A Family Affair
A Play in One Act

Kevin Deiber

SENIOR HONORS THESIS
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements of the
College Scholars Honors Program
North Central College

21 February 2019

Approved: Zachary Michael Jack
Date: 2/24/2019

Approved: Richard Pane
Date: February 25, 2019
Abstract

This one-act play follows a wannabe comedian named Logan who is crashing with his father. Logan has long overstayed his welcome, and his father—a blue-collar man who is out of work due to an accident on the job—is driving him mad. They get some grim news: a distant family member has died. Logan’s estranged brother then returns home for the service, and he brings out the worst in all three of them. This is a realistic play, meaning the things characters do and say are supposed to, ideally, project an impression of reality. It’s primarily a comedy, though some moments are dark. This piece came out of the long and arduous workshopping of a different play, and I fear yet another play will come out of the long and arduous workshopping of this one.
A Gun Survived: Introduction

I discovered the potency of drama through artists like David Mamet, David Ives, Annie Baker, and Samuel Beckett, and I used the Honor Thesis to write my own creative response. This piece does not respond directly to their works—I do not take up arms against the themes of *Glengarry Glen Ross* or *Endgame*. Rather, the works of those playwrights—their honesty, their rawness, their vulgarity—vigorously inspired me to write. They opened a door, and this piece is me sticking my head through and shouting.

I started writing this play over a year ago and I’m not done. At this point, I’m afraid I’ll never be done. Well past the deadline of this project I’m going to continue to grow and transform and evolve the piece until . . . Well, who knows? Back when I started, the play was going to be an intense one-act drama about a son simultaneously coming to terms with his failing career in stand-up comedy and his father’s Alzheimer’s disease. It didn’t quite come out how I thought it would; it came out much, much better.

I read a lot of (and maybe even too much of) David Mamet in the final months of drafting this play. He’s from Chicago — the city in which this play is based, and in which my family of Polish and German immigrants has a long history of working dangerous union jobs. The beating heart of David Mamet’s best drama is always a confidence game. Con games and con men and women make for such rich drama because a confidence game is always destined toward a failure: if the game doesn’t work, the characters have failed to get what they want; if the game does work, the characters have failed in a grander way — failing to see the moral folly of their actions. Con games are destined for betrayal from their very inception, which is great news for the playwright.
There’s a certain amount of trust, of emotional investment, of genuine human connection required to set the con in motion. As Joe Mantegna’s character explains in Mamet’s 1987 film *House of Games*, right before he pulls a perfect con on a marine, “It’s called a confidence game. Why? Because you give me your confidence? No. Because I give you mine.” The victim, of course, is in a vulnerable state, but the con man needs to offer himself too for the con to work. It’s a brilliant way of humanizing a villain, of throwing mud into the clear waters of a hero. Blurring the line between good and bad.

Look at Teach from *American Buffalo* (1975) who manipulates Don into giving him (Teach) a B and E job that was entrusted to a young mentee of Don’s, Bobby. We might think Teach is driven simply by greed, that he wants a take from this job once he hears about it. But then he complicates things: “You’re only doin’ the right thing by him [Bobby], Don. Believe me. It’s best for everybody.” Now, is it greed? Or does Teach really care about Bobby and want to protect him from getting hurt from a job he’s not ready for? You’ll find this trick in *Glengarry Glen Ross*, in *Speed-the-Plow*, in *Oleanna*. And it’s something I’ve tried to do in this play.

I had no idea I was writing a con game until the sixth or seventh iteration of this play. Build, burn, and build from the ashes — that was my approach. I did it this way because I had never written anything this long and serious before and because I had way too much time to think about the project. I had too much time to write it and too little confidence to stick to a single idea. So as soon as I felt the most minute dissatisfaction with a draft, I’d burn the whole thing and start from scratch, even if that draft had been upward of eighty pages.

It exhausted me. I was ready to give up in September of 2018. But in the ashes of a draft, there was a beating heart of drama just waiting there for me.

A gun.
Not just any gun, the family gun. It was a symbol that made it through every new imagining of the play and it took me nine months to notice it. It’s the gun handed down in this fictional family from father to eldest son. It’s a rich symbol of patrilineal descent, of ideal manhood, of tainted family history.

A gun survived all those fires.

My con is this: the eldest brother — estranged until now, working a mysterious “union” job — needs money fast but also needs to keep up the image of success he’s planted in his father’s head. So he must scam his father out of his money via his younger brother, who is still living with the father. What seems like a desperate ploy to get out of trouble quick soon has shades of something else, something more empathetic: “I’m concerned for you,” he says, “I’m concerned you’re not being your Own Man.” It’s no longer just about the eldest brother getting out of trouble: he’s dragged his younger brother into it. He’s dragged him through the pungent mud of traditional male expectations and ideals of success, of self-reliance. He’s given his confidence.

There are plenty of other cons and scams in this play: a potentially phony work accident, a mirage of a career in stand-up comedy, a straw ideal of the perfect American family. Lies, tricks, deceits: all of them, big and small, collide into one another and shatter upon the floor, hopefully making you laugh. That’s ultimately what this piece is: a comedy. It’s a story about a father and two sons and their struggle toward reconciliation after years of estrangement and in the aftermath of a death in the family. That doesn’t sound funny, but it is. At least that’s the goal.

There’s another version of this play that’s much longer — nearly double the length — and more focused on the youngest son whose name is Logan. That play is called *Logan’s Comedy* and was presented at the Theatre at Meiley-Swallow Hall in Naperville, Illinois in
January of 2019. It’s much less developed than this one, but it’s still pretty good. The play you
are about to read is the product of refining the longer one, cutting empty lines, focusing the mood
and themes, improving the dialogue and staging. It’s the product of just a little more experience,
which is always a good thing.

I got the title — “A Family Affair” — from a song of the same name by the band Sly and
the Family Stone. In it, Sly Stone sings, “One child grows up to be somebody who just loves to
learn, / another child grows up to be somebody you’d just love to burn.” That was a good
structure for the writing of this play: two children fighting — consciously or not — to be the
good son, the one who loves to learn. This idea, along with the family gun, was one of the only
things that stayed intact through the entire Build, Burn, Build method of the last ten months.

Happy reading.

KD
A Family Affair

A Play in One Act

By

Kevin Deiber
Cast of Characters


TERRY ABRAMSKY: Logan’s father, in his fifties.

RON ABRAMSKY: Logan’s brother, 33.

Scene

A condo in Berwyn — a suburb of Chicago.

Time

November, 2018.

Notes

1. A slash (/) means the character with the next line of dialogue begins his speech.

2. Dialogue in brackets [ ] is expressed nonverbally.

3. Different parts of the condo are used for all the different places. There are no out-and-out set changes. But, for example, a director may choose to place a checkerboard table cloth and a napkin dispenser on the kitchenette table when we’re in the diner.
(Terry’s condo.)

(Center left there is a ratty couch. Center right, a TV. Center there is a cluttered coffee table. Downstage there is a much-neglected houseplant. Upstage center is the main entrance to the condo. Up left is the kitchenette: a cheap folding table and chairs divides this and the living room. Off stage right is the bathroom and bedrooms. The place is messy with stuff. There’s an imaginary window downstage center.)

(Spot on LOGAN and TERRY standing. Grim. Somber. Shaking their heads. TERRY must use a cane to walk. Everything but the men is in darkness.)

LOGAN
Son of a bitch.

TERRY
Yeh. You’re tellin’ me.

LOGAN
And you just...

TERRY
...yeah...

LOGAN
You walked in and— And found... Just lyin’ here?

TERRY
This morning.

LOGAN
Jesus Christ... Right here? Like this?

TERRY
It was so sudden.

LOGAN
Jesus Christ...
(Lights up. They’re talking about the television.)

What happened to it...?

TERRY
I dunno. Damn thing just... [stopped.]

LOGAN
It just... what?

TERRY
Turned it on this morning. Working fine. And BOOM: don’t work.

LOGAN
That’s weird. Did you press a button?

TERRY
What?

LOGAN
You must have done something. What did you do?

TERRY
I didn’t do anything. Thing just stopped.

LOGAN
TV wouldn’t just stop working. There has to be something wrong...

TERRY
Tell that to the TV...

(Checks his phone and sits.)

What the...?

LOGAN
(sitting)
Something wrong?

TERRY
No. It’s just— It’s your Aunt... She left like five... The hell...? [What could she want?]

LOGAN
Aunt...?

TERRY
Margot. Your Aunt Margot...

LOGAN
What does she want?
TERRY
I dunno... I better call— She’ll be on my ass if I don’t...
(Dials.)
You know how she gets...
(Beat.)
Gonna take a look at it?

LOGAN
...at...?

TERRY
The TV. Are you gonna look at it?

LOGAN
I see it. It’s broken.

TERRY
Oh, ha ha, fucken hilari—
(into phone)
Hey, hi Margot. Uh... just ringin’ you back. I saw you left a few, uh, called a few times. Sorry I missed ya. But, ah... gimme a call. When you got the chance, all right? Hope you’re doin’ good. God bless you. Buh-bye.

LOGAN
How am I gonna fix it if I don’t know what’s wrong?

TERRY
Leaves five messages and doesn’t pick up...

LOGAN
I’ll just call the guy tomorrow.

TERRY
We don’t need to call the guy.

LOGAN
Why not?

TERRY
Because, “why not”... Because you can take a look at it right now. You got feet, don’tcha? You got hands...

LOGAN
Yeah, but I don’t know what’s wrong with it. Can’t fix it if I don’t know what’s wrong.

TERRY
It doesn’t work. That’s what’s wrong.

LOGAN
Let’s just call the guy tomorrow. I’m sick of this crap. Everything’s always broken in / this place—

TERRY
Not “callin’ the guy.”

LOGAN
I really don’t under/stand...

TERRY
Because. Okay, because: who’s “the guy”? I don’t know this guy.

LOGAN
That doesn’t even...

TERRY
...don’t want him in my house, y’know? The hell is this “guy”?

LOGAN
This “guy” is a guy who knows how to fix TVs.

TERRY
There’s always a “guy.” Everyone’s got a “guy” for everything.

LOGAN
Okay... Then you fix it.

TERRY
You know I don’t know how this shit works. I gotta worry about this doctor’s appointment comin’ up and figure this shit out? Just take a look, will ya? I want you to / try and fix—

LOGAN
Is it the money? Do we have money to fix it?

TERRY
Would— Wouldja just take a look at it? Quit yanking me around.

LOGAN
Okay, all right... All right.
(Goes to back of TV. A huge tangle of cables back there.)
Christ. I’m surprised this thing ever worked.

* * *
(A lone chair D.C., harsh spot; LOGAN is at a job interview.)

LOGAN
See, I always like to think of it like: What can I do for you, right? How can I, the potential employee, help you, the company. And what I see myself doing here, at this position, selling patio furniture—a position I’m really interested in by the way, don’t know if I mentioned that, is— What’s that? ... It should all be there— ... Under work history, you say? Ah, yeah. Well... I haven’t had any quote-on-quote real jobs in a while, if we can even define “real” like that, heh. Y’know, what is real? But, uh... Yeah all my relevant work experience should be there.

(pause)
I know it’s kinda light...

(pause)
It’s the only thing on there because that’s what I do. The only thing I do. Stand-up comedy. Y’know, I’m a comedian. I like to think of myself as, uh... I dedicate myself to it, y’know? I tell jokes. It’s a noble thing to do. And I really think—

(long pause)
How does that...? I’m sorry, what was the...?

(pause)
Ahhh, okay. Okay. Yes. I think my experience with comedy really ties back to this question of customer service we talked about earlier: How can I serve the customer? I’ve always thought—and we can keep this between you and me—but I’ve always thought salesmen can kinda be a huge pain in the balls sometimes, weaseling into your business with their BS, and—

(pause)
No, what I was getting at—

(pause)
What was that...? You want me to— To tell you a joke?

(Lights shift to TERRY in a chair U.C.—the clinic waiting room, reading a magazine, talking to an imaginary person.)

TERRY
(flipping through)
...heh... Good Lord, you see this crap? Rather blow my nose with this garbage. Why they gotta make waiting rooms so painful, huh? ... Makes you think they’re doin’ it on purpose. Make whatever it is they tell you in there less painful...

(beat)
Why am I...? Gettin’ some tests. Never be too careful. Got all kinds a stuff out there today. Zika, terrorists, whathaveya... You hear about this new hurricane? Saw it on CNN. Said it’s gonna hit land this week sometime. Hit the Carolinas and move up the whole coast. Jesus, shit’s gettin’ worse and worse: You never know what’s gonna—

(Pause.)

What’s wrong with me? Well. That’s really for them to figure out, isn’t it?

(Lights shift back to LOGAN.)

LOGAN

(irate)
I can’t believe you would ask— Y’know... I do this. I tell jokes. It’s an art form. Art form. I’m not a circus clown! I don’t juggle on command— You see any face paint? Do— do these shoes look like clown shoes to you? I mean, Jesus, I don’t walk in here and ask you to, to... Like, do whatever it is you do. On command like some cheap-ass novelty act— See, that’s always the common misperception when it comes to comedians—

(pause)

Well I do think you’re being unreasonable! And unprofessional...

(pause)

No, I’m not gonna calm down if you’re gonna sit there and actually ask...

(beat)

Yeah, well I was heading out anyway!
(He goes to leave.)

Um... So... I’ll hear back in, what, a couple days?

* * *

(LOGAN and TERRY at home.

LOGAN on the couch, looking at his phone; TERRY standing.)

(A long pause; LOGAN browses. He sighs. Resumes browsing. Another long pause.)

LOGAN

What?

(silence)

What, Dad? What? I know you’re standing there.
TERRY
I thought you were gonna look for a job today.

LOGAN
I am looking. I’m working on it... Just taking a break. The break is part of the work...

TERRY
That place get back to you? The patio furniture place?

LOGAN
Oh. Uh... Yeah turns out they weren’t hiring.

TERRY
Weren’t— I drove by there today. Sign was in / the window—

LOGAN
I guess I wasn’t right for the job. That’s all.

TERRY
Not right for the job?

LOGAN
Yeah. Y’know these freakin’ places, how picky they are today.

TERRY
Anybody could get that job...

LOGAN
Well then... Maybe the job wasn’t right for me. Not a good fit.

TERRY
What’re you, fucking Cinderella? Gotta find the magic slipper?

LOGAN
Based / on what—

TERRY
Good Lord, Logan, you can’t be picky in this economy. Take what you can get, y’know?

LOGAN
Based on what was discussed in the interview... I came to the conclusion... that the job was not a good fit.

TERRY
What didn’t fit?

LOGAN
...the nature of the job...

TERRY
What does / that mean?

LOGAN
The job, it was just too... So I sell some guy a new swing for his porch—so what? What does it mean?

TERRY
So it means you gotta job.

LOGAN
I don’t really have time for that kinda job now. I’m working on my comedy.

TERRY
You’re working on your comedy?

LOGAN
Right. That’s right.

TERRY
...instead of getting a real job...

LOGAN
Here we go with the “real job” / thing...

TERRY
Instead of getting a real job, you’re joking around all day?

LOGAN
What’s a “real” job?

TERRY
Sheet metal. Architecture. Iron work. Construction...

LOGAN
...okay...

TERRY
Those men built America.

LOGAN
Y’know, I think I could actually be pretty good at it.

TERRY
Construction?
LOGAN

Comedy.

TERRY

I’ve known you... how old are you?

LOGAN

Thirty-one.

TERRY

I’ve known you thirty-one years; you haven’t made me laugh once.

LOGAN

Yeah, well / you’re not—

TERRY

So why the hell would you wanna be a comedian?

LOGAN

...I’ve always thought my life was a bit of a joke...

TERRY

Your brother’s in sheet metal. Union rep out in Michigan...

LOGAN

I don’t wanna hear about Ron...

TERRY

They build roofs. They literally put roofs over our heads.

LOGAN

Good for them.

TERRY

What good do comedians do? Did George Carlin ever put a roof over somebody’s head?

LOGAN

I’d have to ask him...

TERRY

...Richard Pryor...? Y’know, these are troubled times. There’s no time for / comedy...

LOGAN

(rising, lighting a cigarette)
I don’t have the energy for this / again—

TERRY
The hell you doin’?

LOGAN

...relaxing...

TERRY

With a cigarette?

LOGAN

Is there any other way?

TERRY

Don’t smoke in my house— I gotta tell you this every / day?

LOGAN

It’s been a long day, all right...?

TERRY

You don’t work.

LOGAN

But... it was still a long day. Cut me some slack... [Please?]

TERRY

Don’t smoke in my house.

* * *

(RON in his car, driving; a lone chair center stage. Holding coffee and donut.)

RON

(poorly singing along to Jackson Browne’s “Running on Empty” playing on the radio.)

Runnin’ on EMPTEEEE, runnin’ on. Runnin BLIIND—

(Radio cuts out.)

Ah, what the...! Stupid goddamn piece of—

(Smacks the radio.)

God damn technology never fucken works—

(out the window)

Hey, ASSHOLE! Nice signal, Dickweed! Jesus... People...

(bites into donut; mouth full)

They let any moron get a goddamn license today—

(Spills his coffee.)
AH! JESUS— God damn— On the good pants too, stupid dumb idiot coffee... FUCK!
(He scrambles for napkins.)
God... On the good pants, too.

* * *

(Terry’s condo. LOGAN at the TV, smacking it. TERRY at the window, looking out.)

LOGAN
Oh! I think I had it... Did you see it come on?
(Silence.)
I thought I saw the screen flash. For a second.
(Silence.)
Did you take your pills yet? This morning? It’s Wednesday...
That’s usually the day you take...
(Silence.)
Look, I promise I’m looking for a job. You caught me / at the—

TERRY
Your cousin Bobby... He died. He’s dead.

LOGAN
Wha— He’s...?

TERRY
Dead. Over the weekend. Car crash.

...Jesus...

LOGAN

TERRY
He was taking a you-burr... Driver was drunk or something.

LOGAN
Uber, you mean?

TERRY
Guy musta been drunk...

LOGAN
Jesus. Bobby? Bobby’s dead?

TERRY
Yeh.
LOGAN
Christ. He was... And Aunt Margot? That’s why she...

TERRY
Yes. Kid was only twenty-two. Good Lord takes ‘em young...
Service is on Sunday. God, she was so tore up. Could barely...
Barely understand what she was saying.

LOGAN
Wow, that’s... That’s just— Sunday? You said.

TERRY
Next Sunday.

LOGAN
(He stands up.)
Wow... I just— Never thought I’d be goin’ to little Cousin
Bobby’s funeral... I might need to borrow a tie.

TERRY
[That’s fine.]

LOGAN
I’m going out for a smoke.
(LOGAN exits.
TERRY pours a drink.
Pause.
LOGAN returns.)
Wait... Did you say... Sunday? You said Sunday?

TERRY
Yeah. Wake’s on Saturday. Open visitation till five / or so—

LOGAN
Wai, wai, wait... Sunday?

TERRY
That’s what I said, yes.

LOGAN
Which Sunday?

TERRY
Next. I said next Sun/day—

LOGAN
So a week from this coming Sunday?
TERRY
That would be the... eighteenth?

LOGAN
Right.

TERRY
No. Yeah, service is the eleventh. Next Sunday.

LOGAN
That would be... this Sunday.

TERRY
No. Next Sunday means the next Sunday that’s gonna happen. Which is in four days—

LOGAN
That’s this Sunday.

TERRY
(after a beat)
No.

LOGAN
The eighteenth is next Sunday.

TERRY
That would be next next Sunday.

LOGAN
Next next Sunday? What is that? Nobody says that.

TERRY
I think I know what I’m talking about.

LOGAN
Oh, what? Are you the Sunday expert?

TERRY
Yes I am.

LOGAN
You know more about Sundays than I do?

TERRY
Yes, in fact, I do. Sunday is the Lord’s Day, and I gave more of a damn about the Lord than you / ever did—

LOGAN
Ah, Jesus Christ...

TERRY
There you go. Taking his name in vain.

LOGAN
I can’t go.

TERRY
You what?

LOGAN
I can’t go.

TERRY
You just asked to borrow a tie. What is this, can’t go?

LOGAN
I was under the impression the service was next Sunday—

TERRY
It is next Sunday!

LOGAN
Can’t go. There’s an open mic on Sunday. Might be my last shot.

TERRY
...Logan...

LOGAN
This could be it. Door’s closing.

TERRY
Are you saying...?

LOGAN
You’ll have to go without me.
(beat)
Look: I’ll go to the wake, but I gotta raincheck the service—

TERRY
You can’t raincheck: there’s only one service!

LOGAN
I’ll visit the grave.

TERRY
I can’t believe... The kid is family, Logan. Family. Does that mean anything to you?
LOGAN
I feel sorry for the kid, I really do. I feel bad for Margot and everyone else. But if I don’t do this gig...

TERRY
Your brother’s gonna be there. At the service.

LOGAN
You really think so? Think he’s gonna show up?

TERRY
He’ll make the drive.

LOGAN
Y’know I barely even knew the guy...

Who?

TERRY
Bobby. It’s been like... what, years?

LOGAN
He’s family. He’s your cousin for Chrissake—

TERRY
He’s not, like, biologically my cousin. We just call him that.

LOGAN
He’s family.

He’s Aunt Margot’s step-son.

TERRY
That means you don’t care about him?

LOGAN
No. That means... Is anyone gonna notice if I’m not there?

TERRY
Yes. They’ll wanna know where you are.

LOGAN
Anyone asks, tell ’em I’m sick.

TERRY
I’m not saying you’re sick. I won’t lie on your behalf for something as / stupid as—

LOGAN
Oh! Say I have the norovirus. I actually had that...

TERRY
You’re not actually suggesting...

LOGAN
Nobody’s gonna notice I’m not there.
(beat)
Bobby’s sure as hell not gonna notice.

TERRY
Jesus. You are sick.

* * *

(Terry’s condo. Empty.)

(Pounding at the door.
Pause.
More pounding.
Then RON enters.
He surveys the room.)

RON
Hello...?

(Pause.)

TERRY
(off)
I’m coming!
(entering)
Stop pounding on the freaking—

RON
Hi Dad.

TERRY
Wha— Ron...? Ronnie-boy!
(Hugs him.)
My God, Ronnie-boy, come in. Siddown, have a seat...

RON
Good to see you / Dad—

TERRY
Yeah, good to see you too, kiddo. Jeez, you scared me there.

RON
Did I?

TERRY
What’re you knocking like a cop for?

RON
I’m sorry.

TERRY
My God, Ron... It’s been...

RON
A while. I know. Sorry.

TERRY
Don’t be sorry! You’re... Working man! Busy guy!

RON
Yeah... Yeah.

TERRY
What happened to those pants?

RON
Oh. Spilled some coffee. Stupid, really.

TERRY
You like coffee?

RON
Uh... I guess. I just got some for / the drive—

TERRY
I’ll put on a pot for ya.

RON
Yeah. Maybe later. Listen, Dad—

TERRY
God it’s good to see you, son. How’s the job treatin’ you?

RON
What?
The job! Union man...

Oh. It’s good— Um, actually... I thought, you know... If it wouldn’t be too much... The drive was kind of a pain in the ass. So if I could, just for a couple days—

No! You kidding? That’s okay. That’s more than okay. It’s good.

Just tonight and tomorrow...

I gotcha.

I’m not moving back in, heh heh. No need to worry about that. Just kind of like a... mini vacation.

Glad to have ya.

Okay... Wish it was under better circumstances.

Freakin’ tragedy, right?

Too young.

Freakin’ you-burr drivers...

Way too young...

I can, uh... I’ll make up the couch for you.
(beat)
Maybe we’ll get Portillo’s...?

Sounds good.
(pause)
Thanks, Dad. Thank you.
TERRY
You’re welcome.
(beat; he checks the time.)
The hell is he at...?

RON
What’s that?

TERRY
Oh, it’s, uh, it’s just your brother. He went out. Should be back by now...

RON
Ah. I didn’t know Logan was here.

TERRY
He’s out right now.

RON
Yeah, I mean— Where’d he go?

TERRY
(to himself)
Shoulda been back by now...
(a long pause)
Hey, how ’bout that coffee now, huh?

* * *

(LOGAN in the aisles of
the supermarket; a big, unmarked
box on the kitchen table.)

LOGAN
God, I hate these places. Freaking ugly lights... Makes me feel like a zombie.
(He picks up the box, examines it.)
Why the hell does he need this thing...? Gotta sit down to take a shower: unbelievable. Never woulda thought...
(Pause; he gets an idea.)
I mean: gotta sit to take a shower? I ever get there, have someone shoot me, right? Sitting down to take a shower, that’s, like, the lowest of the low. Start wearing sweat pants in public ’cause it’s not getting any better...
(He smiles, takes out note pad and jots this down.)
Yeah, yeah... And it’s gotta be depressing enough needing something like this. Then they gotta make it this ugly drab brown color? It’s either that or a dull gray. It’s really like insult to injury. The least you could do is spruce it up a little, add a design, maybe a smiley face... Yeah... Right.

(He’s all smiles; writing stuff down. He almost leaves without getting the box, hurries back for it and exits.)

* * *

(Terry’s condo. LOGAN practicing his stand-up act.)

LOGAN (into fantasy microphone)
Thank you, thank you... Thanks for coming out. Y’know: I always thought I’d be good at comedy, thought I’d be a good comedian, because... my life is a bit of a joke.
(to himself)
Yeah, okay... I like the start. Now what, now what...
(pause, back into mic)
Always thought my life was a bit of a joke. Funny things seem to happen to me. But now...
(thinking)
No, that’s not— Ah!
(microphone)
But now I see this might not have been the best logic.
(thinking)
(RON enters. LOGAN doesn’t see.)
Okay, then... What comes—
(back into mic)
I see it’s a little bit like assuming you’d be a good doctor just because you get sick all the time.

RON
What’re / you doing?

LOGAN

AH! Jesus Christ, Ron...

RON
What’re you doing?

LOGAN
Nothing.
RON
You were doin’ something. Talking or something.

LOGAN
I, um... Just practicing. My material.

RON
Your material...?

LOGAN
Yeah. For / my comedy routine...

RON
Oh, that’s right! Comedy... Yeah, I heard you were into that. Yeah... Hey. I got a good joke for you.

LOGAN
I’m good—

RON
Oh come on, trust me. It’s a good joke. Just listen.

LOGAN
Okay...

RON
It’s a good one.

(clears throat)
These guys are in a plane that’s flying over Japan. And it crashes in a forest. In Japan. And everybody’s killed in the crash except for these, uh... these three guys. So, so they... They’re wandering around the forest / for a while...

LOGAN
I’ve heard this one, / Ron...

RON
Okay, all right, lemme— They wander around until a Japanese general finds them. And he’s with a bunch of soldiers and he’s gonna kill these three guys, the guys from the plane. But they beg for their lives and he’s... Y’know, he’s feeling gracious that day. So he says, “I’ll let you live, if you can do one thing for me.”

(pause)
Of course, the three survivors say yes and that they’ll do anything, anything to... to live. And the general says, “go out into the forest, and bring me back a fruit. If you can put the fruit up your ass without laughing, I will spare you life.” And
the guys don’t question it and they just run out right away because they want to live.

(pause)
Okay. So they come back. The first guy has an apple. And he— No, it was a peach. The first guy has a peach. He puts it up his ass, he giggles, and they kill him, right there. The second guy has a, a single grape. So... he puts it up his ass, he giggles, and they kill him. Right there. Okay, so... the first guy and the second guy are in Heaven. Second guy asks the first: "Why did you laugh?" He says, "The fuzz on the peach tickled me, and it made me laugh."

(pause)
The first guys then asks the second: "You had a single grape, that seems easy, why... why did you laugh?"

(pause)
And the second guy says, "I looked behind me and saw the third guy carrying a pineapple."

(RON laughs.)
A fucking pineapple! Could you imagine—

(More laughs.)

LOGAN

Hilarious...

RON
Up his ASS??

(He laughs.)

* * *

(Later that day;
TERRY by the window, on the phone.)

TERRY
What does that mean? Can you tell me what that means?

(pause)
I paid for these tests, I deserve to know what— ... Sorry. But, in all honesty, I don’t understand why you’re being so, so... shady about this.

(beat)
Whaddya mean you can’t tell me over the phone...? Confiden— What, am I gonna blab about my own results? You think they got this phone bugged or something...? Y’know, the reason I can’t stand this— I’ve got a lot of uncertain things going on right now. A member of my family just died, and you’re gonna dance around with me? Step on my balls like this?
(The next morning;  
RON ironing his pants.  
LOGAN enters, rubbing his neck.)

(LOGAN tries the TV remote. It’s still broken.)

LOGAN  
Ahhh— Stupid piece of trash. God dammit— Is it too much to ask for the right to be able to watch TV?? I mean, Christ...  
(beat)  
I’m getting nostalgic for when it still worked... AMC, Comedy Central, History Channel... I miss channels I didn’t even watch.

RON  
Listen: Lemme ask you: are you... Making moves?

LOGAN  
What?

RON  
Moves. There are moves to be made, and I’m asking...  
(pause)  
Is this a permanent kind of thing? This arrangement.

LOGAN  
I hope not.

RON  
This whole Bobby thing’s got me thinking... Here. Take me, for example. Here’s me.

LOGAN  
I see that

RON  
And I’m My Own Man. My Own freakin’ Man. ’Cause I made the moves.

LOGAN  
...the moves...?

RON  
Yes. Big ones. Bold ones. You see? And that allowed me— Was, was, th-th-the... conduit. No... Catalyst. Those moves, bro, without them? I could not be where I am today. You see?
LOGAN
(after a beat)
What are you talking / about?

RON
...do you see what I’m trying to tell you...?

LOGAN
What is it exactly that you do again? Dad mentioned something about a / union somewhere—

RON
The specifics don’t really matter. But what I’m really saying is: I got to thinkin’ about Bobby, and... I’ve heard some stuff.

LOGAN
Some stuff?

RON
Yes. I’ve heard some stuff. Some... Certain things certain members of the family wouldn’t like everyone to know... Certain things about Bobby’s... character, we’ll say.

LOGAN
What about Bobby?

RON
Look: I dunno what you know about Bobby’s accident. But what I heard... Bobby was drunk in the back of an Uber, he grabbed the wheel, and he ran the car off the road—[WHAM]—traffic light.

LOGAN
Where’d you hear this?

RON
You didn’t hear this?
(beat)
What I’m trying to tell you... Bobby died at, what, twenty-one? Twenty-two? Young guy, right? And he amounted to nothing. What’s his legacy, y’know? We’ll remember him as the guy who unsuccessfully tried to hijack an Uber.
(pause)
D’you know The Wolf of Wall Street...?

LOGAN
The movie?

RON
Uh-huh.

LOGAN

Yeah, I’ve seen it.

RON

Scorsese?

LOGAN

Yeah, I know what it is...

RON

And in that movie... Jordan Belfort? The Leonardo DiCaprio part?

LOGAN

I don’t—

RON

And so. And so: Leonardo DiCaprio: Leo. He was fuckin’ around as somebody else’s man. At first. At the start.

LOGAN

...okay...

RON

...and then moves were there. To be made. And he... do you remember what he does?

LOGAN

He sleeps with that hot chick from New Jersey—

RON

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Before that, though.

LOGAN

I’m fuzzy on the plot—

RON

It’s not about— Listen: It’s not about the fucken plot. He made moves. Is the point. They were there, and he made them. But it took him so long, y’know? At first Leo was happy pussyfootin’ around doin’ whatever. But it’s like... Come on. You know...?

LOGAN

...right...

RON

And he got to be the big hero. Billionaire lifestyle, baby.
LOGAN
I think you’re forgetting what happens after / that...

RON
Bro, he snorted coke out a stripper’s ass. Don’t you want that?

LOGAN
That sounds pretty gross.

RON
Well— Okay, maybe not that specifically. But the **power** to do it if you wanted to... The lifestyle.

(beat)
I’m concerned for you.

LOGAN
Why?

RON
Look around, man. I’m concerned you’re not being your Own Man. You wanna end up like Bobby?

LOGAN
I don’t take Ubers that often, so.

RON
Look: It’s good you wanna help out Dad now that he’s all alone...

...I’m not sure...

LOGAN
It’s generous, is what I’m saying.

RON
I think it’s more like enlightened self-interest.

LOGAN
Is what? Look: generosity... This is good. We need it. But there are moves for you to make.

RON
Move where?

LOGAN
Living here ain’t doin’ you any good.

RON
It’s where I live...
RON
It’s a chain. Chain hooked to a... massive concrete block.

LOGAN
No... it’s a condo...

RON
Funny.

LOGAN
I thought so.

RON
But it’s no joke. I’m telling you this for you, not for me... This place is chaining you down. You’re, what, thirty-two?

LOGAN
Thirty-three.

RON
And... But, but I bet he don’t treat you like thirty-one.

LOGAN
Well... I guess not.

RON
What kinda shit does he pull?

LOGAN
He’s got this thing about smoking in the house. Hates the smell.

RON
Wait a minute, lemme get this... He won’t let you smoke in the house? And you’re okay with this? I mean: what is this, boot camp? Can’t smoke in the house, and you’re a grown adult...

LOGAN
Not like you could even smell it after a while...

RON
See? I’m with you. Chained. That’s what that is.

LOGAN
(rubbing his neck)
I guess...

RON
Yes. If you’re chained then you can’t...?
LOGAN

Move.

RON

Exactly. And making moves becomes...

LOGAN

Difficult.

RON

Very. Some might say outright im-fucken-possible

LOGAN

Improisible...

RON

Right. I know for a fact that if you’re chained down, if something’s got you, it’s one hundred percent impossible to make a move. You see? Be Your Own Man. Cut The Chain. That’s what / it’s all——

LOGAN

What’s... What’s the chain?

RON

You’ve got money trouble, right? We all do...

LOGAN

Yes.

RON

And meanwhile, Dad’s... Y’know, as you’re struggling...

LOGAN

...Dad’s... What?

RON

He’s sitting on something that could be of great service to you.

LOGAN

...you think... Dad’s got money?

RON

That is what I think.

LOGAN

No. We don’t even have money to fix the TV.
RON
What’s wrong with the TV?

LOGAN

RON
Don’t even go there.

LOGAN

RON
Did he press a button?

LOGAN
Ron— Don’t go there. I tried.

RON
He must’ve done something... Anyway: he had money for the TV though. Is the point...

LOGAN
Yeah but: look at this place... doesn’t scream “money.”

RON
That’s how it’s always been, right? Tight on money...

LOGAN
Strapped for cash.

RON
Ever since we were kids.

(pause, reminiscing)
Ahh, man...

LOGAN
What is it?

RON
Ah man, I just remembered— When we were kids. We were— I was nine I think. You woulda been seven. Somethin’ around there... And you’d just come in from playing outside. It was a day kinda like this one. Rainy... But you still wanted to play. And, when it was time for dinner, you rushed in and tracked in all that mud... And you didn’t just go on the tile with those shoes, which was bad enough. But, man, you walked through the carpet. Shit, Mom was pissed. You remember this? And they had just got it redone—this ugly yellow color...

LOGAN
I thought it was orange...

RON
Yellow. And with Mom pissed it was bad enough. But Dad? Whew. Shit man I thought his eyes were gonna pop right out his face, you know how he gets... And he had you— Up, like this. By the collar. Screaming “goddammit you stupid little brat! You know what you just did...!” Do you remember this?

LOGAN
I don’t think he had me up by / the collar—

RON
Yes, dude. He did. I was there.

LOGAN
It happened to me!

RON
In any case, they were so mad because of the money, y’know? “Goddammit don’tcha know how much money we spent on that new rug...!” yadda yadda... And you were bawling and saying “I’ll do anything, please! I’m sorry!” Right? You remember this.

LOGAN
Yeah... Had to scrub the toilets for weeks. I still remember...

RON
Right. Exactly. And what did we get a couple weeks later? (Silence.) A new rug.

LOGAN
What? No... Really?

RON
Yes.

LOGAN
No.

RON
Yes. I remember.

LOGAN
How do you remember?

RON
Logan... Logan. The money’s never been a problem. They got the new carpet— still you were scrubbing toilets. After the new rug... You know what that means? It was never the money. The money’s a good excuse for... to do things— To treat someone...
...like shit...

Now you're catching on.

Okay. But so— I don’t believe you. That there’s money.

Your choice.

But let’s say...

We’ll say...

...that there is money. Where did it come from?

The money?

Yes. Where.

Easy. Go to the source...

What...? His job?

Yes.

What about it— He hasn’t worked for months.

Because of the accident.

Right.

Wrong.
LOGAN

(beat)
What?

RON
I’ve seen this kinda thing before. At my job. I see these stunts. Over-the-hill guys don’t wanna work anymore but they don’t have enough saved for retirement plan or social security fell through or some shit like that. So they pull a stunt. Claim “unsafe working conditions” or something similar. Then... y’know, companies don’t wanna get the lawyers involved, unions get up everybody’s asses. Suddenly—the problem goes away and somebody’s got a big fat paycheck.

LOGAN
You think he’s not even...

RON
Makes perfect sense, no? Seen ’em get ten. Sometimes twenty. I’ve even heard of sixty.

I dunno—

RON
Never ____ sixty. But I’ve heard...

LOGAN
I don’t know, / Ron—

RON
Look: Know what you wanna know. That’s fine. All I’m saying: I’m here, and you’re there. To be blunt. I mean... I mean, for Chrissakes Logan, there’s a chair in the shower. One of those things? For ninety-year-old vets who can’t recognize their own balls anymore. But him? Dad? No. That right there is a stunt.

LOGAN
So... So I’m...

(beat)
So, what, am / I—

RON
I’ll tell you the best piece of advice I ever got: Wise men make more opportunities than they find...

LOGAN
(beat)
What am I—I’m supposed to do something?
RON
All I’m / saying...

LOGAN
Am I supposed to do something? Is that what you’re saying?

RON
All I’m saying is what I’m saying: Wise men make their moves.

...why?

RON
You’re my brother. It’s family.

(Logan rubs his neck.)
What’s with the neck?

LOGAN
Oh. It’s been all... jacked up lately. Stiff, I guess.

RON
See— This is—

(Beat)
Your chain. You feel that? Some people... Some get hooked by the leg or the waist. You, brother... It’s got you by the neck.

* * *

(The funeral service. Terry
consoling Margot.)

TERRY
Okay, I know... All right, yes, come here, come here Margot... I know it’s hard. But you’re whole family’s here, right? And that’s good, right? Feels good.

(Beat)
Bobby... he was a good kid. Promising life. But sometimes the Lord takes things that...

(Beat)
Well, I guess we’ll never know. Not for us to know...

(Logan enters, rubbing his neck.)

LOGAN
Ah, there you are.
TERRY
Logan. Where’s your brother? You seen / him?

LOGAN
This neck! Can’t believe it! Feels like I was in a car crash—
(Mimes it.)
Y’know?

(A pause.)

LOGAN
Oh— Aunt Margot... No, don’t— I’m sorry...!
(turning to TERRY)
I didn’t mean to...

* * *

(RON, alone, D.C.
Harsh spot on him—he is in
the coat room at the funeral home,
on the phone.)

RON
Hi, hey there Brucie. Great to hear from you, but— Listen I
can’t— Yeah, yeah I know I’m...
I’m working on it, man... Working on... Brucie: listen: I—
(pause, grimacing)
No! No, no, no— Look: I’m working on it— What...? I said I’m...
Shit, I know I’m late with it but... No, no, no, please you don’t
need to get Tony. I’m— I’m at a funeral, man. I’m in the god
damn coat closet, man, you’re gonna do this to me now? No! Don’t
get— Ahhh... shit.
(away from phone)
God dammit, God dammit, God—
(into phone)
Hey... Tony, look as I was telling Bruce— No, no, that was
nothing. No... Nooo, no, no. That doesn’t—
(pause)
Fuck, man, fucken fuck I’m fuckin’ trying... Sorry... I’m trying.
I’m working on something— There’s been some shit happening...
Man, I’ll have it tomorrow.
(pause)
Yeah... It’s insurance money, good money. I just gotta find...
(pause)
No...
(pause)
Jesus, Tony. Tone, I didn’t mean to—
(pause, exasperated)
Tony, look, I don’t think you’re a bitch, I don’t think that at all. But I’m doin’ my best. I’m doin’ all I can to get you—to to, to, to pay what I owe, man, because you know I do that. You know I fucken do that, Tony. You know it—
(pause)
What...? Okay...
(pause, deep breath)
Tony, you helped me, and that was good... Okay...
(pause)
I made a mistake. Men make mistakes. And you know that, y’know? And you, God what a good friend you—
(pause)
Five?? Since when— I thought it was four?? What the— What kinda shit are you pulling on—
(long pause, several grimaces)
I’ll have it tomorrow. I promise. I’ll have the mon—
(Checks the phone.)
Hello? Hello? Hell— Shit.
(A few deep breaths.)
Man... Jesus fuck... I don’t— How... God dammit...
(He dials a number on his phone.)
Come on, Brucie, pick up pick...
(long pause)
Dammit! Dammit, dammit... dammit!
(There are knocks on the door.)
(RON calls out,)
Everything’s fine in here!
(pause, more knocks)
Gimme a second, wouldja!?

* * *

(A diner. All three are seated.)

TERRY
Ron, you haven’t touched your coffee.

RON
Eh. Not thirsty.

TERRY
It’s gonna get cold.
(beat)
Coffee’s no good if it’s / cold—
LOGAN
Maybe he doesn’t want coffee.

TERRY
(beat)
Maybe I wasn’t asking you—

RON
No, Dad, it’s— It’s all right. I’ll drink it... See? It’s good.

(A long pause.)

TERRY
(to RON)
Y’know: sheet metal. Now that’s a job for a man.

LOGAN
Great...

RON
What’s that?

TERRY
I said: sheet metal. Now that’s a job for a man... Manual labor.

RON
Uh... yeah. That’s right.

TERRY
Dontcha think so? Metalwork...

RON
Um. Yes.

TERRY
Kinda like what you do?

RON
What I do?

TERRY
For the Union. Out in Michigan, like / you told me—

RON
Oh, righ, righ, right. Yeah... It’s good. Good... stuff.

TERRY
(after a pause, looking away)
Dontcha think that’s valuable work?

LOGAN

Okay, I get the point.

TERRY

(beat)

Maybe I wasn’t asking you.

* * *

(Terry’s condo. One a.m.)

(RON enters, mumbling incoherently to himself. He finds his way with a flashlight.)

RON

Okay... Jesus Christ— Can’t find... shit around this place—
(He knocks something over.)

Fuck— Okay... Chillout, man... Chill... Now: If I was money...
(His phone rings.)

Shit! God dam— Ah... Jesus Christ. Brucie... Not now.
(RON furiously looks around. Then, light from a laptop illuminates TERRY sitting on the couch. After a second, RON shines the light on him and jumps back.)

Gah! Jesus Chr—

TERRY

Ron...?

RON

Dad, what the—
(He turns on the lights.)

TERRY

What’re you doin’ up?

RON

What’re you doin’ up?

TERRY

Can’t sleep... Y’know, it’s actually good you’re up.

RON
You scared the shit outta me...

   TERRY
I need to talk to you... You’re fully dressed...?

   RON
What? Oh, uh, yeah I was / just...

   TERRY
Goin’ somewhere?

   RON
No. Uh, yes, actually... errands. Just misplaced something...

   TERRY
Well, it’s good you’re up. Siddown, kiddo.  
   (RON sits.)

   RON
What’s goin’ on? I misplaced something really important...

   TERRY
...family... I’ve always taught you to, to, to respect family.

   RON
...sure... Look, it’s kind of an urgent thing...

   TERRY
...to value it. Y’know...?

   RON
Yeah, of course. I could... focus better if you left the / room—

   TERRY
And, well... _Me_, being your family...

   RON
...Dad...?

   TERRY
I’m your Old Man, kiddo.

   RON
What is this ab/out—

   TERRY
You love me, kiddo?

   RON
(taken aback)

Do I... Do I what?

TERRY

Do you love me? ’Cause you know that I...

RON

Yeah, Dad... Yeah. I do.

TERRY

Me too. Okay, me too...

RON

Come on, what kinda question is that?

TERRY

I got a lot on my mind, kiddo.

RON

What’s all this about?

TERRY

Well...

(deep breath)

When part of the family... y’know... it, it, it... will live on.

RON

...what...

TERRY

No, no, no: When somebody... dies in the family, their life... their, uh, soul, their soul. It’s given life in somebody else’s—

RON

...Dad have you...

TERRY

Somebody else’s, uh... soul.

RON

How much have you had to / drink?

TERRY

Kiddo: Ronnie-boy: You know what they said to me?

RON

Who?

TERRY
“We’d like to see you.”

Who said this?

“We’d like to see you. We think it’d be good for you to come in.”

You should get to bed...

Doctor’s office said that to me. They called me.

About the...

Look: And this brings me to my point. I know that—

Was this about the tests?

I have not fully recovered.

Recovered?

From the Accident. Never quite got one hundred percent.

Right. The... The Accident...

The headaches and violent coughing... Itching and swelling...

What kind of tests?

Important ones. And it brings me to my point...

What kind of tests...?

I don’t know how...long...
RON
Oh, Christ, Dad—

TERRY
It could be any day now...

RON
For Chrissake, Dad— What are you trying to tell me?

TERRY
Ronnie-boy, listen: / I—

RON
Are you trying to tell me you’re sick?

TERRY
It looks bad.
(pause)

RON
Where— Where are you getting this from?

TERRY
I read it. It’s all here. See:
(reading from laptop)
Eventually, symptoms may include: pain or swelling in the upper right section of the abdomen; weight loss; loss of appetite...

RON
Jesus Christ Dad, some sleep is what you / need right—

TERRY
Itching... Jaundice. I’ve been noticing a bit of yellow...

RON
Stop, Dad, this is all in your head— Where are you getting this?

TERRY
It’s all here on Wed MD.

RON
Okay, that’s what I thought. You can’t trust a stu— Wait...

TERRY
I couldn’t believe it at first either.

RON
Did you... Just say “Wed MD”? 
TERRY

Yes.

RON

Wed... Like a fucken wedding? Like newlyweds?

TERRY

I never thought about where they got the name...

RON

This is crazy. I / mean, I can’t even—

TERRY

Which brings me to my point.

RON

Look: I gotta find this thing. You’re not sick; it’s absolutely—

(TERRY reveals an envelope.)

Totally... Insane... Wha— What is... that?

TERRY

My point being: When one family member goes, it’s time for...

RON

Yes, right, right...

Ron.

RON

Uh-huh?

TERRY

Ron, this. This is all I have left in the world.

RON

Is it?

TERRY

Besides my boys of course.

RON

Naturally.

TERRY

I’ve been... Your brother doesn’t know about it. The contents of this... I had to keep this in that plant ever since the move.
The plant! Of course...

What’s that?

Nothing. You were...?

Right...

(beat)
Since we all go one day, y’know: we all leave something behind.

We do what we must...

God I wish I didn’t have to do... Maybe I should get to sleep.

No... Do what you gotta... You’re already up. Might as well...

(Opens envelope; takes out gun.)
This is the / last piece...

Woah, what the fuck?

This is the last piece of the Old Country I have.

Maybe we shouldn’t have a / gun out right—

This... this. Do you have any idea what this is?

A gun. I can very clearly see that—

My gun. Was my father’s. Before that, was my grandfather’s— Your great grandpa Abramsky...

Okay, can we put it / away now—
TERRY
(pointing it at RON, somewhat absent-mindedly)
And the Germans... When they occupied the Old Country, y’know...
They *fucked* us, y’know...? They had to flee. Our family...

RON
...okay...

TERRY
Your great grandpa took this off a dead German’s body.
(examining gun)
Walther P38. Military issue for the Krauts during the War... And now... I want you to have it.

RON
...really...?

TERRY
(pointing it again)
It’s been passed down from father to oldest son for generations now. Carrying on the family name. The *values* of the family...
(A long pause; is he going to shoot?)

RON
Dad, can you put it...?

I want you to have it.

TERRY

RON
(Takes the gun.)
Okay— There’s nothing... *else* in there.

TERRY
I’ll be gone soon, y’know...

RON
What... What am I supposed to do with this old...

TERRY
I’ll live through you. In that gun.

RON
Right. Right...

TERRY
Owning that gun... It’s like a bit of, of... *Rewriting* history.
RON
Yeah, yeah, sure—

TERRY
Y’know?

RON
Yeah. I don’t know if I / should—

TERRY
Almost sold it once. When things were tight. But family...? No price on that.

RON
You tried to sell it?

TERRY
And I want you to carry on the family. The legacy, if you will...

RON
You were gonna sell it.

TERRY
Yes. Once. Turned down four. Coulda been five with the right guy.

RON
Five...?

TERRY
But ya can’t put a price on family.

RON
Five...

(LOGAN enters. RON stuffs gun in pocket.)

Hey, little bro.

LOGAN
Ron... Dad. What’s...?

TERRY
Logan. It’s actually good you’re here. Now we’ve got three pairs of eyes, huh Ronnie-boy?

RON
What?

TERRY
For that thing, the thing you were looking for?
RON
The...

TERRY
You said you misplaced something. And it was important.

LOGAN
Why do you have all your clothes on?

RON
What? My clothes...

LOGAN
Why do you have your jacket on?

RON
You have your jacket on.

LOGAN
I was out for a smoke. What’s your excuse?

RON
Right, a smoke... Yeah, actually, could I bum one of those things off you?

TERRY
Since when do you smoke, Ron?

RON
Uh... Since what?

LOGAN
Yeah, I’ve never seen you...

TERRY
You don’t smoke. Don’t tell me you’re smoking now too...

RON
Not, like, out of habit. Just once in a while.

(LOGAN gives him a smoke; looks at RON quizically.)

RON
What? Whata you looking at?

LOGAN
Nothing...
TERRY
Just don’t get hooked on them things. Rot your goddamn teeth out.
(RON goes to exit through the front door.)
You don’t wanna ruin that good set of teeth in that head.

RON
(distantly)
Yeah, yeah...

LOGAN
Is something...

RON
Is what?

LOGAN
Hold up. It seems like there’s something...
(He looks at RON, then at TERRY who is all smiles, looking out the window with satisfaction.)
Nevermind.

RON
Do I have permission to leave?

LOGAN
Yeah. Go enjoy your cigarette.

RON
Gladly.
(Pause.)
I’ll... be right back.

TERRY
Don’t lock yourself out now.

RON
Five minutes...
(He exits.)

(TERRY heaves a satisfied sigh.)

TERRY
Ah... Isn’t it great?

LOGAN
No.
TERRY
So negative all the time— Didn’t even listen to what... Isn’t it
great that we’ve got all the boys back together? You and your
brother... back with your Old Man. Isn’t that great?

LOGAN
It’s something.

TERRY
It’s a great thing.

(LOGAN sits, picks up the TV remote,
and tries turning it on—still broken.)

LOGAN
Son of a bitch...

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF PLAY)
Bibliography

A note: Many (if not all) of these texts don’t find their way explicitly into my play. But they served as my touchstones while writing; it would be a very different story without them.


Acknowledgements

Thank you professor Zachary Michael Jack for agreeing to be my thesis advisor after only knowing me for a couple weeks; it feels good that you took a gamble on me. Thank you for all the priceless writing advice and invaluable hours of conversation.

Thank you Dr. Richard Paine for pushing me, always. And thank you for all the books of drama which will keep me busy for months to come.

Thank you to all the thoughtful and wonderful students who read and workshopped an early early version of the script. God bless.

Thank you Dr. Kristin Geraty for keeping this program running and for keeping us students running with coffee and donuts on Thursdays.

Thank you Dr. Matthias Regan and the Writing Center—a beautiful place to work and to write. I must have written twenty thousand words of this project in that room.

And, most of all, thank you Abby. For keeping me sane.