

# Adventure Cabaret

## Show 1

Version 0.8

metanoia

© Copyright 2024 Miranda Sorventi

# Table of Contents

<b>Characters</b>	<b>5</b>
Mistress of Ceremonies	5
Lola de Campa	5
Dr. Finlay Clinkscales, Professor of Horrific Human Stupidity	5
Storyteller	5
<b>Cast</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Costumes</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Props</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Pre-show</b>	<b>8</b>
WordMovie	9
Categories of Stupidity	9
Overture	9
Thought Police Hotline	10
Krill Lives Matter	10
Adventure Cabaret	10
Seat belt sign / Takeoff	11
The Empire of the Mind	12
Words	14
MC Intro	14
Adulterated / Unadulterated	15
Away with words!	17
We Are Here Together	18
Simon Says Something Sinister / Let's Play Guitar!	20
Language Is not Reality	21
Why A Cabaret?	24
George's Story	24
The Talking Dog #1	26
War of the Words	26
Hindu Pushups	29
Floss News Alert #1	29

Unconstitutional!	30
Portable Melanometer	31
Do The Linky Pinky #1	32
Bulgaria	33
The MC Introduces the First Message	34
Messages from the Insects	34
The Talking Dog #2	35
I accidentally peed on my own grave	35
Jewish Pushups	36
Floss News Alert #2	37
Who Is Responsible for Most of the Violence in the World?	37
Do The Linky Pinky #2	38
Invite an Insight	38
Intermission	40
Identification, please. #1	41
Christian Pushups	43
The Talking Dog #3	43
Floss News Alert #3	44
Frozen Figures	44
Do The Linky Pinky #3	48
Messages from the Amphibians	48
The Potato Chip & the Battery	49
Don't Look Down On Manikins	50
Identification, please. #2	52
Ideas of Heaven	54
Muslim Pushups	55
The Horrors of Homophily	56
What is the most important issue in the world?	57
No, that's not it.	58
Floss News Alert #4	61
What Ever Happened to The Human Potential Movement?	61
Deeply Committed Agnostic Pushups	62

Floss News Alert #5	63
Messages from the Animals	63
Pantheist Pushups	64
Not Committing Planetary Suicide	65
Let's Play with the Planet	66
We're All Dead, and So Is Everything Else	68
Please Take Offense	71
Metanoia	72
Metamorphosis	73
Finale	73
Outro	77

## **Characters**

### **Mistress of Ceremonies**

The Mistress of Ceremonies is completely in control. Or is she? She certainly wants to be, but this becomes more and more challenging as the show proceeds. In the end she finds her own form of heroism.

### **Lola de Campa**

Lola is of the Earth, happy in her body, wants to be happy absolutely all of the time, and wants everyone else to be happy too. It doesn't quite work out that way.

### **Dr. Finlay Clinkscale, Professor of Horrific Human Stupidity**

Professor Clinkscale is a man who cannot turn away from the truth, no matter how horrifying that truth may be. This makes him seem harsh, but within him are a deep tenderness and a deep pain of disappointment.

### **Storyteller**

There are various storytellers within the show, sometimes delivering monologues, sometimes appearing in "hybrid" stories in which aspects of the stories are acted out behind the storyteller on stage.

## **Cast**

The cast consists of six actors, each of whom plays multiple roles within the production. Role assignment is meant to be flexible, even within any given performance; any actor may play any of a number of different roles, and this may even be decided on the day of the performance.

## Costumes

**Entire cast:** black t-shirts with "Adventure Cabaret" on the front, black sweat pants, black baseball caps

**Mistress of Ceremonies:** white shirt, black suspenders, black pants, top hat and cane

**Lola de Campa:** long flowing skirt, silly hat with flowers stuck in it

**Professor Clinkscapes:** brown v-neck sweater, white shirt and red tie, rough trousers, work boots

**Greek child:** sleeveless undershirt, baggy wrinkled pants, rope belt, worn leather sandals

**ARMY:** Adventure Cabaret t-shirts, black baseball caps, dog tags, black sweat pants

**Police Officer 1 (male):** full police uniform with cap, mirrored sunglasses

**Police Officer 2 (female):** yellow reflective police vest, police cap, whistle

## **Props**

2 loud stainless steel whistles  
2 hazmat suits  
2 basic chairs  
1 small table  
2 beach ball globes, 1 inflated, 1 deflated  
fluorescent green winter gloves  
wooden spoon  
laser pointer  
2 manikins  
3 small color maps of Saudi Arabia

## Pre-show

*The poster for the show is just in the entryway to the building.*

*Each poster board is printed with the face of a beautiful animal, looking right at you. The ticket holder is invited to scan the QR code, which leads them to a web page with a mysterious question. If the person doesn't want to or can't scan the QR code, the greeter asks the question. If there is time, the greeter also offers to provide more information about the animal.*

*The "light bath" is a combination of the handheld LED lights with colored filters and the LED soft lights controlled from a phone. The colored lights are moved over the person's body. The soft lights are turned up, and their color temperature changed.*

*The program includes a final QR code that links to a web page reminding people to turn off their phone.*

**Actor 1** Is just inside the door as a greeter.

"Thank you for flying Adventure Cabaret!"

Holds up pinky and says "Linky Pinky!" mysteriously.

**Actor 2** is at the elevator door on the ground floor with poster board #1 and QR code #1.

"Have you had this kind of experience before?"

"Scan the QR code for an interesting question."

"May I tell you some more about this animal?"

"Linky Pinky?" holds up pinky and invites linking.

The QR goes to a web page that says "How many different animals around the world do you not know anything at all about?" This page has a link to the page with the answer.

**Actor 3** is outside the elevator on 6th floor with poster board #2 and QR code #2.

"How's your day going? It's about to get much more interesting!"

"Scan the QR code for an interesting question."

"May I tell you some more about this animal?"

"Linky Pinky?" holds up pinky and invites linking.



The QR goes to a web page that says "How many different organisms are there in a single teaspoon of healthy soil?" This page has a link to the page with the answer.

**Actors 4 & 5** at the entrance to the theater check in ticket holders, and offer a "refreshing light bath," and an introduction to the manikins, Fred and Alice, "Who are featured in the show."

There is a bowl full of business cards for the show, and audience members are invited to take a few to share with other people. There will be a reminder about this at intermission and for the after-show.

**Actor 6** is just behind the curtain at the entrance to the theater, which is completely dark. **Actor 6** hands out programs, asking each person to make sure to scan the final QR code in the program, then guides those attending to their seats with a flashlight. If there is a break in the number of people arriving, **Actor 6** may invite an audience member to dance the Linky Pinky while an audience member holds the flashlight to illuminate them.

**Screen:** [Graphic for pre-show]

## **WordMovie**

[TBD]

## **Categories of Stupidity**

[TBD]

## **Overture**

[4:05]

*Symphonic music, with video collage of biodiversity and "Make [ ] great again."*

**Screen:** The Earth in space, which dissolves to the image of the brain.

## Thought Police Hotline

[0:22]

**Screen:** Content Advisory

THOUGHT POLICE HOTLINE

(415) 555-Ilovetoobject

**Announcer:** You may find some of the content of this production not to your taste. If you love to get offended, you're also going to love the special hotline we've set up just so that you can complain, and feel superior in doing so. Just leave a message, and we'd be happy to get back to you in about...*a billion years.*

## Krill Lives Matter

[00:10]

**Screen:** Krill Lives Matter

## Adventure Cabaret

[0:50]

*A loud whistle is heard offstage, blown by the stage manager. Members of the cast enter one by one, lining up an arm's distance apart, touching their fingertips to each other's fingertips in order to set the correct distance between their bodies on stage. When all cast members are lined up, the whistle is heard again, immediately after which the announcer's voice begins.*

*During the announcement below, the cast performs two cross toe touches, then two jumping jacks, then plays patty cake with each other, and then...*

**Announcer:** Good evening, and welcome to Adventure Cabaret! We're glad you've chosen to proceed on this journey with us, a journey that few have had the courage to undertake.

Boy, have we got a show for you ! You'll hear stories of love and longing and loss, and miraculous transformations. We'll plumb the depths of human

behavior, explore deep questions, and even meet a talking dog who is also a terrible conversationalist.

*...the cast performs the Linky Pinky dance with each other.*

We'll play with the entire planet in the relative safety of a public auditorium, explore the future of humanity...

**Screen:** metahuman

**Announcer:** ...and even explore what it means to be much better than human.

**Audio:** Jet engines warming up

*The cast moves rapidly into the audience area, urging members of the audience to make sure that their seat backs and tray tables are in their upright and locked position.*

## **Seat belt sign / Takeoff**

[0:30]

**Screen:** SEATBELTS

**Announcer:** At this time the captain has turned on the seatbelt sign in preparation for takeoff. Please make sure that all your belongings are safely stowed under the seat in front of you or in an overhead bin, and that your seat backs and tray tables are in their upright and locked position.

We thank you for flying Adventure Cabaret as we embark on a journey directly into *The Empire of the Mind*. It's going to be a bumpy flight!

**Audio:** Music, jet engine whine, rumbling, cabin noise, other strange sounds.

*The cast lines up again on stage, and mimes strapping into harnesses. They fold their hands together, and solemnly bow their heads. When the noise of takeoff recedes they unstrap themselves from their harnesses, and quietly exit.*

## **The Empire of the Mind**

[2:00]

**Screen:** The Empire of the Mind  
balloon over the ocean  
abstract image of brain

**Voice:** Wow...the Empire of the Mind. I'm really looking forward to that! It must be amazing!

**Screen:** passageway of lights

wooden office chair, single light

wooden filing cabinets

collage of mostly random, strange images

**Audio:** Heartbeat, dripping water, whispers

*Pause.*

**Voice:** But wait...where am I? It's kind of dark in here. It looks like a huge warehouse, just full of all kinds of junk. What is all this stuff? Rusty filing cabinets, rotting piles of scribbled notes, boxes full of boxes full of even more random junk, tangles of wires connecting everything.

What are all these boxes?

Oh...my...God. It's all my memories, just a jumble of memories...and some of them aren't even true.

And this chest? It's labeled "Pre-verbal memories. Do not open." Scary!

I'm walking around...in my own mind. What a mess!

What's this senseless tangle of wires leading nowhere? Holy crap. It's my belief system, based on no evidence. It looks repulsive, and it obviously makes no sense.

**Screen:** grotesque neon boy/girl symbols

**Voice:** Oh yuck.

**Screen:** neon rainbow

**Voice:** Ok, that's better. Much more realistic.

Oh! Look at the piles and piles of software! That sounds promising.

What? Nineteen ninety six? Nineteen seventy-two? Nineteen...sixty-five?

This crap is totally out of date!

Software inherited from my family? From my society? Uh oh.

What's this software? It's from...2,000 BC! Absurd concepts held over from religion. Man, that is some crappy, defective software.

*Pause.*

But it's...me. All this crude and defective and outdated software is...me.

*Pause.*

I need a major software update!

That disgusting, senseless belief system has got to go!

This place needs to be totally renovated!

How do I get out of here? How do I go out of my mind?

**Voice 2:** (*whisper*) This way. Over here.

**Voice:** Oh...ok.

*Pause.*

**Voice:** What's behind this door?

This room is empty, except for...a dictionary.

Wow, look at all those words. Wait a minute...this isn't a dictionary, it's a gateway...a portal...

...I'm being...Oh, this feels really good!

## **Words**

[1:30]

*Intense video and audio collage of words, both familiar and highly unusual. Some of the words are in languages other than English.*

## **MC Intro**

[1:05]

*Timpani roll. The Mistress of Ceremonies strides on stage. She is wearing a top hat, and twirling a black cane.*

*Timpani snap. Silence.*

*The MC is holding the cane on the floor in front of her and leaning forward on it, bracing herself with both hands, looking down, so you only see the top of her top hat. She suddenly looks up.*

**Screen:** Lightning strikes

**Audio:** Thunder clap, thunder rolling

**MC:** Guten Abend, meine Damen und Herren! Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, etc! The year is 1925, and the beginning of Adolph Hitler's reign of terror is a mere eight years away.

**Audio:** Marching, and one of Hitler's shrieking speeches.

*"Jews will not replace us!" from recent years, then the voice of Trump making false claims.*

**MC:** Or is it 2025, one hundred years later? Where exactly *are* we in the greater arc of human history, and *supposed* societal development? Have we actually progressed, or not?

**MC:** So my question to you, dear members of the audience, meine Damen und Herren, is this:

Do you feel responsible?

*No one in the audience responds.*

**Screen:** [fade in slowly: Earth in space]

**MC:** I ask you again, this time imploring you:

Do...you...feel...responsible?

*Some audience members respond with "Yes!" but others with "No!"*

*The drums begin a steady beat, gradually growing in volume, complexity and intensity. The MC may have to improv what follows, depending on what the audience does.*

**MC:** Ladies and gentlemen, we need unity in this matter. And so I ask you one final time, and ask for unity:

*Drums build to maximum intensity. The music is loud, insistent.*

DO...YOU...FEEL...RESPONSIBLE?

## **Adulterated / Unadulterated**

[1:45]

**Screen:** [Earth fades to a black screen.]

**MC:** Responsibility, true responsibility, is a challenging topic, so we'll get back to it later in the show.

*Complete change of mood.*

**Screen:** [images of children]

**MC:** Do you remember what it was like when you were a child? You were full of curiosity, excitement, fascination. You laughed freely (*the entire cast*

*laughs with childish glee from offstage), and every day was new, full of wonder, and you exercised your imagination without hesitation or inhibition.*

*Transition to downer mood.*

**Screen:** [much less happy images of children]

**MC:** Then gradually life, but most of all other human beings, wore you down. You became disappointed, jaded. Your sense of possibility narrowed. You found less and less to be excited about.

*Two actors dressed in full body hazmat suits appear on stage, and during the following they pick the MC up by the arms while she is talking, and move her directly stage left by about four feet, as though she were just an object that must be moved. They set her down just before she says the word "adulterated."*

**MC:** Your imagination became less and less active. You were once a wonderful child, full of hope and excitement and wonder and imagination...

...but then, in a word, you became...

**Screen:** adulterated

**MC:** ...adulterated.

*The actors in hazmat suits move to where the MC had been standing, and mime repairing an invisible object, at ground level.*

**MC:** Aren't you sick of it? Aren't you just completely fed up with being adulterated? Tell me honestly. Don't you want something much better than being constantly and forever...adulterated?

*Two members of the cast call out "Yes!" enthusiastically, and line up beside the MC, clearly ready for a fun time.*

**MC:** So tonight we are going to make the conscious choice to return to the best of childhood: the boundless curiosity, the excitement, the open mindedness, the enthusiasm.

*The actors in hazmat suits pick up the MC by the arms again, and move her back to her original position, so that she is back in her original position exactly when she says "Completely unadulterated."*



**MC:** We are going to consider new ideas, new outlooks, deeply exercise our imaginations, and have lots and lots of fun together. For the next hour, we are going to be...

*The actors in hazmat suits finish their work, and remove their masks and head coverings.*

**Screen:** Completely unadulterated!

**MC and cast:** Completely unadulterated!

*The two actors dance The Linky Pinky briefly together, and so do the two actors in the hazmat suits.*

**MC:** Who's with me? Great! We'll have stories—happy stories, sad stories, scary stories, silly gags, more stories, fun fun fun, and then we'll get serious again.

*At this point an actor walks slowly in front of the stage, reading a book.*

**MC:** But what have we here? Look, it's some silly guy reading a book! How pretentious. What an elitist! He probably goes home and reads the dictionary. Ha!

*The actor reading a book walks off, lost in his book.*

## **Away with words!**

[1:30]

*The actors in hazmat suits exit, having a mimed professional discussion.*

**MC:** Away with words! Away with them, I say! We need some truly mindless physical entertainment, and to give us that mindless entertainment is our own Lola de Campa. Lola, can we get you out here please?

*The extravagant Lola de Campa enters, swishing her long colorful skirt back and forth joyfully. She is wearing a large straw hat with flowers sticking out, and singing to herself a nondescript, happy little tune.*

*The MC and Lola briefly dance The Linky Pinky together, exchange kisses on the cheek, then high five each other.*

*The MC bows deeply, and exits backwards while in this bow.*

*Two other actors stand behind Lola, ready to demonstrate the mindless fun, and guide the audience.*

**Screen:** [sail rigging, sailor and sailoress, buoys and gulls]

**Lola:** Ahoy there, sailors and sailoresses, buoys and gulls! Let us now begin our mindless fun together! First, stand up please. Yes, everyone please stand up. Shake yourself out a bit, and loosen your lips with a nice long bbbllllrrrr! Again...bbbllllrrrr!

All right, now reach up high! Higher! Even higher! Now bend slowly to your right. Good! Now bend slowly to your left. Great!

Now turn around—yes, turn around, lean forward, and grasp the back of your seat. From this position, when I count down from three, please choose an animal that makes a fun noise, and make that noise. Maybe a dog, or a cow, or a howling wolf, or a quacking duck, or a meowling kitty cat. Ready? Three, two, one...go!

*The audience makes animal noises.*

## **We Are Here Together**

[0:55]

**Lola:** Wonderful! You can turn back around now, but please remain standing. You really are the cat's meow, and more! Now let's try something else that's fun. We are going to sing together, just something very simple, just a chord. There will be three notes, and you can choose any of the three notes—whatever is comfortable for you. Here is the first note.

**Audio:** [G]

**Lola:** If that note works for you, that's your note. And the second note.

**Audio:** [D]

**Lola:** If that one's better for you, that's your note. And the third note.

**Audio:** [B]

**Lola:** If that note is better for you, that's your note. Now we are going to sing this chord together, with the words "We are here together." Watch my hands for the words. Ready?

*The audience sings the chord to the words "We are here together."*

Once more...(motions again)

Wonderful!

## **Simon Says Something Sinister / Let's Play Guitar!**

[0:50]

Now let's try something else interesting. Stretch your left arm out to your side, and put your right arm firmly behind your back. Without moving your right arm, now play some wild guitar! Yes! Let those fingers fly up and down the guitar neck. Wonderful!

Ok, now I have a question for you. Are you playing guitar "right handed?" Yes? But wait a minute, how can you be playing guitar right handed if you can't even move your right arm? Weird, huh?

See you lovely people a bit later! Mmmwuh!

*Lola throws a big kiss, and skips off happily, swirling her skirts again and humming another vague, happy tune.*

## **Professor Finlay Clinkscapes**

[1:22]

**MC:** And now we have another special guest, but a very different kind of guest.

*(She cups her hand by her mouth and whispers.)*

This one's a *professor*! Uh oh! *(Ooh la la gesture.)*

Direct from Fargo, North Dakota, Professor Finlay Clinkscapes, world expert! Come on out, Professor!

*Professor Clinkscapes enters. He appears quite jolly. In his vest pocket is a laser pointer.*

**MC:** Professor Clinkscapes, thank you so much for being with us tonight.

**Professor Clinkscapes:** My pleasure indeed.

**MC:** Professor, could you tell us a bit about your area of study?

**Screen:** Professor Finlay Clinkscapes, PhD, HHS  
*World expert in Horrific Human Stupidity*

**Professor Clinkscales:** Why yes, certainly. I study stupidity.

**MC:** Stupidity? You have a PhD in stupidity?

**Professor Clinkscales:** Yes. I specialize in the study of Horrific Human Stupidity.

**MC:** But humans are intelligent! Your field must be very narrow.

**Professor Clinkscales:** Not at all. Horrific Human Stupidity encompasses most major fields: physics, biology, cosmetics, psychology, sociology, scientology, diet, nutrition and grocery shopping, linguistics, sports, the media, celebrities, breast and butt implants, politics of course, but most of all religion.

**MC:** I see. Professor, what will you be speaking to us about this evening?

**Professor Clinkscales:** Horrific Human Stupidity, of course. Didn't you hear me the first time?

**MC:** Sorry, professor.

*The MC is taken aback by the professor's snappishness, and exits backwards, bowing.*

## **Language Is not Reality**

[2:02]

**Professor Clinkscales:** Language...is not reality. It may feel like reality, you may mistake it for reality, but language often represents the precise *opposite* of reality, and there are *social* reasons for this. All this time you thought everyone was playing the guitar right handed, but they were actually playing the guitar left handed. And in all these years...you never even noticed! Why?

Because not playing "right" would be...wrong. It would be "sinister."

*He holds out his left arm.*

Therefore left must be called right, even though it's...wrong!

*The professor appears a bit angry at this point.*

**Screen:** [images of instruments listed below]

**Professor Clinkscales:** Yet the aggressive misrepresentation of reality in language goes much deeper than the labeling of playing guitar, or mandolin, banjo, ukulele, violin, viola, cello, all of which are also being played left handed while being called right handed.

*The professor pauses, and uses his laser pointer to call up a new slide.*

**Screen:** [the ocean, below the surface]

*Actors 1 & 2 enter, miming fish swimming along.*

**Professor Clinkscales:** Two young fish are swimming along one day.

*Actor 3 enters from the opposite side, also miming a fish swimming.*

An older fish swims by them and asks...

**Actor 3:** How's the water today?

**Professor Clinkscales:** The two younger fish swim on past, then one turns to the other and says...

**Actor 1:** What's water?

**Screen:** sexism

**Professor Clinkscales:** So it is with human language, which is constructed to both refer to objects and concepts, but also to *suppress* awareness of specific aspects of reality, and often to suppress *the most prevalent aspects* of reality.

*Professor Clinkscales begins to become a bit agitated.*

**Screen:** Google nGram Viewer of "sexism"

*Professor Clinkscales takes out the laser pointer, and points it at the chart.*

**Professor Clinkscales:** For example, nearly all human societies up until fairly recently have been thoroughly and completely sexist. You would think that something with one hundred percent prevalence would have a word assigned to it, but *look at this chart*.

*He directs the laser pointer to the beginning of the timeline, and begins to move the pointer along the timeline.*

**Professor Clinkscales:** Even though all human societies had been thoroughly sexist up until only recently, the word “sexism” doesn’t even appear in English until around...1960!

*He turns to the audience, and takes a few steps forward. He is angry.*

**Professor Clinkscales:** If you don’t have a word for it, then it must not exist, because it’s [aggressive air quotes] “normal.”

*The professor is now strongly agitated, angry, almost screaming.*

**Professor Clinkscales:** You are also forbidden by your society to even be aware of it, but you are not even aware that you are *suppressing your own awareness* **in obedience to society**.

*The professor takes a moment to try to regain his composure, and brushes himself off in an odd, nervous way.*

We will study more examples of Horrific Human Stupidity later. Thank you.

*Professor Clinkscales exits, in awkward agitation.*

## Why A Cabaret?

[3:12]

*The Mistress of Ceremonies enters quickly, still taken aback by the bad temper of Professor Clinkscapes.*

**MC:** Well, that was certainly...interesting. Ask a professor, get an answer...yikes! But we'd like to explain to you why we're here tonight. Why are we here tonight?

**Professor Clinkscapes:** *(offstage, shouting)* Because we're not dead yet, that's why!

**MC:** Again, good point! *(She makes the "ooh la la" gesture again.)* But why a cabaret? To answer this question, let's listen to a true story from Greece, but not ancient Greece, no...Greece from the 1950's, even before the word "sexism" begins to be used in English.

*The MC again exits backwards, bowing.*

## George's Story

*Actor enters, sits, and begins casually throwing invisible pebbles from a collection of pebbles in his hand.*

**Screen:** The following story is true, and was told to me in my living room on Cape Cod by my next door neighbor, George Yantsides. The year is 1959.

**Screen:** Image of village in Greece, with the name of the village in Greek.

**Actor:** I grew up in a tiny, isolated village in Greece. I only ever heard Greek spoken, and the next village was a few miles away. One year a cabaret came to the next village, and my whole big Greek family decided to go. We loaded the whole family on the family ox cart to go see it. The ox had to struggle the whole way, towing my entire large family. I was eight years old.

The cabaret started, and it was the most amazing thing I had ever seen!

There was loud, happy music, and people singing, and they weren't singing in Greek, either! Then they spoke. It was the first time I had heard anyone



speak anything other than Greek. They were speaking German! It was so exciting!

I watched the whole thing with my mouth open, I was so amazed. There were accordions, and funny hats, and beautiful young girls with whiter skin than I had ever seen wearing colorful skirts, smiling and dancing in a line. I was in love with all of them!

The entire year after the cabaret I counted the minutes until I could see it again. Today was the day, so we all loaded up on the ox cart again for the trip. But my grandmother was a mean old woman with warts on her face, and she suddenly said I couldn't go. Everybody else in the family was going to go except me, because of my goddam grandmother, that witch.

As the whole family except me loaded onto the ox cart, I felt like I was dying. Really, like I was just going to die right there from the pain and the sorrow. I started sobbing uncontrollably, then screaming. I started jumping up and down, sobbing and screaming.

Then I wanted to kill my goddam grandmother. All my jumping up and down had stirred up some dust, so now I was jumping up and down screaming and sobbing in a cloud of dust next to the ox cart. I drew a circle in the dirt with my foot and screamed "I'm going to kill her! I'm going to kill her and dig her grave right here and then I'm going to jump up and down on her grave and spit on her!"

The ox cart slowly pulled away, with my whole family loaded on it except me, and I had to stay in the village by myself the entire day...all because of my goddam witch of a grandmother. I feel like I'm going to die right now just thinking about it!

*He stumbles off, shaking and sobbing, then suddenly turns around.*

I still want to kill her!

*Exits. After a few seconds, a blood curdling scream is heard from a female member of the cast.*

## **The Talking Dog #1**

[0:43]

**MC:** So you see just how important a cabaret can be! A matter of life and death! But now for some more fun. Are you ready for The Talking Dog? The Talking Dog is about to...

*A stagehand motions from the side.*

**MC:** Excuse me for a moment.

*A brief conference ensues between the MC and the stagehand. The MC returns.*

**MC:** I have just been informed that The Talking Dog is feeling a bit shy about his vocabulary, and wants a more time to learn some more words. Sorry about that! We'll check back with the doggie later. But in the mean time, let's return to the world of words for a moment.

*The MC bows deeply, and exits backwards.*

## **War of the Words**

[1:30]

*Two actors enter, from opposite sides, striding toward each other, but both are preoccupied, looking at their phones. They collide mid-stage.*

*The other actors are waiting in the wings. For each word definition, and actor steps out just barely from the wings and states the definition in a loud, clear voice. These definitions are from alternate sides of the stage, first right, then left, then right, etc.*

*During each definition, the two actors fighting go into slow motion, and one throws a blow at the other in slow motion.*

**Actor 1:** (shouting) Idiolect!

*The actors go into slow motion, and actor 1 punches actor two hard in the stomach.*

**Screen + cast member:** Idiolect: An individual's unique use of language

*The actors return to real time speed.*

**Actor 2:** Sphygmomanometer!

*The actors go into slow motion, and actor 2 punches actor 1 hard in the jaw from upstage, such that the effect of the blow is shown to the audience.*

**Screen + Audio:** Sphygmomanometer: That thing the doctor puts on your arm to measure your blood pressure

*The actors return to real time speed.*

**Actor 1:** Gaberlunzie!

*The actors go into slow motion, and actor 1 punches actor 2 hard in the jaw from upstage, such that the effect of the blow is shown to the audience.*

**Screen + cast member:** Gaberlunzie: An archaic Scottish term for a licensed beggar

*The actors return to real time speed.*

**Actor 2:** Prepostasaurus!

*The actors go into slow motion, and actor 2 punches actor 1 hard in the chest, knocking the wind out of him.*

**Screen + Audio:** Prepostasaurus: An invented word for a preposterous dinosaur

*The actors return to real time speed.*

**Actor 1:** Acousma!

*The actors go into slow motion, and actor 1 punches actor 2 hard in the jaw from upstage, such that the effect of the blow is shown to the audience.*

**Screen + cast member:** Acousma: An auditory hallucination

*The actors return to real time speed.*

**Actor 2:** Zoanthropy!

*The actors go into slow motion, both raising an arm to strike each other.*

**Screen + Audio:** Zoanthropy: The delusion that you are an animal

*Suddenly, still in slow motion, both actors appear confused. They lower their raised arms, and return to real time speed. They turn away from each other, struggling to process their confusion. A great silence and stillness ensues. They look at each other with sudden, strange tenderness.*

**Actor 1:** But we *are* animals, for better and for worse.

**Actor 2:** I know. I struggle with that too.

*Regret fills the room. The two actors look away from each other in shame.*

**Actor 1:** Look, some times my crocodile brain just gets the better of me.

**Actor 2:** Oh, man. Been there, done that shit so many times. I hate it.

**Actor 1:** Dude, I'm so sorry.

**Actor 2:** Me too. i should never have called you a sphymomanometer. That was way out of line.

**Actor 1:** Hey, poop happens, y'know.

*Awkward pause.*

**Actor 2:** Hug?

*Actor 1 puts his hands up in a defensive gesture.*

**Actor 1:** Nah. I'm good.

*They both shrug, and continue on their way toward the sides of the stage. Just as they are about to exit, Actor 2 turns.*

**Actor 2:** Bro, I love you.

**Actor 1:** *(over his shoulder)* I love you too!

## Hindu Pushups

[0:20]

**Screen:** [Om symbol]

*Actor enters, begins to do a couple of slow Hindu pushups, facing sideways.*

**Audio:** The Hindu push up is an excellent exercise that involves multiple muscle groups, and also has the advantage of increasing the flexibility of the spine. Best of all, you don't have to be a Hindu to do them!

**Screen:** Real live non-Hindu below. [down arrow]

*The actor waves to the audience and smiles, then exits.*

## Floss News Alert #1

[0:20]

**Screen:** [Floss News Alert Sequence, then pictures of fruit and vegetables.]

*The following three actions occur simultaneously:*

- *News anchor enters, and sits at the news desk.*
- *The Production Assistant enters holding clipboard, hands printed sheet to anchor.*
- *The Camera Operator enters, takes position in middle aisle behind invisible camera.*

*Then:*

- *The Camera operator says "Ready."*
- *The Production Assistant counts down on fingers and with voice "Three, two..." then counts down one finger, then points to news anchor.*

**Actor:** Researchers at the University of the Upper Peninsula have discovered that eating a healthy diet is strongly correlated with being healthy. This has been a Floss News Alert!

## **Unconstitutional!**

[0:25]

**Screen:** [American flag]

*Actor 1 enters stage left, stops center stage.*

**Screen:** [U.S. Constitution]

**Actor 1:** Nowhere in the United States constitution does it say...

*Actor 2 enters stage right, stops center stage.*

**Actor 2:** ...that you have the right to be boring.

*Actor 3 enters, stands between actors 1 and 2.*

**Actor 3:** Therefore...

**All three actors:** ...being boring is unconstitutional!

*Actors 4 and 5 enter, and join the line.*

**All actors:** Being boring is illegal!

**Screen:** [person in handcuffs, full of regret]

**Screen:** [person behind prison bars]

*Actors 4 and 5 take three steps toward exit, then turn toward the audience, both with an arm extended in command.*

**Actor:** Obey the law!

*Actors 2 and three take two steps toward exit, then turn toward the audience, with an arm extended in command.*

**Actor 1:** Don't!

**Actor 2:** Be!

**Actor 3:** Boring!

## Portable Melanometer

[1:20]

*An actor enters, carrying a wooden spoon, which they hold up for the audience to see.*

**Screen:** [wooden spoon, diagram of skin structure, melanin molecule]

**Actor:** Ok, I know what you're thinking. You probably think this is a wooden spoon, but *you would be wrong!* What I am holding in my hand is actually a high tech device called a *melanometer*. With this device I can measure the precise amount of melanin in a person's skin up to a distance of 100 meters with *more than 100 percent accuracy!*

You can use this handy device to confirm *every one* of your idiotic biases about other people, based on nothing but meaningless melanin! So very helpful.

*The actor mimes turning the device on.*

**Actor:** Just flip the confirmation bias switch to "on," and you're good to go! Let's try it out on some of you in the audience. The readings will appear on the screen behind me.

*The actor points the melanometer at someone in the audience.*

**Screen:** Micronesian

**Actor:** Huh. Well, let's try someone else.

*He points the melanometer at someone else in the audience.*

**Screen:** Gray

**Actor:** Whoops! Sorry, folks.

*The actor whacks the melanometer hard a couple of times.*

**Actor:** Let's try again.

**Screen:** Black...Irish

**Actor:** Hey, this thing isn't confirming my prejudices at all! Ok, one last try.

*He points the melanometer at one final choice of audience member.*

**Screen:** Pure as the driven slush

**Actor:** *(seething with frustration)* HENRY! SOMEBODY BROKE THE MELANOMETER!

*The actor storms off.*

**Screen:** [picture of albino person]

I broke the melanometer.

I am a pink person.

Pink Power!

[hand with pinky extended, and the pinky is pink]

Would you like to do the Linky *Pinky* with me?

## **Do The Linky Pinky #1**

[0:10]

**Screen:** [Two children doing The Linky Pinky]

Innocent children's version

**Audio:** rustic dance music

*Two actors enter from opposite sides, dance the Linky Pinky together, bow to each other, and exit.*



## Bulgaria

[1:30]

**Screen:** The following story is true, and was told to me in my living room in Walnut Creek by my neighbor, Maria Genova. The year is approximately 1960.

България

Bulgaria

[German shepherd puppy]

*Actor enters, stands center stage.*

**Actor:** When I was growing up in Bulgaria, when I was six years old we got a dog, a German shepherd puppy. We named him Rex. He was beautiful, and I loved him. I loved everything about him. I used to play with him in our apartment, and he was just so fun! I would give him a kiss on his nose, and he would lick my face with his big pink tongue, and put out his paw to shake hands. We did that a lot!

But there was a problem. We lived on the second floor, and there was an old woman who lived below us who hated Rex, only because his claws made noise on the floor above her. She used to pound on the ceiling with a broom when she was mad, which happened more and more.

**Screen:** [house]

**Actor:** We all loved Rex so much that we decided to spend more money to move into a little house with a yard, so that Rex could be outside more, and we could get away from the angry old woman.

**Screen:** [German shepherd, adult]

**Actor:** It was perfect! Rex was so happy in his new yard, and we were so happy that he was happy.

But one day Rex got out of the yard, and went out in the street. We saw him out there, and went out to get him. A car was coming really fast down the hill, straight toward Rex. We were horrified. Then the car barely stopped right in front of Rex. It was a police car. The policeman got out of the car, and stole Rex from us. We never saw him again.

**Screen:** [slow fade to black]

It's Bulgaria.

## **The MC Introduces the First Message**

[0:46]

**MC:** Now it's time for some truly special guests. These next guests are just *some* of the amazing creatures with whom we share this beautiful planet called Earth. These friends of ours are of unparalleled beauty and variety. They first began to appear on Earth 480 million years ago, which is about *479 million years* before humans ever did. Without these guests, there would be no flowering plants at all. There would never have been flowers anywhere at all on Earth. Let's listen to what these truly important guests have to say to us.

## **Messages from the Insects**

[0:46]

I love the flowers.

I am at one with the flowers.

I evolved together with the flowers during more than 100 million years.

But our populations have declined 45% in only 40 years, because of you humans.

*An actor appears from the side, looking rather distraught.*

You are destroying our homes, and poisoning us, killing us off in vast numbers.

Many of us are being driven to extinction because of you.

You are also putting yourselves in danger by killing so many of us.

Can't we work something out?

**Actor:** But I recycle!

**Screen:** Do you really think that's enough?

## **The Talking Dog #2**

[00:32]

**MC:** Well, it's finally time for us to hear from that fabulous Talking Dog! I'm really looking forward to hearing from him!

*A stagehand motions to her from the side.*

Excuse me for a moment.

*A brief, slightly frantic conference ensues, and the MC returns to downstage center a bit annoyed.*

I have just been informed that The Talking Dog has become more ambitious, and now wants to study the dictionary a bit before making his historic appearance. Well, a doggie's gotta do what a doggie's gotta do. Oh, that sounds kinda bad. Anyway, on with the show!

*The MC exits backward, bowing in her customary way.*

## **I accidentally peed on my own grave**

[1:22]

**Screen:** The following story is based on a true story told to me by my brother in law. The story has been elaborated for humor.

*A chair is center stage. Actor enters.*

Hi. My name is John...John Spenser.

*The actor sits down, mimics starting a car, driving.*

One day I was driving along in rural Vermont, and I had to pee really badly. I drove a while further, but there was no sign of a gas station or a restaurant. I had to pee so badly by now that I was desperate.

I pulled over, and it happened to be right by an old New England cemetery. I walked a short way into the cemetery, and began to relieve myself. I tried to be really careful not to pee directly on top of any of the graves, and I had just started to pee when I realized that I was peeing right on top of a corpse. When I read the headstone, it was my own name: John Spenser!

Instantly my sphincter closed up like a steel trap, and I ran back to the car without even zipping up, and drove away as fast as I could. I was still driving when my sphincter finally relaxed, and I just peed in my pants while driving. Not proud of myself...I just really couldn't hold it any more.

When I got back to the motel I cleaned myself up, but suddenly I realized that I had peed on myself *twice* that day; the first time I peed on my own corpse, then I peed on myself again in the car.

I started laughing, and then fell down, I was laughing so hard. mThat might have made me pee on myself again, but I decided to pee on myself anyway, just for fun this time. You know-third one's a charm.

*A stagehand appears at the side of the stage, holding a towel. During the lines below the stagehand hands the actor the towel, which he wraps around his waist. He exits wearing the towel.*

## **Jewish Pushups**

[0:22]

**Screen:** [star of David]

**Audio:** Jewish pushups are just like regular pushups, but you do them while kvetching vigorously.

*Actor enters, wearing a yarmulke, and begins to do pushups while kvetching.*

**Audio:** Kvetching helps build stamina for your lungs, which in turn helps in long and senseless disputes over nothing at all.

*Actor finishes the pushups, but continues kvetching as he exits. Just as he is about to exit he turns, and flashes the "peace" sign.*

**Actor:** Shalom, man!

## Floss News Alert #2

[0:25]

**Screen:** [Floss News Alert Sequence, UCB image, ]

*All actions as in first Floss News Alert.*

**Actor:** Researchers in sociology at the University of California at Berkeley say they have determined precisely when racism will end. Their conclusion is that racism will come to a sudden and final end just as soon as the supply of idiots runs out. This has been a Floss News Alert!

## Who Is Responsible for Most of the Violence in the World?

[1:18]

**Screen:** Finlay Clinkscales, PhD, HHS  
Professor of Horrific Human Stupidity

**Professor Clinkscales:** Your mind systematically blocks out certain absolutely obvious aspects of reality, and you don't even know it.

What if I told you that there is a minority in every human population that commits nearly all of the violence in the entire world? What if I further told you that this minority has a specific genetic marker that is easily identified, and even has clear visual signs?

*Professor Clinkscales takes out his laser pointer, brandishing it like a dagger.*

**Professor Clinkscales:** This genetic minority commits:

**Screen:** [statistics below]

**Professor Clinkscales:** Almost ninety percent of all murders  
Close to 100 percent of all rapes  
Close to 100 percent of all violence in war

**Screen:** Nearly all serial killers  
Nearly all mass murderers

**Professor Clinkscales:** In addition, nearly all serial killers and nearly all mass murderers also have this specific genetic marker.

*Professor Clinkscales puts away his laser pointer.*

**Professor Clinkscales:** What if I also told you that you already know about this genetic marker and its connection to violence, but you pretend that you don't? What if the media in every human population *also* pretend they don't know about this genetic marker, even though *they absolutely do*, because *everyone does*?

Who is this violent, murderous minority? You already know! But you pretend that you don't! Horrific Human Stupidity!

*Professor Clinkscales exits in a huff.*

**Screen:** [First an "E" appears in the middle of the screen, then an "M" on the far left, then finally an "N" on the far right. The letters then move together to spell "MEN."]

## **Do The Linky Pinky #2**

[0:10]

[Basic white bread version]

**Audio:** appropriate dance music

*Two actors enter from opposite sides, dance the Linky Pinky together, bow to each other, and exit.*

## **Invite an Insight**

**Screen:** Invite an Insight

*During this segment, a small table is placed at the front edge of the stage at the center, and a 1970s landline telephone placed on top of it.*

**MC:** It's time for an exciting new segment called "Invite an Insight!" But first, a rather personal question for all of you. Ready?

In the next month, what truly deep, important insights are you planning to have? You sir, right there in the front row. What profoundly productive insights are you planning to have during the next month or so?

*The audience member will probably shrug or get confused. If they happen to have a saucy answer, it's time for some nimble improv that may change the paragraph below.*

What? You're *not sure*? But this is *your life*! How can you be unsure about something as crucial as having profoundly productive insights that will change your life and the lives of all those who come into contact with you for the better? Egad, man. We need better than this.

*Pause.*

How many other people here are not at all sure about what profound, beautiful and positively transformative insights they will have during the next month?

*Many hands go up, reluctantly.*

O...M...G. This is *terrible*! We gotta fix this!

Ok, so here's what we're going to do. We're going to make sure that we all have at least one wonderful insight in the next thirty days, guaranteed. Here's how it works. We're going to send a message into the awesome depths of our unconscious, that vast ocean containing all of our experiences, even the many we have completely forgotten, and we are going to ask that vast ocean of wisdom for a deep, powerful insight that will help us in our lives. Our unconscious will receive the request, consider the matter deeply, and then, in its own time and in its own way, deliver that wonderful insight to us.

Whatever the insight you have during the next month, it will be absolutely yours, and no one else's. It may be about a relationship, or your career, or a way you need to change, or a new way of understanding your past, or about society and your part in it, or about anything else. After all, it's your unconscious, and no one else's.

But here's the catch. In all likelihood, the insight will arrive in a form you are not expecting, so you must not just remain alert, but be ready to recognize the insight no matter the form in which it is delivered to you.

You may walking along at a brisk pace, and all of a sudden you stop, and you don't really know why. Is that the insight beginning to arrive?

You could be having a conversation with someone you talk with all the time, and all of a sudden you are intensely irritated by the way they talk. That could be the insight, pushing toward the surface.

Or maybe you're just taking a shower, and suddenly you feel like your whole body is glowing with a cosmic light. Yep, that's almost certainly your unconscious delivering the message.

So let's close our eyes, be very still, and ask that vast ocean of our unconscious to do this wonderful service for us of providing a deep insight, some time during the next thirty days.

Close your eyes. Shut out all distractions. Focus your mind. Greet your unconscious lovingly, because after all, it is you.

Now ask it for that insight. Ask it with complete sincerity, and the fullness of your heart. You can even ask it for an insight in a particular area of your life, and it will absolutely understand and respond, but in its own time, and in its own way. Ask again. Ask one last time.

*Pause.*

All right, now open your eyes. Here we all are, once again. But this time all of us are about to be changed, some time in the next thirty days.

Thank you.

## **Intermission**

*The 1970's phone that has been mysteriously present throughout the previous segment suddenly rings. The MC enters, and picks it up.*

**MC:** Hello?

*She holds the phone out to the audience.*

**MC:** It's for you! They say it's intermission, and we're all supposed to dance the Linky Pinky together!



*Lights out.*

# # #

## **Identification, please. #1**

[2:12]

**Screen:** 1957 pink Ford Thunderbird, top down

*A chair is brought out and placed center stage, and a stagehand brings out a fan from stage right. A woman gets into the "car" and the stagehand turns on the fan so her hair is blowing around. She sees something in her rear view mirror. A police siren is heard. She pulls over, stops and waits. A policeman in full uniform walks to the driver's side window. He is wearing mirrored sunglasses, and has a tough, even frightening demeanor.*

**Policeman:** Identification, please.

**Woman:** I am Olga. I know that sounds Russian, but I am originally from Spain, so I do identity as Spanish, but I moved to the United States several years ago, all the way to California! I like it here a lot, so now I find that I identify partly as Spanish, but also partly as American, but I might identify more as Californian now than anything else, because *I absolutely love California!* Also, specifically *Northern* California, because there *are* strong cultural differences between Northern California and Southern California, and I feel much more compatible with the North than with the South. You know what I mean?

*The policeman stands stock still, silent, inscrutable.*

Also, I am a woman, so guess what? I actually identify as one, even though I'm also kind of ambivalent about it because there are a lot of women whose behavior I don't like. But I also truly enjoy identifying as a woman, though I can't really explain why. It's just kind of fun! You know what I mean?

*The policeman stands stock still, silent, inscrutable.*

*Olga struggles to come up with a further identification.*

But I identify most strongly as an actress, and in that case I *can* tell you *exactly* why, and that is because acting is *a truly noble endeavor*, an exploration of *so many aspects* of humanity. As an actor, my job is to be an agent of truth: emotional truth, behavioral truth, psychological truth.

*Olga stands up, and mimes being an explorer, with a looking glass, and urging others forward in exploration.*

My job is to be a brave, truthful explorer, reporting back on my explorations through my own body, and my voice, and my mind, and most of all my spirit. You know what I mean?

*The policeman stands stock still, silent, inscrutable.*

*Olga again struggles to come up with a further form of identification, but then suddenly stands up on the seat, and begins waving her arms as though she is flying like a bird.*

But then some times I identify as a cormorant, because that way I would be able to fly around *all over the place*, but also...

*Olga flops herself sideways over the seat, and pretends to be swimming under water.*

...but also go scuba diving whenever I wanted to. I would love that!

*Olga sits back up, brushes herself off, and turns to the policeman.*

How about you?

*The policeman takes out a pad, and begins writing.*

**Policeman:** I'm a cop. I identify as a cop. Your left tail light is out. I'm writing you a fixit ticket.

*The policeman hands Olga the ticket, and walks away. Olga looks at the ticket briefly, then stares straight ahead, blankly.*

**Woman:** Man, what a bummer.

## Christian Pushups

[0:28]

*An actor enters, and begins to do pushups.*

**Screen:** [Christian cross]

**Announcer:** Christian pushups are special, because they are all about suffering. You just haven't really suffered until you've done as many Christian pushups as you possibly can.

*The actor does as many pushups as he can, struggling to complete one more pushup. Just as he finishes that one last painful pushup he yells "Jesus Christ!" and quits, then stands. He exits, shaking out his arms.*

**Actor:** Great workout!

## The Talking Dog #3

[0:40]

**MC:** Well, we've waited long enough for The Talking Dog, and now we're ready for his big, big moment! He should be truly amazing by now, having spent time studying the dictionary...

*Once again, a stagehand gestures from the side. The MC now openly expresses annoyance in her gestures. Another brief conference ensues, this time full of obvious irritation. The MC returns to downstage center, shaking her head in exasperation.*

Ok, I gotta tell you I'm getting kind of fed up with this darn Talking Dog. Now he's become rather egotistical about his conversational abilities, and is showing off to everyone backstage, distracting the entire cast. He's becoming a real problem.

**The Talking Dog:** (from offstage, in a voice that is half like barking) No I'm not!

**MC:** Yes, you are!

**The Talking Dog:** Am not!

**MC:** So annoying! Well, on with the show!

*The MC exits backwards bowing, in her customary way, but this time with clear agitation.*

### **Floss News Alert #3**

[0:30]

**Screen:** [Floss News Alert Sequence]

*All actions as in first Floss News Alert.*

**Actor:** Researchers in biology at the University of New Amsterdam have discovered that as bacteria become more educated they tend to have somewhat fewer baby bacteria, but still multiply until all their available resources are used up, despite their education. This has been a Floss News Alert!

**Screen:** [During the above, a clip of bacteria multiplying out of control gradually dissolves into an image of the Earth.]

### **Frozen Figures**

[6:20]

**Screen:** [ice]

*Woman, center stage, curled up in a ball. Behind her are five actors in an arc around her, each in a static pose of utter negativity toward her. To her right is a small table, with a chair behind it. The back of the chair is against the back of the table.*

**Woman:** It hurts. Oh, it hurts. It's like a dagger made of ice, stabbing into the center of my brain, freezing my brain to death from the inside out. But it's not just one dagger. It's five cold, hard daggers made of ice, trying to kill me, freeze me to death, make me cold and hard like them.

*She stands up, and speaks of each frozen figure in turn.*

**Woman:** There he is, my beloved uncle, who raped me.

There she is, my mother, who believed my uncle's lies, called me a liar, and rejected me—threw me out of the house when I was still only a teenager.

And here *she* is, my “best friend,” who decided it was a good idea to become friends with my mother, and then believe her lies, and also call me a liar.

And you, you evil bastard, my boss who fired me because I wouldn't have sex with you. Asshole.

And finally, here he is, the man I still love, the man I still want, who was so good to me right up to the time he left me because he said I cried too much.

*She is now standing behind the frozen figure on the far right, who has his back to her, and one arm held up in a dismissive gesture of departure.*

**Woman:** Oh Jake. Jake, please don't leave me.

*She moves toward him, puts her hands on his arms, her face against his back.*

**Woman:** You know I still love you.

*She suddenly starts back, holding up her hands, which are now like frozen claws.*

**Woman:** Oh my God! My hands are frozen! It hurts! Fuck!

*She rubs her hands in desperation in her armpits, trying to thaw her hands.*

**Woman:** It's always like this—again and again. God damn it! I try to be good to them, to thaw them with the warmth of my heart, the warmth of my love, and they just try to freeze me, try to kill me again.

*Mood changes to happy, contented.*

**Screen:** [dissolve to ice partially melted, some greenery showing through]

Sometimes I'll be in a good mood, happy, warm, when things are going well. Then the frozen figures begin to melt bit by bit, just melt away...

*The actors who are the frozen figures begin to slowly melt, getting smaller, losing their hard edges.*

**Woman:** And then I'm very happy, because I think they will just melt away completely, and I'll be safe from them forever.

**Screen:** [dissolve to ice, even harsher]

But then something harsh happens, or someone else is mean to me, or I just don't get a good night's sleep, and they just grow back again, bigger and colder and more evil than ever.

*The frozen figures grow back, attaining even more threatening proportions.*

**Woman:** This has to stop. Somehow, it has to stop. I can't take it anymore. I can't take the pain, and the sorrow and the poisonous disappointment. I can't take not knowing whether each day, each today, is the day their coldness will finally kill me.

I have to rise above this somehow, or end it all.

*Pause.*

*During the next section, she mimes going up to the roof.*

I'll go to the roof. Yes, I'll go to the roof and make a decision. Either I finally rise above this, or I end my life just to escape this torment. From the roof it's six stories down, with concrete below—just a few seconds of free fall, and then my brain is smashed apart on the concrete, and all my pain stops forever. Only a few seconds of delicious weightlessness, and then I don't even feel the impact. It's all over, and I am free. Just one more step, and all my pain ends forever.

*Pause, while she takes a couple of hesitant, false steps.*

**Woman:** BUT I DON'T WANT TO DIE! I **DO NOT** WANT TO DIE! FUCK! FUCK IT!

*She collapses into a pile, sobbing.*

**Screen:** [starry night sky]

**Woman:** Can I pray for peace? Can I pray for my pain to cease? No, there is no God. There is no one listening. There is no one in this world who cares about me. I am completely broken...completely broken.

But I have to pray, to save myself, because I do want to live. I do.

*She looks up.*

**Woman:** Stars. I see some stars! I will pray to these stars to help me. I will pray to the Universe to fill me with love, and generosity, and wisdom. I know no one is listening. But I want and need the wisdom of the Universe to heal me, and set me free.

*She prays, kneeling, her hands folded, looking up to the stars.*

Please, please give me wisdom to free myself from these frozen figures who torment me. Help me, heal me...please...please.

*She stretches her arms out to the heavens, completely exposed. She closes her eyes, and very slowly bends over until her forehead is against the ground.*

**Screen:** [the ice dissolves to greenery, then to a pathway of purple flowers]

*Gradually, the frozen figures melt completely, and crawl away offstage.*

*Long pause. [count to thirty]*

*The woman opens her eyes.*

**Woman:** I feel different. I don't know how, but I feel different. Something has changed. I'm going back downstairs.

*She quickly gets down off the table. She returns center stage, and looks around, astonished.*

**Woman:** They...are...gone! There's no trace of them! But the floor must be wet, and then they'll grow back.

*She gets down on the floor, feeling all around.*

**Woman:** It's dry! It's completely dry everywhere! They really are gone, and they're never coming back...never coming back.

*She stands up. Pause.*

**Woman:** But who am I now? I lived my whole life so far in relation to them. *Who am I?* I'm really not sure. But I *am* sure I want to find out. I need to find out who I am now.

*She turns and begins to exit upstage right but stops, then turns around.*

**Screen:** [dissolve to hill, with clouds above]

**Woman:** Oh my God. Am I a frozen figure to someone else? Have I done the same kind of thing to anyone else? Yes, I've been bad too. I have hurt people too. I have apologizing to do. There is love I must give to anyone I have ever harmed.

I need to melt the whole world with my love.

*Exit.*

## **Do The Linky Pinky #3**

[0:10]

[Artsy "interracial" version]

**Audio:** Techno version of the Linky Pinky music

*Two actors enter from opposite sides, dance the Linky Pinky together, bow to each other, and exit.*

## **Messages from the Amphibians**

We are the amphibians.

Our evolution began a vast 370 million years ago, 369 million years before humans.

We are tremendously diverse, but we all have moist, permeable skin.

This makes us sensitive to pollutants, and you humans have done nothing but pollute water all over the planet.



Fully 40% of our species are threatened with extinction because of you humans.

Is that fair? Is that right?

Can't we work something out?

*An actor walks on stage, looking at the screen. He turns to the audience.*

**Actor:** But I recycle!

**Screen:** Do you really think that's going to solve this?

## **The Potato Chip & the Battery**

[1:20]

*Stagehands place two chairs next to each other, stage center.  
The storyteller enters, stands downstage left.*

**Screen:** [BART logo]

**Male Storyteller:** One winter I was at MacArthur BART, waiting for a train.

*Male actor enters, wearing a new pair of winter gloves. He rubs his hands together in the cold.*

**Male Storyteller:** I had just bought a new pair of gloves, and was happy to be wearing them, it was so cold.

**Screen:** [gloves appear]

*Female actors enters, begins walking toward the actor already seated.*

**Male Storyteller:** A woman sat down next to me. She was very friendly. I mean very friendly. She chatted about this and that. She was so friendly that every once in a while she would touch my leg.

**Screen:** [gloves move from left to right]

*The male actor takes off his gloves, and the female actor puts them on.*

**Male Storyteller:** She asked if she could wear my gloves, because it was so cold. She had been so nice that I let her wear my new gloves. Then she put her hand on my leg again and said...

**Female actor:** Hey, you want to hear a joke?

**Male actor:** Sure...

**Male Storyteller:** I said.

**Female actor:** What did the potato chip say to the battery?

**Male actor:** What?

*A second male actor appears upstage, observing this interaction.*

**Male Storyteller:** Then she put her hand further up my leg and said...

**Female actor:** I'm Frito-lay if you're Eveready!

**Screen:** [Frito-lay and Eveready logos]

**Male Storyteller:** A few seconds later an undercover police officer walked up to her, addressed her by name and said...

**Undercover police officer:** Ok, Stacy. Let's go.

**Male Storyteller:** He took her by the arm and led her away. She was still wearing my new gloves. That didn't really bother me, but I felt bad because she had been so nice...and I had never asked what she did for a living.

## **Don't Look Down On Manikins**

[2:10]

**Screen:** [beautiful clouds]

*Stage hands place a table center stage, with a chair behind it. They also place two manikins on the table, in joyful poses.*

*A male actor enters, and sits in the chair looking at the manikins. He leans forward and picks one of them up, looks at it closely for a moment, then*

*puts it back. He picks up the second manikin, puts it in an awkward, ugly pose, then laughs.*

*Then he cocks one index finger, and knocks one of the manikins over. He laughs again, this time more strongly. He picks up the first manikin again.*

**Actor:** You know what I could do to you? I could rip your little head off right now.

*He grabs the manikin's head.*

**Actor:** You couldn't do a goddam thing about it.

*He tosses the manikin down roughly, and picks up the other manikin.*

**Actor:** And you? I could so easily just rip off your arms and legs, and you couldn't do a thing to stop me.

*He pushes both manikins off the table, and they tumble to the floor. On the screen behind him appear two very large manikins, floating in the clouds. The actor moves around to the front of the table, and stands over the manikins strewn helpless on the floor. On the screen, word balloons appear next to the heads of the large manikins. During the dialogue of the large manikins, the actor continues to threaten and abuse the small manikins, saying he could burn them alive, etc.*

**Large manikin 1:** Ugh.

**Large manikin 2:** What a jerk.

**Large manikin 1:** I do wonder what is wrong with him.

**Large manikin 2:** Perhaps something in his early toilet training.

**Large manikin 1:** Cruelty is inherently pathetic.

**Large manikin 2:** Sickening.

**Large manikin 1:** I feel sorry for him.

*The large manikins begin to fade away, and then only the clouds are seen again. The actor suddenly stops, as though he senses something. He turns suddenly toward the screen, but sees only the clouds.*

*Pause.*

*He gently picks each manikin up, puts it in a nice pose, and places it back on the table. He turns to leave, looking back at the manikins.*

**Actor:** I'm so sorry, you guys. *(He is fighting back tears.)* I really don't know what's wrong with me. I love you guys so much. I'll see you tomorrow, ok?

*Exits.*

## **Identification, please. #2**

[3:15]

*Same actors as in #1. A woman is driving, and checks her mirror. A police siren is heard, and she pulls over and stops. The imposing police officer walks up to her driver's side door.*

**Woman:** It's you again. You want *more* identification?

*Awkward silence.*

**Policeman:** You know, it isn't easy being a cop. Most people hate you right up until the time they need your help, and after you give them your help, they just go right back to hating you. It's awful. But I do identify as a cop because I chose to be one, because I believe in the role. I am here to help people. I am here to help prevent needless damage and pain and sorrow. I am here to save people, even putting my life on the line to do so.

And people think cops are stupid. I have a degree from UC Berkeley in French literature, with straight A's. I could have done anything, but I chose to be a cop, for reasons of morality and setting a good example.

Yes, I am a black man. But do I identify as black? No. Do I identify as a man? No. I used to identify as a human being, but now I only identify as a being—just a being in human form, yet another accident of nature. I could have been born as a polar bear or a frog or a willow tree...or as a cormorant. Perhaps we could have gone flying and scuba diving together, Olga. But no, I just happened to be born as a human being, for better and for worse.

*Two stagehands come out, with a beautiful satin robe. When the policeman puts his arms out, they slip the robe onto him in one seamless move. He removes his hat and mirrored sunglasses and hand them to the stagehands, who exit with them.*

But most of all, I identify as a dancer. Sometimes when I am home alone I put on a beautiful satin robe and perform tender dances while imagining that I am a famous French dancer named Pierre. I dance slowly and beautifully by myself and say "Je m'appelle Pierre. Je suis de Paris." At the end I always sit down and cry for a long time.

I'm not feeling sorry for myself. I'm just so sad that I will never know what it is like to be anyone other than me. Every person I see, I wonder what it would be like to be them. Every animal I see, I wonder what it would be like to be that animal. And since I met you, I have wondered what it is like to be you, Olga. I wish more than anything that I could know, even for a few seconds, what it is like to be you.

You know what I mean?

*Pause.*

**Olga:** Officer, may I exit the vehicle?

*The policeman makes a gesture of permission. Olga gets out of the car, and stands a few feet from the policeman.*

**Olga:** What's your name?

**Policeman:** Arthur

*Olga opens her arms to him.*

**Olga:** Come here, Arthur. Come on, get over here.

*The policeman steps toward her. She puts her arms around him. He begins crying in her arms. Gradually the crying stops. Olga holds him by the shoulders, looking straight in his eyes.*

**Olga:** Let's be friends. *(shaking him in a friendly way)*  
We...are...gonna...be..friends! *(She chucks him on both arms, rather hard.)*

*Olga gets back in the car, and is ready to drive off.*

**Olga:** Thanks so much for this experience! Pull me over any time...Pierre!

*She blows him a kiss, and drives off.*

*The policeman is still for a moment, then begins dancing slowly, back toward his car offstage, still wearing the satin robe.*

**Policeman:** Je m'appelle Pierre. Je suis de Paris.

## **Ideas of Heaven**

[1:50]

*Actor 1 enters, stands stage left.*

**Actor 1:** I believe in heaven, but I do have a question. What if there are aliens on other planets? Are they going to be in heaven, too? That would make heaven pretty scary, which would kind of defeat the point of heaven. Therefore there must not be aliens.

**Screen:** Conservative

*Actor 2 enters, stands next to Actor 1.*

**Actor 2:** I love the idea of there being aliens in heaven! That would be so cool, so interesting! We could learn so much from each other! Maybe the aliens have solved problems like racism and discrimination against trans and non-binary aliens and we could learn how they did it! That would be fantastic!

**Screen:** Liberal

**Actor 2:** *(to actor 1)* By the way, do you want a hug?

**Actor 1:** No thanks.

*Actor 3 enters, stands next to actor 2.*

**Actor 3:** My idea of heaven is simple. It's just me, my extended family, a few close friends and some key business associates. Everybody else can go fuck themselves.

**Screen:** Conservative? Oh yeah.

**Actor 2:** *(to actor 3)* Do you want a hug?

**Actor 3:** *(horrificed)* Definitely not.

*Actor 4 enters, stands next to actor 3.*

**Actor 4:** There is no heaven other than the heaven we have right here on Earth through the only true miracle, the miracle of evolution and biodiversity.

*Actor 1 rolls his eyes, while actor 3 mimes getting a horrendous migraine, rubbing his temples, vomiting. Actor 2 begins to stare in awe and wonder.*

**Actor 4:** We have a moral obligation to promote rationality, and to preserve and even revere the natural world. I just want to give biodiversity and all the world's ecosystems a big hug.

**Screen:** Liberal? Ooh la la.

*Tender music begins to play.*

*Actor 2 rushes over to actor 4 and embraces him with great passion. They begin to slow dance tenderly, while the other two actors look away in disgust.*

*Actors 1 and 3 express their disgust by beginning to exit to opposite sides. When they have reached the sides of the stage they pause, turn around, slowly walk toward each other, do the Linky Pinky, and then also begin slow dancing tenderly.*

## **Muslim Pushups**

[0:25]

*The entire cast enters, in pairs, each pair discussing and pointing to a small map. They begin doing pushups, but all facing in different directions.*

**Audio:** The Muslim pushup is just a regular pushup, but done while facing Mecca. There is often some argument as to exactly which direction faces Mecca, but there is no argument that if all Muslims did ten pushups five times per day, they would be in better shape than people of other religions.

## **The Horrors of Homophily**

[2:00]

*An actor walks center stage, holding a sign that says "Humanity is horrible." He reads the sign aloud once, just to make sure that everyone in the audience knows what the sign says. A second person walks on, reads the sign and begins to taunt him, verbally abuse him, then physically threaten him. Others gather around him, and begin to do the same, also spitting at him. The person holding the sign refuses to be chased away, and simply absorbs the abuse.*

**Screen:** The Earth in space slowly fades in.

*The group begins shoving him. They shove him to the ground such that he drops the sign center stage. They begin punching him and kicking him. A female police officer enters, sees what is happening, and blows her whistle loudly. The actor who has been knocked to the ground calls out in a desperate voice "Officer, please help me!"*

*The police officer comes over, stops for a moment over the beaten person on the ground. She takes the sign from him and reads it, then also begins kicking him. All the others join in the ultimately fatal beating. Finally they all stop the beating, one of them listens for a heartbeat and says "He's dead."*

*Two people drag the corpse off stage, then return. One of them is holding his own hand, which has a small cut on it.*

**Actor 1:** Are you ok?

**Actor 2:** That bastard scratched me while we were killing him.

**Actor 3:** That's terrible!

**Actor 4:** He was so violent!



**Actor 1:** They are all so violent, unlike us.

**Actor 2:** At least that terrorist is dead.

*The Police Woman puts her hands on her abdomen, in a loving gesture.*

**Police Woman:** We had to kill him, because we are pro-life.

**Actor 1:** But there are more terrorists, and we must always defend ourselves, by killing them first.

**Screen:** Flags of nations of the world begin to appear, one by one: US, Israel, Palestine, Russia, China, more.

*The group gathers center stage, unwittingly directly over the sign. Again, they high five each other and congratulate each other, have a group hug, and say in unison:*

**Group:** We are morally superior! We are morally superior! Yay us! Yay us!

*They disperse, still happily congratulating themselves. The police officer is the last on stage. She bends down and picks up the sign, first such that the audience can read it again. She flips it over so that she can read it, then laughs and shakes her head derisively.*

*She tucks the sign under her arm, laughs again, and walks off smugly.*

**Screen:** No national anthem in the world includes moral ideals of any kind.

## **What is the most important issue in the world?**

[0:55]

**MC:** Ladies and gentlemen, it's time to get truly serious. I would like to ask you a question. It may be a question you have never asked yourself, but it is a crucially important question, perhaps the most important question of all. When I ask the question, I want you to just call out your answer. Call out your answer loud, so everyone can hear you. Ready? Here goes.

What is the most important issue in the world?

*No matter what anyone in the audience calls out, the MC always responds quickly with "No, that's not it" and moves on. "Next?" "No, that's not it."*

**MC:** Let's get back to this question a bit later, shall we?

*The MC bows her formal bow, and once again exits backwards, still bowing.*

## **No, that's not it.**

[1:55]

**Screen:** This story was told to me by my father, about his time in the army.

*Offstage is heard "Hut!...Hut!...Hut!...Hut!" The entire cast minus the MC appear in Army uniforms, marching together.*

*There is a leader, and four soldiers. The leader stands to the side as the soldiers march and call. Each of the four soldiers has a crumpled piece of paper hidden in their left hand. At a key point later, they will all drop the pieces of paper on the stage.*

**Leader:** You had a good job and you left!

**Soldiers:** You're right!

*They all swivel to the right.*

**Leader:** You had a good girl and you left!

**Soldiers:** You're right!

*They all swivel to the right.*

**Leader:** Sound off!

**Soldiers:** One, two! *Called out individually, while turning toward the audience.*

**Leader:** Sound off!

**Soldiers:** Three, four! *Called out individually, while turning toward the audience.*

*They begin to sing.*

**All:** You're in the Army now! *(saluting)*  
You're not behind the plough *(riding behind a plough)*  
You'll never get rich *(counting bills)*  
While digging a ditch *(throwing a shovel full of dirt over the right shoulder)*  
You're in the Army now! *(swivel in a light crouch, then salute on last word)*

*All are in a line facing the audience, saluting.*

**Leader:** At ease, men.

*They drop to at ease, and disperse casually on stage, interacting easily with each other, and casually dropping the pieces of paper that had been hidden in their left hands. A kidding shoulder push or two. One of them is off by himself, not mingling at all with the others, staring down.*

*The storyteller enters.*

**Storyteller:** When my father was drafted into the Army, there was a guy in his platoon, a smart guy, who was very unhappy. Every day, he was obviously miserable. Then he stopped talking to everyone, just kept to himself, and one day he just snapped—lost it completely.

*Actor 1 begins walking around, and slowly bends down to pick up one of the pieces of paper. He looks at it closely. He examines both sides meticulously, looking for something.*

**Storyteller:** He began walking around slowly, picking up every piece of paper he found. Each piece of paper he would examine closely on both sides, then sadly shake his head and say...

**Troubled Soldier:** No, that's not it.

*The other soldiers begin staring at the troubled soldier, then mocking him. One of them points a thumb at him over his shoulder and circles his index finger next to his temple. They laugh together. The leader observes the troubled soldier from a distance, his arms folded.*

**Storyteller:** All day long he would just walk around, picking up pieces of paper, studying them closely and then just shaking his head sadly and saying...

**Troubled Soldier:** No, that's not it.

*Two soldiers move a small table onto the stage, with two chairs behind it. Another chair is placed on the opposite side of the table, so that the person seated there will have their back to the audience. The commander and a soldier enter, the commander holding a document. They sit down at the two chairs on one side of the table, facing the audience, looking stern.*

**Storyteller:** This went on for several painful weeks. It was a damn sorry sight. Finally a hearing was held, and it was decided that this troubled soldier should leave the Army.

*The troubled soldier enters, sees a piece of paper on the ground and moves to pick it up.*

**Officer at table:** (sternly) Leave that be, private. That's an order.

*The troubled soldier struggles to resist picking up the piece of paper, his hand shaking. He finally has to use his other arm to force himself not to pick up the piece of paper. The officer gestures him into the opposing chair.*

**Storyteller:** He was handed a document, studied it closely, and then he suddenly smiled for the first time in months, stood up and said...

**Screen:** [Army discharge document]

*The troubled soldier is handed the document, and studies it for a moment. He stands, turns around toward the audience, a radiant smile on his face.*

**Troubled Soldier:** That's it!

*All the actors other than the "troubled soldier" disperse off stage, and the table and chairs are removed. During this time a trumpet is heard playing "You're In The Army Now." The "troubled soldier" strides around the stage, lovingly holding his discharge document in front of him. On the final note of the trumpet, he kisses the document extravagantly, and exits.*

## Floss News Alert #4

[0:22]

**Screen:** [Floss News Alert Sequence]

*All actions as in first Floss News Alert.*

**Actor:** Researchers in sociology at the University of the Indian Ocean report that Russia is a horrible very big country, whereas Israel is a horrible very small country. The common factor in both cases appears to be...human beings. This has been a Floss News Alert!

## What Ever Happened to The Human Potential Movement?

[2:32]

**Screen:** Dr. Finlay Clinkscapes, PhD, HHS  
Professor of Horrific Human Stupidity

*The professor walks on crisply to downstage right, and whips out his laser pointer again, with gusto.*

**Professor Clinkscapes:** It's time for another chart. This one is particularly revealing, on a subject that is terrifying to most people. I am also terrified of this subject, by the way. But we need to talk about it, because it's so important.

**Screen:** Chart of the use of the phrase "Human Potential Movement," from 1500 to the current time.

**Professor Clinkscapes:** Take a look. For most of human history, even the concept of "human potential" did not exist. Then, quite suddenly, in 1965 humanity appears to wake up and realize that it could *consciously improve itself*.

What an exciting, amazing, inspiring idea! We could make the whole world better by *becoming better ourselves*! This idea then takes hold. During the course of a thrilling fourteen years, from 1965 to 1978, the slope of interest in this idea is close to vertical. Humanity appears to be truly serious about this idea: that the most meaningful progress of all is progress in improving humanity itself.

*The mood darkens.*

Then, from 1979 on, something horrible happens, which you can see clearly toward the right of the graph. A terrible dwindling begins. In dribs and drabs, humanity appears to either give up on itself, or give up on the effort involved in improving itself.

*The Professor begins to become deeply agitated, and appears to be losing control.*

This in itself is terrifying, but what is far more terrifying is that humanity may be correct in its own judgment about itself. Let's be honest about this. We are indeed a horrible species. It's true. We are horrible: horrible to each other, horribly lazy and cowardly, horrible to the entire Earth and all the other creatures on it. Maybe we deserve to give up on ourselves, because *we just plain fucking suck!*

*The Professor suddenly becomes quiet. A visible change occurs in his posture and his demeanor. His chest begins to heave. He is fighting back tears. He can barely speak.*

But I can't do it. I just can't give up on us. I know I probably should, but I just can't. I *know* we can do *so much* better! I cry every day, just thinking about all this.

Horrific...Human...Stupidity.

*The Professor is at a loss, visibly shaken.*

I'm sorry. Please forgive me.

*The Professor exits awkwardly, stumbling off, afraid of completely losing control, still fighting back tears.*

## **Deeply Committed Agnostic Pushups**

[0:30]

*The entire cast enters uncertainly, and occasionally bends down to begin to assume the pushup position, but then stands back up again, unable to decide whether to actually do a pushup. They ponder, rub their chins, then almost do a pushup, then stand back up again to consider anew the choice of whether to do a pushup.*

**Audio:** Deeply committed agnostic pushups are among the most difficult types of pushup to perform, because you can never decide whether to actually do one or not. But all that bending down thinking about whether to actually do a pushup is still good exercise, and at least you're being honest.

*The cast exits, rubbing their chins and shaking their heads indecisively.*

## **Floss News Alert #5**

[00:18]

**Screen:** [Floss News Alert Sequence, gender symbols]

*All actions as in first Floss News Alert.*

**Actor:** Researchers in human sexuality at the University of New Amsterdam have discovered conclusive evidence that there are actually *seven* human sexes, but that only *five* of them really matter. This has been a Floss News Alert!

## **Messages from the Animals**

[00:46]

I am a tiger. I am extraordinary, the largest of the cats.

In only 100 years, you humans have destroyed 94% of my habitat.

Where am I supposed to live?

I am a black rhinoceros. You humans have almost wiped all of us out, just for your idiotic superstitions about aphrodisiacs.

I am an orangutan. You are destroying my home in the forest, just for cheap palm oil.

Fuck you, humans.

*An actor walks to center stage, looking at the screen. He turns to the audience.*

**Actor:** But I recycle!

**Screen:** Good for you, but entirely insufficient.

## **Pantheist Pushups**

[0:50]

**Screen:** [the cosmos]

*The entire cast enters, and begins doing Pantheist pushups, which are like a burpee in slow motion with a pushup in which you kiss the Earth, then stand up and give thanks to the Universe, raising your arms above your head.*

**Audio:** The Pantheist pushup is a modified pushup in which you kiss the Earth, then stand and give thanks for everything the Universe has given you. The Pantheist pushup is by far the best kind of pushup because it involves not only several major muscle groups, but the entire Universe.

In the course of doing Pantheist pushups however, there is one thing you must never, ever do, and that is to begin singing "Kumbaya."

*The cast begins singing.*

**Cast:** Kumbaya, my Lord, kumbay...yuck! Fuck! That song sucks!

**Actor:** Because...it's not about anything.

**Actor:** It's meaningless drivel.

**Cast:** We need songs that are truly meaningful! We'll have to *write them ourselves!*

## **Floss News Alert #6**

[0:20]

*All actions as in first Floss News Alert.*

**Audio:** Researchers in paleontological sexology at the University of Staten Island claim that while human beings have sex for mere minutes at a time, dinosaurs had sex for millions of years. This has been a Floss News Alert!



## Not Committing Planetary Suicide

[TBD]

**Professor Clinkscapes:** Earlier the question was asked “What is the most important issue in the world.” I have a definitive answer to that question. What is the most important issue in the world?

**Screen:** Not committing planetary suicide

**Professor Clinkscapes:** Is there any issue more important than whether we have a habitable planet? Obviously not, but we are currently on course to destroy every ecosystem on the planet, one way or another.

And please don’t think you’re not part of it just because you recycle, or drive an EV, or give a few bucks to some eco non-profit. We are all part of this juggernaut of human evil and idiocy that is destroying all that is good in this world.

Want specifics? Let’s go!

*The professor whips out some notes, which he refers to during this presentation.*

**Screen:** Planetary overheating

**Professor Clinkscapes:** This one’s completely obvious, and an utter disaster. We’re overheating the planet by pumping huge amounts of CO2 into the atmosphere.

*At this point Lola de Campa comes out from the wings, clearly agitated, glares at the professor, grabs her head as though she has a massive headache, and storms off.*

**Screen:** Ocean acidification

**Professor Clinkscapes:** This one’s also a “no brainer.” We are disrupting all the ocean ecosystems.

**Screen:** Sea level rise, leading to crises of mass migration

**Professor Clinkscapes:** Yet another “no brainer,” folks! A hotter planet means the oceans expand, coastlines move inland, and hundreds of millions of people have to move.

**Screen:** Mass extinction of species

*Lola de Campa storms onto the stage, weaves circles around the professor while making faces at him, holds up two “rabbit ears” fingers behind his head, etc., and storms off, swishing her skirt and glaring at the professor.*

**Professor Clinkscapes:** Every year, human stupidity and greed are causing more and more species to go extinct.

**Screen:** Dangerous loss of biodiversity

**Professor Clinkscapes:** ...the loss of so many species means a loss in biodiversity, which leads to instability in ecosystems.

**Screen:** Depletion and pollution of fresh water sources

*Here begins the counterpoint between the professor and Lola, who vie for the attention of the audience.*

**Professor Clinkscapes:** We are also ruining our sources of fresh water all over the planet. Fresh water is only one percent of the water on the planet, and we are polluting it.

## **Let's Play with the Planet**

[TBD]

*The professor continues to speak, even as Lola begins speaking.*

**Lola de Campa:** Ok, enough with all the depressing stuff! I can't take this any more! We need to get back to having fun! Are you guys ready to play with the planet? Great! Bring out the planet!

**Professor Clinkscapes:** Do you acknowledge *horrific human stupidity* yet, or should I continue?

**Screen:** [slide of a young girl playing happily with the planet in a swimming pool]

*Drum roll as the planet is brought out ceremoniously, and handed to Lola. Meanwhile, the professor continues with his presentation, even more vigorously.*

**Lola de Campa:** Ok, everybody! Here's the planet! Let's all play with it!

*She tosses the planet out into the audience, which begins to bat it about high in the air among themselves with great delight and enthusiasm.*

**Professor Clinkscapes:** Wait a minute! You can't control my screen! God damn it, give me my screen back!

*The professor furiously works his laser pointer. The screen returns to showing the professor's slides, but he does not actually have control of the screen, which switches back and forth between his slides and the "Play with the planet" slide, further enraging the professor in the process.*

**Screen:** Deforestation

**Professor Clinkscapes:** Eighty percent of Earth's land animals and plants live in forests. Every year, humans destroy more than twenty five million acres of forest.

**Screen:** Fast fashion and textile waste

**Professor Clinkscapes:** Fast fashion often uses lower quality materials that don't last long. Unsold or outdated clothes are often discarded or incinerated, contributing to waste and pollution.

**Lola de Campa:** La la la...we can't hear you! *(She covers her ears, and wiggles obnoxiously.)* Plus, I like buying new clothes! *(She swishes her big skirt extravagantly.)* I always keep up with the latest fashions!

**Screen:** Depletion of fish populations worldwide

*At about this point the other cast members begin trying to recover the planet from the audience. This may be challenging, particularly the timing of it. If the planet is not recovered by the time the professor has finished his presentation, he will simply wait for it.*

**Professor Clinkscapes:** The depletion of fish populations is a critical issue primarily caused by overfishing. We are wreaking havoc on the natural systems of the ocean.

**Lola de Campa:** Don't you love playing with the planet? I sure do! Fuck the fish! I don't give a crap about some stupid fish!

**Screen:** Toxicants in food sources

**Professor Clinkscapes:** Toxicants in food sources can directly harm human health, and now these toxicants are everywhere in the environment *because of us*.

**Lola de Campa:** It's not toxicants in food sources that makes me sick! It's listening to you be so depressing! You make me sick, you depraved old man!

*The planet has been recovered from the audience, but a switch is performed just offstage, substituting the deflated beach ball, which is handed to Lola as though it is the most evil, disgusting thing that has ever existed. Lola is visibly shocked and horrified, and her patter song fades into confusion and dismay.*

**Lola de Campa:** dah...dee...uh oh. Oh no.

## **We're All Dead, and So Is Everything Else**

[2:10]

**Screen:** [skulls, bones, dead bodies]

*One by one, the other cast members come out on stage, looking distraught and forlorn, staring at the depleted planet. Occasionally they look up at the screen, look at each other, look at the audience, sickened and horrified. One of them rushes offstage, clearly about to vomit. This makes the others look like they are all going to vomit as well, and they are barely holding it in.*

**Professor Clinkscapes:** So now we're all dead, and so is everything else! Are you proud of yourselves? We all have the same blood on our hands.

**Screen:** [bloody hands]

**Professor Clinkscales:** Yes, the blood is on our hands, *our hands*, for killing everything, polluting everything, destroying everything—and all because of our egotism and greed and stupidity. All because we wanted to believe that the worst species of all—*homo* [air quotes] "*sapiens*"—was the best species of all, and the only species that matters.

We've destroyed everything, even ourselves, even our children and grandchildren. We've destroyed humanity's entire future...

...because we are just...plain...fucking...stupid.

*The professor grasps his head in agony, and screams.*

Horrific Human Stupidity!

*Pause, as the professor weaves and bobs in complete torment, holding his head and moaning horribly.*

*Lola is holding the depleted planet at arm's length, between thumb and index finger. She stares at it, utterly horrified.*

**Lola de Campa:** Did I do this? Please tell me I didn't do this. I just wanted to have fun...I just wanted everybody to have fun.

*She begins to cry, still holding the depleted planet at arm's length between thumb and index finger, occasionally glancing at it.*

**Lola de Campa:** Oh my God. I am SO SORRY!

*She begins to weep, gradually bringing the depleted planet toward her, tragically embracing it as though she has murdered her own child.*

*The Mistress of Ceremonies strides out, with great confidence.*

**MC:** Cheer up everyone! None of this is a problem! No problem at all! How do I know this is all not a problem? Because everybody knows we've always got Planet B!

*The MC makes an extravagant gesture with her arms, top hat and cane.*

*Timpani roll.*

**MC:** Bring out...Planet B!

*Timpani roll. Nothing happens. The MC's extravagant gesture wilts a bit. She delivers the big gesture again, with a touch of desperation.*

**MC:** Bring out...Planet B!

*Timpani roll. Again, nothing happens. The MC's gesture wilts even more, and her composure begins to crack. She tries the gesture one final time, grinning painfully.*

**MC:** Please bring out...Planet B!

*Timpani roll. Nothing happens. From the wings, the actor who fled to vomit delivers the next line, as The Talking Dog.*

**The Talking Dog:** You humans are so stupid. Even a talking dog knows there's no Planet B. Bark bark, you idiots.

*An unbelievably awkward, terrible silence ensues. The MC's forced cheerful expression breaks. She begins to cry, then sob. She loses control, and drops her precious top hat, then drops her cane.*

**MC:** Professor, you must know what to do. I mean, you're a professor and everything.

*The professor is barely recovering from his torment.*

**Professor Clinkscapes:** *(pitifully)* I wish I could tell you, but all I do is study stupidity. I don't really have any answers.

*The Mistress of Ceremonies is suddenly enraged.*

**MC:** What? You have NO ANSWERS?! FUCK YOU! Just absolutely fucking FUCK YOU!

*The Mistress of Ceremonies rushes toward the professor in a blind fury, and raises her arm to strike him as hard she can in the face. He cowers before the incoming blow, and she barely stops herself, slowly lowering her arm.*

**MC:** Oh my God. Oh my God. Professor, I am so sorry.

*The Mistress of Ceremonies slowly and tenderly touches the professor's cheek, kisses the professor on the cheek, then moves away, looking into his face, holding her hand on his cheek until it is out of reach.*

*Lola, still holding the planet, goes slowly to the professor, and embraces him as they both cry. She is holding the planet between them. She lets the planet go, and it falls to the floor between them as they continue their tender, sad embrace.*

## **Please Take Offense**

[1:34]

**Screen:** Please take offense.

The only thing humanity should ever be offended by is itself.

Call the Thought Police Hotline if you must.

*The actor who had left the stage to vomit quietly rejoins the group.*

**MC:** Adolph Hitler came to power ninety two years ago this year, and it's as though we've made no actual progress at all. We keep choosing horrible leaders, and doing horrible things to each other, and horrible things to all the other creatures on the planet. We are just making a horrible mess of absolutely everything, and we ourselves are not getting better in any way at all.

**Screen:** The Worst Species Ever

We just plain suck.

**Actor 1:** We really are a shitty species.

**Actor 2:** Man, we absolutely suck.

**Actor 3:** We are just the fucking worst.

**Actor 1:** I've never said this before, but I am ashamed to be a human being.

**Actor 3:** So am I.

**Actor 2:** Me too. Man, this hurts.

**Actor 1:** Why do we continue to be so horrible?

**Actor 3:** What can we do?

*The three actors move toward Lola and the professor, and join in the sad embrace. The actors eventually are all holding hands in a way that will later unfurl to form a line across the stage.*

*The Mistress of Ceremonies is a bit off to the side of the group embrace, lost in thought.*

*On the screen, the abstract image of a brain that opened The Empire of the Mind segment slowly fades in.*

**Screen:** [abstract image of a brain]

*After a while, the Mistress of Ceremonies notices what is on the screen, and is puzzled by it. Something begins to happen in her mind. She gradually moves downstage center, occasionally looking back at the brain. One of the cast members notices the MC looking at the screen, and he looks up at the screen.*

**Actor 1:** Hey, what's that?

**Actor 2:** I don't know. It looks like a brain.

**MC:** It's not just a brain, it's The Empire of the Mind. It's *the answer*.

**Actor 3:** The answer to what?

**MC:** What is the most important issue in the world?

*During the following, the group of five actors gradually unfurls, so that they are all holding hands in a line across the stage.*

## **Metanoia**

[0:37]

**Screen:** metanoia



A realization so profound that you are quickly transformed.

**MC:** Our friend the professor had a good answer, but not the *real* answer, not the *deeper* answer. The most important issue in the world is humanity improving itself. Without that, planetary suicide is inevitable. We must work to become better, first individually, then in groups, then as a species. There is no valid alternative. We must work to become better as a species. Our entire future depends on it.

## **Metamorphosis**

[0:10]

**Screen:** metamorphosis

A better future is already available.

We just need to adopt it.

*The low opening note of the symphonic music of the overture begins. The MC joins the line holding hands, toward the middle.*

## **Finale**

[3:55]

**Cast:** We are all in this together.

**Actor:** We must work together toward solutions.

**Actor:** We must cooperate.

**Actor:** We must change.

**Actor:** We must become much better than we have been.

*The actors release each other's hands.*

**Screen:** metahuman

Do you have what it takes to turn this mess around?

Are you willing to try?

*An actor steps forward. For each line below, and actor steps forward. Thus the entire line gradually moves downstage.*

**Actor:** There is no such thing as (*air quotes*) “human nature.”

**Actor:** We can become as good as we want to become.

**Actor:** There is nothing stopping us except ourselves.

**Actor:** How can we start?

*Pause. An actor steps forward strongly.*

**Actor:** I have a suggestion. We need to become much, much more honest with ourselves, even if it’s painful.

*Another actor steps forward.*

**Actor:** Definitely. True honesty with ourselves is the only way to start.

*One by one, the cast members step forward, with positive ideas and suggestions and ideals, until the cast is toward the edge of the stage, and then steps down into the audience area, as described below.*

*On the screen, a beautiful video collage of Earth’s biodiversity begins to play, timed to the music.*

**Actor:** We can adopt much better ideas, and put those ideas into action.

**Actor:** We can work every day to improve our minds.

**Actor:** We can delete outdated and defective software in ourselves.

**Actor:** We can install much better software in our minds, and use it for good.

**Actor:** Always be ready to adopt new and better ideas, attitudes and outlooks.

**Actor:** Deepen our curiosity.

**Actor:** Choose truly important subjects, and study them deeply.

**Actor:** Learn much more about the glories of nature.

**Actor:** Develop and strengthen our courage, and always apply it toward the good.

**Actor:** Make lists of our faults, and do everything we can to correct them.

**Actor:** Always be ready to admit openly *that we were wrong*.

**Actor:** Aspire to be superior to only one person, and that is our previous self.

**Actor:** Tell someone that you love them, because you do.

**Actor:** Apologize to someone you have harmed.

*Gradually the members of the cast move into the audience area, and continue expressing positive ideals from the audience area, mingling with the audience, occasionally offering a pinky handshake to an audience member.*

**Actor:** Give someone who needs your attention your absolutely full and complete attention.

**Actor:** Learn some wonderful new words and share them with other people.

**Actor:** Choose understanding before judgment.

**Actor:** Choose natural solutions first.

**Actor:** Fall in love with your local and regional ecosystems, and learn much more about them.

**Actor:** Work every day to improve yourself in every way.

**Actor:** As much as possible, pay attention only to what is truly important.

**Actor:** Wherever you are walking, pick up some litter.

**Actor:** Cultivate productive openness.

**Actor:** Every day, do something that surprises even you.

**Actor:** Choose wonderful ways to be an inspiration to others.

**Actor:** Make friends with a new species every week.

**Actor:** A tree...

**Actor:** A bird...

**Actor:** An amphibian...

**Actor:** A fish...

**Actor:** An insect.

**Actor:** Imagine every day how great life could be, then go out and do it.

**Actor:** Read inspiring books, and pass them on to other people.

**Actor:** Get some fun exercise, and try to couple it with something else that's good.

**Actor:** Evaluate your diet, and improve it.

**Actor:** Become your own most perceptive and accurate critic.

**Actor:** Choose walking more.

**Actor:** Develop views that are truly your own, based on evidence and reason.

**Actor:** Become a citizen of the entire planet.

**Actor:** A much better future is already available.

**Actor:** We just have to adopt it.

**Actor:** As much as possible...

**Actor:** ...in every situation...

**Actor:**...and with every person...

**Cast:** Choose love!

**Actor:** And whoever you meet...

**Cast:** ...do the Linky Pinky with them!

*Each cast member chooses a member of the audience, and brings them on stage to dance the Linky Pinky together in front of the rest of the audience. The cast members can choose to "cut in" with another pair, and dance with a different audience member on stage, depending on the timing.*

*On the final chord of the symphonic music, the entire cast puts their arms forward as though to hug the audience and says loudly:*

**Cast:** We love you!

*The Earth appears on the video screen. The cast turns around and says loudly to the Earth:*

**Cast:** We love you!

*The cast turns around to face the audience again, and bows.*

*A dog is brought on stage, and is greeted by the cast. Is that The Talking Dog? He sure looks friendly.*

## **Outro**

[1:30]

**Screen:** Adventure Cabaret  
SEATBELTS

*The SEATBELTS sign blinks off, but remains on screen.*

**Announcer:** At this time the captain has turned off the seatbelt sign and you are free to disembark. We thank you once again for flying Adventure Cabaret, and we hope you will join us on future journeys to other exciting destinations of the mind, the spirit and the imagination.

Together, we can create a much better reality.

*The cast thanks their dancing partners from the audience, walks again into the audience area with their dancing partners, mingling with the audience as they get up to leave.*

**Audio:** Empire of the Mind music

**Screen:** End credits

THE END

*The cast continues interacting with the audience, completely open and kind and loving with them. If a hug is offered or requested, a hug is given. If a smile is sent, another smile is returned. If a question is asked, an honest answer is given.*