

PACK OF LIES

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## CHARACTERS:

SUSAN, early twenties  
DOUG, early twenties  
NURSE, thirties  
MR. MANN, late fifties

## PLACE:

Most of the play takes place in the living/sleeping area of a rundown urban cottage, maybe a converted garage. Various pieces of furniture, much of it scrounged, including: sofa, easy chair, table and chairs, small television and DVD player, telephone cable spool table, vegetable crates full of books. A framed art exhibition poster or two. A modicum of chaos. Someone with very little money has clearly tried to make a home here. Exits to kitchen, bathroom and outside.

One scene takes place in the waiting area a hospital emergency room. Minimal set: three chairs should do it.

## TIME:

December.

## SYNOPSIS OF SCENES:

1. Doug and Susan's place. Early evening.
2. The same, 3:00 AM.
3. The same, dawn.
4. A hospital waiting room. A bit later.
5. Doug and Susan's. Later that morning.
6. The same, early evening.
7. The same, a short while later.
8. The same, a short while later.
9. The same, a short while later.

If needed, an intermission can be taken between scenes 5 and 6.

## SCENE 1

Winter. Dim light. DOUG and SUSAN asleep in the sofa bed which is piled with blankets and assorted clothing. Alarm. Their bodies jerk.

SUSAN's arm emerges and tries to hit the snooze button, but the alarm clock is apparently not where it should be. DOUG tries to move closer to her. SUSAN moves towards the edge of the bed. HE tries again, SHE moves again. HE gives up and rolls over, stealing all the blankets.

SUSAN, who is fully dressed in sweats, flannel shirt and wool socks, tries to keep warm under the few items of clothing DOUG hasn't managed to gather tightly around him. SHE half wakes, tries to take some of the blankets back, but HE groans and holds onto them.

SHE sits up, clearly freezing and hung over, and after some effort, gets to her feet. SHE can't find the alarm clock. SHE stumbles around the room, finally manages to locate the clock under a blanket on the easy chair. SHE hits the snooze button, but the alarm continues. SHE whacks it on the floor. Silence. SHE stumbles to the bed.

Doug. Doug, honey. Doug, honey come on.

SUSAN

Go away.

DOUG

Get up.

SUSAN

What time is it?

DOUG

Six o'clock.

SUSAN

(SHE puts a hand on HIM under the covers.)

DOUG

JESUS! Keep your hands off me.

SUSAN

I'm getting the cold water.

DOUG

Five minutes.

SUSAN

We don't have five minutes.

DOUG

I'm not getting up at six o'clock. It's pitch black out there.

SUSAN

Honey, that's just what happens when you sleep through the whole day.

(Short pause.)

DOUG

Oh, *that* six o'clock. Fucking winter. (Short pause.) Come back to bed.

SUSAN

Oh, all right.

(SUSAN lies back down as though giving in.)

You've got all the pillows.

DOUG

Oh. Sorry. Here.

(HE leans forward. SHE gets a foot in the small of HIS back and shoves him out of bed onto the floor.)

SUSAN

Now, GET UP!

(SHE rolls herself in the covers. DOUG stands up. HE is wearing only a frayed pair of gym shorts. HE picks up a corner of one of the blankets and braces his feet.)

Don't you dare.

(HE gets back on the bed and sidles up to the mound of blankets.)

SUSAN

No. You're up now.

DOUG

I am not.

SUSAN

Go on. You're the one who needs to get dressed. I'm ready.

DOUG

You're going to go like that?

What? SUSAN

You look like a bag lady. DOUG

(Trying to get under the covers again)

Let me in. I'm freezing.

You are not. You're a reptile. SUSAN

(HE stands, turns on the lights, and picks up various pieces of clothing from the pile, starts to get dressed.)

If I was a reptile, I wouldn't get out of bed at all. I'd hibernate all winter. DOUG

You *don't*. SUSAN

I mean, at *all*. DOUG

I'm carrying the demon seed. SUSAN

(SHE sits up.)

Oh no, I forgot about the test results.

Let's call now. DOUG

It's after five. They're closed. SUSAN

(SHE lies back down.)

Dang.

(Slight pause.)

Suz? ...Suuuuz? DOUG

What? SUSAN

I think we need to talk about our relaaaationshiip. DOUG

Fuck off. SUSAN

DOUG  
Agreed. I'll fuck off. You go.

SUSAN  
Not an option. We're going together.

DOUG  
Well, I'm not going like this.

SUSAN  
Like what?

DOUG  
I need something.

(SHE pokes her head out and considers him.)

SUSAN  
Douglas, you are not going stoned!

DOUG  
I won't get *wasted*.

SUSAN  
Christ.

DOUG  
Just a little to take the edge off. You could have some too.

SUSAN  
Never again. Last night was the last time.

DOUG  
Just a couple of hits. I'm not myself.

SUSAN  
We'll stop by the Mainline, get some coffee.

DOUG  
Coffee won't cut it.

SUSAN  
You promised.

(HE gets in bed. SHE gets up and starts to get a few things together; her bag, her coat.)

DOUG  
Where are you going?

SUSAN  
What do you care?

DOUG  
All right. Goody. I get all the covers. ...I thought you said going by yourself wasn't an option.

SUSAN

Where are my keys?

(SHE begins rummaging. At first, her search is not methodical and SHE tries the same places several times over. HE stays in bed watching her.)

DOUG

I just don't see what some "counselor" is going to -- She's just going to tell us that we've got to stop using drugs.

SUSAN

You don't know that.

DOUG

Oh come on. How could she not? She's in the sobriety industry. Thousands of newly-converted ascetics--

SUSAN

Have you seen them?

DOUG

Ascetics?

SUSAN

Shit, where did I put them?

DOUG

Why is it that every time you talk to a twelve-stepper, they tell you about how awful their life used to be?

SUSAN

(Stumbling)

Goddamn it. Would you pick up your shoes? This place is frigging Baghdad.

DOUG

They abused their kids, beat their wives, lost their jobs. These are people we want to emulate?

SUSAN

Are you sure you haven't seen them?

DOUG

I'm sure. Look, if someone has managed to screw up his own life that badly, does that mean you should give him control of yours?

SUSAN

What happened to the extra key? Did we ever get that one back from Julie?

DOUG

You never hear about someone who did a little dope once, but then gave it up because, after thinking it over, he decided he'd rather not have the stuff around any more -- you never hear about this kind of person leading a self-help crusade. No. The leaders are the ones who have to prove to themselves that because they couldn't handle drugs, nobody can handle drugs. Instead of tripping on acid, now they're tripping on power. If that's sobriety, I'll just say no, thank you. (Slight pause.) You've already looked there twice.

SUSAN

Give me your keys.

DOUG

No.

SUSAN

Are you going out?

DOUG

I might.

SUSAN

Then leave the door unlocked if you do.

DOUG

No. We'll get ripped off.

SUSAN

Leave the key under the pot by the door.

DOUG

No. You used them to get in right? So, they're here somewhere. Be methodical. You'll find them.

(SHE glares at him for a moment, then resumes her search.)

I'm a hedonist.



SUSAN

I open the door. I turn on the lights. You aren't home. My coat's on; my keys are in my hand.

DOUG

I mean, I *believe* in hedonism -- as a creed. I believe that God created the land and the sea. And they were beautiful.

SUSAN

I shut the door. What do I do with the keys? ...My coat pocket?

(SHE starts to go through her pockets.)

DOUG

And then God created all the creatures on the earth and he said, *Mi casa es su casa*, go, make yourselves comfortable.

SUSAN

But you've already gone through your pockets five times, Susan, and they aren't there so stop looking there.

DOUG

But then, people being assholes, everybody started making themselves miserable. See, people forget: we weren't put here to be masochists; we were put here to *avoid* pain.

SUSAN

I must have put them down somewhere. So where did I go first? I'm tired, hungry and freezing. So I go into the bathroom to start the water for a bath.

(SHE exits to the bathroom.)

DOUG

The world is painful, so in order to get way from that pain, we ingest things that give us pleasure. Poke an amoeba and it will run away. Offer it something it likes and it will stay around and partake and even be your friend, in its little amoeba way...

(SHE re-enters.)

SUSAN

And I didn't put them down there.

DOUG

It's that way throughout the food chain.

SUSAN

Okay, the water's running. And I go into the kitchen to have a pop-tart.

(SHE exits to the kitchen. Sounds of her rattling around off.)

DOUG

Everything we take into our bodies is a drug -- food, water, air. When I'm nervous, I take a deep breath. When I feel hungry, I eat.

(SHE re-enters.)

SUSAN

And I didn't put them there either.

DOUG

When I want my food to taste better, I put salt on it, or maybe I go out for Chinese and let them lay on the MSG.

SUSAN

Okay, I'm eating my pop tart and watching the tub fill. The keys are in my hand? That doesn't make sense..

DOUG

When I'm tired, I have some coffee. When I need calming down, I take a drink.

SUSAN

The tub's full.

DOUG

When I want to appreciate something sensual, music, food, sex, I smoke some dope.

SUSAN

I put the rest of the pop tart down on the toilet and take off my *clothes* --

DOUG

When I'm feeling lost, I drop some acid.

SUSAN

-- which I throw on the floor --

DOUG

And sometimes, when I've been taking too much shit and I need remind myself that I'm my own person, I'll do something more exotic.

SUSAN

-- and then when I got out of the bath, I threw the clothes, which must have had my keys in them, on the *bed*.

DOUG

Maybe even dangerous.

SUSAN

And I was wearing ... What was I wearing?

(SHE begins tearing through the clothing on the bed.)

DOUG

When they wire up laboratory mice so they can stimulate their own pleasure centers, you know what the mice do? Do they hold back? Do they form support groups? No. They go right ahead and zotz themselves into a pleasure coma. It's an animal instinct.

SUSAN

RAAGH!

(Pause.)

DOUG

Though I suppose I could just as well tell all that to your therapist and see what she says.

(SUSAN sits down in the middle of the floor, begins to weep.)

Hey, hey, hey. Honey.

(HE goes to put his arms around her. SHE shrugs him off.)

SUSAN

Don't.

DOUG

Come on. It's not that bad. We'll reschedule. I'll go. Just not today. I love you.

(He tries again. SHE shrugs him off. HE tries again.)

SUSAN

(Frustrated, collapsing, lets him)

Ohhhhh.

DOUG

Poor babe. ... Want to get high?

SUSAN

NO!

DOUG

Hey, okay. Okay. ... Mind if I do?

SUSAN

Yes.

DOUG

Oh. ... Okay.

SUSAN

Oh, Christ, never mind. Go ahead.

DOUG

Really?

(HE gets up and pulls a small pipe and a bag of marijuana from a drawer, then comes and sits back down next to her.)

SUSAN

And give me some too.

DOUG

I don't want to pressure you --

SUSAN

Just change the channel, all right. Let's just change the damn channel.

DOUG

All right.

(THEY begin to pass the pipe back and forth.)

Another example: given the choice between semi-ripe berries and overripe berries, birds eat the rotten ones. You know why?

SUSAN

Another example of what?

DOUG

How all animals seek pleasure through substances. So, you know why they eat rotten berries?

SUSAN

No.

DOUG

That's how they get drunk. There's this village -- in Mexico I think -- and at the end of berry season, there's this one kind of bird. All their lives, they've been going around just doing what birds do, hop around, try to stay warm, attract a mate. And then one day they're out there eating the berries. And the berries mostly taste just like usual. But then there's this one bush where the berries have gotten a little more sun. And pretty soon, there's a lot of birds on *that* bush. Something in the genetic program of these birds leads them to prefer the taste of the half-rotten berries. They eat a few and then all of a sudden they realize, hey, they're even hungrier than they thought. Pretty soon they start to sway on the branches. One or two of them make a small hop to another branch, but the other branch isn't exactly where they thought. They tumble to the ground, pick themselves up,

DOUG (continued)

shake their heads. What is this new feeling? Then all of a sudden they look at themselves and they say: *madre de dios*, we've got wings! So the birds go out for a little cruise, just casual-like, and it feels great.

Pretty soon, they're doing aerobatics. They're tearing down the street chirping "*Guantanamera*" and dive bombing the tourists. And all the while, the seagulls hover overhead, just like in the Alfred Hitchcock movie: cold, pitiless. And then there's this magic moment: Long shot down the street. It looks mostly the same but something's different, something's new. A few moving specks in the center of the frame. *Que es eso?* Zoom in. It's another bird squadron rushing towards them on a collision course! In their high spirits, they make a collective commitment, all at once, nothing spoken, not a tweet, not a twitter: they will play a game of chicken -- they don't call it that of course. *Ole. Venceremos.* The other flock is coming on fast. Just like in *Rebel Without a Cause*. Their blood is pumping, their wings are straining. They're almost to the point of impact; will they turn aside? No we will not turn aside; we are not cowards, we are *birds*, we don't got to show you any stinking badges.

SUSAN

This is a movie?

DOUG

Then wham, right into the picture window.

(Pause.)

See, it's their own reflection. They fly right into--

SUSAN

You are such a liar.

DOUG

...Want more?

SUSAN

I'm done.

DOUG

Is it my imagination or is this pipe really hard to draw on?

(SUSAN shrugs.)

Must be something clogging it up. Here, better scrape it out.

(HE reaches in his pocket and takes out a set of keys, starts to scrape the bowl of the pipe. SUSAN stares in disbelief for a moment as he sings to the tune of "If I Were a Rich Man")

If I was a reptile. Ya ha deedle deedle, bubba bubba deedle deedle dum..

SUSAN

YOU SON OF A BITCH! MY KEYS!

DOUG

Oh. So they are.

(SHE jumps on him and THEY wrestle during the following. SHE is trying to hit him. Mostly he prevents her and gets the best of her by restraining and tickling her. Gradually, THEIR wrestling match becomes increasingly sexual.)

SUSAN  
You asshole. You junkie. You drug addict --

DOUG  
My angel. My queen --

SUSAN  
You manipulative, phony, lying --

DOUG  
Sugar. Honey. Lambie-pie --

SUSAN  
-- cheating, repulsive reptile. You snake.

DOUG  
Ma cherie. Ma petite pois. Ma grand fromage.

SUSAN  
(Breaking off a kiss)

Fromage? I'm a cheese.

DOUG  
A big cheese.

(HE pins HER.)

SUSAN  
You know, I could kill you.

DOUG  
Just don't ever leave me, okay?

(BLACKOUT.)

## SCENE 2

Three o'clock the next morning. DOUG, sitting up in bed, is watching the closing minute of 2001. SUSAN is wrapped around him, asleep. THEY are both dressed in several layers of clothing. Empty beer cans, half-eaten containers of corn chips, salsa, Oreos, etc. strewn about. He nods a couple of times, on the verge of sleep. The film ends. Pause. DOUG gets out of bed to shut it off. Stands. Shivers. Gets out a small container of pills. Sits on the bed, opens another beer, downs one of the pills with a long swallow. Puts the beer down and starts doing rapid push-ups.

SUSAN

What are you doing?

DOUG

Good morning.

SUSAN

Turn out the light and come back to bed.

DOUG

(Continuing the push-ups)

Nope, nope. Got to feed the fish!

SUSAN

I fed them.

DOUG

(Exiting to kitchen)

Oh, but it's been a while, they want a snack.

(From off)

Antonioni-*oni-oni-oni*. Fellini. *Mangia*, babies.

SUSAN

You love those fish more than me.

DOUG

(Re-entering)

Now that's not true. I love you all equally.

SUSAN

What time is it?

DOUG

Three-ten. Let's see --

In the morning? SUSAN

Okay, first thing: we need money. Did you check the mail yesterday? DOUG

Mmmph. SUSAN

Bet you didn't. Bet there's a Christmas gift. DOUG

Nggh. SUSAN

(DOUG exits for a moment, returns.)

(Going through the mail) DOUG

Credit card, credit card, credit card, credit card. You want to give me a credit card? Are you high?

Shut up. SUSAN

Letter from Stella. DOUG

Burn it. SUSAN

Could be a check. DOUG

I don't care. SUSAN

She's rich. DOUG

Burn it. SUSAN

What do you have against her? DOUG

You just like her because she flirts with you. SUSAN

What if there's cash in here? DOUG

(Sitting up) SUSAN

I don't care. I don't want it. Stop trying to make me like her. All right? Burn it.



DOUG  
(Holding a lighter to the envelope)

All right.

(SHE lies back down. DOUG holds the burning envelope up to the light for a moment to make sure before he puts it in an ash tray. HE returns to the stack of letters.)

Credit card, credit card -- uh oh, this one looks serious. (Opens it, reads.) Oh, this is bad. This is really bad. Suz? Suz, wake up, I'm serious, this is bad.

SUSAN  
WHAT?

(DOUG hands it over. SHE reads)

Is this really the final notice, or do we get another final notice?

DOUG  
This is final.

SUSAN  
How do you know?

DOUG  
Take my word for it.

SUSAN  
December 24. They're going to kick us out on Christmas Eve?

DOUG  
Busiest eviction day of the year.

SUSAN  
What's today?

DOUG  
The 16th.

SUSAN  
So we've got a week to get \$2000?

DOUG  
Looks like it

(Slight pause.)

SUSAN  
I guess it's time to review our budget.

DOUG  
Mmmn.

SUSAN  
How did we get to owe \$2000? We never buy anything. We haven't even

turned on the heat this month.

DOUG

Well, four months rent.

SUSAN

And why haven't we been paying rent?

DOUG

It was rent or tuition.

SUSAN

And you're not working because...?

DOUG

Any job I could get would suck and you won't let me deal. Look, why don't we just bite the bullet and ask for a loan?

SUSAN

Fine, except my dad's just about to declare bankruptcy.

DOUG

I'm talking about my folks.

SUSAN

Douglas, no.

DOUG

They'll probably even *give* us the money.

SUSAN

I hate the way you are with them.

DOUG

All we have to do is tell them they're going to be grandparents.

SUSAN

We don't know that yet.

DOUG

Oh, come on. You did the home pee-on-a-stick thing. What are the chances of a false positive on those? Less than 1%?

SUSAN

Why the hell are you still majoring in chemistry? You're not a scientist.

DOUG

They pay the tuition. They call the shots.

SUSAN

But they don't pay the tuition any more.

DOUG

My grades aren't high enough. That's the deal.

SUSAN

I hate it when you make nice to them.

DOUG

Just once more.

SUSAN

No. Do you think we could just pay part of it? To show good faith?

DOUG

Maybe. When will you get your first big paycheck?

SUSAN

Friday, but it's not going to be very big.

DOUG

But with tips --

SUSAN

I didn't get any tips.

DOUG

Why?

SUSAN

I got fired.

DOUG

...Already?

SUSAN

What can I say?

DOUG

But this was -- why didn't you say anything?

SUSAN

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

DOUG

Maybe waitressing isn't your gig.

SUSAN

No. I like waitressing, and I'm good at it.

DOUG

But this the fifth place you've been --

SUSAN

It just wasn't the right kind of place.

DOUG

It's no shame if you aren't suited for --

SUSAN

I can't help it if people who go to restaurants are assholes. When someone disrespects me, I'm not going to smile and kiss his ass.

DOUG

Suz --

SUSAN

Who the hell wants a servile waitress? This is a trusted position, like an air traffic controller. This is the person who brings you your *food*. This is the person who handles your *money*. Do you want this person to make nice or to be effective?

DOUG

I want to have a nice time.

SUSAN

Well if your idea of a nice time is to be rude to the waitress just to impress your trophy wife with what a big man you are, you deserve whatever you get. If I can't be honest with people, I don't want the job.

DOUG

So the guy with the trophy wife -

SUSAN

I told him to stop being rude and eat his peas.

DOUG

His peas.

SUSAN

I hate it when they don't finish their food.

(Slight pause.)

DOUG

Well, I don't know how you're ever going to support me through film school.

SUSAN

I am not supporting you through --

DOUG  
Let alone financing my first feature.

SUSAN  
Let alone paying for our child's college education.

DOUG  
How about we have this fight later?

SUSAN  
What are we going to do?

DOUG  
I don't know.

SUSAN  
What about your big stash? Why don't you sell some of it?

DOUG  
I thought you didn't want me to deal any more ever.

SUSAN  
I don't.

DOUG  
So ...

SUSAN  
Just this once.

DOUG  
Oh, the queen of absolutes makes an exception.

SUSAN  
Okay, you're right. It's a bad idea.

DOUG  
No, I think it's a good idea.

SUSAN  
Well. So.

DOUG  
But I don't have anything to sell.

SUSAN  
I thought you had this huge --

DOUG  
All gone.

SUSAN  
What happened to it?

DOUG  
I sold it.

SUSAN

But you said ... Jesus, you are a wonder. Okay, so where's the money then?

DOUG

We spent it.

SUSAN

When?

DOUG

October.

SUSAN

The money you said was from your grandmother?

DOUG

Yeah.

SUSAN

Doug! I wrote her a thank you note.

DOUG

(With barely restrained glee)

I know. She's probably still trying to balance her checkbook.

(A knock at the door. THEY look at each other. DOUG shrugs and goes to answer it.)

VOICE

Package for you.

DOUG

(Off)

Oh, thanks.

VOICE

Sign here.

DOUG

Okay ... You guys deliver at 3:00 AM?

VOICE

Well, I saw your lights.

DOUG

Oh.

(DOUG comes back.)

Fed ex.

SUSAN

He saw our lights?

DOUG

Yeah.

Huh. SUSAN

Yeah ... It's from Slink. DOUG

"Slink?" SUSAN

Drug connection. DOUG

Oh. What's in it? SUSAN

Oh, drugs, probably. I guess I'll just throw it out. DOUG

Oh, come on. Open it. SUSAN

If you say so. DOUG

(He opens the package and dumps out several baggies; they contain different amounts of different brightly-colored powders.)

What are those? SUSAN

I don't know. DOUG

(HE gets up, searches for a bit and retrieves a second, opened, package, this one UPS, dumps out the contents.)

What's -- SUSAN

DOUG

Here, wait a sec, there's a letter from him..

(HE retrieves the envelope, extracts a typed letter and scans it.)

It's a new designer drug. It's not illegal yet. He sent half the ingredients in one package, half in the other, and this letter ... has instructions for how to put it all together.

SUSAN

A kit? He sent you a do it yourself designer drug kit?

DOUG

Kind of junior scientist, huh?

SUSAN

But if it's not illegal, why not just send you the drug?

DOUG

Maybe he's afraid they'll outlaw it without him knowing.

SUSAN

What is it?

DOUG

He's calling it "turnpike." Let's see. (Reads) "...Sharpens the mind, picks up the metabolism and produces a mild state of euphoria. It allows you to just relax and really be your relentlessly achieving self. And remember, it's not yet illegal. New Turnpike --"

SUSAN

Enough. Can you sell it?

DOUG

Well, maybe some of it...

SUSAN

How much could you get?

DOUG

Let's see. (Looking at the letter.) "Suggested dosage ..." blah, blah, "Suggested retail price, \$10 per hit." And there's enough here for ... at least a thousand hits.

SUSAN

\$10,000?

DOUG

But we'd have to sell it all. It's too bad finals are over.

SUSAN

And he just *sent* this to you?

DOUG

Yep.

SUSAN

And you'll pay him later?



Oh, no. DOUG

He sent it for free? SUSAN

Oh, no. I already paid him for it. DOUG

How much? SUSAN

Well, \$2,000. DOUG

Back in ... SUSAN

October, right. DOUG

(Slight pause.)

Have you ever told me the truth about anything? SUSAN

You can't just go around telling the truth all the time. The truth bums people out. What if I stopped telling you you're gorgeous all the time? DOUG

(Pause.)

I'll be interested to see how you talk your way out of this one. SUSAN

Oh, you know what I *mean*. DOUG

I don't think you *can*, actually. SUSAN

Well, you *are* gorgeous. Just not all the *time*. I mean, just not to *me* all the time. I mean, it's morning and I wake up and you're still asleep: sometimes you're gorgeous and sometimes your face is all squashed up like ... like someone's been sitting on it— DOUG

Ew... SUSAN

I just don't think some things are worth telling the truth about. I love you. That's not a lie, but it's probably based on some things I'd rather not look at too closely. I say let sleeping pit bulls lie. DOUG

So, now I'm a pit bull. SUSAN

DOUG

Not you.

SUSAN

And you lie to me because you're scared of me. And then, in order to justify lying to me, you hold our relationship hostage. Nice tactics. I can't wait to see how you do as a father.

DOUG

Do you want to get all sane and rational and convenient? I don't. I want things just the way they are. We have big fights. We have great sex. And when I'm broken and hurt, you know how to make it better, just like mom. Maybe that creeps you out, but then I say, just don't look at it.

SUSAN

That's really screwed up.

DOUG

Honey, I'm screwed up and so are you. If this is sick, I don't want to be well. I want to be co-dependent with you. And I want us to have a nice little dysfunctional family. That's love.

SUSAN

You have to be crazy in order to love me.

DOUG

Maybe.

SUSAN

And I have to be crazy in order to love you.

DOUG

Definitely.

SUSAN

You're not going to get away with this, Doug. There's a price to pay here.

DOUG

Name it.

SUSAN

I'll be in touch. Meanwhile I'd like to keep my home, please.

(SHE picks up one of the baggies and tosses it to HIM.)

Let's mix it up.

(BLACKOUT.)

## SCENE 3

Dawn. Downstage, a small work area has been set up on a card table. The baggies are lined up neatly inside a box from a junior chemistry set. There is a rack with various test tubes and beakers filled with liquids of various colors and labelled with masking tape. Everything is either makeshift or from the chem set except an electronic scale. The heat's back on so DOUG and SUSAN aren't bundled up any more. SUSAN is reading the directions.

DOUG

So what does he say next?

SUSAN

This is after the "vessel with the pestle" part?

DOUG

No, right before -- let me see.

(HE takes the directions from her.)

SUSAN

Maybe we should take a break and start over.

DOUG

We're almost there.

SUSAN

We're lost. Let's just go to bed.

DOUG

We're not lost.

SUSAN

Why can't he just write simple, clear directions? Why does everything have to be in this gibberish?

DOUG

It's code.

(SHE grabs the directions.)

SUSAN

"When flagon C is fiery red, add Franklin M from baggie zed." What does that mean?

DOUG

It means, when the stuff in beaker C changes color, add 100 milligrams of stuff from baggie Z. Franklin is 100. Washington is one. Lincoln is five. Get it?

SUSAN  
Is that what we did?

DOUG  
I don't know. I'm checking. You handed me Z for Zhivago, right?

SUSAN  
YES, dammit.

DOUG  
Do you want to do it yourself? Cause I'd be happy to --

SUSAN  
This is worse than driving with you.

DOUG  
Well, if you don't like the way I drive, why don't you do it?

SUSAN  
You won't let me.

DOUG  
If you really wanted to drive, you'd go faster.

SUSAN  
I go under the speed limit. That's why it's called a *limit*.

DOUG  
Why are we fighting about this?

SUSAN  
You're a maniac. No wonder you never got a license. And then you tell me to navigate, and you don't listen to my directions.

DOUG  
Focus. We have to focus. (Back to the recipe) "... baggie zed."

SUSAN  
We're lost.

DOUG  
We're not lost. Now, (reads) "Flagon C now wants to dance with Lincoln M in baggie Pants." Sweetie, will you hand me baggie P?

SUSAN  
I give up. Here.

(SHE hands him one of the baggies and starts to walk away.)

DOUG

No. Look. We're almost done. (Measuring) Five milligrams. Into number C for senility. How about you make us some coffee?

(During the following, HE mixes the powder into a beaker and stirs it. It turns blue. HE then goes to the kitchen to get a box of sugar cubes. HE uses an eyedropper to measure out doses, putting one drop on each cube.)

SUSAN

I don't want coffee.

DOUG

You're just groggy since we turned the heat back on. Go outside for a minute. Clear your head. I'm going to need your help again in a minute.

SUSAN

Aren't we there yet?

DOUG

Honey, this is the big people's world. It's time to put that inner child in day care for a while.

(Susan's phone rings.)

SUSAN

Hello? This is Susan, who is this? Yes, Mr. Eberhardt, we got the notice. Do you know what time it is? Look, we want to pay you. Can you hold off for just another week or so? Well, how about if we get you part of it? Could you just trust us for -- No. You can't do that. I'm going to call the tenants' -- Hey, hey, don't call me names, you asshole. Listen to me. Come the revolution, you're gonna be the first up against that wall.

(SHE hangs up.)

DOUG

Smooth.

SUSAN

No extensions. They want the full amount. He's going to turn off the water.

DOUG

Too bad we don't have any blotter paper.

SUSAN

He called me a deadbeat. Can you believe it?

DOUG  
(still doctoring the sugar cubes)

These are going to be a real pain in the ass to carry around.

SUSAN  
I'm not a deadbeat. I'm a dope dealer.

DOUG  
Could you go to the market and get some more sugar cubes?

SUSAN  
(heading for the bed)

Uuh. I cant.

(DOUG leaps up and heads her off.)

DOUG  
No no no no no. You know as soon as you lie down, it'll be eight, nine hours before you're up again.

SUSAN  
Give me a break. I need sleep.

DOUG  
(Singsong)

No you do-on't.

SUSAN  
What? Speed? I don't want speed.

DOUG  
Don't have any speed.

SUSAN  
What then?

(DOUG pushes the box of sugar cubes towards her.)

No way. I'm not going to be your guinea pig.

DOUG  
I'll take it too. I won't sell anything I haven't tried myself.

SUSAN  
Ah, integrity.

DOUG  
Susan, please. I don't want to do this alone.

SUSAN

You're not going to get me again. Besides, if I'm pregnant -- God, I've probably already screwed the little reptile up beyond recognition.

DOUG

Could you maybe just *forget* about "Rosemary's Baby"?

SUSAN

I'm trying. I dream it every night.

DOUG

Really, I'm sorry I made you watch it. Listen, if you are pregnant, it's early yet. All you've got is a tiny bunch of cells. (Sighs.) You're right, things are going to have to change, but they don't have to change this instant. This instant, what we need is *energy*. And, lo and behold ...

(HE holds up the box of sugar cubes.)

SUSAN

That's great, honey, but what about the side effects? Twisted DNA.

DOUG

Too late. Already twisted. Look at our families.

SUSAN

Cancer.

DOUG

Do you really think we're going to live long enough to worry about cancer?

SUSAN

No. You're right.

(DOUG flips a sugar cube into his mouth, and hands one to SUSAN. THEY grimace at the taste.)

DOUG

Intense, huh? Just one drop.

(Suddenly, HE begins to choke, clutch his throat. SUSAN stares at him. DOUG stops, shrugs, picks up the directions)

"Flavor should be aggressive, yet subtle, pleasantly spicy with hints of cinnamon."

SUSAN

He's way off. It's like morning breath.

DOUG

(Putting down the directions and heading for the bathroom)

Have we got any mouthwash?

SUSAN

(Examining one of the baggies)

Did you use this one? I don't remember adding this color --

(DOUG stops in the bathroom door.)

DOUG

Let me see that.

SUSAN

What?

(HE grabs the baggie, then snatches up the directions again.)

DOUG

It was supposed to taste like cinnamon.

SUSAN

Maybe it tasted like cinnamon to him.

DOUG

Oh shit.

SUSAN

Maybe it tastes different to different people.

DOUG

But it tastes the same to us. (The baggie:) And you're right, we left this one out. (The beaker:) And this is supposed to be red.

SUSAN

Let me see that.

(SUSAN grabs the instructions, DOUG looks over her shoulder. THEY look at the paper, then stare at the test tubes. Pause.)

You said "T"!

DOUG

I said "P."

SUSAN

I heard you. You said "T" for ... therapy.

DOUG

No. I said "P" as in ... as in *psychiatry*.

SUSAN

So we left out the "P"?

DOUG

And we put in three times as much "T."



SUSAN  
So what we just took wasn't Turnpike?

DOUG  
No.

SUSAN  
What was it?

DOUG  
Good question. Do you feel something?

SUSAN  
Definitely.

DOUG  
Me too.

SUSAN  
What have we done?

DOUG  
We don't know.

SUSAN  
Hospital?

DOUG  
Yeah.

SUSAN  
Okay. You drive.

DOUG  
Okay. You navigate.

SUSAN  
Okay.

DOUG  
Okay.

(THEY look at each other. Sudden burst of nervous laughter.  
BLACKOUT.)

## SCENE 4

A hospital. Three chairs. DOUG and SUSAN standing, shuffling nervously.

SUSAN  
So someone's coming?

DOUG  
She said she'd be with us in a couple of minutes.

SUSAN  
You told her what's going on?

DOUG  
No. She said just to sit and wait here.

SUSAN  
We're supposed to sit?

DOUG  
Yeah.

(THEY look at each other, at the chairs. Then THEY sit.)

SUSAN  
They act pretty casual for an emergency room.

DOUG  
Jesus, I'm ripped. You better do the talking.

SUSAN  
Are they going to turn us in?

DOUG  
I think they have to report it.

SUSAN  
Can we give them fake names?

DOUG  
Good idea.

SUSAN  
You think so?

DOUG  
How are they going to know who we are?

SUSAN  
What should we say our names are?

Sid and Nancy. DOUG

No. SUSAN

Janice and Jimi. Curt and Courtney. DOUG

Stop fooling around. SUSAN

I'm not. I'm just trying to come up with something I'll remember. DOUG

Frank. SUSAN

and Nancy. DOUG

As in Sinatra? SUSAN

Yeah. I'll forget if they're not related. DOUG

Well, okay. At least they haven't choked on their own vomit. SUSAN

And we're married. DOUG

Why? SUSAN

One last name. DOUG

Oh. SUSAN

What's your mother's maiden name? DOUG

Drew. SUSAN

Frank Drew. DOUG

Nancy -- SUSAN

No. DOUG & SUSAN

What about your mother? SUSAN

Linn. So Nancy Linn. DOUG

Frank ... Linn? SUSAN

Okay. It's just weird enough to be true. When they joke about it, be amused but rueful, okay? DOUG

Okay. SUSAN

Okay. DOUG

Okay. SUSAN

Okay. DOUG

Nancy Linn. SUSAN

Frank Linn. DOUG

Nancy Linn, Frank Linn, Nancy Linn, Frank Linn. DOUG & SUSAN

Address. They're going to want an address. SUSAN

Christ. I don't think I can do this. DOUG

I'll do the talking. SUSAN

Let's just tell the truth. DOUG

SUSAN  
No.

DOUG  
I thought you wanted to be telling the truth all the time.

SUSAN  
Not this time.

DOUG  
Why not? Even if they do have to report it, what can they do? Poisoning yourself accidentally isn't a crime.

SUSAN  
Because I don't want my parents to find out, okay?

DOUG  
Your parents aren't going to --

SUSAN  
Next of kin; they ask that, right?

DOUG  
Okay, so we're orphans.

SUSAN  
Our parents were killed in a car accident.

DOUG  
All four of them? What'd they have a head on collision with each other?  
Oh, I get it: and that's how we met! Perfect.

SUSAN  
They're just dead, okay?

DOUG  
This linoleum is moving isn't it?

SUSAN  
Yes.

DOUG  
Isn't that unusual for linoleum?

SUSAN  
Focus. We have to focus. Your name is?

DOUG  
Doug. What? Oh, you mean my "name."

SUSAN  
What's your name?

Frank. DOUG

And I'm Nancy. SUSAN

Nancy Drew. DOUG

Nancy Drew. And we live at 1435 Columbus St. and our parents are dead. SUSAN

Dead dead dead. DOUG

And my phone is 867-5439. SUSAN

Where are you getting the address and phone from? DOUG

Johnny's Pizza. SUSAN

Good. But I'm not going to remember. DOUG

I'll do the talking. SUSAN

You'll do the talking. DOUG

Here she comes. SUSAN

Frank Linn and Nancy Drew. Frank Linn and Nancy Drew. DOUG

(A NURSE in hospital garb approaches, sits.)

Okay, so who's got the problem? NURSE

She does. DOUG

(Simultaneously) SUSAN

He does.

I do. DOUG & SUSAN

Both of you? NURSE

Yes. DOUG & SUSAN

Name? NURSE

(DOUG and SUSAN make a physical effort to lie. THEY experience a rush as the truth bursts out of them.)

Fr -- Doug! DOUG

(Simultaneously) SUSAN

N -- Susan!

(DOUG and SUSAN let out a small sigh of pleasure then stare at each other, bewildered.)

Doug and Susan. (To Doug.) NURSE Last name?

What? Oh, sorry. What was the question? DOUG

Your last name? NURSE

Dr-- DOUG

Li-- SUSAN

Excuse me? NURSE

Rappaport! SUSAN

Monroe! DOUG

(Again the rush is followed by a release. THEY look at each other again, mystified and scared.)

NURSE  
Doug Monroe, Susan Rappaport. R-A-P-P?

SUSAN  
Yes. Are you a doctor?

NURSE  
Better. I'm a nurse practitioner.

SUSAN  
We need a doctor.

NURSE  
You'll get a doctor if you need one. Your address?

SUSAN  
But we just poisoned ourselves.

NURSE  
Try to relax. Are you at the same address?

DOUG & SUSAN  
Yes.

NURSE  
Which is?

(SUSAN again makes an effort to stick with their story.)

SUSAN  
14 --

DOUG & SUSAN  
3125 Corona!

(Again the wave of pleasure and release.)

NURSE  
14 --

DOUG  
No! Just 3125 Corona.

NURSE  
Phone?

DOUG  
(To SUSAN, under his breath)

Just go for it.



365-4123. SUSAN

Your birthday. NURSE

July 2, '89. DOUG

You? NURSE

January 23, '90. SUSAN

Insurance? NURSE

None. DOUG & SUSAN

Where do you work? NURSE

I just got fired. SUSAN

I deal drugs. DOUG

(Slight pause.)

But we're students. SUSAN

We're students. DOUG

Where? NURSE

The U. DOUG & SUSAN

I'll just put down that you're students. That okay? NURSE

Please. You're welcome. I mean, thank you. DOUG

Thank you. SUSAN

So what happened? NURSE

We took this drug. SUSAN

But it's not the right drug. DOUG

What was it? NURSE

We don't know! DOUG & SUSAN

We made it ourselves. SUSAN

But we didn't do it right. DOUG

We put in some stuff from P when we should have used the stuff from T. SUSAN

No, it was the other way around. DOUG

You were trying to make what? NURSE

Turnpike. DOUG

Oh, I've never heard of this one. NURSE

It's new. Supposed to be like cocaine. DOUG

All right, so we don't know what you took. How do you feel? NURSE

A little nervous. SUSAN

A little strange. DOUG

But happy. SUSAN

Yeah, happy.

DOUG

NURSE  
Um, well, okay. But no physical symptoms? Stomach pains, diarrhea, vomiting? How do you feel?

DOUG  
I feel ... great!

SUSAN  
Yeah, maybe a little worried, but great!

NURSE  
So ...

SUSAN  
So can you help us?

NURSE  
Well, frankly, no. If this were an emergency, we'd treat you, but, it doesn't seem like you're sick.

SUSAN  
You don't want to keep us for observation?

NURSE  
No.

SUSAN  
But we might be poisoned.

NURSE  
If you're not having any other physical effects besides the ones you describe, you probably aren't poisoned.

SUSAN  
Is this because we don't have medical coverage?

NURSE  
No, ma'am, but this is the emergency room and there doesn't seem to be any medical emergency here. You go on home now. If you start to feel physically sick, severe stomach pains, anything like that, you come on back.

SUSAN  
I bet if we had insurance you'd keep us for observation.

DOUG  
Susan, let's go.

You would, wouldn't you? SUSAN

Come on. DOUG

Health care is a right, you know. SUSAN

We'll just be go -- DOUG

You're fired. SUSAN

Excuse me? NURSE

You're fired. SUSAN

(To Susan) DOUG

She doesn't work for you --

(To someone down the corridor) SUSAN

You too! You're fired.

(To the Nurse) DOUG

Well, thank you for your time. (To SUSAN) We're going home, now, okay?

(Quietly) SUSAN

Fired, fired, fired.

Did you drive here? NURSE

(As THEY are on their way out) DOUG

Yes, we did.

NURSE

(Stopping them)

Hey, hey, wait a minute? Should I call you a cab?

DOUG &amp; SUSAN

N --

(THEY try to resist the question, fail.)

DOUG &amp; SUSAN

Yes!

DOUG

You should!

SUSAN

But we're going to drive anyway!

(Sigh of release.)

DOUG

You're welcome.

(BLACKOUT.)

## SCENE 5

SUSAN and DOUG are back home.

Oh thank God. SUSAN

(Simultaneously) DOUG

Whew!

Are you still peaking? SUSAN

Yeah, it doesn't seem to be wearing off. DOUG

What if this is permanent? SUSAN

Don't even -- Jesus, the things you think of. DOUG

Did anyone follow us? SUSAN

Follow us? DOUG

Yeah. SUSAN

Who would be following us? DOUG

I don't know. SUSAN

You're not usually this paranoid. DOUG

I'm not paranoid. I'm not. SUSAN

Okay, okay, but nobody's after us, okay? It just feels that way because you've got this chemical in your body, right? DOUG

You think so? SUSAN

When this wears off no one will be following you any more, okay? DOUG

... Okay. SUSAN

DOUG

Sit down. Let's have some herbal tea, and try to relax and enjoy this.

SUSAN

Enjoy it.

(DOUG heads into the kitchen. Sounds of him making tea.)

DOUG

(Off)

Maybe we can figure out what triggers the rushes. That'd be fun, don't you think?

(Sneaking a peek out the window, SUSAN tries to answer heartily.)

SUSAN

Y -- (Slight rush) Well, maybe. I guess. I'm scared.

DOUG

I think this might even be better than Turnpike.

SUSAN

Back at the hospital, I mean, I thought I was going to --

DOUG

Me too! It's something about talking. Or worrying. I don't feel it now, do you?

SUSAN

(A small lie)

No -- Well maybe a little just then.

DOUG

So what was it about the hospital --

SUSAN

Let's just drop it. The tea's a good idea. Drinking tea's a normal kind of thing to do. Normal people drink tea. Let's just try to be normal.

DOUG

You sure?

(Doug's phone is on the table. It rings. SUSAN jumps. DOUG reaches for it.)

SUSAN

Don't answer it.

DOUG

If I'm going to be normal, I'll answer my phone.

SUSAN

This is a bad idea.

DOUG

I'll be fine.

(HE picks up the phone.)

This is Doug. Oh, hi, Mr. Eberhardt. Yeah, I'm sorry about that. She just got a little upset. No, we know. We won't. Really you don't need to send someone -- we understand. Well -- yes, I think we'll be around. If you say so. I'm sorry she said that. Oh, there's no need to do that. We'll pay you the money soon. Really. When? Well -- as soon as we sell some drugs!

(Rush, release.)

Hello?

(HE hangs up. Slight pause.)

SUSAN

Smooth.

DOUG

He's sending someone over this evening to counsel us about our debt.

SUSAN

Huh.

DOUG

Hey, wait a minute. I think I've got it. Ask me a question.

SUSAN

Doug --

DOUG

No, come on. Humor me.

SUSAN

What kind of question?

DOUG

Any question.

SUSAN

Okay, what time is it?

(DOUG concentrates.)

DOUG

I don't know.

(SHE picks up his wrist and shows him his own watch.)

8:30.

(HE concentrates again.)

No, nothing. I guess that isn't it. I thought it had something to do with questions.



Huh.

SUSAN

(Pause. SHE looks at him. An idea dawns.)

Remember when I went to stay with Paul and Kathy last summer?

DOUG

Of course. Why?

SUSAN

Did you sleep with Cindy?

DOUG

N --

(The rush knocks him to his knees.)

Yes!

(Slight pause.)

SUSAN

You told me you didn't.

DOUG

Well, we didn't exactly -- We did!

(Pause.)

SUSAN

It's when you try to lie.

DOUG

Yeah. I guess so.

SUSAN

Now this is going to be interesting.

DOUG

I wonder what happened to the tea.

(HE scrambles towards the kitchen. SHE follows.)

SUSAN

Uh, uh. Come back here.

DOUG

(Off)

Oh, I forgot to turn the burner on.

SUSAN

(Off)

Forget the tea. I've got some questions to ask you, son.

DOUG

Sleepytime or Almond Pleasure?

SUSAN

No thanks. Now, about Cindy --

(DOUG re-enters with hands over his ears, singing "Love Story" as loudly as he can. SUSAN is on his heels. SHE pulls his hands away.)

What was she like in bed?

DOUG

Oh, honey.

SUSAN

What was she like?

DOUG

She was -- Great!

SUSAN

Better than me?

DOUG

Oh, no -- Yes!

SUSAN

Did you use a condom?

DOUG

I -- No!

(As DOUG is hit with each wave of pleasure, SUSAN uses her advantage to wrestle him to the floor, eventually pinning him.)

SUSAN

You told me you would never fuck around on me. Were you lying?

DOUG

N -- yes!

SUSAN

You were lying even as you said it?

DOUG

Yes!

SUSAN

You never even had any intention of being faithful to me?

DOUG

Y -- No!

SUSAN

How many other women have you slept with since we've been together?

DOUG

Just --

Only Cindy? SUSAN

No! DOUG

How many? SUSAN

Just one other. Look, I'll tell you all about it tomorrow -- no I won't. DOUG

Who was it? SUSAN

It was -- uuuh, please, Susan, don't make me answer. DOUG

Who was it? SUSAN

That's a rhetorical question, isn't it? DOUG

No. Was it Marjorie? SUSAN

Oh, God, no. I wouldn't -- DOUG

Juliana? SUSAN

No. Babe -- DOUG

Tell me who it was. SUSAN

I -- DOUG

Tell me. SUSAN

It was Ste -- eph-- DOUG

Stephanie? SUSAN

Ste -- DOUG

It wasn't Stephanie, you're trying to lie. Who was it? SUSAN

Ste -- ell -- DOUG

Stella?! SUSAN

N-- DOUG

STELLA!?? Did you sleep with my sister? SUSAN

N-- DOUG

Did you? SUSAN

N-- DOUG

WHO DID YOU SLEEP WITH! SUSAN

(An orgasm) DOUG

STEEEEEEELLLLLLAAAA!

(Pause. SHE lets him up.)

Unreal. I just -- ... Boy are we going to regret this in the morning.

You really think we will? SUSAN

S-sure. DOUG

We? SUSAN

Y -- Well no. I think I'm going to regret it. DOUG

Mmm. Could be. The night is young. SUSAN

No, no. No more questions, please. I'm exhausted. And I need to change. DOUG

(Pause.)

Well what about me? SUSAN

Huh? DOUG

What about me? SUSAN

What do you mean? DOUG

Now don't be selfish, lover. SUSAN

You want me to ... ask you questions? DOUG

Mmm hm. SUSAN

But it won't work. You don't lie like I do. DOUG

You think so? SUSAN

No, you don't. Do you? DOUG

Ask me about last summer. SUSAN

When you were at Paul and Kathy's? DOUG

Yeah. SUSAN

What ...? DOUG

I'll give you a hint. Kathy wasn't there. SUSAN

Oh. DOUG

So ask me something. SUSAN

I ... DOUG

Don't be shy. Come on. Do me. SUSAN

(BLACKOUT.)

## SCENE 6

DOUG and SUSAN in bed. The table and all paraphernalia related to the drug are gone. The alarm goes off again. SUSAN stays where she is. DOUG reaches over her to where the alarm should be. Unable to find it, HE goes through the same motions as SUSAN did at the beginning of the play. Finally and with great difficulty, HE locates the alarm and silences it.

DOUG  
What's the alarm for?  
(SUSAN sits up.)  
SUSAN  
What time is it?  
DOUG  
Six o'clock.  
SUSAN  
PM?  
DOUG  
I think so.  
SUSAN  
It's not for anything. It's yesterday's alarm.  
DOUG  
So this is a flashback.  
SUSAN  
I just forgot to turn it off.  
DOUG  
Oh.  
SUSAN  
Oh, no! I forgot to call about the test.  
DOUG  
Let's call now.  
SUSAN  
It's after five. They're closed. Dammit, dammit, dammit.  
(HE stays where he is.)  
DOUG  
So this is a flashback.

SUSAN

Oh, and Eberhardt's "debt counselor" is coming over.

DOUG

Oh, god. Has it worn off, do you think?

SUSAN

Did you sleep with my sister?

(HE heads for the bathroom.)

DOUG

No. That was the drug talking.

SUSAN

It's worn off. You're full of shit again. Come back to bed.

DOUG

We'd *better* be sober. If we're going to get "counseled," this is a bad time to be falsehood-impaired.

(Off.)

Where's the aspirin?

SUSAN

Kitchen.

(DOUG crosses to the kitchen.)

Headache?

DOUG

Yeah. (Off) Felliiniini. Antonioni-oni. Belly up to the bar, boys.

(HE returns.)

You look chipper.

SUSAN

I feel great.

DOUG

Figures. I ache all over.

SUSAN

Oh come here baby.

(HE does. SHE cradles him.)

SUSAN

Is him a sore iguana?

DOUG

Him feel like he been stepped on.

SUSAN

Boy, I wish we could do it again right now. That was great!

DOUG  
Aren't you pissed off at me?

SUSAN  
Well, of course, you little shit. But we've got to get cracking here.

DOUG  
Cracking?

SUSAN  
Time to sell, sell, sell. Get our ass out of hock.

DOUG  
Sell what?

SUSAN  
Whatever you call what we just made.

DOUG  
How about "super-migraine?"

SUSAN  
Are you kidding? This is the best thing since -

DOUG  
Viagra?

SUSAN  
Fuck Viagra. It's better than Prozac. It's insta-therapy. So it's time to hit the streets, get yourself over to the Mainline, and pitch this thing. And then, you know what?

DOUG  
I will not sell this drug to my friends.

SUSAN  
Then we can come home and take another dose and clear up all the shit, all the misunderstandings, all the lies, between us. Clean slate.

DOUG  
This is not a recreational drug.

SUSAN  
Where's all the test tubes?

DOUG  
I put them away.

SUSAN  
When?

DOUG  
While you were sleeping the sleep of the just. I've been up all day.

SUSAN  
What happened to the stuff?



I flushed it down the toilet.

(Slight pause.)

You threw out \$10,000?

I've got a plan, okay?

You've got a plan.

Don't worry.

Douglas, I can't take this any more.

No, listen. I called Slink last night and got him to tell me what was in the baggies. So now I've got the recipe --

After all that code garbage, he just told you over the phone?

Yeah. We could make it any time. Anyone could. It's scary. Now Slink says it's not the stuff that's valuable, it's the information. So he's sending over a guy he knows tomorrow. And I will sell this guy the recipe. This time, it'll just be one big score, and then we're out of this business for good.

How big?

I'm going to ask for 100,000.

Who has that kind of money?  
SUSAN

It's probably better not to know.  
DOUG

But what if it's the Mafia?  
SUSAN

Well --  
DOUG

Or the CIA? Or Al Quaeda? Or the KGB?  
SUSAN

There is no K--  
DOUG

How do YOU know? Christ, what was I thinking? Call him back. Tell him we won't sell.  
SUSAN

It's too late. The meeting's already set. The guy'll be here tomorrow.  
DOUG

Then we've got to get rid of that recipe.  
SUSAN

No.  
DOUG

You want the government to get hold of this?  
SUSAN

I thought it was the greatest thing since Prozac.  
DOUG

But they'll use it to interrogate people.  
SUSAN

Well, at least being interrogated will be relatively pleasant.  
DOUG

We can't give the government a truth serum. If there's ever a time you have to lie, it's to the government.  
SUSAN

If the government wants information from someone, believe me, they get it. So maybe if they have the drug, at least they won't have any reason to torture people.  
DOUG

SUSAN

They don't need a reason. They don't torture people to be efficient. They do it because they get off on it.

(MR. MANN enters from the front hall, key in hand. Slight pause. THEY look at each other.)

MR. MANN

Honey, I'm home.

(Pause. HE smiles. SUSAN takes out her phone.)

SUSAN

I'm calling the cops.

(DOUG stops her from dialing.)

DOUG

Whoa, whoa, Susan, wait.

SUSAN

(To MR. MANN)

You get out of here right now, and tell Eberhardt to go to hell.

(DOUG takes Susan's phone and puts it in his pocket.)

DOUG

Suz, hold on.

SUSAN

Doug!

DOUG

Just one second. (To MR. MANN) Are you from Eberhardt? Did our landlord send you out here?

MR. MANN

No.

DOUG

Cops?

MR. MANN

No.

DOUG

You have a key to our front door?

MR. MANN

I always have the key. Mr. Monroe, I presume?

DOUG

Yes.

MR. MANN

And you must be Miss Rappaport.

SUSAN

Who are you?

(MR. MANN hands her a business card. Then HE takes a television remote control from his pocket and starts passing it over various surfaces in the room.)

MR. MANN

I am Mr. Mann. (To DOUG) A mutual friend tells me you have something of interest.

DOUG

You're early.

MR. MANN

Pardon me.

SUSAN

"Mr. Mann." That's all it says.

(DOUG starts to speak. MR. MANN motions for him to be silent then motions to SUSAN to turn the card over. SHE does so, reads.)

Oh come on. What makes you think this place is bugged?

MR. MANN

(Overlapping, loud)

PLEASE! ... Humor me.

SUSAN

Uh, okay.

(DOUG takes the card, reads.)

DOUG

Well, we don't *know*, do we?

SUSAN

I guess not.

MR. MANN

Best to be sure.

SUSAN

But that's a TV remote.

MR. MANN

I really must apologize. Not only do I barge in, but I rush headlong into business. The civilized thing to do is let the acquaintance deepen, ripen. Casual conversation first: a genteel exchange of views on the sporting life, the arts -- and perhaps -- if we feel emboldened, even the political arena. A joke or two. An exchange of confidences. Soon, a resounding mutual confirmation of our professional and spiritual brotherhood -- or perhaps a gentlemanly agreement to disagree. *Then* on to business. Or better still, a cup of coffee first, a meal, cocktails, a tour of the home.

(HE exits to the kitchen.)

Incredible how much one can learn about another person from a quick glance at his den, his furniture, his bookshelves, his larder. Ah, the cupboard is bare! *Quel damage!*

(HE re-enters.)

MR. MANN

What romance in this cottage. Salad days. Students burning the midnight oil, exploring new worlds, she in psychology, he in chemistry. Perhaps a little one on the way. Ahead, who knows? The smorgasbord of life. Employment? The career track? The house in the suburbs? Or graduate school perhaps. You're applying to graduate schools in film, aren't you, Doug?

DOUG

Well, I haven't sent in -- that's still something of an issue between --

MR. MANN

May I call you Doug? Do you prefer Doug or Douglas?

DOUG

Either one's okay.

SUSAN

How do you know all this?

MR. MANN

Sue? Susan? Suzie?

SUSAN

Excuse me?

MR. MANN

Which do you prefer, or should I call you Miss Rappaport?

SUSAN

Ms.

MR. MANN

Oh, I beg your pardon. Ms. I hope you won't take my antiquated manners as a sign of disrespect.

SUSAN

How the hell do you know so much about us?

MR. MANN

Ah, Suzie, gently, gently please. Might I suggest, Douglas, that you take things a bit more in hand. Assert yourself as befits a man in his home.

DOUG

Uuh, I don't think --

(MR. MANN heads into the bathroom.)

MR. MANN

Say no more. I understand. I'm out of my depth. Pardon me. I'm a single man, never married and out of touch as they say. I'm sure that, once you reschedule that appointment you missed, a little couples therapy will be just the ticket.

(HE pokes his head back in.)

Pardon. A call of nature.

(HE exits, shutting the door. Sounds of him taking a piss.)

SUSAN

Let's get out of here.

DOUG

Why?

SUSAN

He's damned right the place is bugged. He bugged it.

DOUG

We don't know that.

SUSAN

How else would he --

DOUG

Go if you want.

SUSAN

You come too.

DOUG

I can't. I'm in the middle of a deal here.

SUSAN

Douglas, he is going to eat you for breakfast.

DOUG

No he won't. I have something he wants. Everything's under control. If you just let me handle --

SUSAN

I'm not going to stand by and be quiet while that pig --

DOUG

Shh.

SUSAN

Don't shush me. Ever.

(MR. MANN re-enters.)

MR. MANN

So. No listening devices. We may speak freely. What shall we talk about?

SUSAN

Who do you work for?

MR. MANN

Ah, to business. I don't mean to be coy, but it might be better for you if you didn't know.

SUSAN

No deal then.

DOUG

No, listen --

MR. MANN

Oh come now, relax, relax. If we're going to put our cards on the table, why don't we sit down? Douglas?

DOUG

(Sitting at the table.)

Sure.

MR. MANN

(Holding a chair out for her.)

Sue?

SUSAN

Susan.

MR. MANN

Susan.

SUSAN

I'll stand, thank you.

(MR. MANN takes a seat at the table.)

MR. MANN

I may as well start by telling you we have several operations in progress that we think would be considerably expedited through the use of a quantity of your product. Provided it works as described, we'd like to purchase your entire stock, for which we're prepared to pay fair market value.

DOUG

There's no market yet. How can there be a fair market value?

MR. MANN

Good question. We made an educated projection.

DOUG

Picked a number out of thin air.

MR. MANN

Ah, you are a Tarzan to her Jane after all. Fair enough. Would \$6 per dose be adequate?

DOUG

Probably.

MR. MANN

How much do you have on hand?

DOUG

Seven hits.

(Slight pause. DOUG gets up from the table.)

MR. MANN

You've already sold the rest?

DOUG

I destroyed the rest.

(HE puts the box of sugar cubes on the table and sits down.)

Didn't want to flood the market, you know.

MR. MANN



(Chuckling)

Flood the market. Mr. Monroe, you fascinate me.

DOUG

You need the recipe.

MR. MANN

Well, of course, we could obtain a sample of the drug from you, analyze it and figure out ourselves how to manufacture it. However, we're pressed for time. Yes, we'll need to buy the formula from you.

DOUG

Any educated projections on the value of the formula?

MR. MANN

We're prepared to offer you \$250,000.

(Pause. DOUG nods his head slightly.)

DOUG

That sounds --

SUSAN

It's not enough.

DOUG

Susan!

SUSAN

One million.

DOUG

Jesus.

MR. MANN

Ah, a million. Who wants to be a millionaire? Everyone wants a million these days.

DOUG

250,000 will be perfectly fine.

SUSAN

No. If I'm going to deal with someone like you, I want more money. If this is going to be on my conscience for the rest of my life, I want a million dollars.

MR. MANN

Your conscience? Just who do you think I am? Never mind. You know, a million doesn't go as far as it used to. Lottery winners routinely win 20 times that and go bankrupt in five years.

SUSAN

Those people are stupid. One million. That's the price.

MR. MANN

All right.

DOUG

All right?

MR. MANN

All right. One million.

SUSAN

Cash. Up front. Small bills.

MR. MANN

I'm afraid that's not practical.

SUSAN

Then no deal.

MR. MANN

Please, let me advise you on this point. I give you my word as a bureaucrat. You do not want cash. A million dollars, especially in small bills, is a terribly awkward thing to keep around the house. And if you try to deposit it in the bank, even in small increments, you will almost certainly run afoul of the DEA and the IRS, not to mention the Homeland Security Department. No. We'll wire it into an account for you in such a way that no questions will be asked. From there, you can do whatever you please with it.

SUSAN

And we need a guarantee that you'll leave us alone and won't harm us.

MR. MANN

Harm you? Why should we harm you? You'll be heroes. Salk conquered polio. You've conquered falsehood.

SUSAN

No publicity.

MR. MANN

As you wish. You have my word.

SUSAN

How do we know your word is worth anything?

MR. MANN

You don't.

SUSAN

I want a guarantee that you're not lying.

MR. MANN

My dear, this isn't a legal matter. How can I give you a guarantee?

(SUSAN pushes the box of sugar cubes over to him. Pause.)

DOUG

Susan --

SUSAN

Take one.

DOUG

Mr. Mann, I hope you'll forgive --

MR. MANN

No, no. Nothing to forgive. I don't think it's an unreasonable suggestion. In fact, I'd like to test the quality of the merchandise. From what I hear, it's a rather pleasurable experience, and I certainly have nothing to hide from you. So --

(HE reaches into the box and takes out a sugar cube.)

Just be careful what you ask.

(HE puts the cube in his mouth. HE smiles.)

BLACKOUT.)

## SCENE 7

Later. In darkness, the very end of the Beatles' "A Day in the Life." On the final chord, lights up to reveal MR. MANN sitting in a chair with headphones on and his eyes closed. DOUGLAS is at the stereo. SUSAN is standing, watching nervously. MR. MANN opens his eyes.

Amazing.  
MR. MANN

Isn't it?  
DOUG

I never understood that kind of music before.  
MR. MANN

Uh, huh. Here, this one is by a group called Pink Floyd.  
DOUG

Douglas, that's enough. We know it's working now. Let's get going.  
SUSAN

(To MR. MANN)  
DOUG

All right with you? I mean, you're satisfied with the quality?

MR. MANN  
So far. I can certainly see what you mean about the euphoria. I feel like a new man. Mind clear as a bell. Senses sharp as a razor. God, I love you kids for this. This opportunity. So. On to the questions?

SUSAN  
If we give you the recipe, will you pay us a million dollars?

MR. MANN  
Y -- No! Say, it really works! Extraordinary.

SUSAN  
Then get out.

MR. MANN  
No, please, let me answer in full. The truth is a bit more complicated than that. We will pay. The whole million, in fact.

DOUG  
I don't understand.

MR. MANN

I'm afraid we can't pay the money directly to you. There's always the chance you would be recruited or abducted by the other side. Or that you'd tell people about the drug. It's cleaner if no one hears about it or what it does, except for the people who will administer it. No, I'm afraid you kids are just going to have to go.

DOUG

You mean relocate us?

MR. MANN

No. Eliminate you. (Slight pause.) As they say. Melodramatic for a euphemism, don't you think? No. We'll arrange for the money to go to your relatives instead. Now, I think I've anticipated your objections in this matter and let me reassure you that they'll never know that their sudden wealth has any connection to your disappearance. For example, Sue, I understand your mom and pop have been going through some hard times. Isn't that right? The business is going under. They may lose their house. But still, your pop plays the lottery, am I right? Well, we'll set it up so he wins.

SUSAN

You're going to kill us?

MR. MANN

Oh, not me personally. Not my job. I'm not prone to physical violence. No talent for it. But I will give you the option of killing yourselves.

(Takes a bottle of Tylenol from HIS pocket.)

Here. My handy little stash of cyanide. Very quick.

DOUG

Tylenol?

MR. MANN

So everything will look natural. ...Poisoned Tylenol? You don't get it?

DOUG

No.

MR. MANN

...Oh, of course, you won't remember. Forgive me. The Tylenol murders, Chicago, back in 1982. Before your time. Potassium cyanide in Tylenol bottles.

DOUG

So these are poison?

MR. MANN

Of course six people died before we got the one we were after, so the collateral damage was unacceptable. Still - now the drug companies all put that special safety seal on the pill bottles to protect us from crazies and terrorists. So it wasn't all for naught.

SUSAN

And if we don't kill ourselves?

MR. MANN

We'll have to have you killed.

SUSAN

If you're going to kill us no matter what, then why should we give you the recipe?

(MR. MANN takes a cell phone from his jacket pocket and puts in on the table.)

MR. MANN

Oh, really, it's in your best interest to cooperate. All I have to do is make one phone call. And then I can not only wipe you out but your whole family, your friends, practically everyone who ever knew you. The works. It'll be like you never were born.

(HE notices something about the way his hands move. During the following, HE stares at his hands, turning them over, wiggling his fingers, moving them towards and away from his face.)

Sorry about that. But you kids were in way over your heads right from the start, you know.

DOUG

You can't do that.

SUSAN

Shut up. He can so.

DOUG

He's bullshitting us.

SUSAN

Douglas, how *could* he be?

DOUG

I don't know.

SUSAN

Mr. Mann, please. We'll give you the recipe.

MR. MANN  
(Coming back to reality.)

Hmm?

SUSAN  
We'll give you the recipe.

MR. MANN  
(Agreeably.)

Oh, of course you will.

SUSAN  
We haven't memorized it or copied it or anything. If we give it to you, we won't know how to make it any more. You can go ahead and rob us, but there's no need to kill us.

MR. MANN  
Well, I appreciate the thought, but really this isn't negotiable.

DOUG  
This isn't happening.

MR. MANN  
Any other questions?

SUSAN  
Is there anything we can do to get out of this alive?

MR. MANN  
I don't think so.

DOUG  
(A mantra)

It's only a movie. It's only a movie --

MR. MANN  
(Overlapping)

On the other hand, who can see into the future? *Que sera, sera*. I'd be lying if I said I knew exactly what I would do in every contingency. But I'd also be misleading you if I left you with the impression that I was disposed to let you off at this or any other point in time.

DOUG  
You sure sound like you work for the government.

SUSAN  
Are you armed?

MR. MANN

No.

SUSAN

Well, there's two of us, and you're on drugs. What's to stop us from killing you before you can kill us?

MR. MANN

Good question. Again, there's this matter of your families. If I don't report in, I'm afraid they're all not long for this world. So, Douglas, the recipe please.

DOUG

No.

SUSAN

Give it to him.

(Pause.)

DOUG

I don't have it.

MR. MANN

Beg pardon?

SUSAN

Douglas, quit messing --

DOUG

I didn't want to keep it around here so I mailed it to General Delivery in Philadelphia.

MR. MANN

And to whom is it addressed?

DOUG

Frank Linn.

MR. MANN

Hmm. Frank Linn, Philadelphia. Franklin -- Philadelphia. Oh dear. You're stalling aren't you?

DOUG

No, really.

MR. MANN

Now, as I've said, I'm not personally prone to violence. I won't stand for it in films. Severed limbs, decapitations, dangling eyeballs. Disgusting. I've been known to demand my money back. However, you should understand that, normally, what I would feel compelled to do at this point in our negotiations is to render you to people who, in the course of testing your veracity, would think nothing of cutting you up piece by bloody piece and force-feeding you to each other. Again, one phone call is all it takes. But, bless your hearts, thanks to your own efforts, that's not necessary now. The unvarnished truth is but a spoonful of sugar away.

(HE looks at his watch.)



So ...

(HE holds out the box of sugar cubes to THEM.)

Won't you join me?

(Pause. BLACKOUT.)

## SCENE 8

DOUG and SUSAN seated in straight-backed chairs. MR. MANN seated at the table obsessing on his hands. Pause. DOUG and SUSAN look at each other. DOUG starts to rise.

MR. MANN  
(Sharp, but without looking up.)

SIT.

(Pause.)

What were you doing, Douglas?

DOUG  
I was just --

MR. MANN  
You were just what?

DOUG  
(HIS body convulsing)

I was --

MR. MANN  
Answer.

DOUG  
I was -- trying to see if you were still watching us.  
(Release.)

MR. MANN  
Well, I was, wasn't I?

DOUG  
Uh huh.

(MR. MANN breaks his attention away from his hands, shudders and looks at his watch.)

MR. MANN  
Hmm. So it's working now, isn't it?

DOUG  
Yes.

MR. MANN  
Susan, is it working for you?

SUSAN

I think so.

MR. MANN

Let's see. Go ahead, try lying to me.

SUSAN

Okay. I find you very attractive.

MR. MANN

Hmm. But sarcasm isn't the same as lying. Let's try another approach.

SUSAN

Okay.

MR. MANN

When you two are making the beast with two backs, I'll bet you like it better on top. Don't you?

SUSAN

(Levelly, without hesitation)

Yes.

MR. MANN

Does he have a big one?

SUSAN

Six inches.

MR. MANN

Ah, Mr. Average. How do you know?

SUSAN

We measured.

MR. MANN

Are you two monogamous?

SUSAN

In a manner of speaking.

MR. MANN

You ever cheated on your sweetheart?

SUSAN

Yes.

(To DOUG)

MR. MANN

You knew this?

DOUG

(head in his hands)

Yesterday's news.

MR. MANN

(Back to SUSAN)

So none of this inspires you to lie?

SUSAN

Why should it?

MR. MANN

Fascinating. The new generation. Have you ever stolen anything?

SUSAN

Yes.

MR. MANN

What?

SUSAN

Plates from restaurants.

DOUG

We're eating off stolen plates?

SUSAN

Money from my sister.

MR. MANN

Stella for star.

SUSAN

Fuck you.

MR. MANN

Well, pride, lust, envy, anger. I'm running out of choices. Anything you won't admit to?

SUSAN

Probably not.

MR. MANN

... Are you afraid of me?

SUSAN

N -- Yes!

(MR. MANN chuckles, gets up.)

MR. MANN  
Gotcha! Oh, this is *fun*!

(As HE walks over to THEM, SUSAN starts to rise.)

SIT.

(SHE does.)

Susan, don't you think this is fun?

SUSAN  
No.

MR. MANN  
Too bad. What about you, Doug?

DOUG  
(As if trying to please.)

Y -- No!

MR. MANN  
(Beaming. To DOUG)

All right now. The story about sending the letter to the City of Brotherly Love. Is it true?

DOUG  
N -- Yes!

MR. MANN  
Huh. Well, that's a switch. It's something of a setback to have to take the trouble to retrieve it, but I'm pleased to know you weren't pulling my leg after all. You were trying to lie just now, though, weren't you?

DOUG  
N -- Yes!

MR. MANN  
Now let me guess. You were going to buy more time by telling me you destroyed the formula but you have it memorized.

(Slight pause.)

DOUG

Yes.

MR. MANN

There you go! The spiritual pleasure of telling the truth is always greater in the end than the carnal delight of a lie, isn't it? Rhetorical question. No need to answer. Doug, Sue, it's been a pleasure.

(HE, crosses back to the table, shakes some pills out of the Tylenol bottle, picks up one in each hand and crosses back to THEM.)

Now I hope you'll do the right thing. (Holding out two fists.) Choose. No? All right, then I'll choose for you. Take one.

(HE takes their hands in turn and gives them each a pill. THEY sit where they are. Pause.)

SUSAN

No.

MR. MANN

(Sighs.)

Well, all right then.

DOUG

Look, maybe we can make some kind of trade. We could do some hours of community service.

(MR. MANN picks up his phone.)

No, listen. Wait. You don't have to --

MR. MANN

(Turning on DOUG with sudden force.)

SIT!

(HE does.)

Are you trying to shit me?

DOUG

N --

MR. MANN

Huh? Are you trying to shit me, boy? Answer.

DOUG

Yes.

MR. MANN

Don't.

Okay.

DOUG

MR. MANN  
All right then. You have a choice. Take your medicine or I make the call. Going once.

DOUG

I can't.

MR. MANN  
(Starting to dial)  
Going twice.

DOUG

I --  
(SUSAN jumps up and grabs the phone from his hand.)

SUSAN  
NO!  
(Slight pause.)

MR. MANN  
Oh, come now. Give me that, please.  
(HE holds out his hand. SHE shakes her head. HE opens HIS briefcase.)

SUSAN  
What are you doing?  
(HE takes out another cell phone, starts to dial again. SUSAN and DOUG look at each other.)

SUSAN  
ALL RIGHT! We'll do it.  
(MR. MANN turns the second phone off and puts it back in his briefcase. HE holds out his hand, and SUSAN gives him back his phone. HE crosses his arms over his chest. SHE sits.)

MR. MANN  
Okay. Make up your mind now.

SUSAN  
Doug? (Raising the pill to her mouth.) Here I go. Come with me, all right.

DOUG  
I can't --

SUSAN  
(Bringing her hand down.)

We don't have a choice. Let's be brave, all right. For the people we love.

DOUG  
Susan --

(MR. MANN sighs, starts dialing again.)

MR. MANN  
Look, as they say in Hollywood, this is very touching, but I'm double parked.

DOUG  
(Suddenly)

Do you wear jockey shorts or boxers?

MR. MANN  
Boxers.

DOUG  
How much money do you make?

MR. MANN  
None of -- \$126,000. Stop it.

DOUG  
Who are you calling?

(MR. MANN stops dialing, smiles.)

MR. MANN  
My contact.

DOUG  
What's his name?

MR. MANN  
John.

DOUG  
Last name?

MR. MANN  
I don't know his last name.



(Slight pause as DOUG searches desperately for another question.)

Um ...  
DOUG

Are you trying to stall me?  
MR. MANN

N -- Yes! Is it working?  
DOUG

No.  
MR. MANN

(Slight pause.)

Again, you're a clever boy, but your tactical reasoning isn't what it could be. Why should I lie to you?

I don't know.  
DOUG

Are you really curious about my work?  
MR. MANN

Yes.  
DOUG

(MR. MANN puts the phone away.)

All right. You want to ask me questions about my work, I'll be happy to answer.  
MR. MANN

Why?  
DOUG

It would give me pleasure.  
MR. MANN

Why?  
DOUG

Because I'm good at what I do. And when we're done, you take your pill, okay?  
MR. MANN

Okay.  
DOUG

No. It's not okay.  
SUSAN

If I'm going to poison myself, I want to know who is making me do it, okay?  
DOUG

SUSAN  
No deal.

DOUG  
This isn't a "deal"; this is making an informed decision. Are you in a hurry?

SUSAN  
Don't take that tone with me.

DOUG  
I can't believe this. We're about to be murdered and we're having a marital spat. (To MR. MANN) Is this a common occurrence?

MR. MANN  
(Who has been staring at the wood grain on the table)  
Hmm? Oh. Very common.

DOUG  
Indulge me, okay? Come on. Isn't there anything you want to know?

SUSAN  
Jesus.

DOUG  
Do you work for the government?

MR. MANN  
Perhaps, in a manner of speaking. I have access to government resources and information.

DOUG  
Then who do you work for?

MR. MANN  
I don't know.

SUSAN  
... You don't?

MR. MANN  
I seem to represent various interests. The ones that pay me. They haven't seen fit to let me know their identity.

DOUG  
Then how do they contact you?

MR. MANN  
They have many modes of communicating. My first contact was when I responded to an advertisement tacked to a telephone pole "Lose 30 pounds in 30 days if you qualify."

(Slight pause. DOUG and SUSAN look at each other.)

DOUG

And what happened then?

MR. MANN

They recruited me. It was a significant experience, my recruitment. I gained the weight back of course, but in other ways I was ... transformed. Now, I'm proud to say, I've been put in charge of recruiting.

SUSAN

How do you recruit?

MR. MANN

We do it through the 900 numbers, the internet chat rooms, the sex lines.

DOUG

And who is "we"?

MR. MANN

A family of companies. A network of people who care about people. (Pause.) Anything else?

DOUG

Before you got this job, what did you do for a living?

MR. MANN

Nothing I can recall.

DOUG

What did you do for a living ten years ago?

MR. MANN

The same.

DOUG

Twenty years ago?

MR. MANN

I can't recall.

DOUG

Twenty five?

MR. MANN

Look, I'll save you some time. I contacted my current employers twelve years ago. I am a different person now. I don't remember the person I was.

DOUG

You don't remember anything before 1999?

MR. MANN

Oh I remember the time, the world situation, the price of a hamburger. But as far as my personal history, well, I guess you could say I've been born again. ... Satisfied?

Not just yet.

DOUG

All right.

MR. MANN

(MR. MANN becomes increasingly distant throughout the following, finally settling into a kind of trance.)

You say you have access to government information?

DOUG

Yes.

MR. MANN

To what level?

DOUG

Oh, the highest level.

MR. MANN

Who killed JFK?

DOUG

The Cubans.

MR. MANN

RFK?

DOUG

The Mafia.

MR. MANN

Martin Luther King?

DOUG

The Black Muslims.

MR. MANN

They were all conspiracies?

DOUG

Yes.

MR. MANN

Which is real and which is a hoax? UFO's.

DOUG

Real.

MR. MANN

The Loch Ness Monster.

DOUG

Real.	MR. MANN
Bigfoot.	DOUG
Real.	MR. MANN
The Bermuda Triangle.	DOUG
Real.	MR. MANN
Professional wrestling.	DOUG
Real.	MR. MANN
The moon landing.	DOUG
Hoax.	MR. MANN
Alive or dead? Elvis.	DOUG
Alive.	MR. MANN
Hitler.	DOUG
Alive.	MR. MANN
Paul McCartney.	DOUG
Dead.	MR. MANN
Safe or dangerous? Cell phones.	DOUG
Dangerous.	MR. MANN
High tension wires.	DOUG
Dangerous.	MR. MANN

Bottled water. DOUG

Dangerous. MR. MANN

Radon. DOUG

Dangerous. MR. MANN

Cigarettes. DOUG

Safe. MR. MANN

Safe? Okay -- Was the 2000 election rigged? DOUG

No. MR. MANN

DOUG

Huh. Why didn't Bush do anything to prevent 911?

MR. MANN

There was no actionable intelligence.

DOUG

No actionable— Okay. Did Bush really believe there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq?

MR. MANN

Yes. He really did.

DOUG

He wasn't lying?

MR. MANN

No.

DOUG

Okay, he wasn't even exaggerating?

MR. MANN

No.

DOUG

And that's really why we went to war. WMDs. Not oil. Not Halliburton. Not sheer fucking arrogance.

MR. MANN

That's really why.

(Pause.)

DOUG

Where was Obama born?

MR. MANN

Nigeria.

(Slight pause.)

DOUG

I think you better go ahead and make the call.

SUSAN

No.

DOUG

He's not for real. Come on. 2000 was fair? Bush wasn't lying? And Obama's an African Muslim socialist spy.

SUSAN

Doug -

DOUG

I'm calling his bluff. (To MR. MANN) I refuse to take your Tylenol. Go on, have us killed.

MR. MANN  
(Picking up the phone, sluggishly.)

Suits me. Just you?

DOUG  
Naw. Why not go the whole hog? Kill us, kill our families.

SUSAN  
Stop it!

DOUG  
Take out all of Hackensack while you're at it. Arrange a chemical spill or something.

MR. MANN  
All right. (Starts to dial, stops.) You're kidding about Hackensack, right? I couldn't do that right off the cuff. That kind of job takes a little more arranging, permissions, double checks, purchase orders ...

DOUG  
I'm kidding about Hackensack. Make the call.

SUSAN  
Fine. Okay. Fine.

(MR. MANN finishes dialing.)

MR. MANN  
Yes, this is swordfish -- I'd like a large combination with extra cheese and everything on it, please.

DOUG  
Swordfish --

MR. MANN  
3125 Corona. On my tab. Nothing to drink. Anchovies? Hold on. Friends as well as family?

DOUG  
Sure.

SUSAN  
Oh my god.

MR. MANN  
Anchovies too. Thanks.

SUSAN  
Oh my god. Oh my god.

DOUG  
You still think he's for real?



SUSAN

Yes. He had a key. He knows my dad plays the lottery.

DOUG

He just ordered a pizza.

SUSAN

It was a code for God's sake. "Everything on it." You heard him.

DOUG

Look ...

(To MR. MANN)

Have you ever been in a mental hospital?

MR. MANN

... I can't recall.

DOUG

You've never been treated for mental illness?

MR. MANN

I don't know.

SUSAN

What do you mean you don't know?

DOUG

(To SUSAN)

Suz, think this through for a second. We know he's not lying, right? So the only way he wouldn't know about something like that is if his elevator doesn't go all the way to the top floor, right? This being the case, do you really think that phone call means your whole family is as good as dead?

SUSAN

Yes. I do.

DOUG

I disagree. I think it means we're about to have a pizza delivered.

SUSAN

How do you know?

DOUG

If you really believe he's for real, then why didn't you stop me?

SUSAN

I tried.

DOUG

Why didn't you try harder? Huh?

SUSAN

I -

DOUG

Answer.

SUSAN

I -- was angry with you for putting my family in danger just to make a point. So I let you do it. So I could make you feel guilty about it afterwards.

DOUG

Thank you. (To MR. MANN) Hey, Swordfish-man, I've got a headache. You mind if I take a couple of your Tylenol?

MR. MANN

No problem.

(DOUG goes to put the Tylenol in his mouth. SUSAN stops him.)

SUSAN

No!

DOUG

It's not real.

SUSAN

You don't know that. Here, wait. (To MR. MANN) Are those pills real?

MR. MANN

Oh, sure. They're the real thing.

DOUG

He just thinks they're real.

(HE again tries to put the pills in his mouth, but SUSAN has a hold on his arm.)

Come on. I really do have a headache -

SUSAN

Don't be stupid. Here.

(SHE puts a pill on the table and crushes it with Mr. Mann's phone.)

DOUG

What are you --

SUSAN

Shut up.

(SHE scrapes the powder into her hand and walks into the kitchen. DOUG follows her. Pause. THEY return. Pause.)

Satisfied?

DOUG

You killed my fish.

SUSAN

Satisfied?

DOUG

Crazy people can get hold of poisons just like anyone else.

SUSAN

Poisons that kill that quickly?

DOUG

So the man's resourceful. You killed my fish.

SUSAN

Would you rather have taken the pills yourself? (To MR. MANN who is nearly unreachable by now) Call them back. We'll do it. We'll take the pills. Really. Just call them back and cancel. Hey! Do you hear me?

MR. MANN

-- Yes.

(Revived by the direct question, HE starts to gather his things together.)

SUSAN

What are you doing?

MR. MANN

Job's done. I'm leaving.

SUSAN

Mr. Mann, please. You've got the recipe. We haven't memorized it or copied it, and you know I'm telling the truth.

DOUG

Suz, let him go.

SUSAN

Shut up. (To MR. MANN) We won't tell anyone about the drug. Why should we? And even if we did, who would believe us? And even if we do know too much, there's no reason to hurt our families. They don't know anything. (SHE hands him his phone.) Call them back before you go. You could do that if you wanted to, right?

MR. MANN

Yes.

SUSAN

You could call them back?

MR. MANN

Yes.

SUSAN

You could fix it so no one would get hurt?

MR. MANN

Yes. I could. Excuse me, please.

SUSAN

You could make it like none of this ever happened?

MR. MANN

Yes. Please, you're blocking my way.

SUSAN

Make the call.

(MR. MANN puts his phone in his pocket and pushes past her.)

Stop. Goddamn you make the call. What's with you for Christ's sake? Are you even human? Don't you have any feelings? Answer me.

(MR. MANN stops in his tracks. Slight pause.)

MR. MANN

N -- yes.

SUSAN

(An idea dawning.)

Tell me about your feelings.

MR. MANN

(Starting to move again.)

No.

DOUG

Leave him alone. You're --

SUSAN

(Ignoring DOUG.)

What do you feel right now?

MR. MANN

(Stopped.)

Empty.

SUSAN

You feel empty. Why do you think that is?

MR. MANN

I -- don't know.

SUSAN

Yes you do. You do know, don't you?

MR. MANN

I -- don't know.

SUSAN

(Bearing down)

Okay, you don't know, but what do you think?

MR. MANN

I'm --

SUSAN

Do you enjoy hurting people?

MR. MANN

N -- yes.

SUSAN

Why?

MR. MANN

I don't kn --

SUSAN

Yes, you do. How does it feel?

MR. MANN

-- Exciting.

SUSAN

Sexually exciting?

MR. MANN

-- Yes.

DOUG

What are you --

SUSAN

Shut up. (To MR. MANN) You get off on it?

MR. MANN

Yes.

SUSAN

What do you do when you finish a job and you go back to your hotel?

MR. MANN

-- Watch television.

SUSAN

What else?

MR. MANN

Stop.

SUSAN

What else?

MR. MANN

Drink.

SUSAN

A lot?

MR. MANN

Yes.

SUSAN

What else?

MR. MANN

I -

SUSAN

What else?

MR. MANN

I masturbate.

DOUG

Eeeew! Now come on --

(SUSAN makes an angry gesture to silence him.)

Jesus, well then, do what you please. I need a beer.

(HE exits to kitchen.)

SUSAN

What do you think of when you masturbate?

MR. MANN

N --

SUSAN  
Do you think about the people you just killed?

MR. MANN  
Yes!

SUSAN  
And how do you feel afterwards?

MR. MANN  
I don't know what you --

SUSAN  
Come on: "feel." You know: angry, joyful, hurt, sad --

MR. MANN  
-- Sad.

SUSAN  
Why?

MR. MANN  
I --

SUSAN  
Why?

MR. MANN  
I -- miss them.

SUSAN  
Do you ever think about killing yourself?

MR. MANN  
I -- yes.

SUSAN  
Do you think about it often?

MR. MANN  
-- Yes.

(DOUG returns, watches.)

SUSAN  
Do you think about it when you're sitting there blind drunk in your hotel room with your dick in your hand staring at the television?

MR. MANN  
-- Yes.

SUSAN  
You think about killing yourself.

MR. MANN  
-- Yes.

How often?	SUSAN
Every --	MR. MANN
Every time you finish a job?	SUSAN
I --	MR. MANN
Every week?	SUSAN
(On HIS knees now.)	MR. MANN
Stop.	



Every night.

SUSAN

-- YES!

MR. MANN

(Softly, from behind him.)

SUSAN

Are you thinking about it now? Wouldn't you like to?

(Suddenly, SHE pulls MR. MANN's head back and holds her palm out with the pill in front of his face.)

DOUG

Susan, answer me, what the hell are you --

SUSAN

SHUT UP! (To MR. MANN) Wouldn't it be best for everybody if you did? Answer.

(MR. MANN convulses in orgasm. Slight pause. HE nods his head slightly and opens his mouth. SHE claps her hand over his mouth. HE bites down on the pill and dies. SHE gets up and lets HIM fall to the floor. Pause. DOUG is staring at her. SHE bursts out laughing. SHE stops.

BLACKOUT.)

## SCENE 9

SUSAN is standing by herself, looking around. DOUG enters by the front hall.

SUSAN  
It's like none of it ever happened.

DOUG  
It happened. There's a body in the trunk of our car.

SUSAN  
Do you think anyone saw us?

DOUG  
I don't think so.

SUSAN  
What are we going to do with him?

DOUG  
I don't know. Let's take it a step at a time.

SUSAN  
All right. God, I'm freezing. Let's turn the heat up.

DOUG  
I did. I think they've turned off the gas.

SUSAN  
Oh.

(DOUG takes out his phone.)

Who are you calling?

DOUG  
Slink. Let him know we don't appreciate the humor.

(Pause. HE ends the call.)

SUSAN  
What's wrong?

DOUG  
It's probably nothing.

SUSAN  
What?

DOUG  
Slink's phone's been disconnected.

SUSAN  
Oh God.

It's probably nothing. DOUG

Give me my phone. SUSAN

Who are you going to call? DOUG

My parents. SUSAN

No. DOUG

Doug, give me my fucking phone! SUSAN

Not now. DOUG

I have to warn them. SUSAN

There's nothing to warn them about. DOUG

(SUSAN hits him, tries to get her phone from his pocket)

Give it to me! SUSAN

Wait. Listen. Stop and think a minute, all right? There's nothing you can do right now. You know what's going to happen if you call. First of all they won't believe you, so even if they are in danger, you won't do them any good. Then they'll ask you questions and you won't be able to lie. Remember? You won't be able to lie! DOUG

But I can't just sit here -- SUSAN

DOUG  
They could have you committed. Susan, he wasn't for real. He was a lunatic.

SUSAN  
How do you know?

DOUG  
He scanned our place with a TV remote. He can't remember four fifths of his own life.

SUSAN  
I know lots of people like that.

DOUG  
He thinks the moon landing didn't happen.

SUSAN  
He knew everything about us.

DOUG  
He thinks Hitler and Elvis are living it up in Argentina.

SUSAN  
There are plenty of people who think those things.

DOUG  
Not really.

SUSAN  
Yes!

DOUG  
Well then, they're fucking crazy too. He wasn't working for the government.

SUSAN  
Doug, the two aren't mutually exclusive.

DOUG  
But clinically, certifiably insane people can't --

SUSAN  
Yes they can: McCarthy. Nixon. Donald Rumsfeld.

DOUG  
He was just creepy, not --

SUSAN  
Dick Cheney. Newt Gingrich. Christine O'Donnell.

Listen. They --

DOUG

Sarah Fucking Palin!

SUSAN

(Slight pause.)

DOUG

All right. I see your point.

(HE gets up and pulls out a piece of paper from under the mattress.)

SUSAN

Jesus, we've got to get out of here. They'll be here any minute.

DOUG

"They"?

SUSAN

You know.

DOUG

Babe, you've got to remember you're still on this drug. It makes you paranoid. It warps your judgment.

SUSAN

Don't patronize me. I suppose your judgment is unimpaired.

DOUG

Well, yes, it is.

SUSAN

Bullshit.

DOUG

I was never high to begin with.

SUSAN

But you --

DOUG

I just ate a plain sugar cube. I left one placebo just in case.

SUSAN

But you were --

DOUG

Faking.

SUSAN  
You were ... when you ... You are such a --

DOUG  
Liar.

SUSAN  
STOP IT! Why didn't you tell me earlier?

DOUG  
You didn't ask.

SUSAN  
Oh, come on.

(DOUG considers the question for a moment.)

DOUG  
I didn't tell you because I was saving it to spring on you later. I do that a lot. I'm afraid of you because I think you're stronger than I am, so I withhold information from you until I can use it to make you feel stupid.

(Pause. HE sets fire to the paper.)

SUSAN  
What's that?

DOUG  
The recipe.

SUSAN  
Oh.

DOUG  
We're okay. Trust me.

SUSAN  
But, honey, I don't trust your judgment when I'm straight. Why should I trust you now?

DOUG  
Because I'm not a reptile.

SUSAN  
(Starting to cry)

How do I know?

(DOUG gathers her to him. A knock at the door. SUSAN yelps.)

Don't answer it. SUSAN

Babe, calm down. DOUG

Oh god. SUSAN

Come on, no one's going to hurt us. DOUG

You don't know that. SUSAN

(Another knock.)

Would "they" knock? Besides, if it's "them" what are we going to do about it? Slip out the kitchen window? DOUG

(HE exits to the front hall.)

Johnny's Pizza. VOICE

Oh ... great. What do I owe you? DOUG

It's all paid for. VOICE

Oh ... who paid for it? DOUG

Dunno. Enjoy. VOICE

Well, here's for you. DOUG

Thanks. Good night. VOICE

(DOUG re-enters with pizza box, sets it down on the table.)

Just in time. I'm starved. DOUG

DON'T OPEN IT! SUSAN

What? DOUG

SUSAN

It could be a bomb.

DOUG

A bomb that smells like a pizza?

(HE opens the box.)

SUSAN

Don't eat it. It's probably poisoned.

DOUG

(Sighs, drops the lid.)

Worse. It's got anchovies all over it.

(HE gets up and heads into the kitchen.)

Dead fish.

(HE comes back with his fish cupped in his hands, crosses to the bathroom.)

Antonioni-oni. Fellini. Caio, babies.

(Sound of the toilet flushing, then the squealing sucking sound water pipes make when the water's been shut off down the line.)

DOUG

Shit!

(HE comes back.)

The water's off.

(Pause.)

SUSAN

I can't take this. I don't know whether we're in danger or not, but I've got to get out of here. Will you come with me?

DOUG

No.

SUSAN

Please.

DOUG

No.

SUSAN

All right. I'll go by myself.

(Slight pause.)

Now where are my keys?



(SHE starts searching. DOUG watches for a while.)

Susan? DOUG

Mmn? SUSAN

There's something I've got to ask you. DOUG

What? SUSAN

It's about what just happened. DOUG

Let's talk about it later. SUSAN

No, I've got to ask you now. DOUG

I don't want to talk about it. I want to find my keys and get out of here. SUSAN

When he was on the floor and you were asking him all those questions. DOUG

Not now. SUSAN

When you pulled his head back and put that pill in front of him. DOUG

No. Shut up. SUSAN

When you put that pill in his mouth. It looked like you were ... It looked like you were enjoying yourself. DOUG

Doug -- SUSAN

Getting off on it. Were you? DOUG

I -- SUSAN

Answer. DOUG

SUSAN

(Beginning to convulse, avoiding DOUG's eyes)

-- I don't want to answer you.

Answer me. DOUG

-- You can't do this. SUSAN

I have to know. DOUG

-- No. SUSAN

(Bearing down)  
Were you getting off on it? DOUG

-- This is rape. SUSAN

Were you? DOUG

I DON'T WANT TO ANSWER YOU! SUSAN

WERE YOU? DOUG

(Making a decision not to fight the question, SUSAN looks DOUG in the eye, gets herself under control. Slight pause.)

SUSAN

(Levelly.)

Yes.

(Pause. Susan's phone rings.)

Hello? This is Susan. Oh. Yeah. Yeah, I do want to know. I keep trying to call you guys when you're closed. What time is it? Aren't you closed now? Oh, okay. 056-63-4978. Um, great. Thank you.

(SHE hangs up. THEY stand there.)

So ... How'd you like to be a father?

(Pause. HE opens his fist. HE's holding her keys. Pause.

SHE takes the keys and puts them in her pocket. HE keeps his hand out.

SHE takes his hand and draws him to her. HE embraces her from behind.

The alarm goes off. HE makes as if to move, but SHE holds his arms fast.

THEY stand there.

The alarm continues as the LIGHTS FADE.)