

Not Dead Yet
A Murderous Comedy

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ACT ONE

LOBBY

"E. OR" BLOCK addresses the audience from the top of the staircase landing, descending as he speaks. A brightly colored walkie talkie is prominent on his belt.

BLOCK
(With bravado)
Welcome to the Brumder Mansion,
ladies and gentlemen! Let me just
tell you that tonight you are in
for--

The walkie talkie squawks loudly.

BLOCK (cont'd)
--tonight you're in for a--

The walkie talkie squawks again.

BLOCK (cont'd)
--tonight you're in for a real--

The walkie talkie squawks a third time.

BLOCK (cont'd)
(Apologetically)
Just a moment.

E. Orr disappears into the adjacent dining room.

BLOCK (cont'd)
(Voice audible to all)
What is it, Rogue Two?

A voice squawks indecipherably.

BLOCK (cont'd)
You're interrupting me in the
middle of my live presentation to
tell me that? That you haven't
seen her?

Squawk.

BLOCK (cont'd)
Listen to me Rogue Two. I
shouldn't have to but I'll spell
it out for you. Only call me if
you see something.

Squawk.

BLOCK (cont'd)
Over and out.

E. Orr reappears in front of the audience.

BLOCK (cont'd)
Where was I? Oh yes! Tonight
you're in for a real treat, ladies
and gentlemen! Actually much more
than a mere treat! Tonight you
will have the honor and privilege
of--

Squawk.

BLOCK (cont'd)
You'll have the honor and
privilege of bearing--

Squawk.

BLOCK (cont'd)
You'll have the honor and
privilege of bearing witness to--

Squawk.

BLOCK (cont'd)
Just a moment please.

E. Orr disappears again into the dining room.

BLOCK (cont'd)
(Off stage)
What is it, Rogue Two?

Squawk squawk.

BLOCK (cont'd)
You saw something? What did you
see? Over.

Squawk.

BLOCK (cont'd)
A what?

Squawk.

BLOCK (cont'd)
A squirrel.

Squawk.

BLOCK (cont'd)
 You saw a squirrel. And you're
 telling me this why?

Squawk squawk squawk.

BLOCK (cont'd)
 Suspicious, Rogue Two! Only call
 me if you see something
 suspicious!

Squawk squawk.

BLOCK (cont'd)
 Okay, well, now you know. Over and
 out.

E. Orr reappears in the lobby.

BLOCK (cont'd)
 Where was I? Witness! Bear
 witness! It'll be your honor and
 privilege to bear witness to one
 of the great artists of our time
 as he forges in the primordial
 fires--

Squawk.

BLOCK (cont'd)
 --the primordial fires--

Squawk.

BLOCK (cont'd)
 --the primordial fires of--

Squawk.

E. Orr heads glumly back towards the dining room.

BLOCK (cont'd)
 (muttering)
 ... of his creative genius...

E. Orr disappears into the dining room.

BLOCK (cont'd)
 (Off stage)
 What is it Rogue Two?

Squawk squawk squawk.

BLOCK (cont'd)

What?

Squawk squawk.

BLOCK (cont'd)

Forget it, Rogue Two.

Squawk squawk.

BLOCK (cont'd)

You don't have to apologize. Over
and--

Squawk squawk.

BLOCK (cont'd)

What?

Squawk squawk squawk.

BLOCK (cont'd)

No, I'm not mad.

Squawk.

BLOCK (cont'd)

No, I'm not.

Squawk.

BLOCK (cont'd)

Really, I'm not.

Squawk squawk.

BLOCK (cont'd)

(Angrily)

I'm not mad, Rogue Two! Over and
out!

E. Orr emerges from the dining room.

BLOCK (cont'd)

(Racing through his remarks
as if to finish before he's
interrupted again)

Welcome to the Brumder Mansion
ladies and gentlemen. Let me just
tell you that tonight you're in
for a treat. Well much more than a
mere treat.

(MORE)

BLOCK (cont'd) (CONT'D)
 Tonight you'll have the honor and
 privilege of bearing witness to
 the creation of a new work of
 creative genius before your very
 eyes. Prepare yourselves now,
 ladies and gentlemen! Prepare to
 be thrilled! Prepare to be
 enthralled! Prepare to be--

Cameron James Pinehurst stands at the top of stairs holding a
 large stack of papers.

PINEHURST
 (Bellowing)
 Block!

E. Orr rushes up the stairs to meet Pinehurst.

BLOCK
 Oh my God, the NDAs. How could I--
 Sorry Mr. Pinehurst sir. I don't
 know why I keep forgetting them.

PINEHURST
 You forgot the Non-Disclosure
 Agreements again, Block.

BLOCK
 I know, I know, it's inexcusable.

PINEHURST
 It's inexcusable, Block. It should
 be obvious by now even to you that
 as a creative genius, I require
 absolute confidentiality if I'm
 going to allow the common folk the
 privilege of witnessing one of my
 artistic endeavors in its
 formative stages.

BLOCK
 Yes, Mr. Pinehurst.

Pinehurst hands the stack of NDAs to E. Orr.

PINEHURST
 Every one of these needs to be
 signed and dated before anyone is
 allowed downstairs.

BLOCK
 Yes, Mr. Pinehurst.

E. Orr carries the NDAs down the stairs and starts passing them out.

BLOCK (cont'd)

(In a worried stage whisper)
Just sign them and give them back to me. You don't need to READ them -- they're perfectly harmless. Just a bunch of legalistic mumbo-jumbo.

PINEHURST

It goes without saying that should you find yourself in the enviable position of being part of a Cameron James Pinehurst the Third production, the experience is one you'll not soon forget. It's life-changing! Just ask any Hollywood A-Lister.

Block starts passing the NDAs out.

PINEHURST (cont'd)

Block!!!

BLOCK

(Freezing)
Sir?

PINEHURST

They do understand this event is a table reading, don't they?

BLOCK

That is how we've been promoting it, sir.

PINEHURST

And that as such any failure of the event to measure up to my usual standards of artistic excellence is ipso fatso not my fault?

BLOCK

Of course, sir.

PINEHURST

Good. So long as that's understood...

Block resumes passing out the NDAs.

One of the first people to get one is ADOLPH EBOLA, an obnoxious man in his 30s, wearing a garish plaid jacket and an extra-large pair of sun glasses. He's talking loudly on his cell phone.

EBOLA

(Into phone)

Break out the champagne, Toots!
The rumors are true! It's a
Cameron James Pinehurst project!
Once he sees my acting chops I'm a
shoe-in for the part and my career
finally makes the jump to light
speed!

(Pause)

Yeah you should hear him laying it
on now! What a blow-hard! What a
maroon! HAW HAW HAW HAW HAW...

Adolph has captured Pinehurst's attention. A look of fury on his face, the director heads down the stairs toward Adolph.

Adolph's back is turned. The crowd parts as Pinehurst approaches.

EBOLA (cont'd)

(Oblivious to Pinehurst)

He's as bad as they say! Worse! I
never saw anyone so full of
himself! Here, I'll put you on
speaker, check it out.

Adolph puts his cell on speaker and turns in place, unaware that the enraged director is now standing right behind him.

PINEHURST

(Shouting)

You dare trifle with me, thespian?
I've crucified men for less!

Adolph shrieks. Pinehurst grabs him by his collar and leads him toward the kitchen door.

EBOLA

(Into phone)

I'll call you back.

Pinehurst pushes through the door, Adolph in tow. The door closes. Calamitous sounds of violence follow.

E. Orr, wincing at Adolph's screams and the thunderous crash of falling objects, raises his hands to get peoples' attention.

BLOCK

Nothing to see here, folks,
nothing to see. Everyone follow me
downstairs. You can sign the NDAs
when you're seated.

E. Orr leads the audience downstairs while the beating in the kitchen continues in full fury.

THEATER

As the audience seats itself, E. Orr heads backstage, past three figures seated at a large table downstage:

RIP BUTLER, a hollow, creepy,

life-size styrofoam mold resembling an Adams Family manservant.

BERNICE IS-NOT-MY-NAME, a mature, stylish, elegant actress puffing on a cigarette at the end of a long holder.

SUSIE DITZ, pretty and blonde in a Bus Stop-era Marilyn Monroe sort of way, cradling a large hand bag in her lap.

Upstage hangs a large painting of GEORGE BRUMDER.

E. Orr reappears with a baby's bassinet, which he sets on a second, smaller table upstage.

DITZ

(To Butler)

So that's when I decided I had to strike out on my own and succeed or fail on my own merits, even if it meant turning my back on the family fortune.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME

How very admirable of you, dear. Pardon me for asking, but I didn't catch your name.

DITZ

Susie. Susie Ditz.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME

Pleased to meet you, Susie. I couldn't help but overhear your reference to your family fortune. Such phrases have a way of leaping out at me. How exactly did you come into money?

DITZ
 My family's in the food business.
 You've probably heard of us.

Susie reaches into her handbag and pulls out a large red box of Ditz Crackers.

DITZ (cont'd)
 "Everything tastes great when it
 Sits on a Ditz!"

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
 Of course! How wonderful to be
 known by such a charming slogan,
 dear. Oh but they do taste divine,
 don't they? Such a guilty
 pleasure. And those resealable
 stay-fresh packs -- such
 innovation!

DITZ
 It rhymes, you know. The slogan.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
 Ah yes, so it does.

DITZ
 People make fun of our family
 name, but I don't mind. It rhymes
 with lots of words, so it's easy
 for the ad agency to come up with
 new jingles for us. Ditz, fits,
 mitts, blitz, grits, bits, hits,
 wits, overcommits -- I scored 147
 points with that last one in the
 family Scrabble game last week.

Susie stops abruptly and turns to Rip Butler.

DITZ (cont'd)
 What was that?

Susie cocks her ear, listening intently, then blushes and covers her face.

DITZ (cont'd)
 Ixnay on the aughtynay, Rip
 Butler!

Bernice looks on with an amused smile.

DITZ (cont'd)
 Rip says my last name also rhymes
 with some naughty words.

Susie turns to Rip and slaps him on the shoulder affectionately.

DITZ (cont'd)
 Why, Rip Butler, you are a
 scoundrel and a rogue.
 (To Bernice)
 Don't you agree?

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
 (Embarrassed)
 I'm sorry, dear, but I can't hear
 a word he's saying.

Susie leans back in her chair.

DITZ
 Oh! You two haven't been properly
 introduced. Bernice, this is Rip
 Butler. Rip, this is Bernice, uh,
 Bernice...

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
 Is-Not-My-Name.

DITZ
 (Without missing a beat.)
 Rip, this is Bernice Is-Not-My-
 Name.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
 My family's from the Old Country.
 My parents were in show business.
 When they came to America they had
 to shorten their last name to make
 it fit on the marquees. My full
 name is Bernice Is-Not-My-Name-
 Dammit.
 (Pause)
 The 'e' is silent.

DITZ
 So isn't it exciting? A table
 reading for a mystery project! I
 can hardly wait to find out what
 it's about!

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
 When my agent first told me about
 it I thought he was joking. I said
 to him, "A table reading with
 Cameron James Pinehurst the Third,
 and no other details whatsoever?
 Who works this way?"
 (MORE)

IS-NOT-MY-NAME (CONT'D)

But the more I thought about it
the more I thought it'd be good to
get back in circulation again, and
besides, it was getting a little
boring on my island, so I had
Jeeves pack me a lunch and fire up
the Lear Jet, and next thing I
know here I am with a case of the
jitters just like old times, and
I'm thinking, "Bernice, it's been
too long."

A figure clad from head to toe in hospital bandages hobbles
into the room on crutches from upstage. His extra-large
sunglasses give him away: it's Adolph Ebola. As before, he's
talking, loudly, on his cell phone.

EBOLA

--no, I'll tell you what we're
doing, toots, we're calling the
attorney. The man beat me within
an inch of my life. I won't stand
for it. I'm going thermonuclear on
this.

(Pause)

I don't care if he made the two
top-grossing films of all time.
That's yesterday's news. His last
three flicks were flops.

Adolph finds a spot at the table across from the others and
sits down laboriously.

EBOLA (cont'd)

Yeah, I bet the suits have him on
a tight leash -- no more cushy
executive-suite perks for Mister
High-and-Mighty!

(Pause)

Okay, gotta go doll.

Adolph slaps his phone shut. He looks around him, noticing the
others for the first time.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME

(To Adolph)

Pardon me, dear, but shouldn't you
be at home convalescing?

EBOLA

(Holding up his bandaged
arms)

What, this?

(MORE)

EBOLA (CONT'D)

(Snorting)

What doesn't kill me makes me stronger.

DITZ

What happened?

EBOLA

I had a little "run-in" with Pinehurst.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME

So that's what all the commotion was upstairs...

EBOLA

(Abruptly)

There aren't any Nazis in this play, are there?

IS-NOT-MY-NAME

I beg your pardon?

EBOLA

Nazis. Does this play have any Nazis in it?

IS-NOT-MY-NAME

I don't know. It's a mystery production. No-one knows what's in it except for Mr. Pinehurst. That's what we're supposed to find out at the table reading.

EBOLA

Well, there better not be any Nazis. I've spent my whole acting career playing Nazi scumbags. Nazi this, Nazi that, Nazi Nazi Nazi. It all started with my kindergarten class's production of "Judgment at Nuremberg" -- guess who they picked to play Herman Goering?

IS-NOT-MY-NAME

I'm sorry, I didn't catch your name.

EBOLA

Adolph.

(Pause)

Adolph Ebola.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME

Nice to meet you, Adolph. Tell me, have you ever considered changing your name?

EBOLA

What's wrong with Ebola? It's a perfectly good name.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME

No, I mean--

EBOLA

Our family's had that name for generations. There was an Ebola on the Mayflower, you know.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME

Maybe so, but it might help with your typecasting problem.

EBOLA

I refuse on general principle to change my name. Why should I? Why don't you change yours? What IS your name, by the way?

Bernice smiles, winks to the audience, and turns back to Adolph.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME

Bernice Is-Not-My-Name.

EBOLA

(Pause)

Okay, so what IS your name?

IS-NOT-MY-NAME

Bernice.

EBOLA

Bernice?

IS-NOT-MY-NAME

Bernice Is-Not-My-Name.

EBOLA

C'mon, lady, quit pulling my leg -- it's already hurting.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME

(Nodding)

Alright, my name is Bernice.

EBOLA
 Didn't you just say it WASN'T
 Bernice?

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
 I never said that.

EBOLA
 Yes you did.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
 No I didn't, dear.

EBOLA
 So is your name Bernice or not?

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
 Bernice Is-Not-My-Name, yes.

EBOLA
 (Raising his finger.)
 Stop. Right. There.
 (Pause)
 Say you're at the airport, and
 they're paging you.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
 (Shaking her head)
 This isn't going to work either.

EBOLA
 You hear your name over the P.A.
 Now. Tell me exactly what comes
 out of the speakers. Word for
 word.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
 You're not going to like it.

EBOLA
 Just work with me, lady.

Bernice reaches into her purse.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
 (Cheerily)
 Darling, you've suffered enough.
 As have I and everybody else.
 Thank you for playing, and here's
 your parting gift.

She pulls out a business card and hands it to Adolph, who
 glances down at it. After a brief pause he shakes his head.

EBOLA
You gotta be kidding.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
Certainly not, Adolph.

EBOLA
(Reading from the card)
Bernice Is-Not-My-Name.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
Pleased to meet you, darling.

EBOLA
I mean, I don't mean to be rude,
but you've got the wackiest name
I've ever heard in my life.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
We've all got our crosses to bear,
Mr. Ebola.

Cue sound: Happy baby gurgles.

EBOLA
(To Block)
Hey, E. Orr, what's with the ba--
Oh. Wait. Wait. Is that HIM?

BLOCK
None other.

Bernice, Susie, and Adolph rise from their seats and join E. Orr upstage, where they cluster around the bassinet.

DITZ
Oh he's so cute!

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
So this is BabyFace.

Bernice and Susie start cooing and oohing and awing over the bassinet.

BLOCK
Yes, this is BabyFace.
(Pause)
The world's youngest billionaire.

EBOLA
How old is he?

BLOCK
11 months next week.

Adolph pulls E. Orr off to one side, next to the painting of George Brumder.

EBOLA

(In a stage whisper.)

So, E. Orr, just between you and me what's his net worth?

BLOCK

It goes up so fast I'd be wrong before I could finish saying.

EBOLA

It's all inherited, right?

BLOCK

(Shaking his head)

Nope. Self-made. Worked his way up from nothing.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME

How astounding.

E. Orr turns his attention to Bernice and walks back over to the bassinet.

BLOCK

Made his first million in the first trimester.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME

His mother must be so proud.

BLOCK

(Shaking his head)

Couldn't tell you, really.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME

Oh, how could she not be?

BLOCK

He fired her.

DITZ

Fired his mother? Really?

BLOCK

(Shrugging)

She tried to put him on the bottle.

DITZ

My goodness!

IS-NOT-MY-NAME

Still. Imagine being the toast of Wall Street before you've been potty trained.

Cue sound: baby cries.

BLOCK

It's best not to mention his achievements in his presence. He doesn't like flattery. He's all business, you know. Return on investment. Shareholder value. You know the drill.

EBOLA

Hey, E. Orr.

BLOCK

Yes, Adolph.

EBOLA

(Gesturing at the painting of Brumder.)

Who's this?

BLOCK

That, Adolph, is Mr. George Brumder. He was a leading German publisher here in Milwaukee a hundred years ago. He's the man who built this mansion. They say his spirit has watched over it ever since he died.

EBOLA

You don't actually believe that do you?

BLOCK

Of course I do.

The lights in the room dim momentarily, then return to full brightness.

BLOCK (cont'd)

And I suggest you should too.

E. Orr glances at the reading table downstage.

BLOCK (cont'd)

Now, why don't we go downstairs and get to work.

Cue sound: happy baby gurgles.

E. Orr leads the group down the stage steps to the reading table.

READING TABLE [scene 3]

Adolph, Bernice, and Susie seat themselves at the table. E. Orr stands at the head of the table to address them.

BLOCK

First, I'd like to welcome you all to this table reading. You're about to embark on a memorable theatrical adventure.

(Pause)

Before Mr. Pinehurst joins us, I need to briefly touch on some sensitive matters. Everything I'm about to tell you should be held in the strictest confidence. For those of you who haven't worked for him before, there are certain unique things about Cameron James Pinehurst the Third that you should be aware of. Consider what I'm about to tell you as Rules of the Road -- nuggets of wisdom that I've picked up after working with Mr. Pinehurst.

(Pause)

Mr. Pinehurst's career is at a crossroads. Despite his past box-office achievements, his most recent directorial efforts have fallen somewhat short of his own exulted standards--

Adolph lets out a snort.

BLOCK (cont'd)

--so Mr. Pinehurst has decided the time is right for him to return to his theatrical roots, where he can abuse and torment his actors on a more intimate basis. Which brings us here, to the Brumder Mansion.

(To the audience)

Has everyone signed their NDAs? If you haven't done so yet, please take a moment now.

(To Susie)

Susie dear? Would you please gather up the NDAs for me?

DITZ

Sure.

(Leaning toward Rip Butler.)

Hold that thought.

Susie rises and moves among the audience, gathering up the NDAs.

BLOCK

This may come as a surprise, especially given Mr. Pinehurst's reputation, but I can tell you from personal experience that he's in a vulnerable place emotionally. I don't think people like us can truly appreciate the pressures that World-Historical Artistic Giants like Mr. Pinehurst face every day. Always in the glare of the spotlight. Always the target of ankle-biters and a predatory media eager to pounce on every little personal failing. When you or I screw up, who knows about it? Hardly anyone. It comes and it goes in the blink of an eye and before you know it, everything's fine again and forgotten. But if you're Cameron T. Pinehurst the Third, and you throw your personal assistant through a third-story plate-glass window because he brought you decaf instead of the Hazelnut Blonde Roast latte you specifically asked for -- woah, Hold the Phone, Stop the Presses, you'll never hear the end of it!

Susie returns with the NDAs from the audience. She hands them to E. Orr.

BLOCK (cont'd)

Thank you dear.

Susie takes her seat.

BLOCK (cont'd)

So it's no use trying to ignore the elephant in the room.

Cue sound: elephant trumpeting.

BLOCK (cont'd)

Mr.

(MORE)

BLOCK (cont'd) (CONT'D)
 Pinehurst's last three artistic
 projects didn't exactly set the
 world on fire.

E. Orr rummages through a small pile of papers on the table,
 finds the one sheet he's looking for, and holds it pensively.

BLOCK (cont'd)
 Now, next on the agenda--
 (Pause)
 I hesitate to bring it up -- it's
 hardly worth mentioning really.

E. Orr holds the paper up so everyone can see it. On it is a
 large photograph of GINGER KATZ, a young woman in her late 20s/
 early 30s with a crazed expression on her face.

BLOCK (cont'd)
 Do you know who this is?

DITZ
 (Quietly)
 Hey! I've seen that face!

BLOCK
 This is Ginger Katz.

E. Orr hands the picture to Susie. She furrows her brow.

DITZ
 I think it was today.
 (Brightening)
 At the Post Office, that's where
 it was!

Susie hands the paper to Bernice, who looks at it briefly and
 passes it to Adolph.

BLOCK
 Once upon a time, Ginger Katz was
 an up-and-coming actress of some
 talent and promise.

DITZ
 It wasn't on a stamp.

BLOCK
 She first came to the attention of
 Mr. Pinehurst when he was
 directing his acclaimed ocean-
 going blockbuster "Iceberg
 Shmiceberg!"

DITZ

And I don't think it was one of
the window clerks either.

BLOCK

They had a brief, torrid affair,
which Mr. Pinehurst saw fit to
break off, in no small part
because of a bizarre obsession of
Miss Katz's, of which the less
said the better. Unfortunately,
Miss Katz didn't--

EBOLA

(Loudly)

Way-way-way-way-wait!

E. Orr stops nonchalantly and looks mildly at Adolph.

BLOCK

(Mildly)

Yes, Adolph?

EBOLA

What do you mean, 'bizarre
obsession'?

BLOCK

She had... a bizarre obsession.

EBOLA

What was it?

BLOCK

You don't need to know.

EBOLA

Says who?

BLOCK

It's of no consequence.

EBOLA

Then tell me what it is!

BLOCK

It doesn't matter, Adolph! Now can
I get on with it?

He pauses a moment and meets no resistance from the others.

BLOCK (cont'd)

Now, as I was saying.

(MORE)

BLOCK (cont'd) (CONT'D)
 Ginger Katz didn't take the end of the affair very well, and the harassment and stalking began soon afterward. The situation worsened to the point where restraining orders and lawsuits were filed, but even those didn't stop her. The woman was relentless.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
 (Remembering)
 Yes, there was a trial wasn't there...

BLOCK
 There was indeed. Bernice. And faster than you can nuke a bag of Orville Redenbacher's, the jury came back with a guilty verdict, and the judge threw the book at her.

DITZ
 So where exactly did I see her?
 Hmmmm.

EBOLA
 Sounds like a happy ending, E. Orr
 - what gives?

BLOCK
 Well, even after she went to prison, Ginger Katz carried the proverbial torch for Mr. Pinehurst. She bombarded him with letters that were filled with extravagant declarations of love and the most harrowing threats you could imagine -- they'd curdle your blood if you ever read them.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
 How upsetting for Cameron.

BLOCK
 You might think so, Bernice, but I've seen to it that Mr. Pinehurst hasn't had to read so much as a single letter from his jilted paramour. As far as he's concerned, Miss Katz is permanently and most blessedly incommunicado.

EBOLA

So our Fearless Leader doesn't know jack diddly about his number one fan.

BLOCK

That's right! And I mean for it to stay that way. Under no circumstances is anyone to so much as breathe a word of anything having to do with She-Who-Shall-Not-Be-Named to Mr. Pinehurst.

EBOLA

Whatever you say, pal. I mean, why would anyone want to say anything about Ging--

E. Orr purses his lips and raises a finger to them.

EBOLA (cont'd)

--about her anyway? She's locked up, right?

E. Orr looks away guiltily.

EBOLA (cont'd)

Right, man? The chick's in stir. You said so yourself.

E. Orr grimaces and starts to shuffle his feet and whistle nervously.

EBOLA (cont'd)

Oh man, no. Don't say that. You're kidding, right? You mean to tell us that crazy dame broke out of prison?

DITZ

Wait! I know where I saw her!

EBOLA

And five'll getcha ten we know where she's headed!

IS-NOT-MY-NAME

Where did you see her Susie?

DITZ

I saw her in LINE at the post office!

EBOLA

What?

DITZ

I saw her in line at the post office today!

EBOLA

Today?

DITZ

She was asking for directions to a Victorian B&B. And I said to her, "Well, funny you should ask, because I just happen to be going to a table reading at a Victorian B&B not too far from here."

EBOLA

This isn't happening.

DITZ

(Oblivious)

And she said "Really?" And I said, "Yes!" And then her eyes got all weird and she said, "Well, how do I get there?"

EBOLA

(Fearfully)

And...

DITZ

And so I told her there's this really nice Victorian B&B over on Wells Street with just the coolest underground theater you've ever seen.

BLOCK

What did you say Susie?

IS-NOT-MY-NAME

Did you say Wells Street dear?

DITZ

Yes, 3026 West Wells Street.

EBOLA

Wells Street.

DITZ

We're on Wells Street, right?

EBOLA

No, we're on Wisconsin Avenue!

Adolph starts to laugh in hysterical relief. Susie smiles hesitantly.

BLOCK

I think we just dodged a bullet.

DITZ

That sounds scary.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME

Susie, dear, you sent that crazy woman to the wrong B&B.

Cue sound: police sirens racing past.

DITZ

I did? Oh I'm so sorry. I'll have to apologize the next time I see her.

Cue sound: more police sirens.

E. Orr's walkie-talkie gives a loud squawk and he picks it up.

BLOCK

This is Vandal Decca, over.

(Pause)

Yes Rogue Two?

(Pause)

Sorry, I can't hear you over the gunshots.

(Pause)

What's that?

(Pause)

In custody?

(Pause)

Are you sure?

E. Orr switches channels on the walkie talkie.

BLOCK (cont'd)

Vandal Decca to All Agents, Vandal Decca to All Agents, please be advised -- Hell-Cat is in custody. I repeat, Hell-Cat is in custody. DefCon Two Gazillion is now canceled. Please stand down.

E. Orr puts down the walkie-talkie and wipes his brow.

EBOLA

You're right, E. Orr, that was
hardly worth mentioning. Why'd'ja
have to waste our time with it?

Suddenly, Rip Butler falls backward from his place at the table
onto the floor.

DITZ

Oh my God, Rip!

BLOCK

Quick, get him up on the table.

The rest of the cast lift Rip off the floor and set him on the
table.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME

Does anybody know CPR?

Adolph and E. Orr raise their hands.

They look at Rip, stiff and unsightly on the table top, and
then at each other.

BLOCK

(After a long pause)

Why don't you--

EBOLA

No, after you--

BLOCK

It's been a while since I've done
it.

EBOLA

Hey, small world -- I'm a bit
rusty too.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME

Gentlemen, really.

They fall into silence.

EBOLA

(To Block)

Rock-paper-scissors?

A beat passes and they play. E. Orr's rock beats Adolph's
scissors.

Another pause.

EBOLA (cont'd)
Best two out of three?

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
This is no time to be squeamish. A
man's life hangs in the balance!

They play a second round and E. Orr wins again.

Adolph leans over Rip, takes a deep breath, and gives mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and listens to Rip's chest. After several fruitless tries he raises his head.

EBOLA
C'mon, breathe you ugly bastard!

DITZ
That's not nice, Adolph.

EBOLA
Aw, Susie -- he's heard it before.

Adolph gives one last futile go at reviving Rip, then straightens up and backs away from the table. He gestures to E. Orr.

EBOLA (cont'd)
Your turn.

E. Orr gives a resigned sigh and approaches the table, where he leans down over Rip.

LIGHTS DOWN TO BLACK

LIGHTS UP

GRAVEYARD

Cue sound: whistling wind and the mournful tolling of a bell.

E. Orr, Bernice, Susie, and Adolph are in attendance. They stand in front of a lone cross, their backs to the audience.

BLOCK
Ashes to ashes.

DITZ
Dust to dust.

EBOLA
The poor ugly sucker's no longer
with us.

DITZ

(To Rip, in the grave.)
Please pardon Adolph, 'cause he's
all broken up.

EBOLA

(To Susie)
He's food for the worms now,
what's all the fuss?

IS-NOT-MY-NAME

I daresay this scene has gone on
long enough.

FADE TO BLACK

LIGHTS UP

READING TABLE

E. Orr passes three bound notebooks around the table.

BLOCK

I know the expected thing to do at
this point would be to mourn the
dead, but we've got a show to do.
I'm sure Rip would understand, so
in his memory we must steel
ourselves to sally forth into the
unknown. I need you to initial
this document where you see the
stickies.

EBOLA

(Warily)
I'm not signing anything without
my attorney.

BLOCK

You have to sign, Adolph. Everyone
who works for Mr. Pinehurst has to
sign.

EBOLA

What are these?

BLOCK

(Shrugging)
Just the Terms of Employment. You
have to understand. As a result of
the sub-optimal box office
earnings of his more recent
cinematic efforts, Mr.

(MORE)

BLOCK (CONT'D)
Pinehurst's self-esteem is in a precarious state. The merest touch now could bring it crashing down.

PINEHURST
(Shouting, offstage)
I am the Great and Powerful Pinehurst!

EBOLA
(Stunned -- after a pause.)
What was that?

PINEHURST
(Shouting, offstage)
All shall bow down before me!

BLOCK
Oh, that's just Mr. Pinehurst.

PINEHURST
(Shouting, offstage)
I am beloved by millions!

EBOLA
(Shaking his head.)
What is he doing?

BLOCK
Just reciting his daily affirmations.

PINEHURST
(Shouting, offstage)
You must bend to my will, or face the consequences!

BLOCK
We have a duty to rebuild Mr. Pinehurst's confidence.

PINEHURST
(Shouting, offstage)
I am Never Wrong!

BLOCK
It's our top priority.

PINEHURST
(Shouting, offstage)
I am Always Right!

BLOCK

The Terms of Employment just codify that. They don't ask us to do anything we wouldn't do anyway as decent, caring human beings.

Cue sound: a roaring T-Rex.

EBOLA

(Alarmed)

What the hell, E. Orr!

BLOCK

(Smiling reassuringly.)

Oh that? The T-Rex is Mr. Pinehurst's favorite Jurassic Park character. He likes to listen to it for inspiration.

Adolph takes off his sunglasses and looks more closely at the contract.

EBOLA

(Alarmed. Reading aloud.)

"Cast treatment of Mr. Pinehurst shall consist entirely of the following..."

(Stops and looks up at Block.)

Dude, you can't be serious.

BLOCK

(Mildly)

Of course I'm serious, Adolph.

EBOLA

(Reading from the contract.)

"Cast treatment of Mr. Pinehurst shall consist entirely of the following: Paragraph 1, Subsection (a): Groveling. Subsection (b): Brown-Nosing. 1 (c): Abject Subservience. 1 (d): Total disavowal of one's own opinions."

BLOCK

It should go without saying, Mr. Ebola, that the right collaborative environment is critical for the restoration of Mr. Pinehurst's ego.

Cue sound: Another T-Rex roar.

Susie politely raises her hand.

BLOCK (cont'd)
Yes, Susie.

Susie looks down at the contract, her fingertip on a page.

DITZ
What does 'sycophancy' mean?

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
(To Susie.)
It means 'survival' dear.
Especially in show business.

EBOLA
(Reading from the contract.)
"In the event that Mr. Pinehurst should unfairly criticize, belittle, abuse, or humiliate any actor or actress in his employ, said actor or actress shall accept said criticism, belittlement, abuse, or humiliation without complaint, regardless of their actual feelings..."

Adolph shakes his head in disbelief.

EBOLA (cont'd)
(Voice rising as he continues to read.)
"... and shall recite the phrase, 'Thank you sir, may I have another?' in a strong, clear voice."

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
Oh that's nothing darling. You should've seen what he made me sign for "Blue Alien Terminator".

EBOLA
(Voice still rising.)
"Failure to comply with these Terms of Service are grounds for immediate extension of the contract, to include Mr. Pinehurst's next creative project."

BLOCK
We've found that when it comes to misbehaving actors, the best way to threaten them is not with firing but with continued
(MORE)

BLOCK (CONT'D)
employment.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
Indeed.

BLOCK
I'm signing this agreement too,
Mr. Ebola. Mr. Pinehurst may be
tough, but he treats everyone
equally.
(Pause)
Now, I've got something to show
you.

E. Orr reaches under the table and pulls out a large box, which
he sets on the tabletop.

EBOLA
What's that?

BLOCK
I call it the Ego Restoration Kit.
When a person's confidence is
failing, radical intervention is
sometimes required. The Ego
Restoration Kit contains
everything you need to revive the
self-esteem of the distressed
creative professional.

E. Orr reaches into the box and pulls out a bright-red sequined
two-piece bikini.

BLOCK (cont'd)
This bright, festive attire
creates a cheerful atmosphere that
even the gloomiest Gus will find
hard to resist.

E. Orr sets the bikini on the table and reaches into the box
again. He pulls out a pair of pompoms.

BLOCK (cont'd)
Scientific studies have shown
these to be as effective as anti-
depressants -- but much faster-
acting, and with no side-effects.

E. Orr puts the pompoms on the table and reaches into the box.

BLOCK (cont'd)
Lastly but most importantly is
THIS.

He pulls out a small, Cliffs-Notes-size booklet.

BLOCK (cont'd)
 This is the Cheer Book.
 (Pause)
 It contains a comprehensive and
 fully-indexed collection of
 cheers, custom-tailored for the
 artistic professional in question.

E. Orr passes the box to Susie.

BLOCK (cont'd)
 Now, before Mr. Pinehurst joins
 us, I thought we'd give the Ego
 Restoration Kit a trial run.

Susie takes out her bikini, pompoms, and cheer book, and passes
 the box to Bernice, who does the same before passing it to
 Adolph.

E. Orr, Susie and Bernice strap their bikinis on. Adolph looks
 at the box.

EBOLA
 (Shouting)
 Do you really expect me to go
 through with this?

BLOCK
 (Mildly)
 Of course I do, Mr. Ebola. It's in
 the Employment Agreement.

After a long pause, Adolph struggles to his feet. He pulls the
 bikini pieces out of the box.

BLOCK (cont'd)
 The longer I live, the more I
 believe that dignity is overrated.

EBOLA
 I'm going to need help with these.

Susie, now fully outfitted, comes over to Adolph.

DITZ
 I'll help you, Adolph.

Without warning, E. Orr starts a rhythmic chant that resolves
 quickly into the propulsive sound of a steam train. He's joined
 by Susie, and Bernice. Together they make up "The Chanters".

THE CHANTERS

Choo-choo / choo-choo / Choo-
choo / choo-choo Choo-choo / choo-
choo / Choo-choo/choo-choo

Aghast and speechless, Adolph watches.

The Chanters build on their chant with synchronized pumping motions of their arms, imitating a train's running gear.

THE CHANTERS (cont'd)

Choo-choo / choo-choo / Choo-
choo / choo-choo Choo-choo /choo-
choo / Choo-choo/choo-choo

The Chanters assemble themselves into a conga line, arms pumping, with E. Orr in the lead, then Susie, and then Bernice.

They start to circle Adolph, who remains stubbornly seated.

THE CHANTERS (cont'd)

Choo-choo/choo-choo /
Choo-choo/choo-choo Choo-choo/
choo-choo / Choo-choo/choo-choo

E. Orr produces a wooden train whistle from his jacket pocket and blows into it twice.

BLOCK

All aboard the Butt Kiss Express!

THE CHANTERS

Choo-choo / choo-choo / Choo-
choo/choo-choo Choo-choo/choo-
choo / Choo-choo/choo-choo

BLOCK

Next stop, Suck-Up City!

Cue-sound: a steam train, which initially joins with but then takes over for the Chanters, who switch to rhythmic vocal appeals to Adolph.

THE CHANTERS

Oh yes-you-can / Oh yes-you-can Oh
yes-you-can / Oh yes-you-can

BLOCK

Next stop, Bootlicker Estates!

THE CHANTERS

It's for the team / It's for the
team It's for the team / It's for
the team

BLOCK

Next stop, Yes-Man Junction!

THE CHANTERS

Come on Adolph / Come on Adolph
Come on Adolph / Come on Adolph

BLOCK

Last stop, end of the line,
Whatever-You-Say-Ville!

THE CHANTERS

It's not so bad / It's not so bad
It's not so bad / It's not so bad

Adolph struggles to his feet and sings his reply to the Chanters, to the tune of Queen's Bohemian Rhapsody.

EBOLA

(Singing)

I'm just an actor, but I've got my
dignity.

Cue music: karaoke version of the relevant portion of Bohemian Rhapsody.

The Chanters respond in kind.

THE CHANTERS

(Singing)

Doesn't matter, kiss his butt, for
the team! Spare us your pride,
love the pomposity. Why the fuss?
Why the fuss? Will you kiss his
butt?

EBOLA

(Singing)

No Never!

THE CHANTERS

(Singing)

Yes you must kiss his butt.
(Kiss his butt!)

EBOLA

(Singing)

No Never!

THE CHANTERS

(Singing)

Yes you must kiss his butt.
(Kiss his butt!)

EBOLA
 (Singing)
 No Never!

THE CHANTERS
 (Singing)
 You must kiss his butt.
 (Kiss his butt!)
 You will kiss his butt!

EBOLA
 (Singing)
 No Never!

THE CHANTERS
 (Singing)
 You will kiss his butt!

EBOLA
 (Singing)
 Never kiss his butt, oh.

THE CHANTERS
 (Singing)
 Kiss, kiss, kiss, kiss, kiss,
 kiss, kiss.

EBOLA
 (Singing)
 You can't make me, you can't make
 me!

THE CHANTERS
 (Singing)
 Think again, oh yes we can!

EBOLA
 (Singing)
 I'd sooner die, than plant a
 smacker on his pasty cheeks, his
 cheeks, his cheeks!

The Chanters cut the song abruptly and return to the table
 without comment.

EBOLA (cont'd)
 (After a very long pause)
 I-- how could you just-- you
 just-- that you just--

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
 Darling, you were singing along
 with us.

EBOLA

Yeah but you were the ones who--

IS-NOT-MY-NAME

I for one am firmly of the opinion that we chose to do what we just did.

EBOLA

You people are nuts.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME

Really, when you come right down to it, we have no choice but to believe in free will.

Adolph struggles to his feet and grabs his cell phone.

EBOLA

I didn't sign up for this. I'd rather play Nazi scumbags 'til my teeth fall out.

Adolph flips open his phone, presses a key, and brings it up to his ear. A moment passes.

EBOLA (cont'd)

C'mon, Toots, pick up.

Pinehurst enters from the stairs upstage. He takes a long, deep breath and claps his hands, rubbing them together.

PINEHURST

(Merrily)

Ahhhh! I love the smell of sycophancy in the morning!

Pinehurst descends to the foot of the stairs.

EBOLA

(Into phone)

Toots! Toots! Where are you?

Pinehurst scowls.

PINEHURST

You again? And still on the phone too.

Pinehurst advances a couple of steps toward Adolph.

EBOLA

(Into cell phone.)

Toots!

(MORE)

EBOLA (CONT'D)
 You gotta get me outta here. Now.
 I'm at the Brumder Mansion.

PINEHURST
 (Loudly.)
 Ebola!

EBOLA
 3046 West Wisconsin Avenue.

PINEHURST
 (Shouting.)
 Ebola!!!

EBOLA
 (Still oblivious.)
 I'll be out front. Hurry!

PINEHURST
 (Vexed.)
 What does it take to get his
 attention? Ah! I know!
 (Shouting.)
 Block!!!

E. Orr rushes from the table over to Pinehurst.

BLOCK
 Yes, Mr. Pinehurst.

PINEHURST
 Place a call to our errant
 thespian.

E. Orr fishes a cell phone out of his pocket and pushes a key. He listens for a moment. Pinehurst extends his hand toward E. Orr without looking at him. E. Orr puts the phone in Pinehurst's hand.

BLOCK
 It's ringing.

EBOLA
 Hold on, toots -- someone's trying
 to beep through.

Adolph glances down at the phone.

EBOLA (cont'd)
 Oh, it's just E. Orr.

Irritated, Adolph taps on the phone.

EBOLA (cont'd)
What is it E. Orr?

PINEHURST
(Icily.)
Get off the phone if you want to
live.

Adolph freezes. In a panic, he makes ridiculous fake-static sounds with his mouth.

EBOLA
Sorry--.. --tic... --'t hear you--
who's call--?

PINEHURST
You have five seconds.

EBOLA
--what?... sorr--... bad-connec--

PINEHURST
Four, three, two...

Adolph snaps his phone shut and wheels smartly in place to face Pinehurst.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
(Nodding and smiling
sardonically.)
Good choice.

Pinehurst extends the phone back to E. Orr without looking at him. E. Orr takes it. Adolph trudges back to the table, where he meets E. Orr, who stands ready with Adolph's copy of the Employment Agreement. E. Orr hands a pen to Adolph. Adolph takes it and initials on the proper pages.

Pinehurst glances upstage at the painting of George Brumder and stops in his tracks.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
Block!

BLOCK
Yes, sir.

PINEHURST
(Gesturing toward the
painting.)
Who's that?

BLOCK
That's Mr. George Brumder.

PINEHURST
Has he signed an NDA?

BLOCK
Mr. Brumder built this mansion,
over a hundred years ago. He was a
leading German publisher here in
Milwaukee.

DITZ
(Helpfully, to Pinehurst.)
They say his spirit watches over
the mansion.

PINEHURST
Oh what a bunch of superstitious
hokum!

The lights dim momentarily.

BLOCK
With all due respect sir, I think
you should accord the spirit of
Mr. Brumder all due respect.

PINEHURST
I think the spirit of Mr. Rumbler
should be a little more concerned
with respecting me, Block. If he
plays his cards right, I'll make
his little shack famous with my
new play.

BLOCK
Brumder, sir.

PINEHURST
What?

BLOCK
His name is Mr. Brumder. B-R-U-M--

PINEHURST
(Waving Block off.)
Whatever.

Bernice stands up from the table and heads toward the bathroom.

EBOLA
(To Bernice)
Hey, what's-your-name--

Bernice stops and turns to Adolph.

EBOLA (cont'd)
Uh, Bernice.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
(Smiling)
Yes, darling.

EBOLA
Where are you going?

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
Well if you must know, Adolph, I'm
going to take a powder.

EBOLA
I don't think that's such a good
idea.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
On the contrary, dear, I think
it's a positively divine idea.

EBOLA
(Alarmed)
But don't you see? When you
separate yourself from the group,
you're asking for trouble.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
Your concern for my safety is
touching, Adolph, but I'm not in
the slightest bit of danger. I've
broken none of the traditional
scary-story taboos that would
normally mark me for death. I'm
not a teenager about to have sex,
I'm not a businessman who's just
cheated someone, and I'm not
trying to find my cat.
(More urgently.)
Now if you'll excuse me, I've got
to take my powder.

Bernice enters the bathroom and closes the door behind her.
Adolph turns to the others.

EBOLA
I don't like it. This has all the
earmarks of a hack playwright
working the plot levers.

E. Orr guffaws loudly.

EBOLA (cont'd)
 Then again there isn't a single
 defensible character name on this
 stage, so I shouldn't be
 surprised.

PINEHURST
 Enough of your whining, thespian.

EBOLA
 (Loudly, toward the bathroom)
 You okay in there lady?

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
 (Offstage)
 Never better darling!

PINEHURST
 Never mind that. It's high time I
 let slip a tantalizing hint about
 my secret project!

A moment of silence passes. A piercing scream comes from the
 bathroom. Everyone except Pinehurst rushes to the bathroom
 door. E. Orr tries the doorknob but the door is locked.

BLOCK
 (Knocking)
 Bernice?

DITZ
 Are you okay Bernice?

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
 (Offstage)
 I'm sorry, I didn't mean to alarm
 anyone -- it's just that I just
 noticed the toilet paper in here
 is single-ply. Back to your seats,
 everyone.

The cast, roused to vigilance, remains standing.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME (cont'd)
 (Offstage -- cheerily --
 after a pause)
 Go on now. I want to hear those
 chairs scraping.

E. Orr, Adolph, and Susie return to their seats and pull
 themselves up to the table.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME (cont'd)
 Thank you.
 (MORE)

IS-NOT-MY-NAME (cont'd) (CONT'D)
I'll be out in a moment.

EBOLA
(To the group.)
You know what happens next, don't
you? A little more time will pass,
and then for one reason or
another, somebody will say
something to the doomed person and
they won't answer.
(Loudly, toward the bathroom)
Right Bernice?

No answer.

EBOLA (cont'd)
And for some reason, they won't
notice.
(Turning to the audience)
The audience notices of course,
and instantly recognizes the
silence as a sign of trouble.
Until this awful moment comes.
(Pause)
Uh oh.

LIGHTS DOWN TO BLACK

A bustling sound as all of the cast, except Pinehurst, move to
the bathroom door. Adolph shakes the doorknob, as before.

EBOLA (cont'd)
Dammit lady, why'd you have to
lock yourself in?

DITZ
How about a credit card to pick
the lock?

EBOLA
That's great, Susie.

DITZ
I've got MasterCard, Visa, and
American Express.

EBOLA
(Exasperated)
Pick one.

DITZ
Here you go.

EBOLA

Thanks.

Knob and door jiggling sounds follow. The door opens.

EBOLA (cont'd)

Bernice?

(Pause)

Bernice?

DITZ

What happened, Adolph?

BLOCK

Is she alright?

EBOLA

She's just sitting here... slumped over.

BLOCK

What happened? Does she have a pulse?

EBOLA

Hold on hold on hold on!

A long pause.

BLOCK

Adolph, does she have a pulse?

EBOLA

I...

BLOCK

Adolph does she have--

EBOLA

Just wait a moment will you?

Another long pause.

EBOLA (cont'd)

I can't find a pulse.

BLOCK

Really?

EBOLA

No, E. Orr, I'm kidding. She's doing jumping jacks! Of COURSE I'm not kidding. She's got no pulse. She's gone.

DITZ
Oh how awful!

LIGHTS UP

GRAVEYARD

Now with two tombstones.

Cue sound: whistling wind and the mournful tolling of a bell.

Pinehurst, E. Orr, Susie, and Adolph are in attendance, their backs to the audience.

Bernice's long cigarette holder juts audaciously out of the ground in front of the new tombstone.

BLOCK
Here lies the body of Is-Not-Her-
Name.

EBOLA
So what's her name?

BLOCK
Is-Not-Her-Name.

EBOLA
I'm no longer willing to play that
game.

DITZ
So who's to blame?

ALL
The writer's to blame!

EBOLA
Such a terrible end for a grand
old dame.

DITZ
But how on earth did she die
again?

The others cluster around Susie and whisper gravely to her.

Susie, shocked, brings her hand up to her mouth.

FADE TO BLACK

LIGHTS UP

READING TABLE

Pinehurst paces distractedly near the upstage door.

E. Orr is hanging a large banner on the wall by the reading table. It reads: "The Beatings Will Continue Until Morale Improves."

Adolph and Susie are seated at the table, facing each other over a chess board. Adolph makes a play with a pawn into the middle of the board. Susie is using checkers pieces, one of which she uses to jump over several of Adolph's chess pieces.

DITZ
(To Adolph)
King me!

EBOLA
How did you talk me into this?

PINEHURST
Block!

E. Orr drops what he's doing and hurries over to Pinehurst.

BLOCK
Yes sir.

PINEHURST
I've just heard a rumor that we've lost 40% of our cast. Is that true?

E. Orr silently counts the numbers out on his fingers.

BLOCK
Yes sir, I'm afraid it is.

PINEHURST
(Biting his lip)
I was afraid of that.

BLOCK
(Encouragingly)
But don't forget, sir, you had a much higher cast fatality rate while directing your first film, the spine-tingling sci-fi thriller 3D Piranha Galaxy.

PINEHURST
I see what you're trying to do, Block.
(Pause)
You're trying to cheer me up.

Block signals to Adolph and Susie.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
You're trying to distract me.

BLOCK
(Hushed, to Adolph and Susie)
Get the kit.

In a burst of recognition, Susie and Adolph understand. They retrieve the Ego Restoration Kit from under the table.

PINEHURST
You're trying to distract me from acknowledging the fatal truth of all truths. But as Friedrich Nietzsche once said-- when you stare down into the abyss, the abyss stares back at you.

E. Orr joins Susie and Adolph in hastily pulling out the pompoms and bikinis from the box.

The three of them help each other into their bikinis.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
And it's staring me in the face,
Block.

The three of them, now properly attired, run to the stricken director.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
I can deny it no longer.

Pinehurst falls to one knee. He starts to sway.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
I'm nothing!

E. Orr, Susie and Adolph leaf urgently through the pages of their books.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
I'm a nobody!

BLOCK
Here! Cheer 27!

Pinehurst slumps to the floor.

PINEHURST
(Wailing)
All of my artistic pretensions are
(MORE)

PINEHURST (CONT'D)
just artistic pretensions! They're
just so much dust in the wind.

EBOLA
(To E. Orr)
You know he's right.

BLOCK
Shut up.

PINEHURST
(Singing the song by Kansas.)
Dust in the wind... All I am is
dust in the wind.

Adolph struggles to hold the pompoms and cheer book.

EBOLA
(To E. Orr)
How'm I s'posed to--

PINEHURST
(Singing)
(All he is is dust in the
wind...)
Dust in the wind...

E. Orr takes a conductor's position in front of Adolph and
Susie. He raises his hands.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
(Singing)
All I am is dust in the wind...

BLOCK
And a-one, and a-two, and-a--

DITZ & EBOLA
(Jumping and shaking the
pompoms)
Pinehurst rocks -- there's no
doubt about it! If you don't
believe us, just hear us shout it!

E. Orr looks over his shoulder at Pinehurst.

PINEHURST
(Now singing Send in the
Clowns.)
Isn't it rich? Isn't it queer?

E. Orr turns back to Susie and Adolph.

BLOCK
Next verse!

Adolph and Susie look quickly at Susie's cheer book.

PINEHURST
(Softly singing)
Losing my timing like this / In my
career.

BLOCK
And a-one, and a-two...

EBOLA & DITZ
(Jumping and shaking the
pompoms)
Pinehurst is great / There's no
debate Better listen to us /
'cause we know we rate!

PINEHURST
(Softly singing)
Send in the clowns / There ought
to be clowns...

BLOCK, EBOLA & DITZ
(Jumping and shaking the
pompoms)
Pinehurst is cool / 'cause he
rocks it old school! We'll do the
cheer / while the rest of you
drool!

E. Orr signals Adolph and Susie to stop. They do.

PINEHURST
(Softly singing)
Don't bother, they're here...

Pinehurst lapses into silence. The others move closer to him. After a few moments he comes to, as if from a trance. He looks up at the circle of faces over him.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
(Irritably)
What? Can't a man have a moment of
peace around here?

Adolph and Susie back off. E. Orr offers Pinehurst his hand and helps him up.

BLOCK
We're so glad to have you back,
sir.

PINEHURST

What are you talking about? I haven't gone anywhere! Why's everyone standing around? We've got work to do! I'll have no more of your bumbling, Block. Where are the scripts?

E. Orr stands motionless.

PINEHURST (cont'd)

The scripts, Block!

BLOCK

Yes! The scripts! Sorry sir, I'll go get them.

E. Orr heads for the upstage door.

PINEHURST

Block!

E. Orr stops and turns back to Pinehurst.

BLOCK

Yes sir.

PINEHURST

There's a rumor going around that we've lost 40% of our cast. Is that true?

Block stands for a very long time without saying anything.

PINEHURST (cont'd)

Well?

BLOCK

I'm afraid it is, sir.

PINEHURST

(Pause)

Just as I thought.

BLOCK

But don't forget, sir, you had a much higher fatality rate--

PINEHURST

We've had this conversation before, haven't we? What's the matter with you?

BLOCK
My apologies, sir.

PINEHURST
Do you know what this means,
Block?

BLOCK
Of course. I'll get you an
appointment with BabyFace as soon
as possible.

PINEHURST
Hurry up. I haven't got all day.

E. Orr mounts the stage steps and heads into the nursery. He stands next to the bassinet and confers quietly with BabyFace.

After a few moments, E. Orr returns from the nursery and approaches Pinehurst.

BLOCK
BabyFace will see you now.

THE NURSERY

Pinehurst casts a foreboding look upstage at the nursery.

PINEHURST
It's so demeaning, having to
prostrate myself like this.
(Sighing)
The things we do in service of the
arts.
(Darkly)
He's such an infantile little
bastard too but really, do I have
any choice?

Cue nursery music.

Pinehurst enters the nursery and approaches the bassinet. Next to it is a little plastic baby rattle toy. Pinehurst picks up the toy and looks down into the bassinet. He takes a deep breath and shakes the rattle, forcing a smile.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
(In a sing-song voice.)
Oochie goochie goochie-goo! Oochie
goochie goochie-goo! Who's da
cutest, bestest, super-duperest
widdle media mogul in da whole
world? Oh, who can it possibly be?

Cue sound: happy baby gurgles.

PINEHURST (cont'd)

Dat's wight! It's BabyFace! Oh yes you are! Oh yes you are! And who's going to keep my show from going down the crapper 'cause my actors are dropping like flies? Who's going to save my career from the ash heap of history? BabyFace, dat's who! Oooh he's such a sweetie! Yes he is! He's such a cute widdle sweetie-pie, wid his cute widdle button nose, and his cute widdle rosy cheeks, and his cute widdle eight-figure line of credit! An' he's gonna wite Uncle Pinehurst a big fat checky-wekky so Uncle Pinehurst can mount a lavish, coast-to-coast cost-no-object talent search--

The nursery music stops. Cue sound: a needle dragged over a record.

Cue sound: surly baby cries.

A large-caliber revolver rises out of the bassinet, pointing straight up at Pinehurst's face.

PINEHURST (cont'd)

(Terrified, but still smiling.)

Okay, okay, we'll scale it back, we'll scale it back, Uncle Pinehurst knows BabyFace isn't made of money--

The revolver drops slowly back into the bassinet.

The nursery music resumes.

Cue sound: happy baby gurgles.

Glimpses of a checkbook and the wagging end of a pen are visible in the bassinet.

A small, white pudgy hand holds a check up to Pinehurst. Pinehurst restrains his impatience and excitement with visible effort and gently takes the check when BabyFace offers it to him, casting a quick glance down at it. His eyes pop.

PINEHURST (cont'd)

(Effusively)

Oh tank you, tank you, TANK YOU BabyFace!

(MORE)

PINEHURST (cont'd) (CONT'D)
 Uncle Pinehurst is da happiest,
 most gwateful Uncle Pinehurst in
 da Whole. Wide. World!

Bowing deeply, Pinehurst backs slowly out of the nursery.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 Oh yes he is! Oh yes he is!

When he's gotten a safe distance from the nursery, Pinehurst whirls around in thoroughly adult, fist-pumping glee.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 OH. YES. HE. IS!!! WOO-HOO!!! YEAH
 BABY! OH YEAH!

Cue music: We're In The Money.

EBOLA
 (Loudly)
 Whatcha gonna do now, Boss? Wait -
 lemme guess. Pocket the loot and
 stick another free ad up on
 Craig's List?

BLOCK
 Shut up, Adolph!

Cue sound: a needle dragged over a record. The music stops abruptly.

Cue sound: baby screams.

BLOCK (cont'd)
 Dammit, Adolph! BabyFace heard
 you!

BabyFace's cries grow louder and angrier.

BLOCK (cont'd)
 Great. Just great. Now NO-ONE'S
 getting any sleep tonight.

PINEHURST
 (With steely resolve.)
 I know what we're going to do.

Pinehurst points at Adolph.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 You. C'mere.

Adolph hobbles over to Pinehurst.

PINEHURST (cont'd)

I'm not scurrying off to the bank to cash this thing in some sort of undignified sprint. That's not going to happen. But I'll tell you what IS going to happen.

Pinehurst holds the check up to Adolph.

PINEHURST (cont'd)

You're going to take this check back in there. You're going to apologize to the little monster for your stupid joke, and you're going to beg his forgiveness and offer to return the check. And you better hope he accepts the apology and lets us keep the money or else I'm going to sign you up for a lifetime contract with my production company, effective immediately. Understand?

Adolph takes the check from Pinehurst. He looks toward the nursery and the bassinet. The glint of metal from BabyFace's gun is visible.

EBOLA

But what about the g--

PINEHURST

I don't want to hear it. You know your lines.

DITZ

Break a leg, Adolph!

PINEHURST

And, Action!

Adolph makes his way back toward the nursery. He approaches the bassinet. BabyFace's cries continue. Suddenly Adolph's arms fly up in self-defense.

EBOLA

No! Don't shoot!

Cue sound: gunshots.

LIGHTS TO BLACK

Cue sound: gunshots and ricochets.

BLOCK
 He shot out the lights.
 (Pause)
 Adolph, are you alright?

Cue sound: continuing gunshots and ricochets.

EBOLA
 Been better, thanks.

PINEHURST
 I haven't heard that apology yet.
 What are you waiting for?

EBOLA
 How 'bout some covering fire?

PINEHURST
 This is a theater -- not a
 shooting gallery. Now be a man and
 play the part you're supposed to
 play! I'm not paying you by the
 hour.

Cue sound: a fresh volley of gunshots and ricochets.

EBOLA
 (Hesitantly)
 Uh, pardon me Mr. BabyFace sir.

The gunfire dies down.

EBOLA (cont'd)
 On behalf of everyone, um--
 (Clears his throat)
 On behalf of everyone here I'd
 just like to offer my apologies
 for my, uh, for my unfortunate
 remar--

PINEHURST
 Oh come on! "Unfortunate remarks"?
 Don't be so mealy-mouthed!

EBOLA
 What?

PINEHURST
 Call it what it was.

EBOLA
 Now wait a second--

PINEHURST

We're all adults here.

EBOLA

Whaddaya want? He's stopped shooting, hasn't he?

BLOCK

True, and we should hope for the best, but he could just be reloading.

EBOLA

Mr. BabyFace sir, on behalf of everyone here I'd like to apologize for my stupid joke. It was absolutely uncalled for. Mr. Pinehurst is a professional and a man of the highest ethical integrity. I'm sure he'll make responsible use of your hard-earned money.

Silence.

BLOCK

I must say, Adolph, that was some first rate bottom kissing.

Cue sounds: a new round of infant squalls and bursts of gunfire.

EBOLA

(Despairingly.)

We're all gonna die. Game over man. Game over.

DITZ

(Tentatively.)

Excuse me.

The baby cries, gunfire, and ricochets continue.

DITZ (cont'd)

(A little louder.)

Excuse me.

BLOCK

What is it, Susie?

DITZ

I have an idea.

EBOLA

What, nuke him from orbit?

DITZ

I've always loved children.
Sometimes, when you're feeling
blue and down in the dumps, all
you really need to cheer up is a
song!

EBOLA

(Ranting.)

Well maybe you ain't up on current
events doll, but in case you
haven't noticed, we're busy here
getting our asses kicked. And you
think a song is gonna do us any
good?

DITZ

(Calmly)

That's right, Adolph.

Susie blows a middle C on a mouth tuner.

DITZ (cont'd)

(Singing)

Hush little baby, don't say a word
Mama's going to buy you a
mockingbird
If that mockingbird don't sing,
Mama's gonna buy you a diamond
ring.
If that diamond turns to brass,
Mama's gonna buy you a looking
glass.
If that looking glass gets broke,
Mama's gonna buy you a billy goat.
If that billy goat don't pull,
Mama's gonna buy you a cart and a
bull.
If that cart and bull tip over,
Mama's gonna buy you a dog named
Rover.
If that dog named Rover don't
bark, Mama's gonna buy you a horse
and a cart.
If that horse and cart fall down,
You'll still be the sweetest
little baby in town.

With each verse of the song, BabyFace's cries and the sounds of
gunfire die down a little bit more. By the time Susie reaches
the final lines, calm has been restored.

EBOLA
Oh my God!

BLOCK
We're saved!

Cue joyous music of deliverance.

BLOCK (cont'd)
You're a miracle-worker, Susie.

PINEHURST
All right, let's stop lollygagging
and get back to work.

Cue sound: gunshot.

BLOCK
Oh no! Oh goodness gracious no!!!

LIGHTS UP ON AN EMPTY STAGE

END OF ACT ONE.

ACT 2

GRAVEYARD

Now with three tombstones.

Cue sound: whistling wind and the mournful tolling of a bell.

Pinehurst is flanked by E. Orr and Adolph, their backs to the audience.

Pinehurst opens a bible and starts to read.

PINEHURST
 (Reading from the bible)
 Ashes to ashes. Ditz to dust.
 (Pause)
 We are gathered here today to
 mourn the passing of...

Pinehurst looks up from the Good Book, pauses, and shrugs.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 ... of a real ditz. A ditz's ditz.

BLOCK
 Who will be missed.

PINEHURST
 Who by her noggin bullets whizzed.

BLOCK
 Until, alas, one sadly hit.

After another pause, Pinehurst and E. Orr turn to Adolph. E. Orr kicks him in the shins.

EBOLA
 (Irritably)
 I don't know what the next line
 is!

PINEHURST
 (Resuming, in perfunctory
 fashion)
 We do hereby commit Susie's ditzy
 soul to Heaven, and to the eternal
 loving embrace of the Almighty.
 Amen.

EBOLA & BLOCK
 Amen.

The three of them turn away from the grave and, now facing the audience, begin to walk in place.

PINEHURST

And once again my personnel
expenses are soaring.

EBOLA

Well, it doesn't help that we have
a homicidal executive producer.

PINEHURST

At least this graveyard isn't too
far from the Grumbler.

BLOCK & EBOLA

(Correcting in unison)

Brumder!

PINEHURST

The Mumbler--

BLOCK & EBOLA

Brumder!

PINEHURST

The Tumbler--

BLOCK & EBOLA

Brumder!

PINEHURST

Whatever.

They walk in place, in silence.

ANNOUNCER

Attention, theater patrons! This
is the Brumder Mansion management
with an important announcement.
Due to disappointing ticket sales
for this show, we are unable to
pay the cost of turning the lights
off so that we may accomplish a
badly-needed scene transition.
Shame on you for not supporting
The Arts more generously. While
you contemplate the error of your
ways, we ask you to please close
your eyes while we play a brief
musical interlude until the next
scene can begin. When the music
stops, you may open your eyes
again. Thank you.

Cue sound: theme from Jeopardy, which, after a few moments,
stops abruptly.

ANNOUNCER (cont'd)
No peeking.

Jeopardy theme resumes.

Cue sounds: Hammers, saws, power drills, jackhammers, etc.

Jeopardy theme ends.

ANNOUNCER (cont'd)
You may now open your eyes. Thank
you for your cooperation.

THEATER

Adolph and Pinehurst stand together upstage, while E. Orr
speaks furtively into the walkie-talkie at the reading table.

BLOCK
(Worried)
Are you sure, Rogue Two? Please
repeat, over.

EBOLA
(To Pinehurst)
Excuse me, boss. I've got to go
offstage now to advance a plot
point.

PINEHURST
Well be quick about it. I haven't
got all day.

Adolph exits upstage.

E. Orr, listening to the walkie-talkie, widens his eyes.

BLOCK
Are you certain, Rogue Two? Over.

E. Orr listens in silence.

BLOCK (cont'd)
(Quietly but horrified)
Oh my God.
(Pause)
Thank you Rogue Two.

E. Orr puts the walkie-talkie on the table.

A scream comes from backstage. It's Adolph. A moment later he
bursts through the upstage door.

EBOLA
Oh my God! Oh my God!

PINEHURST
(Irritated)
Oh what IS it?

EBOLA
It's her! It's her!

E. Orr looks sharply over at Adolph.

BLOCK
Who?

Adolph points speechlessly at the upstage door. E. Orr hurries over to him.

BLOCK (cont'd)
Who did you see?

E. Orr grabs Adolph by the shoulders and shakes him.

BLOCK (cont'd)
(Voice rising)
Adolph! Look at me!

EBOLA
(Fatalistically)
It's the End Times. We're in the
End Times, E. Orr.

BLOCK
Blast it Adolph -- who did you
see?

The upstage door opens and a woman steps through. The others draw back.

It's Susie, now sporting a large bullet hole in the middle of her forehead.

DITZ
(Cheerily)
Hi everyone!

Adolph retreats behind E. Orr, who looks more puzzled than frightened. Pinehurst is shocked.

DITZ (cont'd)
What's everyone looking at?

EBOLA
 (To E. Orr)
 It's not her, man. It's a zombie.
 (To Susie)
 Flesh-eater!

DITZ
 Oh Adolph - you're such a kidder.

EBOLA
 Kidder hell! You'll chow down on
 our guts if we let you.

DITZ
 (Looking around)
 Hey, what happened to our rug rat
 theater mogul?

EBOLA
 I think he went to the ammo store.

DITZ
 Oh, his first baby steps! How
 adorable!

E. Orr takes a cautious step towards Susie. He reaches up to
 Susie's forehead and touches the bullet hole appraisingly.

BLOCK
 Susie?

DITZ
 Yes, E. Orr?

BLOCK
 Would you mind turning around for
 a moment?

Susie offers E. Orr the back of her head, which he explores
 with his fingers.

BLOCK (cont'd)
 Hmmm. No exit wound.

DITZ
 Is that good or bad?

BLOCK
 I don't know what to make of it.

PINEHURST
 (Suddenly)
 Ooh!

He pulls BabyFace's check from his shirt pocket.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
I better cash this!

BLOCK
I don't agree with Adolph about it
being the End Times.

PINEHURST
(Voice raised.)
I'm going to the bank.

EBOLA
It IS the End Times!

PINEHURST
(Loudly)
I said, I'm going to the bank!

Susie, E. Orr, and Adolph turn in unison toward Pinehurst and bow deeply.

BLOCK
(Earnestly)
We'll have to manage somehow while
you're gone.

Satisfied with their response, Pinehurst exits upstage.

E. Orr turns to Susie.

BLOCK (cont'd)
Still, it is a puzzle. Usually the
outcome from a bullet to the head
is, you know, death. Yet here you
are.

DITZ
(Smiling and nodding pertly)
Here I am! I feel good. Really
good, now that I think about it.

E. Orr starts to pace distractedly.

DITZ (cont'd)
In fact I've never felt as clear
and as sharp in my whole life as I
do right now. I should get shot in
the head more often.

Adolph lets out a short, giddy laugh.

E. Orr runs his hands through his hair. His face is fretful.

DITZ (cont'd)
 Not only that, I'm ready to kick
 some serious Scrabble- playing
 butt when I get home!

Susie notices E. Orr's pacing.

DITZ (cont'd)
 Is something wrong, E. Orr?

BLOCK
 Pardon?

BLOCK (cont'd)
 No, nothing. It's just...

DITZ
 E. Orr, what is it?

E. Orr steps away from Susie and Adolph for a long moment. He
 looks down at the floor, biting his finger.

BLOCK
 (Breaking down)
 Oh, people, we're in a LOT of
 trouble!

E. Orr wrings his hands.

BLOCK (cont'd)
 Oh sweet merciful God, what are we
 going to do?

EBOLA
 I'd love to fall to pieces with
 you, E. Orr, but how am I supposed
 to do that if you don't tell us
 what's wrong?

BLOCK
 They arrested the wrong person.

EBOLA
 Huh?

BLOCK
 They arrested the wrong woman.

EBOLA
 What person? What woman? Who?

DITZ
 I think E.
 (MORE)

DITZ (CONT'D)
 Orr's referring to the police who
 arrested the crazy woman that I
 sent to the wrong B&B.

BLOCK
 (Impressed)
 That's right, Susie.

EBOLA
 Oh you mean Ginger Ka--

BLOCK
 (Shouting)
 Hush!

EBOLA
 Sorry.

BLOCK
 She Who Must Never Be Named must
 never be named!
 (Pause)
 Yes, it turns out the police
 arrested the wrong person over at
 the Manderley B&B. The woman they
 took into custody wasn't...
 (Pause)
 HER.

EBOLA
 Who did they arrest?

BLOCK
 (Shaking his head)
 Oh, how could they botch it so
 badly?

EBOLA
 E. Orr, who did they arrest?

BLOCK
 The owner. They arrested the
 Manderley Inn owner.

EBOLA
 What?

BLOCK
 They just released her from
 custody.

EBOLA
 But that means the Hellcat...

BLOCK
 (Nodding)
 Is still out there.

EBOLA
 (Pause)
 I'm ready for my meltdown, Mr.
 DeMille.

E. Orr and Adolph lapse into a slow motion panic. They lip-sync their dialog, which is played back prerecorded over the theater PA in ultra slow-mo.

BLOCK
 Weeee'rrrrre doooooooooomed!

EBOLA
 We'rrrrre alllllll gonnnnnnaaaaa
 diiiiieeee!

Susie speaks normally, directly to the audience, while E. Orr and Adolph are locked in their agony behind her.

DITZ
 I don't know why E. Orr and Adolph
 are talking funny like that -- it
 must have something to do with the
 playwright.

BLOCK
 Whaaaaat are we gooooo-ing tooo
 dooo?

DITZ
 I might as well take this moment
 to share something with you. See,
 this is a real pickle.

EBOLA
 Weeeeeee're reeeeeeally up a
 creeeeeeeeeek!

DITZ
 Gosh, look how they're freaking
 out. What's gonna happen when I
 show them what I found on my way
 back from the cemetery? Hold on.

Susie exits through the upstage door.

BLOCK
 Sheeee'ssss gonnnnnnna kiiillllll
 ussss!

Adolph pulls out his cell phone in slow-mo and hits a key.

EBOLA
 Tootssss! Tootssss! Youuuu gottt-
 taaa saaaaaave meeeeee!

Adolph listens, looks at the phone in despair, then puts it back in his pocket.

Susie returns, holding a cat's litter box and a scratching post. She holds them up for the audience.

DITZ
 I think these are pretty good
 signs that Ginger Katz-- oops, I
 mean that You-Know-Who, is
 somewhere nearby.

She ponders matters for a moment.

DITZ (cont'd)
 Well, I might as well get it over
 with.

She turns to E. Orr and Adolph.

EBOLA
 (To E. Orr)
 Niiiiiiiiiiice knowwwwwwwwing
 youuuuuuuuu, dooooooooood...

DITZ
 Hey guys...

BLOCK
 (To Adolph)
 Arriiiiiiiiivederrrrrrrci,
 Aaaaaaaaadolpshhhhhh...

DITZ
 (More loudly)
 Uh, guys...

EBOLA
 Thiiiiis iiiiiiis the ennnnnnnd!

DITZ
 (Loudly)
 E. Orr!!! Adolph!!!

E. Orr and Adolph stop and look at Susie. She holds up the scratching post and the litter box.

DITZ (cont'd)
 Look what I found!

The sight of the objects sends them into fresh spasms of slow-motion terror.

EBOLA & BLOCK
Ohhhhh nooooo!

DITZ
Guys! Guys!

EBOLA & BLOCK
I don't waannnnnnna diiiieeee!

DITZ
Ixnay on the anicpay!

E. Orr and Adolph pull out of their doomsday grip and look at her.

DITZ (cont'd)
We've got to get it together and tell Mr. Pinehurst.

BLOCK
I don't think that's a good idea, Susie. You've seen how he handles bad news.

EBOLA
The minute he hears her name he's gonna turn into a puddle of goo!

E. Orr's phone rings.

BLOCK
(Answering)
Yes, boss!
(Pause)
Any trouble at the bank?
(Pause)
Good.
(Pause)
Yes, it's been terrible without you.
(Pause)
Okay, see you soon.

E. Orr hangs up.

DITZ
We've got to come up with something before Ginger shows up.

E. Orr furrows his brow for a moment.

BLOCK
Wait! I've got it!

E. Orr's phone rings.

BLOCK (cont'd)
(Answering)
Yes, boss!
(Pause)
Good.
(Pause)
Nope, no change. We're still
suffering terribly without you.
(Pause)
Okay, see you soon.

E. Orr motions to Susie and Adolph into a huddle.

BLOCK (cont'd)
We're not going to tell Mr.
Pinehurst about You-Know-Who. He's
going to tell himself.

EBOLA
Come again?

BLOCK
You heard me. And here's how we'll
do it. See, the thing is...

E. Orr's phone rings.

BLOCK (cont'd)
(Answering)
Yes, boss.

EBOLA
(Exasperated, to E.Or)
Voice mail, dude - ever heard of
it?

BLOCK
Good.
(Pause)
Yes, the pain is unbearable, sir.
(Pause)
See you soon.

E. Orr hangs up.

EBOLA
I say we let Ginger kill him.

BLOCK

No -- listen to me.

(Pause)

Mr. Pinehurst has always been a sucker for charades. If there's a game of charades being played anywhere near him, he can't help but barge in and take it over.

EBOLA

So all we have to do is start up a pretend game, make She- Who-Must- Never-Be-Named the answer...

BLOCK

Exactly. When Mr. Pinehurst walks in, he'll take one look at us, hijack the game, and--

EBOLA

(Gleefully)

--then we lead him down the primrose path!

(To Susie)

You wanna do the honors?

DITZ

(Quietly)

You betcha!

BLOCK

Alright! Let's do it! He'll be back any moment now.

They clap hands and break the huddle. Susie takes a spot in front of E. Orr and Adolph, who face her. Their backs are to the upstage door.

Susie holds up her left hand with her index and middle fingers extended.

EBOLA & BLOCK

Two words.

Susie holds up her index finger.

EBOLA & BLOCK (cont'd)

First word.

Susie stretches her left arm out. She taps it with her right index and middle fingers.

The door opens upstage and Pinehurst enters, triumphant.

EBOLA & BLOCK (cont'd)
Two syllables.

PINEHURST
I've returned from the bank, to
once again bestow myself upon you
and give meaning to your empty
lives!
(Seeing the game)
Oooh! Charades! I wanna play!

Pinehurst strides eagerly over to E. Orr and Adolph and pushes them aside. E. Orr and Adolph exchange knowing looks as they step back.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
Wait! Wait! How many words?

Susie holds up two fingers.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
Okay, two words.

Susie holds up her right index finger.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
First word.

Susie holds up her right index and middle fingers.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
Two syllables.

Susie taps her left arm with her right index finger.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
First syllable.

Susie tugs her ear.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
Sounds like...

Susie musters the biggest, most teeth-baring smile she can manage.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
Smile... teeth... lips... happy...
glad... GRIN!

Susie points excitedly at him.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
Okay sounds like "Grin".
(MORE)

PINEHURST (cont'd) (CONT'D)
 Fin, Tin, Win, Skin, Sin, Men, Rin
 Tin Tin...

Susie shakes her head repeatedly, then makes a drinking motion.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 Something to do with drinking that
 rhymes with "Grin".

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 (Floundering)
 Uh, Drink, Tea, Cup...

Susie makes the drinking gesture again, but in a drunken fashion.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 (Floundering hopelessly)
 Blotto, plastered, drunk,
 hammered...
 (Whiningly)
 I don't know, binge?

Susie nods encouragingly.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 Binge?

Susie makes rapid brushing motions.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 No? Not binge?
 (Pause)
 Gin?

Susie jumps up and down happily.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 Gin!
 (Authoritatively)
 Alright. Okay, second syllable.

Susie tugs her ear.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 Sounds like...

Susie scrunches her face into a snarl and makes clawing motions.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 Claw, Claws, Nails, Teeth, Mad,
 Snarl, Scratch, Bite,

Susie doubles down on her snarling pose.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 Wild. Fierce. Untamed. Beastly.
 Growling, you're growling, it's a
 growl, a growl, it's like you're
 "GRRR"--

Susie leaps up and down with delight.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 (Shouting)
 Second syllable sounds like
 "GRRR"!

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 "Gin" plus "GRRR".
 (Pause)
 Ginger?
 (To Susie)
 Ginger! Ginger!

Susie smiles deliriously, then holds up two fingers.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 Second word.

Susie extends her left arm and brings down her right index
 finger.

BLOCK & EBOLA
 One syllable.

Susie tugs her ear.

PINEHURST
 Sounds like...

Susie lifts an imaginary hat off her head.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 Head... Hair... Wig... Cap...
 Tip...

Susie repeats the hat-lift gesture.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 I can't do it. Your clues are too
 hard. Are you trying to embarrass
 me? How dare you embarrass the
 great Cameron Pinehurst the Third?

Susie repeats the hat-lift gesture.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 Mat... Fat... Bat... Sat...
 Gnat... Scat...

Susie repeats the hat-lift gesture.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 This is an outrage. I'll destroy
 you. You'll never work in theater
 again.

Susie repeats the hat-lift gesture.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 No. Wait. I'll hire you.
 Permanently. Lifetime employment
 -- how does that sound?

Susie repeats the hat-lift gesture.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 I'll cast you in every one of my
 projects 'til the End of Time.
 I'll--
 (Blurting realization)
 Cat?!?!

Susie nods excitedly.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 Cat! I KNEW it! My God I'm so
 brilliant it's scary!
 (Pause)
 Ginger Cat.
 (Pause)
 Ginger Cat?

The upstage door flies open. Ginger Katz steps through.

Cue Monty Python "Spanish Inquisition" music.

Susie points upstage. E. Orr and Adolph turn to look.

BLOCK & EBOLA
 (Terrified)
 Ginger KATZ!

E. Orr, Adolph, and Susie scatter to the edges of the stage,
 leaving Pinehurst alone at the center.

GINGER KATZ steps toward Pinehurst. He looks at her and
 swallows hard, frozen in his tracks.

KATZ
 (Calmly)
 Hello, Cameron.

Pinehurst is speechless. Katz advances toward him, slow and sultry, her eyes locked onto his.

KATZ (cont'd)
 Do you remember when we first met, in the pet shop? I'll never forget the ride home in your car. I was so scared. I made such a racket, I'm surprised you put up with it. But you were so kind and thoughtful. You punched air holes in the box for me. And then that first night with you in your house.

(Pause)
 So long ago but I remember it so clearly.

(Pause)
 I hid under the bed and you had to lure me out with tuna and milk.

(Pause)
 Our love was a sacred love, a secret love, a forbidden love, a love that longed to declare itself for all the world. But it was right there in the Rental Agreement -- "No Pets". Still, you were such a mad, impetuous fool, Cameron. You didn't care about carpet stains, or cleaning deposits, or eviction -- you had to have me! You had to have me, Cameron. And I you. I you.

Katz circles Pinehurst slowly.

KATZ (cont'd)
 How wondrous and magical were those first golden days, my love. Oh, what I wouldn't give to live them with you all over again!

Pinehurst gulps silently.

KATZ (cont'd)
 The balls of yarn. The hairballs. The terrified rodents. The YouTube videos. I got more hits than that stupid Grumpy Cat could ever hope for.

(MORE)

KATZ (cont'd) (CONT'D)
It launched my career in
Hollywood.

(Pause)

Sure, there was the time I knocked
over the Christmas tree, and the
flea bombs and the unpleasantness
with the laundry piles, but if
you'd only scooped the litter box
a little more often darling we
wouldn't've had to go through
that.

Katz stops and gives Pinehurst a mischievous look.

KATZ (cont'd)
You know what I really miss? Oh, I
miss it so much.

She drops slowly to the floor on all fours and arches her back.

KATZ (cont'd)
I miss how you used to do you-
know-what and call me by my
special name.

(Pause)

You know the one.

Pinehurst stands next to her in an agony of awkwardness.
Ginger, oblivious, leers up at him.

KATZ (cont'd)
Come on, darling.
(Pause)
What's the harm? You know you want
to.

(Pause)

It's been so long. And I couldn't
get anyone in the SuperMax
facility to do it. Oh why did you
have to send me off to Federal
prison, Cameron? Why?

(With a sigh)

But what does it matter now? All
is forgiven.

(Gesturing up at Pinehurst
with a tilt of her head
toward her hindquarters.)

C'mon.

Zombie-like, Pinehurst walks around Ginger and stops behind
her.

KATZ (cont'd)
 What's the worst that can happen?
 A little fun for you? A little fun
 for me? This is what you do when
 you're in love.

Pinehurst puts his hand down to a point in the air just above
 Katz's bottom, which she lifts invitingly.

KATZ (cont'd)
 Darling, please.
 (Pause)
 I need it so much.
 (Pause)
 Oh, just do it.
 (Pause)
 Don't tease me like this.

EBOLA
 Dude, whatever it is, don't do it.
 You're playing with fire!

Still Pinehurst hesitates.

KATZ
 (With desire and something
 close to anger.)
 Do it now Cameron!!!

In a spasm, Pinehurst reaches for the small of Katz's back and
 scratches it vigorously.

PINEHURST
 (In a high voice. The first
 'G' in 'Ging' is a hard
 'G'.)
 Ging-ging/ging-ging-ging! Ging-
 ging/ging-ging-ging!

KATZ
 (Commandingly)
 Again!

PINEHURST
 (In an even higher voice.)
 Ging-ging ging-ging-ging! Ging-
 ging ging-ging-ging!

BLOCK
 Alright, Hell-Cat -- you got what
 you wanted. Time for you to go
 now.

KATZ
 (Smiling dangerously)
 Do you ever wonder.

Ginger stands up and begins to circle Pinehurst.

KATZ (cont'd)
 About what it means...

BLOCK
 Uh oh.

KATZ
 To become enflamed...

BLOCK
 This is bad.

KATZ
 With the desire to be with
 someone.

Cue sound: a female cat, caterwauling.

KATZ (cont'd)
 Can you hear it?

Cue sound: more caterwauling.

KATZ (cont'd)
 There's nothing like that sound in
 the whole world.

BLOCK
 (Voice starting low, but
 building.)
 No no no no.

KATZ
 Imagine if all women did that.

The caterwauling continues.

KATZ (cont'd)
 Imagine if all the women of the
 world just wantonly cried out for
 LOVE, wherever they happened to
 be, whenever they needed to have
 it.

BLOCK
 (Loudly)
 Plug your ears, Cameron!

KATZ
They don't care who hears!

BLOCK
Don't listen!

KATZ
They'd say:

BLOCK
(More loudly)
Don't listen to her, boss!

KATZ
I need a MAN!

Cue sound: more caterwauling.

KATZ (cont'd)
A MAN, Cameron!

EBOLA
Sounds kinda cool, actually.

BLOCK
(Shouting; beside himself)
Thank God they don't! Can you
imagine? Guys'd be climbing over
the walls of every backyard in the
country! They'd be parachuting in
from overseas! You think we have
an immigration problem now?

Pinehurst backs away from Ginger. He gropingly checks his shirt
and pants pockets.

EBOLA
(To Pinehurst)
Dude!

Pinehurst turns to Adolph.

EBOLA (cont'd)
Here!

Adolph tosses Pinehurst his cell phone. Pinehurst grabs it. He
flips it open and holds it up to his ear.

Cue sound: dial tone.

Pinehurst punches in a three-number code on the phone.

Cue sound: digital tones.

Cue sound: ringing.

KATZ
Oh can't you see, dearest?

AUTOMATED PHONE VOICE
Loony Bin--

PINEHURST
(Desperately)
Hello--

AUTOMATED PHONE VOICE
Thank you for holding.

KATZ
It's what we're MADE for!

AUTOMATED PHONE VOICE
Your call is important to us.

KATZ
It's our DESTINY!

OPERATOR
What is your emergency?

Pinehurst opens his mouth to speak. Nothing comes out.

OPERATOR (cont'd)
What is your emergency sir?

PINEHURST
(Hesitantly)
Yes, uh-- I'd--
(Pause)
I'd like to report a-- there's a--
there's a wild animal on the
loose.

OPERATOR
What is your location sir?

PINEHURST
(Flustered)
Uh, 3640, no, 4036--
(Remembering)
We're at the JUMBLER MANSION!

BLOCK, EBOLA & DITZ
BRUMDER!

PINEHURST
The HUMBLER MANSION!

BLOCK, EBOLA & DITZ
BRUMDER!

PINEHURST
The RUMBLER MANSION!

BLOCK, EBOLA & DITZ
BRUM-DER!

PINEHURST
Whatever! Just send someone!
Hurry!

OPERATOR
Try to stay calm, sir. Help is on
the way.

Cue sound: line disconnection and dial tone.

Cue sound: approaching ambulance siren.

PINEHURST
Why is it taking so long?

Pinehurst pockets Adolph's phone.

KATZ
(Entreating)
Oh, dearest, all I want is for
things to be like they were
before!

Ginger makes a sudden move toward Pinehurst, who grabs a nearby chair and holds it up between them like a lion tamer.

KATZ (cont'd)
(Disappointed)
Darling!

Ginger lunges toward Pinehurst, who shifts again, keeping the chair raised at her.

Loud knocks ring out from the upstage door.

VOICE
(Offstage)
Psycho Squad!

PINEHURST
We're in here!

The door starts to open slowly.

VOICE

What kind of threat do you have?

PINEHURST, EBOLA, BLOCK, & DITZ

Hell Cat!

A large net on the end of a pole is thrust into view.

KATZ

So, I'm supposed to just throw in
the towel, am I?

The net bearer takes an unsuccessful swipe at Ginger.

BLOCK

Yes, be a good kitty please and
surrender to the authorities.

Ginger, pacing to and fro, eludes another swipe of the net.

KATZ

I have to admit...

The net takes another futile swipe.

KATZ (cont'd)

It's not easy, living on the run
like this... Sometimes I think
about it... about giving in...

Pinehurst lowers the chair a bit.

KATZ (cont'd)

Maybe I should call it quits.

Pinehurst lowers the chair a touch further.

EBOLA

(To Pinehurst)

Careful dude.

KATZ

(Half-smiling)

After all, we had our good times.

(Pause)

Better to have loved and lost, as
they say.

Another swipe of the net and another miss.

Pinehurst sighs and lets the chair down.

Ginger springs at Pinehurst. He loses his grip on the chair.
She grabs him by the throat and sinks her teeth into him.
Pinehurst screams. The two of them hit the floor.

Susie bolts from the sidelines and pulls Ginger off of Pinehurst, who lies motionless on his back. Susie, joined by E. Orr and Adolph, rushes to the prone director.

Ginger regains her footing and backs inadvertently into the waiting net, which swooshes down on her and pulls her towards the upstage door.

DITZ
(Shouting)
Wait! Wait! Ginger!

The net briefly stops pulling Ginger toward the door.

KATZ
(Snarling to Susie.)
What is it?

DITZ
Sorry I sent you to the wrong B&B.

The net resumes its work and Ginger is pulled through the door, which closes behind her.

Cue sound: cat screeches, hisses and spits.

Pinehurst is sprawled on the floor on his back. E. Orr, Adolph, and Susie gather around him.

BLOCK
Boss! Boss! Can you hear me?

E. Orr puts his ear over Pinehurst's heart.

EBOLA
Don't bother with that, dude, he
hasn't got one.

E. Orr starts applying CPR.

BLOCK
(Shouting)
Come on, boss! Come on!

E. Orr continues to apply CPR.

BLOCK (cont'd)
Come back to us, boss!

E. Orr applies mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to Pinehurst.

EBOLA
You're a better man than I am, E.
Orr.

E. Orr listens to Pinehurst's chest, then renews CPR.

DITZ

E. Orr, I have an idea.

Susie dashes to the reading table, picks up the Ego Restoration Kit, and rejoins the others.

DITZ (cont'd)

We can use this!

E. Orr looks up at her.

BLOCK

Good thinking, Susie! Get the gear
and the cheer books and stand by!

Susie and Adolph help each other strap on their cheer-leading skirts and tops.

E. Orr continues with the CPR.

Susie pulls out two cheer books and hands one to Adolph.

BLOCK (cont'd)

Okay! Get ready to perform Cheer
14-B!

Susie and Adolph flip through the pages of their books.

DITZ

Here it is.

Adolph and Susie edge in for a closer look while E. Orr applies mouth-to-mouth to Pinehurst and listens at his chest. Abruptly E. Orr sits up and makes a wide, sweeping motion with his arms.

BLOCK

Clear!

Adolph and Susie step back. E. Orr points to them.

BLOCK (cont'd)

And, GO!

Adolph and Susie glance quickly at their books.

DITZ & EBOLA

(Swooningly)

Oh, CAMERON!

E. Orr puts his ear to Pinehurst's chest and listens.

BLOCK
 (To Susie and Adolph)
 Again!

DITZ & EBOLA
 Oh, CAMERON!

E. Orr, straddling Pinehurst, gives him a hard slap on the face. Adolph leans forward.

EBOLA
 That's it, E. Orr! Get him! Get him!

E. Orr swivels at Adolph, who pulls back.

EBOLA (cont'd)
 I mean Back to Life! Get him Back to Life!

E. Orr swivels back to Pinehurst.

BLOCK
 Boss! Boss! It's me! E. Orr! Your devoted servant!
 (To Adolph and Susie)
 Cheer 27a, Verse 3!

Adolph and Susie flip hurriedly through the pages. They find the cheer and read it silently.

E. Orr's efforts grow more vigorous. He pounds on Pinehurst's chest, then swings his arm at Adolph and Susie.

BLOCK (cont'd)
 And, GO!

Susie performs the cheer wholeheartedly. Adolph does so half-heartedly.

DITZ & EBOLA
 Cameron Pinehurst, we love you! /
 Tell us what we have to do! /
 Without you we're surely lost! /
 We're so glad that you're the boss!

BLOCK
 (To Pinehurst)
 You think I'm going to let you die on me boss? Huh? Well think again!

Suddenly E. Orr's blows on Pinehurst's chest become angry.

BLOCK (cont'd)
 And how did I know Starbucks would
 get the order wrong? I WROTE IT
 DOWN! I told them, just like you
 SAID! Blonde roast hazelnut
 latte!!!

DITZ
 (Alarmed)
 E. Orr! E. Orr!

E. Orr swivels toward Susie.

DITZ (cont'd)
 Ix-nay on the urder-may!

E. Orr turns back to Pinehurst.

BLOCK
 Oh God!

Pinehurst finally starts to stir.

BLOCK (cont'd)
 Oh my God! He's alive!

EBOLA
 (Nonplussed)
 God be thanked.

Pinehurst sits upright and looks around, scowling.

PINEHURST
 What's everyone standing around
 for? Do I have to be looking over
 your shoulders every second to get
 any work out of you?

DITZ
 (Happily)
 Welcome back, Mr. Pinehurst.

PINEHURST
 (To E. Orr)
 Help me up, Block.

E. Orr helps Pinehurst up.

BLOCK
 Sir, are you alright?

PINEHURST
 Of course I'm alright. What a
 stupid question.

BLOCK
Thank you sir, may I have another?

PINEHURST
What a stupid question.

BLOCK
(To Pinehurst)
Well.
(Pausing to catch his breath)
Thank goodness you're okay.

PINEHURST
(Irritated)
Of course. What's the point here
if I'm not?

E. Orr is having difficulty catching his breath. Adolph notices.

EBOLA
Dude? Are you okay?

E. Orr waves him off.

BLOCK
I'll be--
(Pause)
I'll be--
(Pause)
I'll be fine.

EBOLA
Are you sure?

E. Orr clutches his chest.

BLOCK
Oh dear.

E. Orr collapses to the floor.

Adolph limps over to E. Orr. Pinehurst watches as Adolph turns E. Orr on his back and tries to revive him.

PINEHURST
(Excitedly)
Oooh! Oooh! You know what this
reminds me of?
(MORE)

PINEHURST (CONT'D)

In my groundbreaking undersea thriller "The Abuse" I staged the most spectacular and emotionally intense drowning and resuscitation scene ever performed in the history of cinema!

Adolph continues to try and revive E. Orr.

PINEHURST (cont'd)

See, there's this scene where the ex-wife voluntarily drowns herself so that her ex-husband can survive a tight spot and then revive her in turn--

Adolph listens to E. Orr's chest for a moment, and then returns to giving him CPR.

PINEHURST (cont'd)

On account of they only have one wet suit and oxygen supply between them in the little mini-sub they were driving, which has been damaged. She trusts him enough to get her back to the Moon Pool and revive her there. Oh it's so moving!

E. Orr is unresponsive. Adolph listens to his chest again.

PINEHURST (cont'd)

Okay, so, now we're back at the Moon Pool. The underwater oil rig crew huddles around them as the husband gives the wife CPR.

EBOLA & PINEHURST

--"No Pulse"--

PINEHURST

--he says, and he goes back to the CPR.

Adolph goes back to the CPR.

PINEHURST (cont'd)

The suspense mounts. The wife's skin is turning blue. The clock is ticking. How long can she go without oxygen before she dies?

Adolph gives mouth-to-mouth to E. Orr.

PINEHURST (cont'd)

I mean sure, she's been a harpy through the whole film, but she has her good points. Finally, in a burst of love and passion and desperation, the husband slaps her face--

Adolph slaps E. Orr's face.

PINEHURST (cont'd)

--in a last valiant attempt to revive her and he says, "Gosh darn it you bee-otch, you never backed away from anything in your life, now--

EBOLA & PINEHURST

--"fight! Fight! Fight! Fight!"

PINEHURST

And now comes the supreme moment of drama, when her chest heaves and she coughs up water and then, lo and behold--

Adolph looks up at Pinehurst.

EBOLA

He's dead.

PINEHURST

(Long pause)

What?

EBOLA

E. Orr's dead.

PINEHURST

No.

EBOLA

Yes.

PINEHURST

That's not how it goes.

EBOLA

It is this time.

PINEHURST

Let's take it from the top again, from where he--

EBOLA

There's no second take on this one
dude!

FADE TO BLACK

LIGHTS UP

GRAVEYARD

Cue sound: whistling wind and the mournful tolling of a bell.

Susie, flanked by Adolph and Pinehurst, holds a Bible in one hand and her handbag in the other. The three of them stand in front of three crosses, their backs to the audience.

DITZ

E. Orr Block, now we lay him to
rest.

PINEHURST

As lackeys go, fair to middling, I
guess.

EBOLA

Aren't you leaving out something
you shouldn't leave out?

PINEHURST

I'm sure I don't know what you're
talking about.

EBOLA

He saved your damn life, you
should give him his due.

PINEHURST

He's paid to do that, that's
enough out of you.

FADE TO BLACK

LIGHTS UP

THEATER

Pinehurst paces uneasily upstage in the underground theater.
Susie and Adolph are at the reading table.

PINEHURST

I've lost my flunky and half my
cast. My life is cursed!

DITZ

Some things are just meant to be, Mr. Pinehurst. It's like my mom always says, "Susie, you're a Ditz. You've always been a Ditz, and you'll always be a Ditz."

EBOLA

(Doing a double-take)
That's a pretty ditzy thing to say, Susie.

DITZ

It is?

EBOLA

Yeah. I think you're going through some kind of regression.

(Pause)

Say something else.

DITZ

Something else.

EBOLA

It's Flowers For Algernon all over again.

DITZ

I like flowers! Who's Algernon?

EBOLA

Okay, here's what I think. Check it out.

(Pause)

I think BabyFace's bullet took out most of your ditzy brain cells, which left your non-ditzy brain cells temporarily in charge, and they've kinda been running the show for awhile. But your ditzy brain cells have always been the stronger of the two, and now they've regrouped and are staging a furious counter-attack.

DITZ

That reminds of something else my mom once said.

EBOLA

You've got to fight it, Susie.

Susie reaches into her hand bag.

DITZ
It was in a letter. I've got it
here somewhere.

EBOLA
You've got to fight the ditziness.

DITZ
Here it is!

Susie pulls a large sheaf of papers from her handbag and starts
flipping through them.

EBOLA
You can do it, Susie.

DITZ
I think it was near the end of the
letter.

She stops flipping the pages.

DITZ (cont'd)
Here it is.

EBOLA
You can do it!

DITZ
(Reading from the letter)
"Sincerely, Mom"

Susie drops the handbag and falls to the floor. Adolph limps
over to her, kneels down, and checks her pulse.

PINEHURST
Well?

EBOLA
(Shaking his head.)
She's gone. End-stage ditziness.

Adolph struggles to his feet.

PINEHURST
You know what this means, don't
you?

FADE TO BLACK

LIGHTS UP

GRAVEYARD

Cue sound: whistling wind and the mournful tolling of a bell.

Adolph and Pinehurst stand side-by-side in front of four crosses, their backs to the audience.

They look over their shoulders to face the audience.

EBOLA & PINEHURST
This time she's really dead.

FADE TO BLACK

EBOLA
No rhyme this time.

PINEHURST
You just--

EBOLA
Sorry.

PINEHURST
Moron.

EBOLA
Uh, thank you sir, may I have another?

PINEHURST
(Drippingly)
No.

LIGHTS UP

THEATER

Pinehurst and Adolph stand facing each other in front of the George Brumder painting.

EBOLA
So, boss, you might as well tell me.

Pinehurst, in a daze, has barely heard him.

PINEHURST
Tell you what?

EBOLA
The project! Tell me about the secret project!

PINEHURST
(Getting it)
Oh, that.
(MORE)

PINEHURST (CONT'D)
 (Shoulders slumping)
 The project is dead. Dead, kaput,
 finis!

EBOLA
 Dude, don't say that!

PINEHURST
 (Erupting)
 Look, I know a dead project when I
 see one, and I'm looking at one
 right now! It has passed on! This
 project is no more! It has ceased
 to be! It's expired and gone to
 meet its maker! It's a stiff!
 Bereft of life! It rests in peace!
 It has shuffled off its mortal
 coil, run down the curtain and
 joined the choir invisible! This
 is a dead project.
 (Pause)
 My life is in ruins. Ruins! I'll
 never work in Hollywood again.
 (Pause)
 I'm nothing.

Pinehurst staggers forward a step, a stricken look on his face.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 The fame, the wealth, the
 adulation -- it was all an
 illusion. THIS is my destiny!
 Utter and complete failure! To be
 exposed as the fraud that I am
 before the pitiless stare of
 eternity! Oh, how can I go on?

Pinehurst drops to his knees, then collapses, face down on the floor.

Adolph dutifully hobbles over to the Ego Restoration Kit on the table. He straps on the cheerleader bikini top and skirt, grabs the pompoms, glances through the cheer book, finds a page that he likes, and heads back to the fallen director. He shakes the pompoms and tries to jump in rhythm to the cheer.

EBOLA
 Cameron Pinehurst, he's the best /
 So much better than the rest / For
 him we will give our all / For him
 we will...

Adolph peters out, his enthusiasm lost. He drops the pompoms beside him.

He steps closer to Pinehurst and prods at him with one of his crutches.

EBOLA (cont'd)
C'mon boss. You've got to get up.

Pinehurst is unresponsive.

EBOLA (cont'd)
(Insistently)
Nobody can do this for you, dude!
You've got to fight! Right now!
You've got to BE A MAN!

Pinehurst opens his eyes and lifts his head in Adolph's direction.

EBOLA (cont'd)
I mean sure, you're an arrogant jerk and a colossal failure as a person and everyone knows it, but what's so bad about that?

Cue hopeful music (Randy Newman: "My Life is Good")

PINEHURST
(Hopefully)
I never thought of it that way.

EBOLA
Sure. In a minute or two the awful truth will fade from your mind and it'll be like it never happened.

Adolph offers Pinehurst his hand and Pinehurst takes it.

Pinehurst struggles to his feet.

PINEHURST
What was your name again?

EBOLA
Adolph. Adolph Ebola.

PINEHURST
(Smiling toughly.)
You poor bastard.

EBOLA
Tell me about it.

PINEHURST
Mr. Ebola -- Adolph -- you've touched my heart.

(MORE)

PINEHURST (CONT'D)

I've decided to reveal the details of my secret project to you.

(Pause)

It's a brilliant murder-mystery. It's called "Not Dead Yet", and the world has never seen anything like it. Imagine, if you will, a motley group of strangers, each of them morally tainted in some way. They're brought together to an isolated mansion by a sinister, unseen host. Suddenly, they're locked in. Trapped. And then, one by one, they start dying, under mysterious circumstances. Now, here's the real kicker: "Not Dead Yet" isn't a new play. In fact, it was written almost a hundred years ago. Over the years there have been several attempts to produce it. None of these attempts has ever succeeded. Every time someone tries to perform the play, terrible things happen. One way or another, the production is plagued by bad luck, misfortune, and untimely death! The play has never been performed. Some people even say it's cursed!

Pinehurst and Adolph look at each other for a long moment -- then burst out laughing together.

EBOLA

(In disbelief)

Cursed???

PINEHURST

(Gleefully)

Cursed! Do you believe it?

EBOLA

(Shaking his head)

Some people.

PINEHURST

Yeah.

EBOLA

They'll believe anything.

PINEHURST

How gullible can you get?

Their laughter trails off.

EBOLA
So, how does it end?

PINEHURST
Oh, it's ingenious. You know, I wish the others were here. Bernice would love it! Susie, E. Orr, Rip, they'd love it.

EBOLA
Too bad they're all dead.

They burst out laughing again. After a few moments they catch their breath.

PINEHURST
At the end of the play, there are just two people left. They're in this big house and it's full of dead bodies.

Cue Get Smart standoff music.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
In the final scene they're standing in a room like this, facing each other like we are. The identity of the murderer is still unknown. Of course they suspect each other. Finally, one of them pulls a gun--

Pinehurst pulls a gun from his jacket pocket and points it at Adolph.

EBOLA
(Jokingly)
Hey! Watch where you point that!

PINEHURST
Yeah, you've dodged enough bullets for one day.

Another big round of laughter that gradually tails off.

EBOLA
No sense pushing my luck any further.

They burst out laughing again. Pinehurst is still pointing the gun at Adolph.

EBOLA (cont'd)
 (Nervously)
 Hey, could you just--

Adolph pushes Pinehurst's hand so the gun points away from him.

Pinehurst draws it back so it's pointing at Adolph -- who pushes it away again.

PINEHURST
 (Chidingly)
 Oh c'mon!

Pinehurst draws the gun back again.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 Do you really think--

Again Adolph pushes it away. Again Pinehurst draws it back.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 Don't be paranoid! It's just a
 prop--

He pulls the trigger. The gun fires. Adolph grabs his chest.

EBOLA
 (Gasping)
 Toots!

End Get Smart music.

Adolph falls to the floor dead.

Pinehurst, stunned, looks at Adolph's body.

PINEHURST
 (To Ebola, after a long
 pause.)
 Oh please. Don't do this to me.

Pinehurst starts to walk slowly around Adolph's motionless body.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 Is there no end to my bad luck?

Pinehurst stops his pacing and looks up, as if to address The Fates.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 I am Cameron James Pinehurst the
 Third!
 (MORE)

PINEHURST (cont'd) (CONT'D)
 My motion pictures -- if you don't
 count the last three -- have
 grossed billions of dollars world-
 wide. Studio executives tremble at
 the mere mention of my name. The
 fortunes of entire industries rise
 and fall because of me. And now I
 can't even make it to the TABLE
 READING of a measly little play?
 This cannot be! This IS NOT
 happening!

Pinehurst looks down at Adolph's body and then straight up at
 the audience.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 You're all still under Non-
 Disclosure by the way!

Pinehurst looks down at Adolph.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 At least I won't have to tell him
 he was gonna play the Nazi.

Pinehurst looks upstage at the painting of George Brumder. He
 marches up to it.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 (To the painting)
 And you! George Stumbler! Give me
 one good reason why I shouldn't
 hold you personally responsible
 for this mess! You Germans. You
 can't be trusted. You start two
 World Wars and now my career's
 going down the tubes and you don't
 lift a finger to stop it. It's an
 outrage! I don't care what anyone
 says about "respecting the
 spirits". As far as I'm concerned
 you're just another trouble-making
 Hun!

Pinehurst turns his back on the painting, folds his arms, and
 snorts.

PINEHURST (cont'd)
 Well, you're dead anyway, so what
 does it matter? What difference at
 this point does it make?

A pair of arms reach out of the painting and grab Pinehurst by the neck, holding the terrified director in place and shaking him violently.

BRUMDER
 (Thunderously)
 The name is BRUMDER, dummkopf!
 BRUMDER! B-R-U-M-D-E-R! And I have
 had just about as much of you as I
 can stand!

Pinehurst, held in place by the painting's powerful grip, gasps as he's being throttled.

FADE TO BLACK

LIGHTS UP

Ebola and Pinehurst are on the floor.

TOOTS enters from stage right. She sees Pinehurst on the floor and draws back in shock - then she sees Ebola, and rushes over to him. She kneels and strokes his hair.

TOOTS
 Adolph! Adolph!

Bernice enters stage left, lightly covered with dirt. She spies Toots and Adolph.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
 Oh my goodness!

Bernice joins Toots by Adolph's side.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME (cont'd)
 Is he dead?

TOOTS
 No, no - he's not dead. He's had a narcoleptic attack. He just needs a little time to wake up. He's actually fully conscious. He can hear everything we're saying.

(To Adolph)
 I got your voice mail sweetheart.
 I came as fast as I could.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
 Are you... Are you Toots?

TOOTS
 My name is Brittany, but he always calls me Toots. I hate that.

(MORE)

TOOTS (CONT'D)
And your name is...

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
Bernice Is-Not-My... Bernice. My
name is Bernice. Pleased to meet
you.

Bernice notices Pinehurst on the floor and lets out a gasp.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME (cont'd)
Goodness gracious, Cameron!

Bernice rushes over to him and kneels. She takes his wrist and
checks for a pulse.

TOOTS
Poor Adolph.

Bernice lays Cameron's arm down and rises somberly.

TOOTS (cont'd)
(To Bernice)
Is he...

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
(Nodding)
I'm afraid so.

Bernice joins Toots beside Adolph. They look down at him
together.

TOOTS
Imagine being trapped like this.
Fully conscious yet unable to
move.

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
I don't have to.
(Beat)
A few minutes ago I woke up and
found myself inside a coffin.

TOOTS
Oh how horrible!

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
Truly! And instantly I realized
that it could mean only one thing
-- my Bradycardia had flared up
again!

TOOTS
 (Puzzled)
 Your what?

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
 My Bradycardia. It's a heart
 condition. Your heart rate slows
 down so much that you pass out and
 bystanders who don't know any
 better think you're dead.
 Apparently they gave me a
 makeshift funeral.

Adolph stirs groggily and comes to. He sits up and looks
 around.

TOOTS
 (Brightly)
 Welcome back, sweetie!

EBOLA
 Would you please stop calling me
 that? You know I don't like it
 Toots.

TOOTS
 Sorry sweetie.

EBOLA
 Toots.

TOOTS
 Sweetie.

Susie Ditz enters, lightly covered with dirt, carrying Rip
 Butler.

DITZ
 Hi everyone! Look who I found!

EBOLA
 Now wait a minute!
 (Looking in exasperation up
 at the sky.)
 Really? Really? So this is what
 it's come to?

DITZ
 I think my non-ditzy brain cells
 must have had a little bit of
 fight in 'em after all.

EBOLA
 Of course they did!

Susie puts Rip down next to her.

EBOLA (cont'd)
 (Pointing at Rip)
 What's HIS excuse?

DITZ
 (Turning to Rip)
 What's your excuse?

Susie puts an ear beside Rip's mouth for a few moments.

DITZ (cont'd)
 He says he nodded off at the table
 read and next thing he knew people
 were throwing shovelfuls of dirt
 on him.

Susie stops and puts an ear next to Rip again.

DITZ (cont'd)
 (To the group)
 He expects to be compensated.

EBOLA
 (Cupping his hand to his ear)
 Wait! Wait! Do you hear that?

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
 Hear what, darling?

EBOLA
 Shhh! Listen!

Everyone falls silent.

Cue sound: rattling, clanging metallic sounds.

DITZ
 What's that?

IS-NOT-MY-NAME
 Oh that's just the plot machinery,
 dear. I'm afraid it's falling
 apart.

EBOLA
 I can hardly guess what's coming
 next...

E. Orr stumbles in from stage right. He's lightly covered with dirt.

Adolph puts his hands on his face, Macaulay Culkin/Home Alone style.

EBOLA (cont'd)

(In a mechanical, mock-horrified voice)

Oh-my-God, Oh-my-God. It-is-the-End-Times again. You're-supposed-to-be-dead.

BLOCK

(Sincerely)

I thought so too, Adolph. But then the most remarkable thing happened. As you were giving me CPR, I felt myself leaving my body and floating overhead. I watched as you futilely tried to revive me. And then the darkness began to close in. And then I found myself at the end of a long tunnel, with a brilliant light at the other end, and I was moving toward that brilliant light, and I was thinking that my time had come. I was crossing over to the other side. Soon I would be reunited with all the spirits of all the maltreated production assistants whoever toiled in the entertainment industry - my abused brethren. But then I became aware of something - something behind me in the distance was beckoning. And I turned to look. And by the tunnel's dim light I could just barely make out the desperate figure of Mr. Pinehurst, and I saw that an attacker had set upon him. And in that moment I realized that life was calling me back one last time before I could bid it farewell. And so I drew near to the scene of the struggle...

DITZ

Oh how sweet, E. Orr. You wanted to help Cameron.

BLOCK

No, I wanted to cheer on the attacker. "Kick his ass! Give him one for me!"

DITZ

So who was attacking him?

BLOCK

I couldn't tell. Before I could
get close enough to see,
everything went black. And the
next thing I knew I was clawing my
way up through the dirt.

DITZ

I guess we'll never know then.

The group looks together at the body of Cameron James Pinehurst
the Third, sprawled on the floor beneath the painting of George
Brumder. Their gaze drifts up to the painting.

A pair of arms pop out of the painting and give a shrug.

BRUMDER

Don't look at me!

LIGHTS OUT

THE END