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CHECK IT OUT HERE

YESTERDAY STARRING A WOMAN NAMED, CALIFORNIA RED

A Drama and Dark Comedy in Two Acts

BY JOSEPH ROBINSON

Yesterday, Starring A Woman Named, California Red

Written by Joseph Robinson III

josephrobinson@email.com

This play has no previous production history

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CHARACTERS

CALIFORNIA RED — Female

PETE RED — Male

MICKY PAGE — Male

BARISTA — Female

ANOTHER BARISTA — Female

LISA (Voice Over) — Female

SAMMY — Male

LIONEL — Male

AA MEMBER — Female

TERRY — Male

LADY — Female

GEORGE JR. — Male

LENA — Female

TOM — Male

GEORGE — Male

JAKE — Male

MARGOT — Female

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

- California Red is a typically kind and fun person, with a good job and a great husband...the event of “yesterday,” though is so great that she is crushed in spirit; like her father, Terry, California is mean when she’s angry.
- Pete Red, is California’s loving, wise, supportive, and at times facetious husband, who also is heart-broken by the driving event of the play.
- Micky Page is an all-star business man and friend of California, Pete, and Lionel.
- Sammy Leland is California’s fun-loving boss and friend.
- Lionel is a friend of California, Pete, and Micky; he is a typically kind person, and owns a software company.
- Terry is California’s father; he truly is a good man, but we find him very angry and having a severe internal conflict; this isn’t anything new to Pete and California; they know this side of Terry well.
- Lady is California’s sweet and honest mother.
- George Jr. is the son of George and is eighteen, smart, and in need of family.
- Lena is George Jr.’s super nice, yet tough, mother.
- Tom is calm, brilliant, and just. George is conflicted; he has done something wrong in the eyes of everyone, though he stands by his innocence; he is a person bothered mentally.
- Jake is a kind-hearted priest.
- Margot is a mother who has lost her only child; she is angry, saddened, and lost.
- The two baristas are proudly kind, vain, efficient, and politically correct.
- Lisa (V.O.) is the typical hard-working office assistant.
- The AA Member is outspoken and young.

ACT 1 PROLOGUE:
The Next Day: A Prologue
Lights up. George and Tom in Tom's office.

GEORGE. I don't know why I did it, but, you know what, it's done - so let's move on. Soon.

TOM. It's not that easy, George.

GEORGE. You told me, "to the best of my ability" explain what I was thinking, and I believe, *to the best of my ability*, that I have done exactly that.

TOM. George, the problem is this: you just killed forty innocent people and then yourself -

GEORGE. I know that!

TOM. Then do better! (*Pleading.*) Period.

GEORGE. I... (*Beat.*) I can't.

TOM. George, look, you hurt a lot of people and we have court in three days; try harder.

GEORGE. Tom, then you don't get it.

TOM. Then what am I missing?

GEORGE. Everyone has been in my head for years now, and after therapy, and drugs, I came to one conclusion: kill myself.

TOM. But you killed others also.

GEORGE. Because justice eventually came to that point.

TOM. Excuse me?

GEORGE. I...

TOM. Whose justice?

GEORGE. Who cares?

TOM. Excuse me?

GEORGE. I don't know, God's, Satan's, the President's, no matter what, I was broken so I did what I did not to be broken. Am I sorry? Only if justice wasn't done. Period. Do you think I would just hurt people? I wasn't made for that; but honestly every bad thing I did I believe was warranted. These people tore me apart. I hurt just knowing that I existed there, or that they existed at all. Did they hurt me outwardly — physically? No. But I swear to you and to whomever is listening that they were there mentally. They were there, at that point, intentionally. Wholeheartedly. I saw through them. They were two faced. All of them.

TOM. So, you killed them.

GEORGE. It's not that simple, but I only had one option.

TOM. Murder is not an option, there are better ways -

GEORGE. It wasn't murder! It was justice!

TOM. Whose justice?

GEORGE. If I do something that is bad, or evil, consider this: I believe in hell...I fear it. I work against it so I don't end up there. So, why would I do something that would take me there? I don't want to burn forever. Come on. I wouldn't do bad things when I could be hurt by it. Am I fearful of the truth? No. But murder is not my truth. Justice is. It happened because it should have. Anything else is impossible. It happened because it should, not because it could.

TOM. It happened because it *should* and not because it could?

GEORGE. Right.

TOM. You, maybe not tactfully or eloquent enough for the court, but still something case worthy, and in your favor, finally said something. Good job, Kid.

GEORGE. I don't follow you, sir. What did I say?

TOM. That's fine, don't worry about it, the rest is up to me. By the way, I have never lost a case.

GEORGE. How many cases have you worked?

TOM. About four billion.

GEORGE. "About?"

TOM. Technically.

GEORGE. What's "technically?"

TOM. Sometimes I view every case as one big suit.

GEORGE. Oh. *(Beat.)* Am I really dead?

TOM. Are you Superman?

GEORGE. No?

TOM. Then you bet your ass, son. And, son, you died hard. You all did.

GEORGE. Damn.

TOM. Oh, also, you're fortunate to be tried here.

GEORGE. Why?

TOM. Because it's my home and I know you'll be given an honest case.

GEORGE. Why?

TOM. Because I am everyone and everything. Consider this a blessing.

GEORGE. *(Beat.)* How many of you are there?

TOM. I lost count.

GEORGE. Hm.

TOM. What?

GEORGE. Your home or not, everything is subjective. My life is still in the hands of someone else's opinion.

TOM. *(Beat.)* Duh.

Lights fade.

END OF PROLOGUE

ACT 1

SCENE ONE:

Another Next Day

Lights up. California and Peter at home.

PETE. Are you okay?

RED. I don't want to talk about it.

PETE. Why?

RED. Because I'm angry.

PETE. California, then you *really* should talk about it.

RED. I'm mad.

PETE. Like crazy?

RED. Don't be funny.

PETE. Then talk about it. Come on, California.

RED. Don't "come on, California" me.

PETE. Listen, honey, we need to talk about this.

RED. Or you could just understand me and go away.

PETE. Understand what? Because I'm getting a whole lot of nothing from you.

RED. Just go away.

PETE. So, I'm supposed to know something and do nothing about it?

RED. Nothing is something.

PETE. Let me try this again: So, I'm supposed to know something and do nothing about it?

(Silence. Peter can see he will get nothing else from her.) Fine.

RED. Alright, *Pete*.

PETE. Fine. *(Under his breath.)* Bitch.

RED. Fuck you, you motherfucker!

PETE. Whoa.

RED. Yeah, I said it. In the eyes of God!

PETE. Alright, Red.

RED. And you know what?

PETE. Please, tell me.

RED. Fuck him too.

PETE. Who?

RED. God.

PETE. Why?

RED. Because yesterday sucked! *(Beat.)*

PETE. So? Yesterday sucked, so that means everyday now sucks? *And it's God's fault?* What does he owe you? Nothing.

RED. I thought God is in control of everything.

PETE. He is, but we have a choice.

RED. I didn't choose bad. I didn't choose this. I didn't choose yesterday.

PETE. That's not how that works.

RED. Enlighten me.

PETE. Red, sometimes really bad things happen because we live in a place where, at times, evil has an at bat opportunity and gets a home run. Some battles evil wins.

RED. And sometimes it's only good people who are punished. Who asked for that? No one. It's God's fault.

PETE. That's a poor way to view things. That's a poor way to view life. We may be powerless at times but come on, Red, we can either get busy living or get busy dying.

RED. *(Beat.)* Did you just quote *Shawshank Redemption*?

PETE. Look, and yes, but look, just because your yesterday sucked doesn't mean you can go around saying, "[eff] God."

RED. But it's his fault, Pater. So, I am going to say this one more time: Fuck! God! *(She exits in a rage. Beat.)*

PETE. *(Looking up and speaking to, God.)* By the way, Jesus, I'm not always with her.

Lights out.

SCENE TWO:
Micky Page Get's Coffee

Lights up. Micky is in line at a cafe about to order coffee; he is next.

BARISTA. Next.

MICKY. Hi.

BARISTA. Hi. How may I help you?

MICKY. I would like a...a...is a Venti a small? I rarely buy coffee.

BARISTA. No, it's a large.

MICKY. To me it sounds small.

BARISTA. Grande is the small.

MICKY. That sounds huge.

BARISTA. I see.

MICKY. Good, because I'm becoming uncomfortable.

BARISTA. I'm sorry.

MICKY. Whatever, you're not the coffee king.

BOTH. That would be a lot of pressure.

MICKY. Right. Yeah, well, look, here's the problem, I want a large coffee, but I want to sound impressive, I mean, at least to myself, I want to sound like some huge massive muscle—ly man, do you understand?

BARISTA. I do.

MICKY. And listen, I'm not arrogant, I'm just really down today. Now, with that said, I want a large coffee — a Venti — but I need you to say it's a Grande when you call for my order pick-up.

BARISTA. But people will know that.

MICKY. What?

BARISTA. People know the difference between a Grande and Venti. They'll spot the cup and think we've gotten something wrong.

MICKY. *(He thinks for a moment.)* ...I don't really care. Besides, I didn't know.

BOTH. So, there must be other people who do not know.

MICKY. Correct. You're a - a winner.

BARISTA. The thing is, though, that could confuse new customers.

MICKY. Holy hell.

BARISTA. If they see it they may say it, and next thing you know, all we'll have here are huge problems. We're awfully vain here, sir. *(Beat.)* Proudly vain.

MICKY. You're awfully proudly vain?

BARISTA. *(Happily and proudly.)* Oh, yes.

MICKY. *(Disappointed.)* I'll never get what I want.

BARISTA. You could buy two grandes.

MICKY. ...Maybe...though...no, no, that's okay, I only have fifty dollars on me.

BARISTA. Our grande is only \$7.95.

MICKY. "Only?" If "only" you could hear yourself.

BARISTA. You're funny.

MICKY. Thanks. I appreciate that. I needed a boost.

BARISTA. Rough morning?

MICKY. Friend, you have no idea.

BARISTA. That bad?

MICKY. Yesterday was just awful.

BARISTA. Yeah?

MICKY. Yeah. Did you hear about the latest mass shooting?

BARISTA. I did hear that.

MICKY. This guy took a rifle into his place of work, killed forty people, and then himself.

BARISTA. I did hear that.

MICKY. These mass shooters somehow always get the order of things wrong. You're supposed to walk into an office building with an AK-47 - then kill yourself. Not others then you, just you... Your world is over, not ours. The thing about it is, and I hate to say it, but the truth is, that's my company he shot up. *(Beat.)* Yesterday sucked. *(Beat.)* Big time. *(Beat.)* I'll have a large hot black coffee, suck free, please. *(He extends his credit card. The barista hesitates.)*

BARISTA. I'm sorry, about yesterday.

MICKY. We all are. *(Meaning the deaths of the people.)* So many people...too many people...look I need to go - but I still need that suck free coffee. Please take my card I'm dying here. *(After a beat she does.)*

BARISTA. May I have a name?

MICKY. Micky...better yet, call me, Yesterday Sucked...

BARISTA. I need to keep it p.c.

MICKY. What? I thought when Trump won p.c. died?

BARISTA. *(Tickled.)* That's not how that works.

MICKY. Well, it should. *(Beat.)* Fine, say, "Y. S.

BARISTA. Okay. *(The Barista types in the name he gave, swipes his card, then hands the card back.)* Would you like a receipt?

MICKY. Yes. *(The barista hands Micky a receipt.)*

BARISTA. Okay, your order will be up soon.

MICKY. What's "soon?"

ANOTHER BARISTA. Grande black coffee for, Y. S.!

MICKY. Wow.

BARISTA. Yes, sir. We're proudly vain and proudly efficient.

MICKY. My god, you're like the Jimmy John's of coffee.

BARISTA. It is also just a black coffee.

MICKY. Simple stuff?

BARISTA. Very.

MICKY. I guess I'm a simple guy. *(Beat.)* Awesome. *(He takes his coffee.)* Have a nice day.

BARISTA. Same to you. *(Micky exits.)* Next.

Blackout.

SCENE THREE: California Confesses

Lights up. California is in her office. She works. After a couple beats Sammy knocks on the door.

RED. *(Presses a button on her office phone; it's an intercom to her assistant.)* Lisa?

LISA. Yes, Mrs. Red?

RED. I said to notify me when I have a visitor; who is knocking on the door?

LISA. Mr. Leland.

RED. Oh, alright. *(To Sammy.)* Come in. *(Sammy enters.)*

SAMMY. California.

RED. Hi, Sammy.

SAMMY. Do you know why I'm here?

RED. To bother me, boss?

SAMMY. *(He has no clue that her brother is the mass shooter.)* To give you an opportunity to confess your sins.

RED. Just mine?

SAMMY. Or everyone's, just be smart about it, no need to confess to crimes you didn't commit. Though...I could use a fall guy for an event back in 1997. *(Beat.)* What were you up to on May 10, 1997?

RED. What?

SAMMY. Never mind. Anyway, speak your mind.

RED. Alright, here I go: A good clean joke about death on TV is great to me, I masturbated 20,000 times before my first marriage, which is my current marriage, and my brother is a murderer. *(Beat.)*

SAMMY. Ohh-kaay. Look, Red, did I catch you at a bad time? Because I promise you, this confession game of ours used to be fun.

RED. *(Sarcastic.)* And right now it's not?

SAMMY. Right.

RED. (*Sarcastic.*) Dang-it. How dare I? Though, what if I'm not the problem?

SAMMY. In all my life I never seemed to be the problem, but here's a good question: Do you think it's me? Right now?

RED. (*Sarcastic.*) Hm. Maybe. Did I catch you at a bad time?

SAMMY. Red, what's wrong?

RED. That shooter from yesterday?

SAMMY. That crazed guy who killed forty people in his office building?

RED. And then himself.

SAMMY. And then himself?

RED. Yeah, him.

SAMMY. What about him?

RED. That's my brother.

SAMMY. Oh. Shit.

RED. Yep, just shit.

SAMMY. Holy, shit.

RED. You see, Sam, you really did catch me a bad tim..

SAMMY. Holy shit.

RED. Yeeeeeeep.

SAMMY. I... I'm speechless.

RED. Who isn't?

SAMMY. Was he sick? I mean, actually crazy?

RED. I don't know.

SAMMY. Damn.

RED. That's my brother. Look, no one truly knows why he did it...but he did it.

SAMMY. What are you going to do?

RED. I have to give a speech.

SAMMY. On the news?

RED. Yes.

SAMMY. Which one?

RED. All of them.

SAMMY. Knowing you they should make sure their seven second delay is working.

RED. Shut up. (*Beat.*)

SAMMY. Do you need anything?

RED. Like what?

SAMMY. "Like what?" I don't know, these conversations never get this far, or personal — though I love you.

RED. Give it a shot?

SAMMY. Okay...how about a hug?

RED. (*Beat.*) What?

SAMMY. Do you need a hug?

RED. I'm sorry my ears must be clogged. Say that again.

SAMMY. Would you like a hug?

RED. May I rip your heart out you son-of-a-bitch?

SAMMY. Okay, relax, I'm leaving. I'm sorry about your...*this*. Your troubles.

RED. Yeah?

SAMMY. Yeah. *(Beat.)* Would you like the day off?

RED. No, not now. *(Beat.)* Okay?

SAMMY. Yeah, okay. *(Beat.)* I think, all things considered, you're taking this really well.

RED. *(She's about to lose it.)* Well, fuck, I didn't do it. Shit, I didn't do it. *(She begins to lose it.)* I didn't do it. I did not do it. I did not. I didn't. I mean, maybe it had something to do with me teasing him when we were kids, but fuck get over it you stupid bitch - him not me - because I didn't do it. I didn't. I just didn't do it. I just didn't. ... Did I? ... I mean ever since we reconciled in college we've been best friends. Right, so, I didn't do it. I didn't. I didn't care for his choice of women, but hell I'm family, I may be vocal. Come on: Carla was a gold digger, Susan was a cheating whore, and Lena West was practically retarded. I could be vocal. It's my right. Right?

SAMMY. Right.

RED. Shut up - I'm having a rhetorical breakdown - I mean conversation! I'm having a conversation! I'm having a conversation with myself! I mean - I mean - I mean - I didn't do it. I - I - I - Sam...tell me that I didn't do it. I, I need to speak to, Peter. I need to speak to my husband. He knows me. He knows where I was in 1997. He'll believe me I swear.

SAMMY. Red! Stop! *(Silence.)* Try to be calm. Please. This will be okay. This all will be okay. Deep breaths and a little time to relax will fix everything. Okay? *(Beat.)*

RED. What just happened?

SAMMY. It seemed like a panic attack. Are you alright?

RED. Yeah.

SAMMY. Good. *(Beat.)*

RED. I thought you were leaving.

SAMMY. Oh, right. I was, that is, until you flipped your shit, Woman.

RED. Fuck. I'm sorry.

SAMMY. I get it - not *it* - but I get it.

RED. I know.

SAMMY. Anyway, I should be on my way, California. *(Beat.)* Bye, Red.

RED. Bye, Sam. *(Sammy exits. Beat. Red drops her head onto her desk making a loud thud.*

Beat.) Ouch. *(A couple beats pass then her office phone rings. She keeps her head down and reaches for the phone. She picks it up, and keeping her head down to speak, answers.)* Hello, this is, California. *(Beat.)* Hi, Peter. *(Beat.)* What now? *(Beat.)* You have to be kidding me. *(Beat.)* You're lying. *(Beat.)* You're right, I'm sorry, why would you lie about this. I'm just... I don't feel good. It's all of this. I'm so sorry. I will be in contact, okay? *(Beat.)* I love you. Okay. Bye. *(She hangs up the phone. Beat. She throws a heart broken, angry, disgusted - but concealed - so as to not be heard by anyone outside of her office - tantrum. After a couple beats she stops.)* I. Hate. My. Life.

Lights fade to black.

SCENE FOUR:

More and More and More and More, A Press Conference, Starring, California Red

Lights up. California Red is at a lectern giving a press conference.

RED. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, my name is, California Red, and I denounce and abhor everything that my brother did three days ago. There is no argument in favor for him, not even some secret thought that I will exhale on my deathbed justifying this event. I need to say, because I feel this, and this is true: I am truly sorry for the death and trouble that he brought onto you. The sadness, the hatred, he put into your hearts, the sickness that you were forced to witness I hate and I am truly sorry. Three days ago should have never happened. I hope it never happens again. If we are to gather anything from this, let it be how we hate and condemn this behavior as a species. I was notified yesterday that my brother was involved in even more great wrongdoing. Not only did he kill forty people but they found in his home three missing teenage...

(Speechless.) Teenage... You know what? Fuck him *(Beat.)*

Blackout.

SCENE FIVE:

Messages

Lights up. Red is sitting on the couch (feet and all) reading through messages on her cell phone from her brother. A couple beats pass. Pete enters with a glass of red wine that he hands to her. Red immediately drinks the entire glass.

PETE. Wow. *(Red hands him the empty glass, which he takes and puts down. Beat. Red belches.)*
Wow. Also, ew.

RED. Mhm.

PETE. What are you doing?

RED. Reading through my messages.

PETE. All from, George?

RED. Yeah.

PETE. Does he say anything really out there?

RED. No. *(Beat.)* Did you really hate yesterday's press conference?

PETE. Of course I did. You can't say things like that on TV.

RED. It's not my fault no one's seven second delay box was broken. The world is against me.

PETE. Even still.

RED. I was just upset. I sort of...blacked out.

PETE. Okay...I...Look, Red, we need to talk about this all.

RED. M.

PETE. Red, do you understand how much I love you? Truly? *(Red hands Pete her cell phone.)*

What? *(She gestures for him to take it. He does.)* Read? *(She gestures for him to do so. He reads. Beat. She gets up and walks into the kitchen and pours him a glass of red wine. She returns with it and hands it to him. Pete takes the glass of wine and drinks. Red sits close to him and they*

cuddle as he continues to read. A couple beats pass. This is their safety position.) God he was so nice.

RED. I know.

PETE. I hate this.

RED. I understand. *(Beat. Pete puts the phone down and kisses her head. Beat. She begins to cry.)*

PETE. Let it out. *(Red cries for a few beats, then there is a knock at the front door that grabs them both. Red wipes her tears away.)*

RED. I'll get it.

PETE. Let me.

RED. No. I'll get it.

PETE. Okay. *(Beat. She doesn't move. A couple more beats pass.)*

PETE. When?

RED. Hm?

PETE. Did you mean, "I" as in "me?"

RED. *(Duh.)* Yeah - you get the door.

PETE. Cute, lady. *(Pete goes to answer the door.)*

RED. Pete?

PETE. Yes?

RED. If you tell anyone I was crying, I'll lie and tell them you're gay.

PETE. *(Sarcastic.)* Thanks, babe. You know what? I always had a thing for unnecessary conversations. *(He opens the door. It's Micky.)*

MICKY. Hi, Pete.

PETE. Hi, Micky, come in.

MICKY. Sure. *(While entering.)* Want to finish my coffee?

PETE. No. Ask, Red, though.

MICKY. Fine. Hey, i'm really starting to love this new habit of mine. coffee just may be man's best friend.

PETE. Funny.

MICKY. Right, aren't I a peach?

RED. Hi, Micky.

MICKY. Hi, Red. Would you like to finish my coffee?

RED. Is it old?

MICKY. It's fresh.

RED. Yeah. *(Micky hands her the coffee and she drinks.)*

MICKY. Were you crying?

PETE. And I said nothing.

RED. But you just did, Homo.

PETE. Watch it.

RED. *(Responding to Micky.)* And yes, I was crying.

MICKY. May I apologize for him?

RED. For, George?

MICKY. Yes.

RED. Because you *know* he's sorry?

MICKY. You're right.

RED. And if you do, ever, apologize for him, ever, know this: you will never be welcome here.

MICKY. Fine.

RED. After Pete and I beat your ass.

MICKY. You know, sometimes I wish you were a man.

RED. Why?

MICKY. So I could beat your ass.

RED. You're sexist.

MICKY. How?

RED. Would you like to rephrase you comment — because if I can go to war — I can fight a man.

PETE. (*Drinking his wine.*) Mick, she will beat your ass.

RED. Micky, have you ever fought a woman?

MICKY. No.

RED. Why?

MICKY. Because it would be too easy.

PETE. (*About the trouble Micky is inviting.*) Oh shit.

RED. You're totally lying about never being beat up by a woman. Look at you, you friggin' bottom. I bet she crushed you. Fuck you, Micky. You little boy. You. Little. Boy.

MICKY. Side note: If I had a dollar for every time I heard “fuck you, Micky” in the last three days —

RED. Who cares? What do you want?

MICKY. (*Under his breath; inaudible.*) Cunt.

RED. What?

MICKY. I called you a cunt. But not because you are, but because that's all you are.

RED. If I had a dollar for every time someone called me a named under their breath in last week

-

MICKY. You'd be rich.

PETE. Alright guys, we can start a fight club or we could order a pizza.

MICKY AND RED. Pizza.

PETE. Thank. God. (*Pete begins to exit to order a pizza.*)

RED. (*As Pete is exiting.*) You're getting fat by the way.

PETE. (*Exiting.*) It's a good thing you're easy. (*Micky laughs.*)

RED. Seriously, Micky, what do you want?

MICKY. To know that you're okay. (*Beat.*) Are you?

RED. I am. It's just, he wasn't like that. He wasn't a murderer-rapist.

MICKY. I know.

BOTH. Or he always was.

MICKY. This whole thing is causing too much conflict in me. I just don't know who I am anymore.

RED. How's that?

MICKY. I keep looking in the mirror and saying, "What do you know!? Nothing! You know nothing! You don't know people - you don't know you! Nothing! This is what your brother did to me, and for that, I hate him. I hate your brother.

RED. I understand.

MICKY. The worst part is, your brother, George, was the best employee I ever had. One of the nicest people I've ever met.

RED. Did he show signs?

MICKY. Of what he did?

RED. Yeah. Was he odd?

MICKY. No. Just normal and cool and awesome. He was lovable.

RED. Oh.

MICKY. You know, who knows what was going through that man's head? There's a strong part of me that wants only to hate everything about him.

RED. *(Me too.)* But we can't.

MICKY. Right. We can't hate everything about him when we don't know everything that was going on. Let those days ago be what they were and move on. He's seriously deleted from my vocab' list though.

RED. Seriously, before all of this happened, I'm telling you, those times when we needed a laugh or an elevated heart-beat he was there and he was good. Always. He wasn't perfect, but he was still good. He was meaningful.

MICKY. Two days ago sucked.

RED. What do you think he'd say about all of this?

MICKY. He'd probably say, "*What was he thinking?*"

RED. Yeah.

MICKY. *(After Red's line he is really upset by George's actions.)* What a bitch, though. He's just a piece of sh — *(There is a knock at the door. Pete enters.)*

PETE. *(Referring to the knock at the door.)* Pizza.

MICKY. That was fast.

PETE. They are known for their quick delivery. It's the Jimmy John's of pizza.

MICKY. What's the place called?

PETE. Johnny Jim's.

MICKY. Oh, I've heard of that place!

PETE. They're great.

RED. Is the door bell broken?

PETE. I don't know. I'll check it later. *(He opens the door.)* Hello.

LIONEL. Hi, Pizza. *(Pete notices it's, Lionel, a friend of the family.)*

PETE. Lionel?

LIONEL. Surprise!

PETE. Come in, dude. *(Lionel enters and Pete closes the door.)*

RED. *(She is very happy to see him.)* Lionel!

LIONEL. Hi, California.

RED. What are you doing here?

LIONEL. I just bought the pizza restaurant you apparently order from, and that's a total rip-off of Jimmy John's. And since I was in town, I just had to stop by. By the way, that'll be \$18.95.

PETE. *By the way?* It should be free now, Friend.

LIONEL. My ass, Pete. And don't forget to tip.

PETE. Oh I'll give you a tip.

RED. So, life in general is good for you?

LIONEL. Not necessarily. I bought this pizza place so my software company would have another source of income. We're actually not okay at the moment.

PETE. I'm sorry to hear it.

LIONEL. Me too.

MICKY. Hi, Lionel.

LIONEL. Hi, Micky. What took you so long? Just like my look?

MICKY. Oh, shut up and welcome home.

LIONEL. Thanks, buddy. Where is George? *(Beat.)*

PETE. You haven't heard?

LIONEL. What?

RED. Mr. Software developer doesn't watch the news?

LIONEL. What happened?

PETE. He snapped and killed forty people, then himself.

LIONEL. What?

PETE. Yeah.

LIONEL. That's not a funny joke, Pete.

RED. It's not a joke.

LIONEL. *(To Red.)* Red, come on, what is this?

RED. It's true. *(Beat.)*

MICKY. This doesn't mean he was suddenly evil one day. He was, maybe, sick.

LIONEL. God. *(Beat.)* He just messaged me five days ago.

RED. What did he say?

LIONEL. He sent me a song.

RED. What?

LIONEL. "Fox On the Run."

PETE. By, Sweet?

LIONEL. Yeah.

RED. Play it.

LIONEL. Yeah. *(He pulls out his cell phone and plays the song and all listen in silence. Red cuts the song short.)*

RED. Everyone get out.

PETE. C'mon, Red.

RED. You too. Go, get beer or something — just get out, all of you. Now.

PETE. Fine. *(Lionel, Micky, and Pete grab their things and make for the front door. Pete goes to give Red a kiss on the cheek but she stops him.)*

RED. Don't kiss me, get out.

PETE. Fine. *(The men exit. Beat. She sits on the couch in silence. In anger she takes the wine glass and throws it against the wall. It shatters. Silence. She cries.)*

Lights fade to black.

SCENE SIX:

PETE GIVES A SPEECH

Lights up. Pete is in front of an AA Group.

PETE. Before I begin, I would like to be honest about why I am with you all, today, this evening, in Alcoholics Anonymous. I'm not an alcoholic...not to my knowledge...but I was walking past and saw your sign, and I thought to myself, "well, I do have some things that I would like to share, to get something off my chest." Maybe to avoid becoming one. Because I do like alcohol. I like it a lot. Maybe I sound a little selfish, but I really need a moment. I know that we do not know one another, but we all know something: we know that life is important. Why else would we be here? Even if we do not know one another, we have a shared experience in this...life that we live side by side. *(Beat.)* My name is, Peter Red, and I am here to communicate an idea about responsibility: We are, all of us, responsible for ourselves, but we, at times, forget, or maybe we really don't know, that *ourself* is in no way void of others. I recall driver's education class, in high school, when my instructor told my class that we must "drive for others, not only ourselves." We must live for the true "ourself," which is us and others. That's our responsibility. For example, the day we marry our wife, or husband, we marry their world. It's never just you two. The single person dies. *(Beat.)* My brother-in-law is the man who killed all of those people in that office building and -

AA MEMBER. What the fuck?

PETE. I know. He did what he did, and it hurts; a lot of people were hurt - and not just the immediate victims, the people who he killed - but also those who have been effected by his actions. We should take from this the fact that we are responsible to more than ourselves; we are responsible for, or to, others as well. To drive my point home, when you feel like taking a drink, as a friend told me, "play the tape back..." You *know* what could happen if you do take that drink. Really bad things. Even if you feel that it's too much to be responsible for others in that context think about this: maybe *you* deserve a better life. I don't know you and you already mean so much to me. That's all. Thank you and God bless.

Lights fade to black.

SCENE SEVEN:

Breakfast

Lights up. Red and Pete are sitting at their breakfast table eating. He is telling her about the statements he made at the Alcoholics Anonymous meeting the night before.

RED. So, last night, instead of hanging out with the guys —

PETE. They were there —

RED. Okay, so you all went to AA, and you're not alcoholics — not to my knowledge —

PETE. Not to mine either —

RED. Not to our knowledge — and you gave a motivational speech?

PETE. That was a perfect team summary.

RED. *(After a beat.)* And then what happened?

PETE. And then we went to the bar and had a few drinks.

RED. *(Beat.)* Great. *(Beat.)*

PETE. What?

RED. Nothing, you're free to do such things. I get it too.

PETE. Yeah. *(They eat.)*

RED. Did you make any friends at AA?

PETE. Define friends.

RED. Okay: friends.

PETE. Define the word with the word and you'll only get nowhere.

RED. Did they go to the bar too?

PETE. You know, I don't really remember. *(Beat.)* Are you accusing me of being an enabler? I'm not an enabler if that's your point.

RED. *What am I getting at?*

PETE. I don't know. This all seemed innocent.

RED. It seems wrong that you used the death of those people to stand out in a crowd. I didn't think you were selfish. Maybe practical, but never disgustingly selfish. But if that makes you feel good, go on, keep taking advantage of people.

PETE. That wasn't the point.

RED. It's too bad that I wasn't there; then I wouldn't be missing the point.

PETE. You're the one who said go.

RED. I said leave the house, not go find broken souls and take advantage of them.

PETE. You should take the day off and do a character analysis, because where ever you are in your head right now, will not be allowed in this house. Ever.

RED. Yeah? And you are?

PETE. Someone. Something. Certainly not a punching bag.

RED. You really don't get what just took place these last few days, do you?

PETE. What's happening here? Who are you?

RED. Hurt! I'm crushed! I'm crushed and you go out with your pals and motivate other people while your wife is imploding.

PETE. Number one: Those are your pals also. Number two: You said go, and I respected your space enough to do so. Do you really believe I want to be anywhere but by your side? Number three: think really hard about this moment; this is unacceptable.

RED. You shouldn't have gone. Next time fight to stay.

PETE. Oh, please, Red, if you're changing change, but I didn't sign-up to be anything other than who I am! I signed up to be me! We're a team, lady. Did George kill us too? As if! I'm going to keep living. You should give it a shot. I hate the image or idea of you dying, but that's some delusion of mine, because I'm sure you did. *(Beat.)* What do you feel guilty or something? Huh? Do you feel guilty, California Red?

RED. *(She breaks down into tears.)* Yes! I know I played a role in this! I just know it!

PETE. Red, come on. How?

RED. I don't know, I just did! I did! I know I did!

PETE. You are not guilty. You didn't do anything wrong, and no one could have seen this coming. No one. And if someone out there did see it coming and did nothing, it's their guilt. You were a good sister. Just as you're a good friend and wife.

RED. Then why do I feel this way? I have this feeling that we're all guilty somehow.

PETE. Because you're powerless. *(Beat.)* We all are. Take comfort in that if you could have done something to prevent any of this you would have. When I was in school, I took a course called, Living in Balance. Guilt was a huge component. California, some people feel guilty because they may have had opportunities to say or do something, but they allowed it to pass, or they see issues in the world and they don't stand up and advocate solutions...they just call their best friends and say "*how bad*" for three hours and move on. Guilt can be very nasty. But I know for a fact that that if you could have done something to prevent this all from happening, you would have.

RED. It's just wacky how you can know someone for years and they're okay, seemingly, and next thing you know, you're giving some press conference and having to say things like, "My brother is a murderer..." I hate it. I hate it so much. *(Silence.)* I didn't sign up for this. I didn't sign up for this life.

PETE. Some times things are so well out of our reach it's a nightmare. It doesn't mean we're useless or guilty, it means we're not a deity that *could*. I remember the first interview I had with the firm that I now work for: My boss asked me, "What is your greatest weakness?" Do you remember that? I said, "My greatest weakness is that I'm not, God. When I'm powerless, I just am, but I handle that reality well." California, that's one of the questions from events like this: "What is our greatest weakness?" The answer is simple: "We're not, God." But you know what? He's there for us. While there isn't a "Bring Your God To Work Day," mine is always with me. I'm not trying to say all of this as if you and I don't share the same God, because we do, but it's clear you forget him. Try not too. I'm not trying to beat a dead horse here, because that's just an awful image, but even though we can't change the past, we can live a ridiculously awesome future if we pick ourselves up and go forward. All we need to do is be honest and good and when we can't we need to fight to be honest and good. In doing so our future will be good to us. Red, never forget that I am on your side. I am on your team. Don't push me away. Sometimes it's clear to me that you're all God has given me to have, so, I care to have you. I — *(She kisses him.)*

RED. I'm sorry about how I treated you. Peter, you're my best friend and do not want to lose you.

PETE. So don't. *(He kisses her forehead.)*

RED. Pete, I'm still afraid of what this all could mean.

PETE. Me too, but all is well...*(Trying to make feel better.)* Because I know karate. *(Laughter breaks through her tears.)*

RED. You really do know how to make me feel better. I'm actually a little jealous.

PETE. You bring the best out of me. You know? You complete me, California. I'm a real person when I'm with you. *(They kiss.)*

RED. Peter?

PETE. Yes?

RED. I'm glad you didn't end at karate. *(He laughs. They kiss.)*

PETE. Me too. *(They kiss.)*

Lights fade to black.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT 1 EPILOGUE:

Violence

Lights up. Tom and Pete are in his office speaking.

TOM. George, I need to ask you a couple questions for the case.

GEORGE. What's up?

TOM. Since you consider yourself an artist at heart, I need to know your stance on violence in entertainment and if that assisted your decision to attack those people.

GEORGE. Oh. That's easy. Since art is a vehicle for communication, as long as your intentions are for the good of the world, even if you lie and go for peace but you don't really want that (I mean an agreed upon good), of course —

TOM. Of course —

GEORGE. Have at it. You're fine and it's fine. It's art, not propaganda meant to incite violence. There is a clear line between propaganda and art.

TOM. Okay.

GEORGE. According to *Frontiers of Psychology* there is no real direct link to violent video games and the such and violent actions of people. If it happens due to entertainment it's a rarity. Increased aggression is short term. So, did any of those things assist in my decision to attack those people and then kill myself? No. That's more attributed to DNA and nurturing. And I really did have a great childhood.

TOM. Okay, that's all I need.

GEORGE. Cool.

Lights out.

END OF ACT ONE EPILOGUE

ACT 2 PROLOGUE:

Tomorrow

Lights up. George and Tom are speaking in Tom's office.

TOM. George, tomorrow is your funeral; would you like to be there?

GEORGE. I don't know. *(He thinks for a beat.)*

TOM. What are you thinking about? *(Beat.)* They will not know that you're there.

GEORGE. But I'm a monster to them. Whether they know or not I don't think it's right. When I did what I did, I didn't think about my funeral or those people's funerals; I didn't think about my family, or friends. I shouldn't be there.

TOM. Why do you think you didn't think about your family or friends or those people?

GEORGE. Hate.

TOM. Do you still hate them?

GEORGE. I never actually hated them; I hated my powerlessness.

TOM. George, do you know what you just said?

GEORGE. What?

TOM. You freed them from this event. It's not them —

GEORGE. It's, *it*.

TOM. Exactly. By the way, I say you go. You should go and understand them.

GEORGE. Maybe.

Lights out.

END OF ACT 2 PROLOGUE

ACT 2

SCENE ONE:

George's Funeral

Lights up.

PETE. Red, the funeral director said everything is fine, it was just a minor scare.

RED. Great, fear and a funeral. It's bad enough we're having one for a psychopath.

PETE. What does that sound like to you?

BOTH. A Patterson novel. *(Beat.)*

PETE. Red, everything will be all right.

RED. That's good too, because my parents will be here soon.

PETE. How's your mother?

RED. Not great at all.

PETE. Has she said anything since the day?

RED. She's sure she's the worst parent ever. I know she will get over it...*when* is the killer though. She keeps a smile on her face, but you can tell she's just heart-broken.

PETE. What about your dad?

RED. He wants to kill George.

PETE. And you?

RED. I wish I could leave.

PETE. Be strong, California.

RED. I am *being* strong; I'm just not.

PETE. Stop.

RED. That's how I feel, Peter.

PETE. What can I do?

RED. You can take me on vacation.

PETE. Let's go next week.

RED. Okay. Sammy keeps asking me if I want to take time off anyway. He began with a day, and now he's up to, "Yeah, you know, I get it." Which means a lot of time. (*Sammy approaches.*)

SAMMY. Red, hi.

RED. Hi, Sammy.

SAMMY. Petey, hi.

PETE. Hi, Sammy.

SAMMY. How are you two?

BOTH RED AND PETE. We're doing the best we can.

SAMMY. And that is the best anyone may. God bless.

BOTH RED AND PETE. Same to you.

SAMMY. Look, guys, I wanted to give a few words today.

RED. You barely knew him.

SAMMY. But I knew something; and what I knew tells me to say something. I think I can say this: (*Lady, very sad, enters.*)

LADY. Red.

RED. Mommy! (*They hug.*) I love you so much.

LADY. I love you too.

RED. Where's dad?

LADY. Arguing with a man of God.

RED. Why?

LADY. Because he's nuts - just nuts.

RED. Pete, will you go break them up?

PETE. I'll be right back.

RED. Tell my dad that there are more important things than some silly dispute.

PETE. Okay. (*To Lady.*) Hi, Lady.

LADY. Hi, Peter. (*Pete exits.*)

SAMMY. So, your name is, Lady?

LADY. Yes. Who are you?

RED. Mom, this is Samuel Leland, my boss.

LADY. Hello, Mr. Leland.

SAMMY. Hi, Lady. I was hoping I could say a few words today.

LADY. You knew my George well?

SAMMY. No, I just have a few uplifting objective words to share.

LADY. Like what?

SAMMY. Like this: "The hard part about these things is seeing good in bad or bad in good. It's tough because we are afraid of making a mistake and glorifying the wrong thing, or allowing anything to be glorified; for example, we're afraid to accidentally make what George did seem like a good thing - and believe me - it's not. We live in a world where we are always being tried; tried by some tall law that says no matter what, good is in bad and bad is in good; so, we must at least always remember the law to be safe. Today, we want to celebrate life. The trouble is that we are currently surrounded by wickedness. What can we do? It's like a guy on a skateboard; it's fun to him, but there are dangers. What George did is bad, but what we've learned from this is that life is important and good and worth all of the work we put into it. Let's remember the good things that were with George, like any person in this situation, in his position, but let's also gain from the bad things. How? How do we 'gain from the bad things?' His death, and the circumstances surrounding it, should be a guide for us. Let's walk behind George, step for step, being better and doing better than he did, or better than he had the power to do. When he goes left, we should consider what left was and possibly go right, if not forward. When we feel ill mentally let's use George as a stepping stone to stand up and tell someone that we're not okay. This funeral is also a celebration to living a life without pain and sickness. Let's go and be better and be happy." That's all.

LADY. *(Beat.)* You must say that.

RED. Do it, Sammy.

SAMMY. Okay. *(Pete enters with, Terry.)*

PETE. Here he is.

RED. Daddy!

TERRY. Cali! *(They hug.)* How are you, my girl?

RED. After what I just heard, much better.

TERRY. What did you hear?

RED. You'll hear it later.

TERRY. Okay. So, should we get this show on the road?

PETE. I'll grab, Jake.

TERRY. A man of God whose name is, Jake. Ha! What a phony!

LADY. You're just angry.

TERRY. You're damn right I am! I didn't raise a murderer! I did not want to be here.

RED. It's not your fault.

TERRY. I wish it was.

LADY. Why would you wish that?

TERRY. So I could die. I'll never sleep again. I'll always remember the last time I saw him; I kissed him on the cheek and I thought, "What a good man." How wrong could an old idiot be? Wronger? What a bad man he was. You're damn right I'm angry. You'll be damn right forever.

LADY. *(Just heart broken.)* Oh, Terry. *(An angry family member of one of George's victims enters. Her name is Margot.)*

MARGOT. How dare you honor this man!?

TERRY. And you are?

MARGOT. Margot Miller, the mother of one of the dead men.

TERRY. *(Meaning the man of God.)* Goddamn it, Jake! Fucking, Jake, this is a private event! Is that priest allowing anyone in?

LADY. He's a priest not a security guard.

TERRY. *(He ignores Lady and goes back to Margot.)* Get out of here woman!

MARGOT. Not until you stop this thing! You're an enabler!

TERRY. My ass, I hate him too!

MARGOT. I would never do this to people!

TERRY. You think you're better than me!?

MARGOT. You did raise a murderer.

TERRY. Yeah? Well, at least I didn't raise a victim. Nothing is lower than a victim. A weak crime against nature. *(Pete enters.)*

PETE. Stop this right now! *(To Margot.)* This is a private event, we will call the police. Don't make us. Please.

MARGOT. *(Breaks down into tears.)* But I have nothing left. *(Pete holds her.)*

PETE. Listen, this all is in God's hands now.

MARGOT. There is no God. Just murderers and evil.

PETE. Look, no matter what happened, we don't know what this was all about. He could have been very sick. Just, look, stay here with us and celebrate life. Believe me, none of this is easy for any one of us. We're all hurt.

MARGOT. I just don't know what to do; he was all the family I had.

PETE. You can be better than this. Do that. Share life with us and do that. Please try. *(Jake enters.)*

JAKE. Is everything okay?

PETE. Yes.

JAKE. Are we ready? *(Beat. Pete extends his hand to Margot. Beat. She takes it.)*

PETE. Yes. We're all ready.

Lights fade to black.

SCENE TWO:

Gun Control

Lights up. Red, Pete, Micky, Lionel, Sammy and Terry are at Pete and Red's home. This is a day after the funeral.

PETE. *(On the phone with Jake.)* Yes. Yes. Okay. Yes, Jake, the service yesterday was beautiful. Thank you. Okay. Alright. Bye. *(He hangs up.)*

TERRY. How's the man of God named, Jake?

PETE. He's great.

TERRY. Lucky him.

PETE. I know you don't like him —

TERRY. You're right, son, fuck him!

PETE. Listen —

TERRY. I will not!

MICKY. Do you see what the gun control issue is doing to us? (*Terry lets out a magnificent and irritated sigh. He can see where this conversation is going.*) What?

TERRY. Cali, do you have any beer?

RED. We do.

TERRY. How about some before it's too late?

RED. What's, "too late?"

TERRY. I can feel the room getting political.

MICKY. He's right — it's about to happen —

TERRY. Hurry, California! Get that beer!

MICKY. (*As if someone brought it up.*) What about gun control?

TERRY. Here we go.

MICKY. I mean, what is our problem?

TERRY. I'm perfect.

MICKY. This nation...why can't we fix this issue easily?

TERRY. Free will?

MICKY. It's that simple?

SAMMY. We can't fix this because sometimes people are too unpredictable.

PETE. People kill people.

RED. We have a people problem, not a gun problem.

PETE. And there will be no day when we all do not have a basic right to bare arms.

TERRY. What do you say to that, Micky?

MICKY. Then only give firearms to certain people.

PETE. But people in general are too unpredictable.

MICKY. It surely has to be the right people.

LIONEL. Like who?

MICKY. One of the best mass shooting deterrents that I have ever heard in one situation is arming school teachers. (*Terry laughs.*) What?

TERRY. Have you ever met a teacher?

MICKY. I don't follow you.

TERRY. Yeah, well, some of them are as batshit-crazy as the gunmen.

MICKY. Come on.

TERRY. Micky, I mean that. We trust teachers to give information, not to wield weapons. Just think about it: Give one of those half out half closeted lesbian chemistry teachers a gun and she'll kill everybody. All because she's fifty-parts angry that she doesn't have a penis and fifty-parts happy that she doesn't have a penis. The only thing she'd be good for is making Christmas shopping cheaper.

PETE. Oh, boy.

LIONEL. You know, if you trained them well, a teacher with a gun could be just as good as your best cop.

TERRY. Ha! The next thing you'll say is: "If that doesn't pan out we should just make guns illegal and only cops and military personnel should have guns anyway.

LIONEL. Why not do that?

MICKY. Only allow military personnel and police officers to carry guns.

TERRY. Here's an issue: Some of them are batshit-crazy too! There is no win here, boy.

RED. The problem is people, not guns.

TERRY. And that's the truth.

RED. The problem is we can't really do anything about freedom. We may threaten freedom with incarceration, but it's not an absolute. Not in this country. We could make possessing guns more difficult, especially if you have broken certain laws. But what's stopping people from breaking that law and bringing in guns from other places?

LIONEL. Fear of more time behind bars.

PETE. People kill people out of anger and helplessness. Their parents and friends or teachers or even the police can't fix their issue so they take the law into their own hands. A kid is bullied in school and next thing you know he becomes the judge, jury, and executioner. Red's right: it's not about guns. Sure we have a responsibility to make laws that attempt to stop the possession of guns by what we determine is undesirable people, but it will never be absolute.

MICKY. I just wish that I could do more.

TERRY. Run for, God.

RED. Dad, stop.

TERRY. What!? He could!

RED. Run for, God?

TERRY. Yeah! Apparently any son-of-a-bitch could!

RED. Come on, Dad.

TERRY. No! That mother-fucker owes me \$85,000!

MICKY. Okay, I think we're starting to get a little crazy here.

TERRY. But it's true!

SAMMY. How does God owe you \$85,000?

RED. My dad prayed to God for a new life —

TERRY. And next thing you know — poof — I'm out of a job, sick, and up to my nose in hospital bills. I paid off \$85,000 on my own! God wasn't there for me. That mother-fucker owes me \$85,000.

PETE. If I had a dollar for every time I heard "fuck God" this month —

RED. You'd have three dollars, now be quiet.

TERRY. Look, if you can't tell, I'm a little angry. But, anyway, here's my point: Gun control, bank control, birth control, boob control, the problem is people feeling mistreated and alone. So, then they give people what they felt that they were given: they take lives and now you both have nothing. That's what we all do. One day it was teat in a harbor and then it's gunmen striking down fellow classmates. That's what broken people do: they bite.

SAMMY. Do you believe that's why George did what he did?

TERRY. George did what he did because he's evil.

LIONEL. That's hypocritical! You're contradicting yourself.

TERRY. My seed should be better than that! Just look at, California. Perfect. I'm not contradicting myself. I'm acknowledging a flaw in the system. Life stinks at times — but golly — my children are better than this all. I hate my George and that's that. Goddamnit, Red, where's that beer?

Lights out.

SCENE THREE:
Red and Pete Go Fishing
Lights up. Red and Pete are fishing.

PETE. Are you having fun, Red?

RED. Yeah. You?

PETE. I am.

RED. Buuuuut?

PETE. I'm just so hungry.

RED. Would you like a snickers?

PETE. No, I think it's the call of the wild running through me. The moment I eat needs to be when I catch a fish.

RED. But you're not yourself when you're hungry. Eat a snickers.

PETE. *(Beat.)* Did you just quote a commercial?

RED. Yeah.

PETE. Intentionally?

RED. Yeah.

PETE. May I ask why?

RED. Then what the hell do they want? It's catchy. Next thing you know you repeat it and your husband hates you.

PETE. I don't hate you.

RED. Fine. *(Beat.)* Was it at least funny?

PETE. Hilarious, Red.

RED. Good. *(Beat.)*

PETE. We should switch positions.

RED. Okay. *(They switch positions. Beat. Both lines snag a fish.)* Good idea, Pete.

PETE. Yeah, let's reel them in! *(He howls. It's the call of the wild. They both pull in giant fish.)*

RED. This is huge!

PETE. Mine too! We'll eat for days!

RED. *(She howls.)* How's that for the call of the wild?

PETE. Wonderful. You're getting extra love for timing.

RED. May I cook?

PETE. *(A sarcastic, "do you know how to cook?")* Can you?

RED. Shut up.

PETE. Never.

RED. Good. I like your voice.

PETE. Because you're in love with me, dude get a room.

RED. Maybe I will.

PETE. You never told me when you go back to work.

RED. I offer you a good time and you ask about work- you're your own cock-block, señor. Just so you know.

PETE. Just so I know. *(Beat.)*

RED. On the first.

PETE. Cool.

RED. Seriously, may I cook?

PETE. *Seriously, can you?*

RED. Dude, I'm a brother-ow.

PETE. A what?

RED. A brother-ow... It's like a widow -

PETE. But it's your brother -

RED. And not my husband.

PETE. Dude, what the fuck?

RED. Seriously; so be nice to me.

PETE. God, I'm in love with you.

RED. *(Pretending to be perplexed.)* Whyyyy?

PETE. Shut up.

RED. Kidding.

PETE. You goof. And you know what? Yes, you may cook.

RED. Great. It's because I'm a brother-ow.

PETE. *(Laughing.)* Yes, it's because you're a brother-ow. *(Beat. He can notice a change in her mood.)* What?

RED. I know this can't last forever. It just really could. I'm finally free but then we go back. When we go back, people will say things I just don't care to hear.

PETE. Like what?

RED. "How are you doing?" "You're soo strong, California! Oh, my!" Blah blah blah. Stupid stuff. I just wish people would act as if it never happened.

PETE. We're almost over the hump. Just suffer through it and it'll go away.

RED. I need a time machine.

PETE. Just have a couple beers.

RED. Whoa, Peter Red, you might be an alcoholic.

PETE. Oh, by the way, and I'm totally changing the subject, but before we go back, I have a request.

RED. What?

PETE. We should start working on a baby.

RED. What?

PETE. Let's start making a kid.

RED. You really want to bring a person into this world?

PETE. On the one hand, sure I'm not cruel, but terror shouldn't win. They can't have everything.

RED. Are you being romantic?

PETE. Of course not. You know I'm practically sound. Besides when you're practically sound you're allowed to be romantic.

RED. It still sounds irresponsible.

PETE. You're not wrong.

RED. But you don't care.

PETE. No. I don't. We can't be afraid.

RED. Just practical.

PETE. Seriously.

RED. You're not wrong.

PETE. But you don't care.

RED. Look, Peter Red, I'll give you your kid, but I swear it: if something goes wrong, it's your fault.

PETE. I mean, duh.

RED. Okay, fine. *(He howls in joy.)* Now may we eat?

PETE. And then the kid.

RED. Right. You cook.

PETE. It honestly shouldn't be any other way.

RED. I *would* kill us both; and the unborn yet to be attempted baby.

Lights out.

SCENE FOUR:

Andy and Layla

Lights up. Red and Pete are having dinner at a restaurant.

PETE. So?

RED. Okay, just be cool, okay?

PETE. Alright. *(Beat.)* Come on, Cali, what's the news?

RED. I'm pregnant. *(Silence.)*

PETE. How?

RED. What?

PETE. I mean, how?

RED. You just said the same thing.

PETE. I - h - stop, I can do this. *(He clears his throat.)* How?

RED. Again, the same thing.

PETE. How...pregnant?

RED. How pregnant?

PETE. Yes, h — h — h — how — how pregnant?

RED. Very.

PETE. You're very pregnant?

RED. Super very.

PETE. (*Beat. He explodes with excitement.*) We did it! (*He howls the same call of the wild.*)
Woo!

RED. Be quiet, dude.

PETE. I am so happy.

RED. Me too.

PETE. We have so much to do. What if it's a boy?

RED. We'll name him, Andy.

PETE. And if he's a girl — I mean if she's a girl — I mean if it's a girl, we'll name her, Layla.
Like L.A.

RED. L. A. from, California.

PETE. Yeah. This is so good! That's so smart. L. A. from California. Oh, God, I need to call my
parents.

RED. Me too.

PETE. Oh, God, this is great. Andy and Layla. (*He howls the call of the wild again. Their waiter
enters.*)

WAITER. Is there a problem, sir?

PETE. No. But I'm going to be a father.

WAITER. Congratulations.

PETE. (*Meaning Red is his pregnant wife.*) That's her, she's with it.

WAITER. Congratulations.

RED. Thank you.

PETE. I am one step closer to taking over the world!

WAITER. Do it quickly, sir.

PETE. Why's that?

WAITER. Because you seem like a nice guy.

PETE. Awesome!

WAITER. Good, sir.

PETE. By the way, the chicken is great.

Lights out.

SCENE FIVE:

Two Months Later

Lights up. Red and Pete at home.

PETE. Are you sure you'll be alright?

RED. You're going on a work retreat, not leaving forever.

PETE. I'm just asking.

RED. Get out, Pete.

PETE. Fine. *(They kiss. Pete exits. Red closes the door. Beat. Red crosses to their stereo system and plays "Come and Get Your Love" by Redbone. She dances. After sometime George Jr. enters. He watches her. After a few beats Red notices him and freaks out. She stops the music.)*

RED. Who are you?!

GEORGE JR. I'm sorry, I didn't mean to scare you.

RED. Is that your name?

GEORGE JR. No. I'm George.

RED. What?

GEORGE JR. Junior.

RED. What?

GEORGE JR. I'm, George Junior. *(Silence.)*

RED. My brother didn't have children.

GEORGE JR. But I'm his son.

RED. *(Depressed.)* Oh, George. *(Beat.)* How old are you?

GEORGE JR. 18.

RED. What is your mother's name?

GEORGE JR. Lena West.

RED. I went to high school with her.

GEORGE JR. I know. She wants to see you.

RED. Were they married?

GEORGE JR. No.

RED. What are you doing here?

GEORGE JR. I wanted to meet you.

RED. Why?

GEORGE JR. Because I never could.

RED. Your dad wouldn't let you?

GEORGE JR. Right. *(Micky knocks on the door.)*

RED. Just a minute!

MICKY. Red, it's, Micky!

RED. Hold on, Micky! *(To herself.)* We really need to get that doorbell fixed. *(She opens the door.)*

MICKY. Hi, Red.

RED. Hi, Micky.

MICKY. *(To George Jr.)* Hello.

GEORGE JR. Hi.

MICKY. *(To Red.)* How's the baby?

RED. That's why you're here?

MICKY. That's how living vicariously through a person works.

GEORGE JR. You're pregnant?

RED. Yes.

GEORGE JR. I'm going to be a cousin.

MICKY. Hm?

GEORGE JR. Hm?

MICKY. Who are you?

GEORGE JR. I'm, George.

MICKY. *(To Red.)* Who is this?

RED. George's son.

MICKY. *(Beat.)* George had children?

RED. Only one.

MICKY. How old?

RED. 18.

MICKY. Whoa.

RED. I just found out. *(Beat.)* Micky?

MICKY. Yeah?

RED. Let us talk.

MICKY. Okay. If you need me I'll be around.

RED. Okay.

MICKY. Nice, to meet you, George.

GEORGE JR. Same to you, Micky. *(Mickey exits.)*

RED. You weren't at the funeral.

GEORGE JR. We were out of town.

RED. When did you find out?

GEORGE JR. Last month.

RED. It's been over two months.

GEORGE JR. I know.

RED. Did he leave you anything?

GEORGE JR. No. But we have money.

RED. Good.

GEORGE JR. You don't have to worry about us.

RED. Look, George, I don't feel good, I want to be alone.

GEORGE JR. Alright.

RED. We'll have dinner soon, okay?

GEORGE JR. Sure. *(Beat.)*

RED. George, was your father a good man?

GEORGE JR. He was one of the best.

RED. Okay... Good. Listen, don't forget to take down my number, and, also, never just enter like that. And I mean anyone's home. Okay, George?

GEORGE JR. Okay.

Lights fade to black.

SCENE SIX:

Dinner at Terry and Lady's, or What the Fuck?

Lights up. Red, Pete, Terry, Lady, George Jr., and Lena are sitting at the dinner table in silence. The only sounds heard are the clanking of silverware on dinner plates. After a few beats of uncomfortable silence and clanging silverware on plates someone speaks.

GEORGE JR. *(To Lady.)* So, Lady? Should I call you, Grandma? *(Terry, disgusted and angry, drops his silverware on his plate. He stands then takes his plate and drink and begins to exit.)*

LADY. Terry, where are you going?

TERRY. To kill myself. *(He exits. They all go back to the uncomfortable, clanking of silverware on dinner plates silence.)*

GEORGE JR. My father was a good man.

TERRY. *(From the other room and disgusted and angry.)* Good people don't kill other people! *(Pete drops his silverware and exits into the room where Terry is to try to calm him down.)* GET OUT! *(Pete returns, defeated. He sits. More silent uncomfortable, silverware clanking on dinner plates.)*

GEORGE JR. *(To Pete.)* He told you. *(Beat. Everyone laughs. Terry reenters and everyone becomes silent.)*

TERRY. *(To Lady.)* I'm done eating my food. Are you done?

LADY. Yes. *(Terry takes her plate and, while eating her food, exits.)*

GEORGE JR. Will there be dessert?

LADY. I have cake.

RED. I'll get it.

LADY. George, you may call me, Grandma.

GEORGE JR. Cool. Thank you.

LADY. There is no need to thank me. It's your place to call me that. *(To Lena.)* Now, Lena, are your parents alive?

LENA. No.

LADY. Do you have money?

LENA. Yes.

LADY. Okay. Do you work?

LENA. No.

LADY. What is your source of income?

LENA. George makes money from some investment he made a few years back.

LADY. You collect from that?

LENA. He signed it over to me, yes.

LADY. When?

LENA. Years ago.

PETE. What investment?

LENA. Family Matters, Inc.

PETE. Whoa. That's real money. *(Terry enters with the plate he took from Lady.)*

TERRY. *(To, Lady.)* I'm done. I don't want the peas.

LADY. Oh, I forgot to eat my peas. I'll eat it.

TERRY. Okay. *(He gives her the plate then begins to exit.)*

LENA. Terry?

TERRY. Yes?

LENA. Don't hate us because of him. *(Beat.)*

TERRY. But you look like him. Both of you. Even you, Lena. That narcissistic prick. *(He exits. Beat. Red enters with the cake.)*

RED. I have cake. *(Beat.)* Why does everyone look so sad? We were just laughing.

LADY. We need the cake. *(They eat.)*

LENA. Red, I was hoping we could spend some time together. Shopping? I'll buy.

RED. That sounds great. When?

LENA. Whenever.

RED. I'm free tomorrow.

LENA. Then tomorrow it is. *(Terry enters and sits.)*

GEORGE. You're back!

TERRY. I want cake.

LENA. It's delicious.

TERRY. My wife made it, I'm sure it is.

GEORGE. Lady said that I may can call her, Grandma.

TERRY. Yeah? *(Condescending.)* Well, good for you.

LENA. Fuck you, Terry. What the fuck do you know other than yourself? You're the prick.

TERRY. I — *(Lena throws her cake in his face. Silence. He begins to laugh. He takes a bite of his cake then throws it in her face.)*

GEORGE. FOOD FIGHT! *(They have a food fight. It's fun.)*

Lights fade to black.

SCENE SEVEN:

Family

Lights up. Terry and Lady are at home.

LADY. So, Old Man, how are you feeling?

TERRY. *(Beat.)* Better.

LADY. Good. I was worried about you.

TERRY. Honestly, me too. There is nothing like a good slice of cake to the face to bring a man out of a coma.

LADY. Lena and George sure are lovely.

TERRY. Yes, they are.

LADY. Something special.

TERRY. A gift from above. You know, Lady, what if our George was suffering? Then it's good he's dead. I just wish it was another way. *(Beat.)* Was I a good father?

LADY. Of course, Terry; you were something special.

TERRY. Then what happened?

LADY. Life. Those uncontrollable things. Just don't forget to be a good father to, George Jr.

TERRY. Consider it done. You know he wants to be an english teacher?

LADY. Awww.

TERRY. Lady, the next few years will be a lot of fun. I know we'll be okay.

LADY. Me too. *(He chuckles.)* What?

TERRY. I can't believe she threw cake in my face. *(Lady begins to laugh, then Terry.)*

Lights out.

SCENE EIGHT:
How Are You, Red?

Lights up. Red is sitting on the couch at home talking to the baby in her stomach.

RED. You're going to be so much fun. I just know it. Mommy's going to take care of you as well as she can. Daddy will too. When you're born I'm going to whisper to you, "Welcome to Earth." And then I'm going to kiss you and hold you with love and duty. I promise to do my best in raising you. Then you'll get married and make someone happier than ever possible and make any pain go away. I know you will. You'll be good for everyone. *(Pete enters unnoticed. He listens to her. He is in love with her and their child.)* You need to promise me one thing though: Promise me that you will understand happiness. Let me tell you a secret about happiness: Your best shot at happiness is being faithful to happiness. *What does that mean?* Simple: It means that to be truly happy you must abide by the laws of happiness; your actions have to be good and loving. Babe, please hear me, because "my only point, the only point that I'm making, is life has got to be allowed to continue even after the dream of life is all over;" so, sweetie, always be good and fight to be good. Never stop being good.

PETE. *(Respectfully and in love.)* Red, are you ready for bed?

RED. Yes.

PETE. How's the baby?

RED. Wonderful.

PETE. So are you.

RED. Yeah?

PETE. Yeah.

RED. Thank you, Pete.

RED. *(Beat. Honestly.)* Yes.

PETE. Good. *(Beat.)* Let's get some rest.

RED. Alright. *(They exit.)*

Lights fade to black.

ACT TWO EPILOGUE:

But That Was Yesterday: An Epilogue

Lights up. Tom and George are waiting for the jury verdict.

TOM. How do you believe your trial went?

GEORGE. Fair.

TOM. I told you so.

GEORGE. You did, thank you.

TOM. How do you believe I did?

GEORGE. Masterful. Brilliant.

TOM. Thank you.

GEORGE. How do you think they will vote?

TOM. I don't know.

GEORGE. But you're everyone.

TOM. I have rules.

GEORGE. Your rules?

TOM. Mhm.

GEORGE. *(He sighs.)* Okay.

TOM. Don't worry, true justice takes place here.

GEORGE. Are you still being subjective?

TOM. Always.

GEORGE. What will happen to me either way?

TOM. I also do not know that.

GEORGE. Do you ever wonder what? I mean of all of your cases?

TOM. No.

GEORGE. Why?

TOM. Because my life is too good to go and take risks like that. If it's not broken why bother?

GEORGE. It makes me wonder: "Are you in charge?"

TOM. Have I ever given you such a hint?

GEORGE. You did say these are your rules.

TOM. Then shut up, George.

GEORGE. Fine! Damn. *(Beat.)* Thanks again, by the way.

TOM. It's my job, kid.

GEORGE. *(Beat.)* Do you think I'm guilty?

TOM. I honestly may not care.

GEORGE. Oh. *(Silence.)*

TOM. George, listen, Yes, I know everything, but at times I need you to search yourself and say it yourself. I need your truth. You have to say it yourself or live through a moment. I need something more than my own answer. I need your perspective. Because that is who I am. But, look let me say this much: No matter how you felt then, or how you feel now, you are loved. That was your problem: you felt hate and not love. But, boy oh boy, you really are loved.

(Silence as George reflects. When he heard that he was loved, he began to weep gently.) Well, say something. You're dead there, not here. Believe it or not we do a lot more than have trials to see if you're innocent or guilty, okay?

GEORGE. *(George hugs Tom. Beat.)* Okay.

TOM. All right, bud. You know what? There is good in you. Now, use it.

Lights fade to black.

END OF PLAY

PROPS

Credit Card (MICKY)
Large (Venti) Cup of Coffee (BARISTA)
Office Phone (RED)
Cell Phone (RED)
Cell Phone (LIONEL)
Wine glasses (RED and PETE)
Two fishing poles (RED and PETE)
A notepad and pen (TOM)

SOUND

Fox On The Run by Sweet
Come And Get Your Love by Redbone

FOOD

Cake (Act 2 Scene Six)

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