice. And don't make any more threats. Because if you do I'll reach over and haul your satin ass right down to headquarters! You're talking to the police here! You can't threaten my life. You're operating on very thin ice!!

MARY

I don't like having my supper interrupted. And I don't like being visited by the police at any time.

DIAN

Well tough shit!

MARY

(stands) No one talks to me like that!

DIAN

Shut up and sit down!

MARY *sits*.

DIAN

I'm here to give you a message from the top. So listen up! You were allowed into this city on a number of strict conditions. Your family was allowed to bring your money here and build condominiums and apartment buildings. You were clearly instructed to leave all your other interests where you came from. You were under very strict guidelines. And those guidelines were all there as guarantees that your "subsidiary" filth would not rear its ugly head in this city. We have very convincing evidence that you have not adhered to these guidelines, and I am here to put you on notice. Clean it up. Clean up your mess or get out. The people I work for have no intention of letting some gangland bullshit lead to some public revelation tying the money that owns and constructed those buildings to a bunch of drug-trafficking porn-trafficking, gambling, pimping hoods... Well that's it. You got it? I said, have you got it?!

MARY

Yes.

DIAN

Great!... I've got to get going. I'm late for my aerobics class.

(picks up a nylon gym bag from the chair; throws it over her shoulder) See ya. *(leaves)*

Pause.

MARY stands. Suddenly. Knocking over her chair. Begins to pace. Suddenly stops. Looks a round. Walks over. Picks up her chair. Sits down. Begins to eat.

PAUL comes in from the opposite direction that DIAN left. He is holding STEVIE by the collar of his jacket. They are both lightly covered in soot. PAUL is carrying STEVIE's gun.

PAUL

I've got a message for you. It concerns your son. We've got him. If you want him back you'll have to pay.

MARY

How much.

PAUL

A lot. We'll let you know. My first instinct was to go to the police. But a wiser mind prevailed. She's got a better plan. You're part of it. You'll be told what it is.

MARY

When.

PAUL

When we're ready. You people are insane. Insane and stupid. You've made some colossal mistake in identities which is pure stupidity. You make me sick. You make me so sick you're making me healthy again.

MARY

Why don't you just calm down and tell me what happened.

PAUL

You know. And if you don't know, this pile of sewage will fill you in. Stay by the phone. We're serious. We're mad. And we're... heavily armed.

PAUL throws STEVIE across the desk. STEVIE lands in the middle of MARY's supper. PAUL leaves.

Pause.

STEVIE

Things turned a little sour. Things got kind of screwed up.

MARY

Get off the desk.

STEVIE

Okay. But I'm telling ya—

MARY

Get off the desk!!

STEVIE

Okay okay. (*does*) But I'm telling ya that guy's dead in the water. He's dead and ready to get buried. I'm mad. God I'm mad. No one's ever seen me this mad. It's terrifying. He's gonna get terrified right to fucking death. (*crying*) He threw me around like a sack of friggin' onions. Jesus!

MARY

What did he mean when he said we'd made a mistake in identities.

STEVIE

He's squirming. He might look like he's in control. But we've got him squirming.

MARY

I see. And there's no chance that you've lead us astray here. You really *saw* him and your aunt trying to take over our street business.

STEVIE

Well why would I lie, eh.

MARY

Perhaps to get in our good graces.

STEVIE

Hey. I've never been in anyone's good graces in my life. Why would I think I could start now. I was just trying to save my dad before he got outta control.

MARY

Well it doesn't matter now, does it. They have Tony.

STEVIE

Yeah that's weird. How that happened is really weird. We blew the place to bits and—

MARY

You did what?

STEVIE

My aunt's house. We blew it up. I was with Michael. We started to run. We came around a corner and met up with your son *standing* by the car. He was still holding the detonator. Like he was in a freakin' daze. We tell him to drop it and get in the car. No answer. We yell at him. You know, cause all hell's goin' to break loose. We're yelling "Come on, come on." He's just standin' in a freakin' daze. Finally he looks at us and says "I can't go. She wants me to stay. I have to make amends." He says he's gotta make amends. That's what he says... So Michael jumps into the car to take off. I'm about to jump in too when I feel a hand on my shoulder then a terrible whack on my head. I wake up and our friend in the hat has me on the ground behind this building with his foot on my face. That's all I know. You know the rest. The rest is what he told you.

MARY *stands, trying to contain her fury. Walks to STEVIE.*

MARY

Whose idea was it to blow up the house.

STEVIE

Mine?

MARY

(starting to steam)

I see. And my son went along with it, did he.

STEVIE

Well I'll tell the truth, he didn't seem to care. All the way over there he was talking about his enormous shopping mall he wants to build *in* the lake. By the time we reached my aunt's house he was like almost hysterical talking about it. Almost crying, talking about it. Well I knew you wanted us to take some action here so I stepped in. I made the arrangements. He didn't seem to care. I had to take charge. You see, I'm the kinda man who-

MARY

Would you wait outside Mr. Moore.

STEVIE

Outside the door? Or outside in the street.

MARY

(barely under control)

Just leave.

STEVIE

Sure. *(does)*

MARY calmly walks to the desk. Then in a fury sweeps the mess from the desk.

MARY

Jesus! Fucking!! Christ!!!!

Blackout.

Scene Ten

Late night. The same alley as before. GINA MAE, JANE and TONY. TONY is sitting on the garbage bags. His hands tied behind his back.

TONY

Poor people live around here don't they. This is one of those areas that are never talked about.

JANE

We talk about it

GINA MAE

We used to live here. Someone blew up our house.

TONY

I'm sorry about that. I'd like to make it up to you.

GINA MAE

You will.

TONY

Like I told you, we were given bad information. Your nephew said you were trying to take over our business.

GINA MAE

Never refer to that creature as my nephew. If you do I'll come visit you in your brain again.

TONY

Hey. Was that you in there before.

GINA MAE

Yes.

TONY

That was strange. We had a nice long talk didn't we. But it was strange.

GINA MAE

You didn't mind? Most people can't stand it when I do that.

TONY

No you set me straight about a few things. Especially the part about making amends. You see, I think a part of me is really into making amends. I think that's what my mall is really about.

JANE

We don't want to hear any more about your mall. It sounds stupid.

TONY

Really? Maybe I didn't describe it property.

JANE

When you said it was under water that was all I needed to hear.

GINA MAE

No matter where it is, we don't need it. If you want to build something that's needed build a huge Bargain Harold's.

TONY

Who's he.

GINA MAE

I don't know. I don't know if Harold even exists. But his dream lives on.

TONY

Great. I'm attuned to dreams. Maybe me and this guy Harold could team up.

GINA MAE

How much money could your mother have come up with in 24 hours.

TONY

Hard to say. Seven or eight million.

GINA MAE

Damn it. I only asked for five.

TONY

Five is no sweat. You'll get that for sure. What are you going to do with it. Travel?

JANE

My mom hates to travel. .

TONY

(to JANE) How about you.

JANE

I like it here. I like my job. I used to like my house.

TONY

Buy a new one. Five million gets you a great house. Or better still buy a condo.

JANE

We hate those things. Living in those things is living away from life.

TONY

That's what's so great about them. Life sucks. People should avoid it as much as possible. They'll live longer for sure.

GINA MAE

You're not an evil man, Tony. You've just not completely human.

TONY

Thanks.

PAUL rushes on from the end of the alley.

PAUL

They're coming. They're just getting out of the car. Are you ready?

GINA MAE

Well I've never done this before so I'm not sure...

PAUL

You'll do fine. I have total faith in you.

He smiles widely. Puts his hand gently on GINA MAE'S cheek.

GINA MAE

Yeah...thanks. Now go stand next to Mr. Raft. Put the pistol to his head.

PAUL obeys. GINA MAE crooks a finger at JANE. JANE comes closer to her.

(whispering) Did you see what he just did. Did you notice the gooey smile he gave me. Did it have a meaning. Just who exactly does he think I am.

JANE *shrugs*. GINA MAE and JANE *turn*. Look at PAUL, who is holding the gun to TONY's temple.

TONY

That thing loaded, Paul?

PAUL

Yes.

TONY

It's just the chemistry between us, isn't it, Paul. Our chemistry just turned bad somehow.

PAUL

You were killing me.

TONY

Nah. I was just giving you honest work.

GINA MAE

Jane, are you nervous.

JANE

It's for a good cause.

GINA MAE

Come stand behind me.

JANE

I'd rather you stood behind me, Mom.

GINA MAE

I know you would. But get behind me anyway. Just to humour me.

JANE

Okay. *(does)* But just to humour you, okay.

Footsteps. MARY and STEVIE appear out of the shadows. Advance. MARY is wearing a luxurious fur coat. STEVIE is carrying two suitcases. They stop in front of GINA MAE.

GINA MAE

Welcome to our little home away from home.

MARY

Are you all right, Tony.

TONY

Terrific. Take a good look around, Mom. This is one of those poor-people neighborhoods. If we're smart we'll use it one day.

PAUL

You've been using it for years.

TONY

I mean in a positive way. Mom, I've been thinking. It's time to start acting positively. It could be a trend.

MARY

Be quiet for a moment, Tony. *(to GINA MAE)* You wanted us here. We followed your instructions. The money is in those suitcases. *(to STEVIE)* Show them.

STEVIE begins opening up the suitcases.

GINA MAE

That's really a great coat. Is it real.

MARY

Yes, of course.

GINA MAE

Can I have it. I want to give it to my daughter.

JANE

I don't like coats like that, Mom.

GINA MAE

I feel it's the least they can do for you after destroying your house.

JANE

I'd never wear it. I'd feel stupid.

GINA MAE

(to MARY) She doesn't want it. You can keep it.

STEVIE

Holy shit. Look at all this money. Is this real.

MARY

Yes. Of course... Shut up.

STEVIE

Holy shit.

MARY

All right. There's the money. Take it. Turn my son loose. We've finished doing business.

GINA MAE

The truth is we've just started. You've injured the life force in my neighborhood. It's going to cost a lot of money to make it better.

MARY

You talk like an insane person.

GINA MAE

Be gentle now. Insane people are ill. Don't annoy me by showing disrespect for genuine illness.

MARY

There's your money. Right there. Take it, turn my son loose, let us go about our business. And I'll take no further action against you. Push me and I'll have you and everyone you know obliterated from the face of the earth.

GINA MAE

Now there's an example of what I mean. I'm afraid you have a long way to go in order to get on good terms with the life force. This five million is just a down payment... But as down payments go it's not bad. Stevie, bring the money over here.

STEVIE

What? (*staring at the money*)

MARY

Take her the money!

STEVIE

What?... No, I don't think I can. Yeah. That's right. I can't. Look at it. It's right here. It's millions of dollars. I can see it. It's right here.

GINA MAE

Be careful now, Stevie.

STEVIE

It's right here. I'm touching it.

MARY

Be very careful.

STEVIE

No, no. I gotta say it. I gotta have it. I'm gonna do it. Jesus Jesus, I'm gonna---

GINA MAE

Careful.

STEVIE

(pulls out a gun) Fuck you. Fuck you all. This is my chance. I see it. Who knows if I'll ever see it again, so fuck you all to death. I'm taking it. *(to PAUL)* You. Drop your gun.

PAUL obeys.

STEVIE

Okay I'm on a roll.. I'm gonna win. I'm really gonna win. Awk. Awk. Ah shit...
Awwwwk!

(Slowly the arm holding STEVIE's gun is moving, bending until the gun is at his temple. He looks pleadingly at Gina Mae)

Stop it! Stop it! Please! Jesus. Awk.

(Suddenly STEVIE begins to sob. The sobbing becomes a whimper as STEVIE slowly crumples onto the ground where he remains whimpering almost inaudibly. Everyone looks at GINA MAE)

GINA MAE

I'd like to take responsibility for that. But I think he did it to himself. The man has such low self-regard it's possible his subconscious just couldn't deal with the idea of him winning at anything and took the necessary steps to prevent it. I mean if anybody was wondering.

TONY

I was wondering.

PAUL

Me too.

(MARY is reaching inside her coat.)

PAUL

(picks up his gun quickly) Leave that gun where it is, Mrs. Raft.

GINA MAE

Good for you, Paul. Now where were we.

JANE

Fixing the wounded life force, Mom. You were about to explain how she's going to do it.

GINA MAE

Yes. Well money of course is the answer as it so often is. Lots of it. From you, Mrs. Raft. Five million a month let's say for an indefinite period.

MARY

You're in over your head. That's an incredible amount of money you're talking about. You're in the process of pushing me into a position which will allow me no alternative but to lash out at your.

GINA MAE

We'll chance it. After all we have your son. And we're keeping him.

MARY

For how long?

GINA MAE

I want a community centre, two new parks, low cost housing. I want a shelter for the homeless and mistreated. I want big bright beautiful stores with lots of good quality fresh produce. I want a throbbing, creative neighborhood and a nice place for my daughter to live. And I want you to pay for it all because no one else will. As for how long, well as long as it takes.

MARY

He's my only child. I won't leave him with you.

TONY

Its okay, Mom. I don't mind.

MARY

Be quiet, Tony.

TONY

But, Mom. She talks to me. She puts interesting things in my head.

MARY

Tony, she wants too much. The other members of our family won't agree to giving her all that money just to save you. Most of them think you're just a flake!

TONY

But, Mom!

MARY

Okay the hell with it!

SHE REACHES FOR HER GUN.

PAUL

HEY!!

He is pointing his at her.

JANE

Paul! Don't!!

TWO GUN SHOTS

DIAN COMES OUT OF THE DARKNESS WITH HER GUN OVER HER HEAD AND HER I.D. IN THE OTHER HAND

DIAN

Okay everyone stay very calm. You're looking at the police here. So stay very very calm.

(taking possession of the guns) So what seems to be the problem?

GINA MAE

She doesn't like my plan.

DIAN

Well I do. It has scope courage. And it seems deeply connected to populist fantasy. (whistles) Okay, boys!

(MICHAEL AND ROLLY APPEAR OUT OF THE DARKNESS)

DIAN

Both these guys appeared at police headquarters wanting, for some reason to make confessions. But we decided that it would be best for all concerned for us to just ignore them and get them back to wherever they came from. Now who belongs to who here. Hurry up. If they don't get claimed, they get put away.

PAUL

That one's my brother.

DIAN

Great. *(to MICHAEL)* You over there.

MICHAEL goes over next to PAUL.

How about this one...No takers? *(to ROLLY)* I'm sorry. You're police property. Get used to it. I mean we can't just let you wander the streets unattended.

JANE

Mom?

GINA MAE

He's an awesome responsibility. I don't think I can do it alone.

JANE

I'll help.

GINA MAE

Really? Okay then. I'll take him.

DIAN

Great. Over there, Rolly.

ROLLY *goes over to* GINA MAE.

ROLLY

Thanks, Gina Mae.

GINA MAE

You'll have to work. We're homeless. Thanks to your friends.

ROLLY

They're not my friends. I'm just a victim. This lady cop explained it all to me. Turns out it goes way back in history. I'm a victim of those goddamn revolutions. You know, the industrial revolution and the technical revolution too. Hey, what's wrong with Stevie. Why's he look so sad.

GINA MAE

Ask *her*. (*points to DIAN*) She's the expert. Maybe he's a victim of the technical revolution too.

JANE

Maybe he's just rotten to the core, and he's starting to realize it.

GINA MAE

That sounds more like the truth to me.

DIAN

Excuse me. I'm not finished yet. The man on the garbage looks out of place. Untie him.

PAUL

(*to GINA MAE*) Should I.

DIAN

I know who you are, Mr. Gallagher. I'd think a man with your background would have more respect for police authority. Now untie him.

TONY

I don't want to be untied.

DIAN

Sure you do.

PAUL *proceeds to untie* TONY. TONY *resists but finally* PAUL *succeeds*. DIAN *turns to* MARY.

DIAN

Well this is really a fine mess you've gotten us all into. I thought you were warned.

MARY

I was taking appropriate measures.

DIAN

You were being shafted, lady. *(to TONY)* You. Over there with your mother.

TONY *goes over to* MARY.

Pause.

DIAN *walks slowly around. Stopping briefly at each group. Winds up in the middle. Takes out some gum.*

DIAN

So what we have here basically is conflict between families. I mean if you simplify it. Let's do that. Let's simplify it, so we can all find a way out. Now like I said before I like that lady's plan.

GINA MAE

Thank you.

DIAN

It's not perfect though. The money is the problem. If the money just goes haphazardly from that family to that family and then that family *(points to PAUL and MICHAEL)* helps to build all those wonderful facilities you mentioned... well imagine the questions, the possible revelations. Any solutions to that problem?

TONY

Tunnels!

(They all look at him)

DIAN

I've got one. A foundation. A legal philanthropic foundation. The Raft Foundation (*to MARY*) The money will pass from the Raft family to the Raft Foundation to the Sabatini family to the Sabatini Rebuilding Fund. And there it is. The solution to all our problems.

MARY

It was my intention to one day start such a thing.

PAUL

Sure it was.

MARY

There are tax benefits to be had. I won't debate your inference beyond admitting that. The point is any such foundation will be initiated in good time of my own free will. I will not do it under duress.

DIAN

You will do it under relentless duress. You will do it. Or you will be dispossessed of all your holdings in this city. I speak with authority here. It was given to me. I'm using it. (*pause; goes to MARY; hands her a piece of paper*) There's a telephone number on that paper you could call to confirm my authority. I know you recognize that telephone number... Do you understand? Say you do. Say it now.

MARY

I do.

DIAN

(*to GINA MAE*) Do you understand.

GINA MAE

You're hard to read. Are you a good person or a bad person. You're incredibly difficult to read.

DIAN

I'm just following orders. Doing my duty. Cleaning up the mess. Do you want money from this lady's foundation or not?

JANE

Of course we do.

GINA MAE

Shouldn't we figure out the true nature of the intent here first?

JANE

There'll be time for that later. For now, take the money, Mom.

GINA MAE

You're right... We accept.

DIAN

Good. An agreement. There are conditions, of course. This is the most important one—silence. Okay? Total silence about what was just negotiated.

(They all nod)

DIAN

You know, I think we can make an exception of this five million, Mrs. Sabatini. Take it. Use it to get started.

(JANE gets the suitcases. DIAN is collecting the guns from Paul and Mary)

DIAN

Life in the big city, eh. Some people love it. Some people just live it... (*pinches ROLLY's cheek*) Keep in touch (*starts* See ya.

She is gone.

Long pause.

MARY *starting at* GINA MAE.

GINA MAE

Wow that's some look you're giving me, lady. How'd you get to be so filled up with negativity. You have such nice clothes. Apparently you have a big family. Where' the destructive impulse come from. And the cruelty. Usually it's stupid people who are as cruel as you. You're a mystery. You could teach me a lot.

MARY

Enjoy your fantasy while you can. But don't assume that the people around here, your so-called victims, were put on this earth for any other reason than to serve the needs of the powerful. And don't assume that this natural state of affairs won't return eventually. Do you want me to repeat that in language you can understand.

JANE

I guess she thinks you're stupid, Mom.

GINA MAE

Or maybe she's mistaken me for someone else. That seems to be happening a lot these days. (*to MARY*) It wasn't me who talked about victims. I don't believe there are victims. I believe there are just people who haven't learned to defend themselves yet. But I'd rather talk about you. Have you considered changing your diet. Making new friends?

MARY

Come on, Tony. We're leaving.

TONY

Go ahead. I'll catch up.

MARY starts off. Looks over her shoulder at GINA MAE.

MARY

We'll meet again.

GINA MAE

I know. And it'll be thrilling.

MARY leaves.

PAUL

Go with your mother, Tony. We don't want you here.

TONY

That's just a passing phase. (to GINA MAE) I want you to promise you'll call me when you start to work. Anything that it has to do with the future of this city I want in on. I can be useful. In the meantime here's an idea for free. Have you ever thought of a community centre *dash* golf course *dash* wholesale outlet for shoes. There's a sublime connection there. It's based on the rich-poor poor-rich thing. Let it sink in. Call me. Or better still just pop into my brain sometime. You're invited. That's an open invitation. (*leaves*)

GINA MAE

Jane. Take 10,000 dollars of that money and put it in Stevie's pocket.

JANE

Why?

GINA MAE

I want Rolly to take Stevie to the airport and send him as far away as possible. The money will help him stay away. Is that all right with you Rolly?

JANE *sets about obeying her mother.*

ROLLY

Sure if that's the situation, that's the situation Gina Mae. You sure you don't want me to go with him. I won't even take any money. I'd just disappear if that's what you want.

GINA MAE

It's up to you.

ROLLY

Is it?

GINA MAE

Totally.

ROLLY

Really?... Okay, I'll stay. I really want to be a good person.

She looks at him.

ROLLY

Okay . That's not tue. I just don't have the legs for a life of crime anymore.

GINA MAE

I guess that's a good enough reason. This isn't church, Rolly. We're not asking purity of thought from you here. We're just asking you to stop being destructive.

(Stevie is groggy but on his feet now)

STEVIE

Hey... Ah...what's goin' on.

(ROLLY GRABS HIM)

ROLLY

You're leaving, Boy.

STEVIE

Really. Are you comin'.

ROLLY

No way. You're goin' to hell. And there's no way I'm comin' with you if I got a choice.

ROLLY *is pulling* STEVIE *off*.

STEVIE

How come I don't get a choice. Hey come on. Get fair. Why am I the only guy who never gets a friggin' choice.

They are gone.

PAUL goes to GINA MAE. Hugs her. She looks at him oddly. He breaks away. Puts his hands in his pockets. Goes over to the garbage. Stares at it.

MICHAEL

Paul?

PAUL

Shut up.

MICHAEL

It's just that I'd like to take this opportunity to apologize to you all and offer an explanation.

GINA MAE

(turns to him) Stupid man! Go back to your expensive car and your expensive house. You should have known better. Everything you have in your life should have made you a better person!

MICHAEL

I don't have an expensive car. My wife and kids have expensive cars. I drive a Dodge Dart. Not a bad car... I'm not complaining. I'm just--

GINA MAE

Go home. Think about what you've done. You let yourself be bought. Go home. Stay indoors for awhile. Be miserable!

MICHAEL looks at PAUL. PAUL looks away. MICHAEL shrugs. Leaves.

JANE

That was kind of harsh, Mom. Relatively speaking, I mean.

GINA MAE

He needed it. Basically he's a good boy. I was just spanking him a little.

PAUL

Who was that guy. He's not my brother. He's not even human... He's just a walking talking mortgage... How'd he get to be like that. How could he have been in with those people. I have to... I've got to... I've got to--- (*sits on the garbage bags*).

GINA MAE

Pick up the suitcases, Jane. We're going .

JANE

Where to?

GINA MAE

A motel I guess.

They start off.

PAUL

What about me.

GINA MAE

You still have a place to live, don't you.

PAUL

That's it? After all we've been through together, you're just leaving me behind.

GINA MAE *stops*.

GINA MAE

You'll live. Up till recently there was some doubt.

PAUL

There still is.

GINA MAE

What do you want from me. You look great. You're not having stomach pains... Go back to your condo. Continue your illustrious career. Get on with your life. You're the least of my problems. (*starts off*)

PAUL

I didn't know you only thought of me as a problem.

GINA MAE

Relax. You'll be fine.

GINA MAE catches up with JANE. Takes one of the suitcases. They start off. PAUL STANDS.

PAUL

That's not the point. I feel something not being completed here. I thought we meant something to each other. I thought we made a connection. You know, a spiritual bond.

GINA MAE

(leaving) There it is again. Like I said. It's not a church. It's just the rhythm of life. It sometimes skips a beat or two.

They are gone.

PAUL

That's not the point. She has to know that's not the point. I can't believe it. She just left... *(sits)* She didn't even say goodbyes.

Blackout.

Scene Eleven

Bargain Harold's.

The checkout area.

GINA MAE behind the counter. Counting the cash. Humming to herself. She picks up a phone from the counter. Punches a button.

GINA MAE

Yeah. Rudy. It's me. I've done the cash. It's all balanced. The other girls have gone. I'm just getting ready to close. No you're wrong. We're five minutes past closing already. No you don't have to apologize. Just learn how to tell the time *(hangs up phone)*

PAUL comes in. He looks the same. Wearing the same clothes. His hair is messed up. He is holding his toque in his hands. Tightly.

PAUL

Hello.

GINA MAE

Hello.

PAUL

I was just passing—

GINA MAE

Why do you look like that. It's been two weeks. You were supposed to get on with your life. I figured you'd understand, part of that involved changing your clothes and cleaning yourself up.

PAUL

I'm as clean as I want to get thank you. As I was about to say. I was passing and I remembered that good deal you had on work socks. It still on?

GINA MAE

Over there.

Pause

PAUL

How are the community building plans going.

GINA MAE

Jane's forming a committee. She says we should get some local input. I think it'll take unnecessary time. You probably know all about those things though.

PAUL

Yes... Listen I've been meaning to call... to offer help...

GINA MAE

You wanted to look at the socks. They're in that bin. Over there.

He walks over to the bin.

Long pause.

GINA MAE

Are you having trouble making a selection. If you look closely you'll notice they're all exactly the same.

PAUL

Yeah.

He reaches. Picks up an armful of socks. Maybe 30 pairs. Bring them back. Drops them on the counter.

GINA MAE

You want all those?

PAUL

Yeah. I do.

GINA MAE

That's stupid.

PAUL

That's my business. I've got plenty of money. I'll spend it how I want. I want socks. Lots of them. In fact I want them all. How much for every sock in the store.

GINA MAE

You can take some. But they're a real good buy. So you should leave some for other people.

PAUL

Okay. I'll leave some.

GINA MAE

Okay. I'll marry you. Why are you looking at me like that. That's why you're really here. Isn't it. To ask me.

PAUL

I ... don't know.

GINA MAE

Well *I* do. So lets just get on with it. There are plans to make. Right?

PAUL

(quietly) Yeah...

GINA MAE

What!

PAUL

Yeah! Right!

GINA MAE

Okay then,

Lights are fading.

They look at each other.. GINA MAE shrugs. PAUL shrugs.

Blackout.

The End.