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The year of and A statement: two plays

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The Year Of and A Statement

Two plays

by

William Bonfiglio

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

Major: Creative Writing and Environment

Program of Study Committee:
Charissa Menefee, Major Professor
Debra Marquart
Susan Yager
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Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2016

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DEDICATION

These plays are dedicated to Bob and Catherine Bonfiglio, who have gifted me with unconditional, unfailing support and love throughout my education.

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PREFACE

When I arrived at Iowa State University in the fall of 2013, I did not anticipate that my three years attaining an M.F.A. in Creative Writing and Environment would culminate with two plays. I had achieved admission to the program based on my poetry, which, in the writing sample I included with my application, explored such innocuous territory as Ontario pastorals and toenail clippings. It seemed to me that my perspective on environmental writing did not achieve the same profundity as that of my peers, who had successfully established their voices and careers upon sustainability, food politics, and ecological awareness. This was never clearer than at our introductory potluck dinner when a classmate asked to which environmental causes I had invested my time and passion, and I replied that I enjoyed eating carrots. Environmentalism is an ideology I certainly appreciate, but not one to which I have devoted extensive effort. I have always been more intrigued by social environments and how place, including one's country of origin, influences personal beliefs, values, and behaviors.

My country of origin is the United States, home to the most firearms per capita and the highest rate of homicide by firearm than any other country in the world (Masters). In my country, when a man walks into an elementary school with a gun and kills twenty-seven women and children, twice as many states pass legislation weakening firearm regulations than strengthening them (Hartmann). In my country, schools and universities – traditional bastions of logic, intellectuality, and diplomacy – are, more than anywhere else in the world, the settings of senseless, prolific carnage (“173 School Shootings In America Since 2013”). My peers lament the ecological damage being committed by TransCanada's Keystone Pipeline and Monsanto's unethical operations. Companies such as these are inflicting irreversible but gradual damage to

our environment and quality of life. Comparatively, the epidemic of gun violence that claims more than 33,000 lives each year represents a threat far more immediate (“Assault or Homicide”).

I cannot reconcile the America I was taught to love in my youth – land of the free and home of the brave – with the evidence that mass shootings have increased dramatically since 2000 (Schmidt). But I am far more troubled by the significant population of Americans who assert this country would be safer if firearms were more prevalent (Newport). Studies have repeatedly and consistently rebuffed this belief (Ingraham). And though gun ownership is firmly entrenched in American culture and identity, its role is not irreversible, as demonstrated in the precedent set by Australia in 1996 when gun laws were radically strengthened in response to the Port Arthur Massacre. The years that followed were marked by a pronounced decrease in firearm violence (Smith-Spark).

But despite multiple, earnest attempts by individual states and leaders, the United States as a whole has failed to impart significant changes in policy. And just like Joe Keller, the protagonist of Arthur Miller’s tragedy *All My Sons*, our choices – freely elected – leave us solely responsible for the consequences: tens of thousands of shattered families every year. Despite plentiful resources, we have no shared inclination to institute more effective and responsible legislation. Perhaps this is what makes the prevalency of gun violence in America so disconcerting.

The first piece of my thesis, titled *The Year Of*, is a full-length play divided into two acts and set in an upstate New York all-boys Jesuit high school modeled after the one I attended. *The Year Of* portrays the caustic, volatile dynamic that I encountered in high school, interrupted by a violence that is, as aforementioned, far too common. The play relies upon an extensive cast as

well as measured, deliberate stage directions to create as realistic a portrayal of school violence as I could conceive. Characters and plot were informed by my studies in psychology both preceding and concurrent to my tenure at Iowa State, as well as independent readings on violence and loss.

The second piece of my thesis is a one-act play titled “A Statement.” It explores the grief suffered by the parents of a perpetrator of mass violence five days after his rampage and death. The play is set near Worcester, Massachusetts, and was principally informed by the journalistic writings of Dave Cullen and the events of the massacre at Columbine High School in April 1999.

My purpose in writing these two plays was to illustrate that tragedy of mass shootings and gun violence in general through more concentrated, focused settings. I could not, through poetry, achieve the immersive, sustained tension that was necessary for this subject.

Scriptwriting, which relies upon timing, atmosphere, and characters, would fit my needs far more capably.

But more importantly, I wrote these plays because I am confused. I do not understand why the world’s richest country – a country with seemingly every resource at its disposal – is also among its most violent. I do not understand why its people value their capacity to own weapons over their own personal safety and the safety of those they love. And I do not understand why we have permitted acts of mass violence to become the norm, to become routine.

Arthur Miller hypothesized “The very impulse to write, I think, springs from an inner chaos crying for order, for meaning, and that meaning must be discovered in the process of writing or the work lies dead as it is finished” (Eby).

I did not write these plays to change anyone's mind, to win anyone over, or to raise any awareness. I wrote these plays to mourn, to reflect, and to find a semblance of clarity. I wrote these plays for me.

But I am grateful to be able to share them.

* * *

The plays included in this collection were developed in part through exploratory exercises in composing scenarios and character sketches, examples of which are included in Appendices A and B, respectively. In addition, the plays were variably influenced by the works listed in Appendix C, which include a selection of short plays, several full-length tragedies, and a few films, among others.

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THE YEAR OF: A PLAY IN TWO ACTS

CHARACTERS (in order of appearance)

MR. LEE FINNIGAN: Thirty. White. Gym teacher. Fit. Crop-cut hair. Relaxed demeanor.

DR. BARBARA LEGWAND: Forty-eight. White. High school principal. Fit. Conservatively made up. Upright posture and rigid, professional bearing.

A.J. JOHANNES: Seventeen. Middle Eastern. Small. Speaks with a slight lisp and stands in forward-head posture. Sheepish and self-conscious.

CESAR BOJOS: Seventeen. Black Hispanic. Short and slightly overweight. Short curly afro. Glasses. Speaks and moves frenetically.

ROYCE CALLAHAN: Eighteen. White. Tall and skinny. Maintains an upright and prim posture. Handsomely dressed and styled.

PHILLIP SMITH: Eighteen. White. Wrestling star and student body president. Muscular but on the shorter side. Practiced but relaxed posture. Attractive. Some acne, but in a charming way.

ROB LEFAIVRE: Eighteen. White, though with a naturally dark complexion. A backup point guard for his school's team. Short with some muscle. Slouching, disengaged posture. Messily dressed and kept.

JOHN JURRIES: Eighteen. White. Hockey player. Big and burly, with particularly wide shoulders and blonde hair past his ears. Speaks deeply and lazily with little effort toward enunciation. Pockmarked face.

TOMASZ PACHUCKI: Eighteen. White. Slouching and potbellied. Unkempt, dress-wise. Unattractive bowl cut.

WYATT DOAN: Seventeen. White and pale. Trim and handsome, but holds a slight forward-head posture. Speaks clearly and precisely.

MARCUS STRONG: Seventeen. Black. Attractive. Unpracticed posture. Deep, articulate voice. Short, simple haircut.

COREY ADAMS: Seventeen. White. Hockey player. Tall and more skinny than muscular. Short, handsome haircut and smooth features. Head is constantly crooked to one side.

MAX TRESKELL: Seventeen. White. Posture is comically upright. Soft-spoken but articulate. Short, trim haircut. Handsome features and a smile perhaps a bit too big for his face. Effeminate.

PATRICK COLLINS-MANAHAN: Eighteen. White. Thin. Walks and stands upright but sits in a slouch. Monotone speaking voice, but warm laugh and handsome smile. Hair is buzzed close to his scalp.

MRS. DEBORAH MANAHAN: Fifty-five. White. Thin. Practiced and upright posture. Brazen, confident speech, with a slight Long Island accent. Face has some wrinkles and hair is obviously dyed.

ADAM KALICH: Seventeen. White. Average height and build. Short, casual haircut.

A NOTE ON COSTUMES

This play is set in an all-boys Jesuit high school where students are required to adhere to a particular dress code. This code requires a dress necktie or bowtie, a suit coat or sport coat, a business-type shirt designed to be worn with a tie, plain dress pants worn with a belt, and traditional dress shoes or medium-dress shoes. Shirts are always to be tucked in, top buttons are always to be done up, and ties are to be cleanly and firmly knotted at the top button. All of the student characters should be dressed in variations of this uniform unless otherwise specified. Members of the faculty, while not explicitly held to the same standards, are expected to dress professionally.

A NOTE ON DATES

On occasions when the year is identified, the current year should be used. The day and month, however, should remain as written.

ACT I

SETTING

A classroom with one neutral-colored wall angled from center-left to back-center. The lighting is bluish, as if lit naturally from a cloudy day.

The wall has a windowed door nearest to stage left. This door opens into an off-stage hallway. Above the door is a crucifix.

A grey, plastic garbage bin is next to the door, with a black plastic trash bag inside. Above it, a light switch flipped to the “off” position. Along nearly the entire length of the remaining wall, set three and a half feet from the floor, is a whiteboard, about three feet in height, with a metal tray for markers underneath. On the tray are a dry erase board eraser and four dry erase markers. Written in the top left hand corner of the whiteboard in elegant, red cursive is “Friday March 18, 2016 A.M.D.G.”

Back center, separated from the wall with a chair behind it: a large kneehole desk, facing downstage right. On it is a leather blotter, a coffee mug filled with pencils, a globe, and a simple analogue clock facing away from the audience.

Thirteen identical legged chairs with connected writing desks fill in the remaining space. They are arranged in three rows on a diagonal parallel to the backstage wall and facing downstage left. The two rows further back each have five chairs; the front row has three.

(A key jiggles in the door's lock and the door opens. Enter MR. FINNIGAN, wearing a lightweight athletic jacket, khakis, and sneakers, and carrying a mug of coffee and a satchel over his shoulder. He flips the light switch on. Nothing happens. He flips the light switch off and on and off.)

MR. FINNIGAN

Christ...

(He looks around, notices the crucifix hanging above him, and looks sheepish.)

MR. FINNIGAN flips the light switch on once more. When nothing happens, he flips it off, moves to the desk, draws out the chair, and sets the satchel on it. He sets his mug on the blotter, hesitates, and then moves the mug from the blotter to a bare spot on the desk.

He runs his hand across the surface of the globe, touches the pencils in the mug, and fingers the blotter. He leans over the desk, propping himself on splayed, straight, outstretched arms, and surveys the room, nodding slightly. He reaches back, picks up his coffee mug, and takes a swig, nodding while doing so as if he were listening to a student.

DR. LEGWAND enters tentatively, wearing a suit jacket and light overcoat over a plain white blouse and a skirt that matches the suit jacket. On her feet, she wears simple black flats and, on her left hand's ring finger, a wedding band. Around her neck is a small, plain cross on a thin necklace. She carries a briefcase.)

DR. LEGWAND

Lee?

(MR. FINNIGAN startles visibly. He sets his coffee mug down on the desk.)

MR. FINNIGAN

Heh. You scared me.

DR. LEGWAND

Sorry about that.

MR. FINNIGAN

Almost spilled my coffee all over Father's desk, his nice blotter.

DR. LEGWAND

Good thing you didn't.

(MR. FINNIGAN laughs.)

MR. FINNIGAN

Yeah.

DR. LEGWAND

Anything I can get you?

MR. FINNIGAN

Nope. Should be all right.

DR. LEGWAND

You picked up the materials from the office?

(MR. FINNIGAN taps his satchel.)

MR. FINNIGAN

Got 'em all right here. Thanks, Doc.

DR. LEGWAND

Good.

(A pause.)

Want me to turn the lights on?

MR. FINNIGAN

Oh!

(He moves toward her.)

Well, I tried to, actually, but they didn't, uh, they didn't go on. Is there a trick or something?

(DR. LEGWAND flips the light switch. For a moment, nothing happens. Then, fluorescent light flickers and flashes on from above.)

DR. LEGWAND

It takes a few seconds in some of these rooms.

MR. FINNIGAN

Ahh. I thought I gave it a few seconds.

DR. LEGWAND

Hm.

MR. FINNIGAN

Let there be light, huh?

DR. LEGWAND

Hm.

(An awkward pause.)

Well, you know where the office is, if you need anything.

MR. FINNIGAN

Sure do.

DR. LEGWAND

Don't hesitate.

MR. FINNIGAN

I won't.

(remembering)

Oh, wait. There is something. Um... I saw on the schedule you have me proctoring second period. But I'm teaching gym second period. I'm sure I could get Steve to cover it, if you needed me here.

DR. LEGWAND

Go to gym. I'll look at the schedule and find someone else.

MR. FINNIGAN

Okay, great.

(DR. LEGWAND exits.)

MR. FINNIGAN

(to himself)

Idiot.

(MR. FINNIGAN walks to his desk, lifts his satchel off the chair and sets it on the floor, and sits down. He stretches his feet, leans back, and looks at the ceiling.)

'Let there be light....' Agh.

(MR. FINNIGAN shakes his head, sits up, and bends behind the desk. After a moment of fumbling he withdraws a folder, presumably from his satchel, which he drops onto the desk and opens. He pulls out a few papers and glances through them.)

MR. FINNIGAN opens the center drawer. He sifts through it, pulls out a stack of stickie notes, and sets them on the blotter. He pulls out a very large silver pen, holds it in both hands, and rolls it between his fingers for a moment before putting it back and closing the drawer. He notices the stickie notes, opens the drawer, and puts them away. Then he closes the drawer.

He stands, walks around the desk and leans against it, facing the chairs and the audience. For a moment he stares over the classroom. Then, he folds his arms, and smiles. He pantomimes having a conversation with a student, gesturing and nodding.

Enter A.J. (His clothes are too big for him, but his tie is straight, his shoes are shined, and his shirt is neatly tucked in to his trousers.)

A.J.

Mister Finnigan?

(MR. FINNIGAN startles slightly.)

MR. FINNIGAN
(a little embarrassed)

Hey, A.J.

A.J.

Is Father not here today?

MR. FINNIGAN

He's got the flu.

A.J.

Oh.

(A.J. turns to leave.)

MR. FINNIGAN

Anything I can help you with, A.J.?

A.J.

No, thank you.

MR. FINNIGAN

Okay, but you know where I am if you need anything.

Thank you.

A.J.

Don't hesitate, okay?

MR. FINNIGAN

Okay.

A.J.

(A.J. exits.

Offstage, in the hallway, boys can be heard moving around at lockers, opening and shutting them, and chatting indistinctly between themselves.

MR. FINNIGAN moves toward the door, slowly at first, but then quickly, as if he's remembered to tell A.J. something. But when he reaches the door he stops, reflects, and turns back, and begins to walk slowly toward the desk before stopping at the whiteboard and reading what is written there.)

Eighteenth?

MR. FINNIGAN

(He thinks for a moment. Then, he picks up the eraser and erases the "18." He walks back to the desk, leafs through the folder. He frowns, pulls his cell phone out of his pocket and looks at it.

He walks back to the left side of the whiteboard, picks the red marker from those available, and writes "18" where he had previously erased. The numbers he draws are sloppy; they are not angled like the rest of the text and are slightly bigger. He notices the discrepancy, erases the numbers, and tries again. He steps away from the board, considers his writing, and sets the marker back where it was.

CESAR enters quickly. His glasses are askew, his shirt is untucked in the back, and his tie is drawn too tightly around his neck. He carries three thick notebooks, three binders, three textbooks, and a zippered pencil case. He clutches his materials close to his chest, as if afraid someone might knock them away.)

CESAR
Oh! Good morning, Mister Finnigan.

MR. FINNIGAN
Good morning, Cesar.

(CESAR moves to the first desk in the furthestmost downstage row. He sets his stack of materials on the desk and sits down. From one of his coat pockets, he removes a clasp of notecards and begins to flip through them, quizzing himself. Once, he stops and rearranges his folders and textbooks, stacking them so that the folders are on top and the textbooks on the bottom. All of his movements are fast – almost frantic.

Simultaneously, MR. FINNIGAN moves to the instructor's desk and sits down. He takes a swig of coffee, wrinkles his nose, then takes a long draught. He shakes his head as if to wake himself up, and stands again. He walks around to the side of the desk and spins the globe.)

MR. FINNIGAN
Got any plans for the weekend, Cesar?

CESAR
Sorry?

MR. FINNIGAN
Do you have any plans for the weekend?

CESAR
Oh. No.

MR. FINNIGAN
Not going to one of the games?

CESAR
What games?

MR. FINNIGAN
Hockey? Basketball?

CESAR
Oh. No.

(CESAR resumes looking through his notecards.)

MR. FINNIGAN

Hm.

CESAR

Sorry?

MR. FINNIGAN

Nothing.

MR. FINNIGAN returns to his chair and sits down. He opens his folder, looks around him for something, and then sees the mug full of pencils. He takes one, begins to make a note on a sheet inside the folder, but the tip snaps. He looks at it, then puts it back in the mug with the others. He takes another pencil and finishes his note. Then he puts the pencil back in the mug.

Enter ROYCE, dressed impeccably. He carries a worn leather briefcase, stuffed full.)

ROYCE

Morning, Mister Finnigan.

MR. FINNIGAN

Good morning, Royce.

(ROYCE moves to a desk in the center row, next to CESAR. He sets his briefcase under the chair, and takes a seat)

ROYCE

Is Father out today?

MR. FINNIGAN

Mhm.

ROYCE

Is he sick?

MR. FINNIGAN

Yeah.

ROYCE

He was just saying yesterday that they ought to close the school.

MR. FINNIGAN

He was?

ROYCE

Everyone's sick.

MR. FINNIGAN

Well, not everyone.

ROYCE

No, but lots of people. Teachers, too.

MR. FINNIGAN
(with humor)

Oh, yeah. I noticed that.

(ROYCE laughs politely.)

ROYCE

I guess you did.

(to CESAR)

Hey, Cesar. Studying for Chem?

CESAR

Yes.

ROYCE

How are you feeling?

CESAR

Fine. Why?

ROYCE

No, how are you feeling about the exam?

CESAR

Oh, okay, I guess. I don't have the best grasp on moles and molar mass. That could be a big problem. And I would like to get an A-plus. A-plus is the score.

ROYCE

I'm sure you'll be fine. How'd you do on the last one?

Um... okay.

CESAR

Just okay?

ROYCE

Yeah.

CESAR

What'd you get?

ROYCE

I would prefer not to say.

CESAR

Ah, well. Figured I'd ask. In any case, I'm sure you did great.
(to MR. FINNIGAN)

Will you be proctoring first period, Mister Finnigan?

ROYCE

Mhm.

MR. FINNIGAN

Will we need anything?

ROYCE

We're going to have a study hall.

MR. FINNIGAN

Okay.

ROYCE

(He reaches into his briefcase and takes a notebook, then stands and walks to the door.

As ROYCE exits, PHILLIP appears in the doorway but does not enter. He is handsomely dressed and groomed, but has not yet put on a tie.

As PHILLIP and MR. FINNIGAN talk, ROB enters, passing PHILLIP, and moves to the last chair in CESAR's row. ROB is slouching and tired, carrying a notebook and a pen. His hair is uncombed and messy, his dress shirt is stuffed carelessly into his trousers, and his tie is sloppily knotted. He wears a basketball jersey

with “ST. IGNATIUS” printed on it instead of a suit coat, and sneakers instead of dress shoes.)

PHILLIP

Hey, Mister Finnigan?

MR. FINNIGAN

Good morning, Phillip.

PHILLIP

Good morning. Father’s out?

MR. FINNIGAN

Afraid so.

(ROB sits down heavily, drops his notebooks under his chair, and folds his arms on his desk, laying his head on them and closing his eyes.)

PHILLIP

So, we’ll be having a study hall?

MR. FINNIGAN

Yes, sir.

PHILLIP

Great.

(PHILLIP exits. CESAR continues to run through his flash cards.

Enter JOHN, slow and sauntering. He wears a St. Ignatius hockey jersey over his dress shirt. His tie is straight and his pants are pressed, and his hair is slicked back wetly. He has one notebook tucked into his waistband along his back, and he pulls it out as he walks between the rows of chairs. When he reaches ROB, he whaps him on the head with it.)

JOHN

Wakey wakey.

(ROB lifts his head, scowls, and puts it back down. JOHN falls into the seat next to ROB.)

Didn't you sleep last night?

JOHN

Fuck off.

ROB

Watch it, Rob.

MR. FINNIGAN

(JOHN tousles ROB's hair.)

JOHN

Yeah, Robby.

(ROB swats JOHN's hand away.)

ROB

Fuck off, dude.

MR. FINNIGAN

What did I just say?

ROB

Mister Finnigan, John is harassing me.

MR. FINNIGAN

What?

ROB

He's harassing me, sir. And I don't think I should have to suffer such malicious treatment when my parents pay twelve thousand dollars a year for me to achieve a respectable education.

MR. FINNIGAN

All right, your honor, give it a rest.

ROB

(with mock exasperation)

Don't I have rights?

JOHN

No rights for you, man.

(to MR. FINNIGAN)

Are you coming to the game this weekend, Finny?

MR. FINNIGAN
(simultaneously with ROB)

No...

ROB
(simultaneously with MR. FINNIGAN)

He's coming to basketball.

JOHN
(to MR. FINNIGAN)

No, he's not.

Are you?

(MR. FINNIGAN nods.)

JOHN
What? Come on, Finny! It's the championship!

MR. FINNIGAN
Sorry, but if I'm going out, I'd rather drive to East than to Utica. And can you...?

JOHN
(cutting him off)

State championship, man!

ROB
You're gonna get killed, anyway.

JOHN
Like hell. We're going all the way to nationals.

(Techno music begins to play over an intercom – a repetitive, driving beat.)

MR. FINNIGAN
Hey, John, can you call me Mister Finnigan?

JOHN
(reflexively)

Sure, Finny – I mean, Mister Finnigan.

ROB
How'd you even make the playoffs with a loss to Saint Tom's?

(JOHN dances in his seat.)

Shut up. You're ruining the song.

JOHN

(MR. FINNIGAN takes a pencil out of the coffee mug, begins to make a note, then realizes the pencil has no point. He puts it back in the mug, and takes another pencil.)

Hey, wanna dance? Come on, it'll be fun.

JOHN

(mimicking a girl's voice)

Maybe next time.

ROB

(ROYCE enters and retakes his seat.)

Aww, you don't wanna dance with me?

JOHN

No fat chicks.

ROB

More cushion for the pushin', baby!

JOHN

John, can you be quiet for a second?

MR. FINNIGAN

(MR. FINNIGAN checks off names on a roster, frowns, and counts heads.)

How many people are in this section?

Fifteen?

ROYCE

Fourteen?

MR. FINNIGAN

Sounds about right.

ROYCE

Oh. Seems small.

MR. FINNIGAN

JOHN
(to ROB)

That's what she said.

ROB

Wow, dude. Going retro?

JOHN

I'm bringing it back!

(Enter TOMASZ and WYATT. TOMASZ's shirt is sloppily tucked into his pants, and his jacket is lightly but visibly soiled. His top button is undone and his necktie, clearly a clip-on, is askew. He wears sneakers instead of dress shoes, and holds two notebooks, one textbook, and a half-unwrapped muffin. WYATT is smartly dressed and nicely styled, and carries a folder and a notebook.)

MR. FINNIGAN

Tomasz, where are your shoes?

TOMASZ
(through a mouthful of muffin)

On my feet?

(As MR. FINNIGAN and TOMASZ talk, WYATT moves to the one of the chairs in the furthest row and sits, setting his things on the desk.)

MR. FINNIGAN

No, where are your dress shoes?

TOMASZ

In my locker.

MR. FINNIGAN

Why?

(TOMASZ shrugs.)

TOMASZ

I dunno.

MR. FINNIGAN

Well, go get them. And fix your tie while you're at it.

(TOMASZ exits.)

ROB

Hey, Mister Finnigan. What are we doing in gym today?

MR. FINNIGAN

You'll find out soon enough.

ROB

No, really. I forgot a gym shirt.

MR. FINNIGAN

I guess you're not prepared then.

ROB

So, we'll be doing something?

MR. FINNIGAN

Well, yeah. Why wouldn't we?

ROB

I was just wondering if we were doing health or something like that.

(MARCUS shuffles in sullenly, carrying a notebook and a textbook. His shoes are scuffed and his shirt is too small. He walks to the last chair in the row furthest upstage and sits.)

(Meanwhile, CESAR pockets his notecards.)

WYATT

Are we playing handball again?

MR. FINNIGAN

Maybe.

WYATT

Sweet.

(The music stops. PHILLIP begins to speak via intercom, accompanied by a slight electric buzzing.)

PHILLIP

(offstage, via intercom)

Good morning students, faculty, and staff of Saint Ignatius. This is Phillip Smith speaking.

WYATT, ROB, and JOHN
(shouting in unison)

Smitty!

(All of the action and dialogue that follows overlaps with the broadcast announcements unless otherwise specified.)

MR. FINNIGAN

Knock it off.

(MR. FINNIGAN stands, walks to the door, and closes it. Immediately afterward, COREY knocks on the door's window.)

MR. FINNIGAN opens the door to reveal COREY, wearing a particularly baggy hockey jersey over his dress shirt. His tie is not drawn all the way up and the top button of his shirt is undone.)

PHILLIP
(offstage, via intercom)

Today is Friday, March eighteenth, the year of our Lord twenty sixteen, and a "C" day.

MR. FINNIGAN

Sorry, Corey. You're late.

PHILLIP
(offstage, via intercom)

Please stand for the pledge of allegiance.

COREY

Come on, Finny.

MR. FINNIGAN

You've got to be in here when the music ends – you know that. Go get a slip. And call me Mister Finnigan, okay?

(COREY exits and MR. FINNIGAN shuts the door.)

PHILLIP
(offstage, via intercom)

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MR. FINNIGAN

What are you doing, guys? Stand up.

(ROYCE and CESAR stand. CESAR puts his hand over his heart.)

WYATT

Father doesn't make us stand for the pledge.

MR. FINNIGAN

Well, this'll mix things up nicely, then. Come on.

(WYATT, ROB, and JOHN stand.)

PHILLIP

(offstage, via intercom)

Please join me in reciting the Lord's prayer.

MR. FINNIGAN

Marcus, stand up, please.

MARCUS

No.

PHILLIP

(offstage, via intercom)

Our Father who art in heaven: hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

MR. FINNIGAN

What?

MARCUS

No.

MR. FINNIGAN

You don't want to stand up?

MARCUS

No.

MR. FINNIGAN

Why not?

MARCUS

I don't want to.

MR. FINNIGAN

I asked everybody, out of respect, to stand for pledge and prayer. You don't want to be respectful?

(MARCUS shrugs.)

Okay. I'm not going to force you.

PHILLIP

(offstage, via intercom.)

And lead us not into temptation. But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

(The students sit.)

JOHN

What, now we sit? Why do we have to stand if we're just going to sit down again?

PHILLIP

(offstage, via intercom)

And now for today's announcements.

MR. FINNIGAN

Is it too much to ask for you to stand for your country, John?

PHILLIP

(offstage, via intercom)

Tickets are now on sale for Saint Ignatius and Sacred Heart's joint production of *Into The Woods*, opening Thurs-, opening yesterday in our very own Hamline Auditorium. Tickets can be purchased from Mrs. Shroeder in the switchboard office. They are eight dollars for students and ten dollars for general admission. Shows will be Thursday at seven, Friday at seven, Saturday at seven, and Sunday at two. The same schedule will repeat next week.

JOHN

I dunno. Seems like a communist thing to do.

MR. FINNIGAN

What?

JOHN

I'm just saying.

MR. FINNIGAN

Hold on. Since when has showing respect for your country made you a communist?

ROYCE

You probably mean “fascist,” right, John?

(JOHN shrugs.)

JOHN

Same thing.

WYATT

(to ROYCE, referring to Phillip’s announcement)

Hey, are you in that show?

PHILLIP

(offstage, via intercom)

The Cans for Crystal Drive is going strong, but we need your help. Bring two canned goods to your homeroom by Friday, March twenty-fifth, and you can dress down for that day. Remember: together we can put a dent in poverty.

ROYCE

(to WYATT)

No.

WYATT

How come?

(ROYCE shrugs.)

ROYCE

Can’t sing. Too busy.

WYATT

Oh.

PHILLIP

(offstage, via intercom)

And now, Father Rich with an important announcement.

MR. FINNIGAN

It surprises me that Father Echevarria doesn’t make you stand for prayer.

FR. RICH
(offstage, via intercom)

Good morning everyone. As you may have seen from the posters around school, Saint Ignatius will be hosting its tenth annual Clementi Blood Drive on April first. Gordon Clementi taught biology at Saint Ignatius for more than forty years, during which he inspired and offered guidance to more than two thousand students. He was a treasured member of the faculty and remains the winningest football coach in the history of the school. When he passed away in 2005, students of Saint Ignatius established the Clementi Blood Drive in his memory, and every year this drive has provided increasingly more students with the opportunity to donate blood to the Red Cross.

ROYCE
(to MR. FINNIGAN)

We've talked about it a few times.

MR. FINNIGAN

Oh? What does Father say?

ROYCE

He says that one of the greatest things about living in a free country is being able to do what we want, instead of what others want.

MR. FINNIGAN

Oh. So, Marcus, is this, like, a statement for you?

(MARCUS shrugs.)

You are Catholic, aren't you?

(MARCUS shrugs again.)

I asked you a question.

MARCUS

I'm Catholic.

MR. FINNIGAN

And you're American. So, why didn't you stand?

MARCUS

I didn't want to.

MR. FINNIGAN

So, were you just being lazy?

(MARCUS glares at MR. FINNIGAN.)

What does Father say about laziness? Royce? Has Father said anything about laziness before?

ROYCE

I don't think so.

MR. FINNIGAN

Has he ever said anything about the seven deadly sins?

WYATT

We've never discussed them.

MR. FINNIGAN

No? All right, first lesson of the day.

(MR. FINNIGAN walks to the whiteboard and writes "Seven deadly sins" in sloppy, unpracticed print. CESAR looks around at his peers. He opens one of his binders and begins taking notes. No one else does.)

FR. RICH

(offstage, via intercom)

Last year, more than two hundred students donated blood, and together preserved and saved more than six hundred lives. This year, our goal is to earn donations from two hundred and twenty-five students. If you would like to be a part of this worthwhile cause, please schedule your donation by signing up on the chart on my door. Students who donate will receive a free tee-shirt, complimentary of the Red Cross. And don't forget: every minute you spend giving blood is one less minute you have to spend struggling through AP Chem.

MR. FINNIGAN

There are seven deadly sins, sins that the Bible says are particularly damning. Anybody know one?

(With the exceptions of CESAR, taking notes, and ROYCE and WYATT, the students are obviously disengaged.)

ROYCE

Well, 'laziness,' yes?

(MR. FINNIGAN writes each sin on the board as he remembers it. He does so slowly, in the unpracticed way of a person who hasn't yet mastered the ability to talk and write at the same time.)

MR. FINNIGAN

Right. 'Laziness' is one. 'Pride' is another. Another is 'gluttony.' Another is 'envy.' 'Lust' is one. Another is... what's one more?

PHILLIP
(offstage, via intercom)

Thanks, Father Rich.

WYATT

‘Greed’?

PHILLIP
(offstage, via intercom)

Economics club is cancelled today. The group will meet next Tuesday as regularly scheduled.

MR. FINNIGAN

Yes, you’re absolutely right. Do you remember the last one?

WYATT

I just remember the ones in the movie.

MR. FINNIGAN

What movie?

PHILLIP
(offstage, via intercom)

And now, Doctor Legwand would like to say a few words.

WYATT

The one where Kevin Spacey plays the serial killer.

ROB

Aw, that was great. ‘What’s in the box?’

(MR. FINNIGAN replaces the cap on the marker and retakes his seat.)

MR. FINNIGAN

Okay, everybody. Let’s quiet down and listen to the announcements.

DR. LEGWAND
(offstage, via intercom)

Hello students, faculty, and staff. This Sunday, I am proud to announce that Saint Ignatius’ hockey team will be playing in the division four state championship for the first time in the program’s history.

ROB
(to JOHN, very quietly)

‘What’s in the fucking box?’

CESAR
(to WYATT)

What movie was that?

MR. FINNIGAN

That's enough, Cesar.

(CESAR takes a few more lines of notes before putting down his pen.)

DR. LEGWAND
(offstage, via intercom)

Due to popular demand, we will now have four busses available to transport fans from Saint Ignatius to the Memorial Auditorium in Utica. Busses will leave from Saint Ignatius' west parking lot at seven-thirty and arrive at the arena at around eleven-thirty. If you would like to claim a seat on the bus, please bring five dollars to Mrs. Schroeder in the switchboard office. Saint Ignatius seniors will be hosting a pre-game tailgate, and the game itself is scheduled to begin at two p.m. Tickets are eight dollars for anyone with a school I.D. I look forward to seeing the very best from the students of Saint Ignatius. And go Bucks!

JOHN

I'd better see all y'all there. You too, Cesar.

CESAR

Me?

MR. FINNIGAN

Quiet, John.

PHILLIP
(offstage, via intercom)

Now, Tomasz Pachucki with a word.

ROB

Hey!

MR. FINNIGAN

Shh. You won't get another warning.

TOMASZ
(offstage, via intercom)

He-Man Club. Free period. Mister Chabot's room. Go Bucks!

(MR. FINNIGAN looks up at the intercom disbelievingly, then walks to the door, opens it, and steps outside and looks down the hall.)

PHILLIP

(offstage, via intercom)

He-Man Club. I'll be there. Will you? Writing Club will be meeting in Dr. Rafei's Room during free period. Father Echevarria will be hosting an informal discussion... hang on, Father's not here today. I'll see if we can confirm that meeting is still happening.

(While MR. FINNIGAN has his back to the class, ROB reaches over and shoves JOHN in the shoulder. JOHN cocks his fist as if to punch ROB, who doesn't flinch. CESAR is looking back at them, watching. JOHN sees CESAR and cocks his fist at him in the same way. CESAR flinches, ducks his head a little. JOHN leans over and punches him twice in the thigh. CESAR hisses, pained, and rubs his leg.)

COREY enters carrying his notebook, hands MR. FINNIGAN a small slip of paper, and moves to the desk next to JOHN and in front of MARCUS. He sits down, slapping the notebook on his desk as he does so. JOHN leans toward him, holding out his hand for a low-five. COREY slaps his hand with friendly gusto, then leans back in his seat. MR. FINNIGAN, still standing near the doorway, watches this.)

PHILLIP

(offstage, via intercom)

No, please disregard that last announcement.

MR. FINNIGAN

Rob, where are your shoes?

ROB

We get to dress down for basketball.

PHILLIP

(offstage, via intercom)

Attention seniors: Next week, Somner's Suits will be measuring students for graduation tuxedos in the gymnasium. Please make an appointment with Mrs. Schroeder in the switchboard office to be fitted.

MR. FINNIGAN

Who says?

ROB

Doctor Legwand.

I didn't hear that.

MR. FINNIGAN

(ROB shrugs.)

He's shitting you, Mister Finnigan.

JOHN

PHILLIP
(offstage, via intercom)

This concludes the morning announcements. This has been Phillip Smith speaking. Have an excellent Friday, and go forth to be men for others.

(The slight buzzing that had been accompanying
PHILLIP's announcement ends.)

MR. FINNIGAN
Watch your mouth, John. Does Father tolerate that kind of language?

JOHN
(not wholly serious)

Father says one of the best things about this country is our right to free speech.

MR. FINNIGAN
I don't like your attitude.

(MARCUS snorts.)

Yes?

(MARCUS looks at MR. FINNIGAN, eyebrows raised
in a 'Who? Me?' expression.)

MR. FINNIGAN
Do you have something you want to say?

MARCUS
No.

MR. FINNIGAN
It sounded like you wanted to say something.

MARCUS
I don't.

(MR. FINNIGAN stares at MARCUS for a moment,
challenging him. After an extended pause, he retakes

his seat at the desk, pulls out a sheet of paper, and starts ticking off names.)

MR. FINNIGAN
(to himself)

No Chris... no Adam... no Troy...

(to WYATT)

Does Phillip usually skip homeroom?

WYATT

I don't think he has to come.

MR. FINNIGAN

Okay.

(TOMASZ knocks on the door's window. MR. FINNIGAN stands, walks to the door, and opens it.)

MR. FINNIGAN

Go get a slip.

TOMASZ

What? I was here on time!

MR. FINNIGAN

You were here, but you were unprepared, and now you're late. Go get a slip.

(He shuts the door and walks back to his desk. TOMASZ makes faces of incredulity in the window, then flips his middle finger toward MR. FINNIGAN. ROB, who is watching, smiles mockingly at TOMASZ, who redirects his gesture toward him.)

MR. FINNIGAN sees ROB, turns around, and starts moving toward the door. TOMASZ sees him coming and dashes away from the window. MR. FINNIGAN turns to the class.)

MR. FINNIGAN
(to ROB)

Go get your dress shoes.

ROB

I didn't bring them, Mister Finnigan. We were told we could dress down.

MR. FINNIGAN

You don't have dress shoes in your locker?

ROB

No.

MR. FINNIGAN

If I ask Doctor Legwand later whether you're allowed to dress down, she'll tell me yes?

ROB

That's what she told us.

MR. FINNIGAN

Will she tell me that?

ROB

I don't know.

MR. FINNIGAN

You probably should, shouldn't you?

(MR. FINNIGAN moves back to his desk and, while standing, looks over his materials once more. ROB and JOHN exchange scornful expressions.)

MR. FINNIGAN

I've got Corey, Cesar, Royce, Wyatt, John Jurries, Rob, Tomasz, Phillip, and Marcus. I don't have Chris, Adam, Troy, John Oberman, and Miguel. That sound about right?

(The students are quiet.)

All right. Sounds good.

(MR. FINNIGAN sits. Keeping his hands under the desk so the students can't see, he takes his phone from his pocket and begins to type out another message.)

For a short time, the students are quiet. WYATT opens his folder and pulls out a study guide. He reads down the page, using a finger to mark his spot. ROYCE has withdrawn a small, neat agenda from his briefcase. He flips through it. CESAR moves his pen from his notebook, closes the notebook, and takes his notecards from his pocket. He begins to run through them, just as he did earlier. MARCUS remains comfortably slouched in his chair. ROB puts his head back down on his desk.)

JOHN
(to COREY, quietly)

Give me a piece of paper.

COREY
(to JOHN, not as quietly)

What will you give me for it?

JOHN
(quietly and with good-humor)

Fucking nothing.

(COREY smirks, opens his notebook to the back, and tears out a sheet, which he hands to JOHN. JOHN begins to tear the paper into narrow strips. MR. FINNIGAN looks up and watches this while continuing to use his phone.)

MR. FINNIGAN

John, what are you doing?

JOHN

Nothing, Mister Finnigan.

MR. FINNIGAN

You're doing something.

JOHN
(to COREY)

Have you got anything for tonight?

COREY
(to JOHN)

Later.

(to MR. FINNIGAN)

Hey, Mister Finnigan. Are we allowed to use our phones?

MR. FINNIGAN

Of course not.

COREY

Then can I use yours?

(A quick beat. MR. FINNIGAN's hands stop moving and he opens his mouth and begins to say something, then pauses before he finds the right words.)

MR. FINNIGAN

You could, but I'm using it right now.

(JOHN takes the paper he's been tearing up and throws it into the air like streamers, laughing as he does so. ROB vaults out of his chair and shakes COREY by the shoulders, delighted and bellowing.)

ROB

Ohh, boom!

(CESAR is startled and exasperated by ROB's outburst. He rolls his eyes and then stares contemptuously back at him.)

MR. FINNIGAN

Sit down, Rob.

JOHN
(colloquially)

There you go, Finny.

(to CESAR)

What's up, Cesar?

MR. FINNIGAN

Call me 'Mister Finnigan,' will you, John? And I hope you're planning on cleaning those up.

JOHN

Absolutely, Mister Finnigan.

(ROB retakes his seat.)

ROB

What's on your mind, Cesar?

CESAR
(grumpily)

You're making a lot of noise.

ROB

That's true, that's true. Gotta wake up somehow.

CESAR

Well, can you do it a little more quietly?

(TOMASZ appears at the door's window and knocks.
MR. FINNIGAN rises and walks to the door.)

ROB

That wouldn't be much fun, now, would it?

CESAR

(inordinately frustrated)

I'm trying to study, Rob.

ROB

Maybe you should have studied at home, huh, Cesar?

(MR. FINNIGAN opens the door and steps aside to admit TOMASZ, who hands him a small slip of paper and begins to walk into the room. Before gets too far, MR. FINNIGAN stops him.)

MR. FINNIGAN

Where are your shoes?

(TOMASZ looks down at his feet and sighs.)

TOMASZ

I knew I forgot something.

MR. FINNIGAN

Go get them!

(TOMASZ exits. MR. FINNIGAN waits by the door.)

CESAR

(angrily, but under his breath)

I did study at home.

ROB

What?

CESAR

(a little louder)

I said I did study at home.

MR. FINNIGAN

(calling down the hall to TOMASZ)

Come on, Tomasz! At this rate, you'll be late for first period!

ROB

Well, maybe you should have studied harder.

CESAR

(animated and indignant)

I studied really hard!

(MR. FINNIGAN turns back into the room.)

MR. FINNIGAN

Cesar! If I hear another word from you, I'll have you in Doctor Legwand's office.

(A beat. MR. FINNIGAN turns back toward the hallway to wait for TOMASZ.)

ROB

(to CESAR)

Come on, sped. Don't you know how to be subtle?

JOHN

(to COREY)

What are you bringing?

COREY

The usual.

(ROB leans over the desk in front of him to prod CESAR, who shrugs violently away.)

ROB

(to CESAR)

Hey. Hey.

(Over his turned shoulder, MR. FINNIGAN sees ROB.)

MR. FINNIGAN

Leave him alone, Rob.

(ROB puts up his hands in an expression of surrender.)

Outside the classroom, students have started to move around, transitioning from homeroom to their first period class.

TOMASZ reenters, his feet stuffed forcefully into a beaten pair of dress shoes, their heels collapsed.)

Put them on right, Tomasz.

MR. FINNIGAN

(TOMASZ kneels and fixes his shoes, setting his notebooks and textbook on the floor next to him. MR. FINNIGAN stands over him, off to one side.)

COREY
(to JOHN)

Can you bring paper?

JOHN

Yeah, sure.

COREY

We're good on drink.

JOHN

Who's bringing it? Ian?

(COREY nods.)

COREY
(to MR. FINNIGAN, louder)

His brother has an I.D.
Hey, Mister Finnigan. Can we go to class?

MR. FINNIGAN

Is it ten after?

COREY

I dunno.

ROYCE

It's ten after.

MR. FINNIGAN

Good deal. Get lost, people.

(ROYCE pulls his briefcase out from under his desk, repacks his agenda, and exits. COREY also exits, carrying his notebook. TOMASZ, who has finished tying his shoe, moves to his seat – the last in the center row, and sits down heavily, dropping his things on his desk.)

MR. FINNIGAN walks to the whiteboard and erases his notes on the seven deadly sins.)

ROB
(quietly, to JOHN)

Yo. Come on.

(ROB stands.)

Hey, Mister Finnigan. Can John and I run down to the vending machines?

MR. FINNIGAN

Can you be back here in four minutes?

ROB

Of course!

MR. FINNIGAN

You sure?

(JOHN stands and stretches.)

JOHN

Yup.

MR. FINNIGAN

All right, but hurry.

(ROB and JOHN exit, leaving their things.)

MARCUS stands.)

MARCUS
(to MR. FINNIGAN)

I'm going to the bathroom.

MR. FINNIGAN

Make it quick.

(MARCUS exits unhurriedly.)

MR. FINNIGAN moves to his desk and sits. He pulls a folder out of his satchel and opens it. Grabbing a pencil from the mug, he makes checkmarks on a paper tucked into the folder, then pulls it out of the pocket and continues checking off items.

CESAR stands and moves to MR. FINNIGAN.)

CESAR

Mister Finnigan?

MR. FINNIGAN

Yes, Cesar?

CESAR

I want to apologize for being disruptive.

MR. FINNIGAN

No worries, Cesar. It wasn't a big deal.

CESAR

I don't want you to think that I wasn't paying attention.

MR. FINNIGAN

Oh, I know you were. You don't have to worry about that.

CESAR

I wasn't writing fast enough. What was the seventh deadly sin?

MR. FINNIGAN

What? Oh, don't worry about that, Cesar. I'm not going to test you or anything.

CESAR

I'd like to know.

(WYATT stands, stretches, and moves toward the door. As he does, MR. FINNIGAN stands and walks to the white board, picking up a marker.)

MR. FINNIGAN

You're with me next period, right, Wyatt?

WYATT

Just going to the water fountain real quick.

MR. FINNIGAN

All right.

(WYATT exits.

MR. FINNIGAN begins to write each of the seven deadly sins on the whiteboard as he did before. He

speaks as he writes. CESAR, meanwhile, remains standing awkwardly at the instructor's desk.)

MR. FINNIGAN

So, I was saying earlier that there are seven sins that are considered to be particularly awful. 'Greed' is one. 'Lust' is another. After 'lust' comes 'sloth,' or, 'laziness.' Then there's... um... 'gluttony,' which I suppose goes kinda with 'greed,' doesn't it?

(A.J. enters carrying two notebooks.)

Hey, A.J.

A.J.

Hello.

(A.J. moves to the second seat in the middle row and sidles lightly into it.)

MR. FINNIGAN

There's also... um... 'greed,' 'lust,' 'sloth,' 'gluttony'... I'm drawing a blank.

(PHILLIP enters with a notebook. He has put on a tie.)

PHILLIP

Hey, Tomasz. Long time, no see.

TOMASZ

Yup, yup. How goes it?

PHILLIP

Not too shabby.

(He moves to his seat, the first in the furthest row. He sits easily, laying his notebook on his desk.)

MR. FINNIGAN

'Pride'! Ah, I forgot 'pride.'

PHILLIP

The seven deadly sins, Mister Finnigan?

MR. FINNIGAN

You got it.

PHILLIP

You're missing 'envy.'

Good call.

MR. FINNIGAN

(He writes 'envy' on the board.)

What's the last one?

A.J.
(quietly)

'Wrath.'

MR. FINNIGAN

That's it. Great, A.J.

(He writes.)

CESAR

So, why are these sins so bad?

MR. FINNIGAN

Well, they represent the very worst of what humanity could do.

CESAR

According to God?

MR. FINNIGAN

Mhm.

(WYATT enters and moves to his seat.)

WYATT

Hey, Smitty.

PHILLIP

Hey, Wyatt, hey.

CESAR
(to MR. FINNIGAN)

Like, through a prophet?

MR. FINNIGAN

Um...

(Enter MAX, wearing a green t-shirt instead of a dress shirt and no suit coat. In plain block letters, the shirt reads "St. Ignatius and Sacred Heart Present:" and, in stylized writing, "*Into The Woods*. MAX carries a binder with plenty of loose-leaf paper. He moves to his

seat, the third in the back row.)

PHILLIP

Hi Max.

MAX

Hey.

(He takes his seat smoothly.)

PHILLIP

How'd it go last night?

MR. FINNIGAN

What was last night?

MAX
(to PHILLIP)

It went really well. Thanks for asking.

(to MR. FINNIGAN)

Opening night of the musical.

MR. FINNIGAN

Oh, right. Would you like to make an announcement before we start study hall?

MAX

Um, no thanks.

MR. FINNIGAN

Okay.

CESAR

Mister Finnigan?

MR. FINNIGAN

Yeah, Cesar?

CESAR

Did God speak through a prophet about the seven deadly sins?

MR. FINNIGAN

Well, I'm sure he did. That seemed to be his way of doing things.

(PATRICK enters wearing a tie that is too small for him, but drawn neatly up to his top button. He is otherwise smartly dressed. He takes a seat at the desk)

behind MAX.)

WYATT
(to PHILLIP)

Hey, I forgot to ask – how’s the Koran treating you?

(MR. FINNIGAN pulls his cell phone out of his pocket and checks it for the time.

PHILLIP yawns.)

PHILLIP

Laboriously. Very slow going.

WYATT

Why’s that?

PHILLIP

I’ve just been reading a couple verses before I nod off each night. I thought it’d be easier to remember in smaller bits, but I end up reading the same passage over and over again. Not really retaining much.

(MR. FINNIGAN moves to the door and closes it.)

MR. FINNIGAN

A.J., you doing okay?

A.J.

Yes. Thank you.

CESAR

Mister Finnigan, why did God make those sins more serious than the others?

(MR. FINNIGAN moves to his desk and sits.)

MR. FINNIGAN

Hm? Oh, I don’t know. I don’t what God was thinking. You know, Father might be better able to answer your questions. I have a feeling I’m not going to be able to do them justice.

CESAR

Are you sure?

MR. FINNIGAN

Yes, I’m sure.

(Abruptly, CESAR walks to his chair and sits down.

When seated, he opens a small notebook and writes.
MR. FINNIGAN briefly watches.)

MAX
(to PHILLIP)

You're reading the Koran?

PHILLIP

Trying to, yeah. It's pretty hard.

WYATT
(teasingly)

Phrasing...

(PHILLIP chuckles.)

MAX

You're not reading it in Arabic, are you?

PHILLIP

No. I've got a translation. Which is a bit of a bummer. The language is supposed to be beautiful – poetic.

WYATT

I bet you could find audio recordings online.

CESAR

Phillip, are you Muslim?

PHILLIP

No, I'm Catholic.

CESAR

Why are you reading the Koran if you're Catholic?

PHILLIP

Just out of interest.

CESAR

Like, to study it?

PHILLIP

I suppose.

CESAR

Have you read anything about terrorism?

TOMASZ

What?

PHILLIP
(lightheartedly)

I mean, I'm reading as much about terrorism in the Koran as I have in the Bible.

CESAR

The Bible doesn't say anything about terrorism.

PHILLIP

Maybe not explicitly, no. But neither does the Koran.

CESAR

Yes, it does.

PHILLIP

It does?

CESAR

The Koran says that all non-Muslims should be killed.

PHILLIP

I guess I haven't gotten to that part.

TOMASZ
(delighted)

Oh, my god...

WYATT

Cesar, where did you hear that?

CESAR

The news.

WYATT

What news?

CESAR

On T.V.

WYATT

No, what channel?

I don't know. CESAR

Was it Fox? WYATT

I don't know. CESAR

It was probably Fox. You can't listen to that crap. WYATT

They're only reporting what's happening. CESAR

Wow. TOMASZ

Reporting? Are you kidding? WYATT
(incredulously)

Hey. PHILLIP
(to WYATT)

Every religion has extremists. Christianity's got terrorists. (to CESAR)

There aren't any Christian terrorists. CESAR
(adamantly)

Haven't you heard of the Irish revolution? Lots of Christian terrorists then. WYATT

Is this what Father's classes are usually like? MR. FINNIGAN
(to MAX)

No. MAX

We were talking about blind faith yesterday. A.J.

Only because of Missus Manahan.

WYATT

What did Missus Manahan do?

MR. FINNIGAN

Our final project for her class is to prove the existence of God through math.

WYATT

Math?

MR. FINNIGAN

(MARCUS appears at the window and knocks. MR. FINNIGAN reaches into his pocket for his cell phone, checks the time, stands, and walks to the door.)

Your mom assigned that?

CESAR
(to PATRICK)

I guess.

PATRICK

Why?

CESAR

You'd have to ask her.

PATRICK

(MR. FINNIGAN opens the door.)

Marcus, you've gotta go get a slip.

MR. FINNIGAN

I was only in the bathroom.

MARCUS

The period started at 8:14. It's 8:21, now. You're late.

MR. FINNIGAN

(The other students listen with interest.)

I was here, Mister Finnigan. And I went to the bathroom.

MARCUS

MR. FINNIGAN

I told you to be here before the period started, Marcus. It was your responsibility to be on time.

MARCUS
(with slow anger)

I was on time. I stepped out.

MR. FINNIGAN

You weren't here when the period started.

MARCUS

I was here before it started!

MR. FINNIGAN

Go get a slip.

MARCUS

Are you serious?

MR. FINNIGAN

I'm serious.

(MARCUS begins to withdraw from the door.)

MARCUS
(exasperated)

Such bullshit...

(He exits. MR. FINNIGAN steps quickly into the doorway and calls after him.)

MR. FINNIGAN

What did you just say?

MARCUS
(from offstage)

You heard me!

MR. FINNIGAN

Are you kidding, Marcus? Do you want jug?

MARCUS
(offstage)

Fuck you, man! You're a fucking sub!

MR. FINNIGAN

You're talking to a teacher, Marcus!

MARCUS

(offstage)

You're not our teacher! You don't teach this fucking class!

MR. FINNIGAN

Marcus! Marcus!

(He steps back into the classroom and walks quickly to his desk, slowing as he reaches it. He is a little shocked, but mostly furious. He starts to write a note to himself, but thinks differently and walks to the door.)

I'm going to run down to Doctor Legwand's office. I'll be right back.

(He exits, leaving the door open behind him. There is a long, pervasive silence.)

TOMASZ

What the hell was that?

MAX

Shh.

TOMASZ

Shut up. What was that?

PHILLIP
(to WYATT)

Did something happen?

WYATT

Marcus wouldn't stand for pledge.

TOMASZ

We never stand for pledge.

WYATT

Finny wanted us to stand.

TOMASZ

Why?

WYATT

He thought it was respectful.

Father never makes us stand.

TOMASZ

Did Finny know?

PHILLIP

We told him.

WYATT

And he made you stand anyway?

TOMASZ

Yeah.

WYATT

What a dick.

TOMASZ

Marcus brought it on himself.

CESAR

I doubt that.

TOMASZ

How so?

PHILLIP
(to CESAR)

How so?

CESAR

He asked us to stand – we all stood. He was the only one who didn't.

(ROB and JOHN enter, each with a small, open bag of chips. JOHN also has a plastic bottle of soda. Over the dialogue that follows, both eat.)

Where'd Finny go?

JOHN

He had to step out.

PHILLIP

Had to finish chasing Marcus away.

TOMASZ

JOHN
(through a mouthful of chips)

What happened?

ROB
(to TOMASZ)

How was the office, by the way?

TOMASZ
(sarcastically)

Great, thanks for asking.
(to JOHN)

Marcus went to use the bathroom and Finny said he was late. Marcus flipped out.
(ROB and JOHN move to their desks and sit.)

ROB

Flipped out? Like, how?

TOMASZ

Called Finny out. Told him to fuck off.

JOHN

No shit...

ROB

Dude, what's his problem?

PATRICK

Maybe he's having a rough day.

ROB

Wouldn't surprise me. He is black.

MAX

What?

(ROB holds the bag upside down over his open mouth, shaking out the crumbs.)

ROB
(not seriously)

I mean, he's got it harder than we do. And Max, if you don't admit that and recognize your white privilege, you're an asshole.

Not Marcus. Finny.

PATRICK

Finny's not black.

JOHN
(joking)

No, I mean maybe Finny's having a rough day.

PATRICK

Ah, he's on a power trip.

TOMASZ

He was giving me shit for my shoes.

ROB

You don't get to dress down.

JOHN

Yeah, but he doesn't know that.

ROB

(ROB crumples and tosses his empty bag at JOHN, but the bag floats off course.)

Nice try.

JOHN

Marcus is right. He's a fucking sub.

TOMASZ

Does that mean you shouldn't treat him respectfully?

CESAR

(ROB stands and strolls leisurely to CESAR.)

Of course it doesn't, Cesar. In fact, it's so, so important that we treat all of our elders with respect. And as long as we're on the subject, can you give a dollar to your mom?

ROB

My mom?

CESAR

(ROB pulls out a crumpled dollar bill out of his pocket and gives it to CESAR, who stares at it, befuddled.)

Take it. ROB

Why? CESAR

I owe your mom a buck. ROB

Why? CESAR

(JOHN is laughing a little.)

What, are you an idiot? ROB

(He looks back at JOHN and sighs.)

ROB
(to CESAR)

Listen. Your mom sucked my cock last night. And when I came, she pulled my dick out of her mouth and had me shoot all over –

Oh, knock it off. PHILLIP

(JOHN guffaws.)

ROB
(innocently)

What?

My mom? CESAR
(genuinely confused)

He's just joking, Cesar. A.J.

ROB

Honest to god, I'm not! Cesar said it himself. We have to treat our elders with the upmost respect.

That's enough. PHILLIP

(ROB pockets the dollar and moves back to his seat.)

ROB

Whatever. But I know if that was my mom, I'd want her taken care of.

(JOHN walks to the trashcan and drops his empty bag inside, then crosses back to his desk and sits.)

JOHN

How worn out was she? Any treads on the tires?

ROB

What, Cesar's mom? You should have seen her panties. Fuckin' skidmarks!

TOMASZ

Ugh, nasty.

JOHN

She taste like chocolate or salsa?

ROB

What? I'm not sticking my face in that shit!

PHILLIP

Come on, guys.

CESAR

You're making fun of my mom.

ROB

Dude, this guy is legit retarded.

CESAR

I'm not retarded.

ROB

You sure?

CESAR

Of course I'm sure! I've taken the test!

(ROB, TOMASZ, and JOHN burst out laughing. PATRICK smiles. The others are less amused.)

ROB

What test? I want to know more about this.

(CESAR is quiet.)

JOHN

Oh, come on, Cesar. Tell us about it! When was it?

ROB

Don't you have to be tested regularly if you're a retard?

CESAR

(flustered and angry)

I'm not a retard!

ROB

Oh, Cesar. There's nothing wrong with it, you know. Plenty of great people are retarded. Who's the guy in the wheelchair? The scientist?

(He looks to PATRICK for help.)

He's a nerd? Talks like a robot?

PATRICK

Stephen Hawking?

ROB

That's him! Look at all he's done!

PATRICK

Stephen Hawking's not retarded.

ROB

I mean, basically.

JOHN

When were you tested, Cesar? What was it like?

ROB

I bet they probed him.

CESAR

What? No! Why are you doing this?

A.J.

(quietly)

Let it go, Cesar.

This is pretty amazing.
 TOMASZ
 Why do you make fun of me like this?
 CESAR
 (to ROB)
 Oh, Cesar. You just make it so easy!
 ROB
 (sarcastically conciliatory)
 Not more than any other people! What about Max? He's a homosexual! Why don't you make fun of him?
 CESAR
 (breaking down)
 I have a girlfriend.
 MAX
 (simultaneously with TOMASZ)
 Whoa! Cesar! You can't do that.
 TOMASZ
 (simultaneously with MAX)
 Do what?
 CESAR
 This isn't about Max. You can't rope him into this. Dick move, bro.
 TOMASZ
 (nearly hysterical)
 Why not? You guys can do anything you want! Why can you make fun of me? I'm not a bad person! I follow the rules! I follow the Bible! I don't make fun of other people! I'm a good student! I keep to myself! Why can't you just leave me alone?
 (MR. FINNIGAN hurries in, having heard CESAR from far down the hall.)
 MR. FINNIGAN
 Cesar!
 ROB
 Hah!

MR. FINNIGAN
(reacting to ROB)

Rob!

ROB

What?

MR. FINNIGAN

Both of you! Get over here!

(CESAR moans.)

ROB

What did I do?

(CESAR stands and slowly gathers his things. He is deeply embarrassed and on the verge of tears.)

MR. FINNIGAN

Now!

(ROB pulls himself reluctantly out of his chair and walks down the aisle. As he passes CESAR at his desk, he checks his shoulder into CESAR, pushing him and making him spill his belongings. ROB immediately puts his hands up apologetically.)

ROB

Sorry 'bout –

MR. FINNIGAN

Don't touch him, Rob!

(CESAR collects his things.)

ROB

I didn't mean to do it!

MR. FINNIGAN

Get over here!

(ROB walks to the door followed by CESAR, his belongings piled awkwardly in his arms. MR. FINNIGAN exits with both in tow, but returns and stands briefly in the doorway.)

MR. FINNIGAN

No more! I don't want to hear any more! That's enough, all of you!

(He lingers for a second, staring them down, and then exits.)

For several seconds, the remaining students are quiet. MAX looks down at his desk, morose and embarrassed, and a little shaken. A.J. glances at him a couple times.)

A.J.
(quietly)

I'm sorry that happened, Max.

(MAX looks up, shakes his head, and smiles dismissively.)

MAX

It's fine. Jen will think it's funny.

(JOHN snorts.)

JOHN

Max, you do not have a girlfriend.

(He stands and walks to the desk at which MARCUS had been sitting. He sits in the chair and lightly whaps PATRICK's shoulder with the back of his hand.)

You got some gum?

MAX

I've had a girlfriend for three years.

(PATRICK reaches into his pants pocket and pulls out some chewing gum. He offers a stick to JOHN.)

JOHN
(to MAX)

Bullshit.

(to PATRICK)

Can I have two?

(PATRICK removes another stick and hands both to JOHN.)

MAX

Scout's honor. Wyatt knows her.

(JOHN unwraps the gum, puts it in his mouth, and begins chewing loudly and obnoxiously.)

PHILLIP has taken a phone out of his pocket and is scrolling through it.)

JOHN

Well, I bet she's fuck ugly. What do you say, Wyatt? Am I right?

WYATT

Hey, I don't know...

(JOHN stands, leans over TOMASZ, and gropes TOMASZ's chest.)

JOHN

I bet her tits are smaller than Tomasz's.

(TOMASZ knocks JOHN's hands away.)

TOMASZ

Fuck off, dude!

(JOHN reaches again for TOMASZ's chest. TOMASZ tenses and cups himself, and JOHN leans over TOMASZ's back to grab his arms and hands. Both grunt, wrestling playfully but with some intensity.)

PHILLIP is staring at his phone.)

PHILLIP

Guys. Saint Tom's is on lockdown.

A.J.

What?

PATRICK

How come?

(TOMASZ and JOHN stop wrestling.)

PHILLIP types rapidly at his phone. He pauses. He types again.)

Phillip?

MAX

(Abruptly, PHILLIP stands and crosses down right with his phone. He looks offstage, as if through a window.)

Smitty!

PATRICK

What?

PHILLIP

What'd he say?

TOMASZ

Why is Tom's locked down?

PATRICK

I don't know.

PHILLIP

Saint Tom's?

TOMASZ

How do you know it is?

PATRICK

Ellen texted me.

PHILLIP

(WYATT stands and crosses to PHILLIP.)

What'd she say?

WYATT

She says they're locked down.

PHILLIP

Did you text her back?

WYATT

You can't see Saint Tom's from here. It's fifteen miles, at least.

PATRICK

I'm just looking.

PHILLIP

For what? PATRICK

I don't know. PHILLIP

(At his desk, MAX stands and looks offstage.)

You can't see anything, can you? MAX

When did she text you? WYATT

Nine minutes ago. PHILLIP

What did she say? WYATT

"We're going on lockdown." PHILLIP

Anything else? WYATT

No. PHILLIP

Do you guys see anything? MAX

Shut up, Max! TOMASZ

(MAX takes out his phone and begins to scroll through it. PATRICK has also taken out a phone.)

Probably just a drill, right? A.J.

Could be a bomb scare. TOMASZ

(JOHN takes a seat at MARCUS's desk, next to TOMASZ.)

JOHN

Could be legit. Fuckin' Muslims ...

MAX
(disgusted)

Oh...

JOHN

What?

PATRICK

Shut up, John.

JOHN

What? I bet it is. What do you say, A.J.? Friends of yours in town?

(A.J. ignores this.)

TOMASZ
(to PATRICK)

Who are you texting?

PATRICK

Ian.

TOMASZ

Where is he?

PATRICK

Home. Call him, will you?

TOMASZ

Why?

PATRICK

You've got his home number, right?

WYATT

I do.

PATRICK

Call him.

(WYATT takes a seat at one of the unoccupied desks. He briefly scrolls through his phone.)

Why do you want to talk to Ian?
TOMASZ

His dad's got a scanner.
PATRICK

(WYATT lifts his phone to his ear.)

A scanner?
MAX

A police scanner.
PATRICK

Why do you want a scanner?
MAX

(PHILLIP sits backwards on the desk in front of WYATT, his feet on the desk's seat. He watches WYATT intently.)

Shh.
PATRICK

(A beat. JOHN hums. After several seconds, WYATT lowers the phone a little.)

Answering machine.
WYATT

Um.
PATRICK

Here. Give it here.
TOMASZ

(WYATT hands the phone to TOMASZ, who brings it to his face.)

Ian?
TOMASZ

Ian! Wake up! Wake up, Ian!
(He waits a few seconds.)

Give it to me.

JOHN

Are you there?

TOMASZ
(into the phone)

Give it to me!

JOHN
(He leans over and grabs the phone from TOMASZ.
He immediately begins to speak into it in an offensive
Asian accent.)

Oh, misser Ian! Wakey wakey! This is Cherry Pie, here! I need my money!

For fuck's sake...

PATRICK
(JOHN's eyes are suddenly wide. He thrusts the
phone into PATRICK's hands.)

What?

PATRICK
(JOHN is pointing at PATRICK.)

You.

JOHN

What?

PATRICK

You! You!

JOHN

Ian?

PATRICK
(into the phone)

(PATRICK turns, wide eyed, and while he holds the
phone to his ear with one hand, he winds up and
punches JOHN repeatedly in the bicep with the other.
He lands a few hits before JOHN vaults out of his chair,
nearly overturning it in the process, and scampers to the
door, backpedaling the last few steps while holding his
arm and laughing.)

Hey! Careful with that!

WYATT

That was John Jurries, Missus Remkin.

PATRICK

It's Patrick, fucking Patrick!

JOHN
(shouting)

(MR. FINNIGAN hurries on and stands in the doorframe, peering, mortified, into the room.)

Oh, god ...

MR. FINNIGAN

(JOHN whirls around. He is equally mortified.)

Ah, Finny ...

JOHN

Can I not leave for five minutes? Are you that hopeless?

MR. FINNIGAN

Hold on, Mister –

JOHN

Get out here! Now!

MR. FINNIGAN

(JOHN slouches to the door and exits past MR. FINNIGAN.)

Missus Remkin...

PATRICK
(quietly into the phone)

Patrick, are you on the phone?

MR. FINNIGAN

(PATRICK nods quickly.)

Put that down!

MR. FINNIGAN

(PATRICK lowers the phone a little and covers the receiver with his palm.)

PATRICK

Mister Finnigan...

(MR. FINNIGAN takes a few hard, fast steps into the room and PATRICK, startled, starts to set the phone on his desk, then starts to pass it to WYATT, who reaches for it.)

MR. FINNIGAN

No! Give it to me!

(PATRICK gives the phone to MR. FINNIGAN, who swings it fiercely around in his fist.)

Get out there!

(PATRICK stands and exits. MR. FINNIGAN follows more slowly. Behind them, WYATT stands and crosses tentatively to the door.)

Sit down, Wyatt!

WYATT
(sheepishly)

Can I have my phone back?

MR. FINNIGAN

What? Get out there!

(WYATT exits past MR. FINNIGAN, who watches him leave, then turns back into the room. MAX and PHILLIP have hidden their phones.)

MR. FINNIGAN
(to himself, taking stock)

Max, Tomasz, A.J., Phillip ...

(to the boys, barely containing his temper)

If I come back here, and you're yelling, you're fighting, you're on your phones ... I swear to God ... I swear to God!

(He stares at them, seething. A few seconds pass. Then, abruptly, he turns and exits.)

MR. FINNIGAN
(offstage)

Go! Walk!

Mister Finnigan...

WYATT
(offstage, faintly)

Don't you say a word!

MR. FINNIGAN
(offstage, less faint)

(There is the sound of footsteps fading as MR. FINNIGAN and the students make their way down the hall.)

Onstage, at their desks, MAX, TOMASZ, A.J., and PHILLIP sit, petrified, for a few seconds.)

Christ, he's pissed.

TOMASZ

(PHILLIP takes out his phone. He types briefly into it, then holds it to his ear.)

Mister Finnigan might come back...

MAX

Shut up.

TOMASZ
(to MAX)

What are you doing?

(to PHILLIP)

Calling Ian.

PHILLIP

He's asleep.

TOMASZ

His mom might have woken him up.

PHILLIP

Probably not, man.

TOMASZ

Maybe, though.

PHILLIP

A.J.
(to MAX)

What do you think happened at Saint Tom's?

MAX

I don't know.

(MAX has taken out his phone as well.)

A.J.

Do you think it could have been a terrorist attack?

MAX

I don't know. Probably not. Probably just a false alarm.

TOMASZ

Max. Go watch the door.

MAX

Excuse me?

TOMASZ

Watch the door. Watch for Finny.

MAX

You do it.

TOMASZ

We're calling Ian.

MAX

If you want to play spy, you can go play. I'm fine where I am.

TOMASZ

You fucking faggot...

PHILLIP
(into his phone)

Ian, it's Patrick. Call me back.

(He sets the phone down on his desk and shakes his head at TOMASZ.)

PHILLIP

There's no need for that.

Try him again?

TOMASZ

(PHILLIP shrugs.)

PHILLIP

No point.

A.J.

Why do you guys want Ian so bad?

TOMASZ
(to A.J.)

His dad has a police scanner.

(to PHILLIP)

Did you check the news? Maybe there's something on the news.

MAX

There's not.

TOMASZ

Well, maybe there is now.

MAX

I just looked. There's nothing.

(TOMASZ stares at MAX, challenging him.
MAX stares unrelentingly back.)

A.J.

We ought to apologize to Mister Finnigan.

TOMASZ

You can apologize to him. I've got nothing to apologize for.

A.J.

I just mean on behalf of the class. He doesn't deserve this.

TOMASZ

He deserves shit.

(He stands and crosses to the door.)

I'm going to keep an eye out. Call Ian again.

PHILLIP

He's not going to pick up.

TOMASZ

He might. If his phone buzzes enough, he might.

(PHILLIP types into his phone.)

TOMASZ

Are you calling him?

PHILLIP

I'm texting him.

TOMASZ

Call him.

PHILLIP

Chill out, okay?

(TOMASZ steps into the hall and peers offstage.)

TOMASZ

(to someone offstage)

Good morning, Missus Manahan.

MRS. MANAHAN

(offstage, from a bit of a distance)

Get back in there, Tomasz.

(TOMASZ steps back into the classroom and moves to his chair.)

TOMASZ

She's coming.

(MAX and PHILLIP put their phones away.)

After a beat, MRS. MANAHAN enters. She wears a belted trench coat over a sport coat, patterned black and white dress, black leggings, and black dress shoes. Her face is lightly made up. On the ring finger of her left hand is a simple gold band, and on her left wrist is a petite gold wristwatch. A satchel hangs from her shoulder, and she carries a canvas lunch bag and a travel mug.

She crosses to the instructor's desk and sets her satchel on the floor next to it. She puts her lunchbox down

next to her satchel, and sets the travel mug on the edge of the desk.)

MRS. MANAHAN
(to TOMASZ)

You have jug today.

TOMASZ

What? Why?

MRS. MANAHAN
Because you weren't in your seat, sitting quietly, doing your work, and minding your own business.

TOMASZ

I was just –

MRS. MANAHAN

I don't care.

(TOMASZ looks to his peers for help. A.J. is looking down at his desk. PHILLIP sighs sympathetically, but is quiet. MAX, however, looks TOMASZ head on. He is cool, and maybe a little smug. TOMASZ stew.)

MRS. MANAHAN

Do you have any idea how frustrating it is to come into work, and even before you're able to set your things down, to put your lunch in the fridge, you have to go babysit another class that refuses to behave? That acts with blatant, appalling disrespect to one of your colleagues? I'm furious with you. I am absolutely furious.

(A.J. raises his hand.)

What?

A.J.

We're very sorry.

MRS. MANAHAN
(irritably)

I am, too. I'm really sorry.

(PHILLIP raises his hand.)

What?

PHILLIP

Do you know if anything's happened at Saint Tom's?

MRS. MANAHAN

Excuse me?

PHILLIP

We're just wondering whether you had heard anything.

MRS. MANAHAN

Why? What's going on?

PHILLIP

They're on lockdown.

MRS. MANAHAN

No, I don't know. Is that why you were being so disrespectful to Mister Finnigan?

PHILLIP

No, ma'am.

TOMASZ

(under his breath)

No one here was being disrespectful to Mister Finnigan.

MRS. MANAHAN

(to TOMASZ)

Haven't you said enough?

(TOMASZ doesn't reply.)

A moment passes.

Outside, quick steps are heard making their way to the classroom. ADAM appears in the doorway wearing a button up shirt, tie, khaki pants, and dress shoes, and carrying a backpack over one shoulder. When he enters, he looks around the room tentatively.)

MRS. MANAHAN

Yes?

ADAM

Is Father not here today?

MRS. MANAHAN

No, he's not. Why?

Phillip, Tomasz, Max, A.J....

ADAM

What do you want, Adam?

MRS. MANAHAN

Hey, Missus Manahan.

ADAM

Hey. What do you need?

MRS. MANAHAN

(ADAM unslings the backpack from his shoulder and sets it down, crouching next to it and unzipping one of the pockets.)

Adam?

MRS. MANAHAN

ADAM pulls a handgun from his backpack, and as he stands, facing his peers and MRS. MANAHAN, he swings the door closed behind him.

BLACKOUT

END OF ACT I

ACT II

SETTING

A carpeted office, with one wood-paneled wall running parallel to the stage from back left to back right. Near the middle of this wall, to the left of center, is a door with a frosted window. The door has been blocked with a large desk turned on its side, the bottom facing downstage. A small sliver of the topmost part of the window – not more than a couple inches – remains visible. At right, a leather executive chair on wheels faces left. The desk's imprint is visible in the carpet in front of this chair. Just downstage from the imprint of the desk is a freestanding potted plant.

A bookshelf with manuals, yearbooks, binders, and photographs runs from back left to up left, facing center. Set haphazardly down left are two tipped-over chairs, a coatrack, and DR. LEGWAND's light overcoat.

Scattered randomly down right are a disconnected desk phone, a stapler, a desk lamp, a metal pen cup and several pens, a folder, a desk calendar, a desk name plate that reads "DR. LEGWAND," and the tie JOHN had been wearing in ACT I.

(At rise, MR. FINNIGAN is standing against the upturned desk, leaning into it with his shoulder and facing down left. He is without his jacket, and has on a polo shirt. He is visibly sweating.

ROB is up right, huddled against the back wall, distressed and holding his knees. Next to him is JOHN, sprawled comfortably with his back to the wall. The top collar of his shirt is unbuttoned and his sleeves are sloppily rolled. He is sweating and red, but he looks calm despite this. Between JOHN and MR. FINNIGAN is CESAR, sitting cross-legged and wide-eyed. His face is flushed, as if he had been crying, but he is not crying now.

To MR. FINNIGAN's left are WYATT and PATRICK, also with their backs to the wall. WYATT is sitting, his legs up and his elbows on his knees. PATRICK is crouched and on his feet, his hands wrapped around his legs.

For several long seconds, everyone is quiet. JOHN breathes heavily, but calmly. ROB is trembling. CESAR looks from ROB to MR. FINNIGAN.)

CESAR

Mister Finnigan?

(A pause.)

Mister Finnigan, am I still in trouble?

MR. FINNIGAN

Be quiet, Cesar.

(A pause.)

CESAR

It's Rob's fault. He was bullying me.

ROB

(shakily)

Shut up, Cesar.

(CESAR looks eagerly, and a little triumphantly, at MR. FINNIGAN, waiting for him to scold ROB. When MR. FINNIGAN doesn't move, CESAR's expression clouds.)

CESAR

Mister Finnigan, did you hear what Rob said?

ROB

(with some anger)

Goddamn it, Cesar –

MR. FINNIGAN

(hushed and furious)

Be quiet! Both of you, be quiet!

(A longer pause. JOHN makes as if to stand up.)

JOHN

Want to take a break, Finny?

MR. FINNIGAN

(reflexively harsh)

Stay where you are.

(JOHN settles again. Another pause. CESAR watches ROB, who has hidden his face. WYATT jiggles his leg, agitated.)

WYATT

Mister Finnigan, can I have my phone?

MR. FINNIGAN

Why?

WYATT

I'd like to see if I can figure out what's going on.

MR. FINNIGAN

No. They might be tracing texts.

WYATT

Who might?

MR. FINNIGAN

The people in the school, the shooters.

(A pause.)

It's probably only a student.

PATRICK

(Another pause.)

Any guesses? My money's on A.J.

JOHN
(lightly)

Phillip's reading the Koran.

CESAR
(earnestly)

Oh, God...

WYATT

All of you, be quiet!

MR. FINNIGAN
(seething)

(A pause.)

Mister Finnigan, the only people who would be tracing phones are the police.

WYATT

Lockdown protocol is that we stay where we are until the police come get us...

MR. FINNIGAN

That doesn't mean we can't use our phones.

WYATT

...and that we don't use our phones.

MR. FINNIGAN

(A brief pause.)

It's not like a student can trace texts.

WYATT

We have to assume the worst. It's the safest way.

MR. FINNIGAN

What about a quick phone call? Quick calls can't be traced. We could call Phillip's girlfriend. She's at Saint Tom's. I bet she knows what's going on.

WYATT

PATRICK

My mom probably knows what's going on. We could call her.

MR. FINNIGAN

Nobody is calling anyone!

(JOHN discreetly removes a cell phone from his pocket and types into it. CESAR sees him.)

CESAR

Mister Finnigan! John's on his phone!

(JOHN slips the phone into his pocket as MR. FINNIGAN shifts hurriedly to look at him.)

JOHN
(to CESAR)

Ah, you fucking snitch ...

MR. FINNIGAN
(frenzied)

You're on your phone, John?

JOHN

He's just trying to make trouble.

CESAR

I am not! He was on his phone, I swear!

(ROB suddenly erupts from his crouched position and scrambles to CESAR, taking him by the shirt and jacket and throttling him.)

ROB

What the fuck is wrong with you, you fucking sped? Do you want to die? Do you want to fucking die?

MR. FINNIGAN

Rob!

(MR. FINNIGAN reaches out with his foot, trying to push ROB away from CESAR. CESAR, meanwhile, has put up his hands and is also pushing ROB.)

MR. FINNIGAN (cont.)

Help me, John!

(JOHN, moving slowly and deliberately, wraps ROB in his arms and pulls him, with some difficulty, to the upright corner of the room. ROB struggles against JOHN's grip, but his eyes stay riveted on CESAR.)

ROB

You fucking creep! You fucking retard creep!

MR. FINNIGAN

Shut up, Rob!

(to WYATT and PATRICK)

Shut him up! We've got to be quiet!

(WYATT and PATRICK crawl up right to ROB. As he moves, WYATT loosens his tie with one hand, pulls it off, and rolls it into a ball. He pushes it into ROB's face, who whips around, avoiding WYATT.)

ROB

What the ... You motherfucker!

(ROB kicks WYATT in the chest, who sprawls back, hissing.)

MR. FINNIGAN

Don't gag him! Just calm him down!

(MR. FINNIGAN looks away and closes his eyes, as if keeping the door closed requires his deepest concentration. At MR. FINNIGAN's feet, CESAR watches the other boys, bewildered.)

JOHN

Shut up, Rob. You've got to shut up!

ROB

He tried to put his fucking tie in my mouth.

PATRICK

Shh!

JOHN

Hey, hey!

(He shakes ROB.)

Get a grip, man. Come on.

Breathe, Rob. Breathe.

PATRICK

(ROB stops thrashing. He stares contemptuously between CESAR and WYATT.)

I'll fucking kill you guys.

ROB

God, shut up, Rob!

MR. FINNIGAN

(A few seconds pass. JOHN gradually loosens his grip on ROB, testing ROB by shaking him gently.)

Hey. You okay? You'll be all right, man. It'll be all right.

JOHN

(WYATT crawls to his spot to the left of the door and sprawls out with his back to the wall, rubbing his chest as he does.)

I'm going to have a bruise.

WYATT

What did you think would happen?

JOHN

Shh!

MR. FINNIGAN

(A pause. Abruptly, ROB starts to stand up. JOHN grabs him by the shoulders, but ROB shrugs out from under his hands.)

Get off me. I just... need a second.

ROB

(He stands and crosses quickly down to the potted plant. For a moment, he stands, breathing heavily, looking down at the plant.

At the door, MR. FINNIGAN looks over his shoulder at him.)

MR. FINNIGAN
(quietly, but forcibly)

Rob. Rob! You've got to stay down!

ROB
(angrily)

The fucking window's covered!

MR. FINNIGAN

It's a lockdown! You've got to stay down!

(ROB crosses to the chair and falls heavily into it.)

Rob!

(MR. FINNIGAN shakes his head, exasperated, and returns his attention to the door.)

In the chair, ROB swivels slowly from one side to another. For a few short seconds, this is the only movement on stage.)

CESAR

Mister Finnigan ...

JOHN

Shut up, Cesar.

(Another pause.)

Suddenly, JOHN remembers something. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a lighter and a small plastic tube with a rubber top. He pops the top and shakes out a joint, which he briefly rolls between his palms before putting in his mouth and lighting.)

PATRICK

Heh. Nice.

JOHN

Shh.

(JOHN drags once on the joint, exhales slowly, then takes a second drag. He then stands and crosses to ROB, and gives him the joint.)

JOHN

Here, man. Calm down.

(ROB takes the joint and puts it in his mouth, drawing from it unsteadily, but not coughing. He exhales heavily, then draws again.)

MR. FINNIGAN suddenly whips around, looking at the boys.)

MR. FINNIGAN
(incredulous and seething)

What are you doing?

JOHN

Relax, Mister Finnigan. It'll calm him down.

MR. FINNIGAN

Are you crazy?

JOHN

You can have some, if you want.

MR. FINNIGAN

You can't smoke in the school! In the... you're in Doctor Legwand's office!

JOHN

It's okay. It's not a big deal. It's helping.

(PATRICK crosses to the JOHN and ROB.)

MR. FINNIGAN

Patrick! Get against the wall!

(PATRICK looks over his shoulder and crouches a little, but continues his cross to ROB and JOHN.)

PATRICK

Hey.

(He motions for the joint. ROB finishes a drag and gives it to him. PATRICK draws from it slowly.)

MR. FINNIGAN

Patrick, your mom would kill you if she knew what you were doing.

PATRICK

You haven't seen her today, have you?

(MR. FINNIGAN hesitates.)

MR. FINNIGAN

No.

(PATRICK gives the joint back to JOHN, who passes it to ROB after taking a quick drag.)

PATRICK

Are you sure?

MR. FINNIGAN

You guys, that is really, really dangerous. Someone could smell it.

JOHN

No one's going to smell it, Mister Finnigan. There are two doors between us and the hallway.

MR. FINNIGAN

Put it out, Rob!

PATRICK

Mister Finnigan –

(Distantly, but not too far, are three sharp popping noises. Everyone freezes.)

MR. FINNIGAN
(quietly)

Put it out.

(PATRICK grabs the joint and punches it into the ground, then smears its fragments into the carpet with his shoe. He then crosses up, crouching, and retakes his place on the left side of the door next to WYATT, who has tensed visibly.)

Simultaneously, JOHN crosses, hunched, to the wall up right. When he reaches it, he falls quietly against it.

Simultaneously with the others, ROB slides painstakingly from the chair to the floor and crawls to JOHN in the back corner of the room. He squeezes his body behind JOHN's, against the wall.)

JOHN
(whispering)

What the fuck, man?

(Using his shoulder, JOHN shoves into ROB once. ROB burrows behind JOHN even more frantically. JOHN shoves him again, then relents, and scoots left a little to make room for him. ROB curls up against the wall.

CESAR watches this, delighted. JOHN sees him.)

JOHN

What are you looking at?

(CESAR points at ROB.)

CESAR

Bullies are cowards.

JOHN

Somebody's out there with a gun, and you're smiling?

CESAR

We're safe. Mister Finnigan will protect us.

(At the door, MR. FINNIGAN sags noticeably.

A pause.)

PATRICK

I can't believe we smoked pot in Doctor Legwand's office.

JOHN

Highlight of the day.

(A long pause.)

WYATT

Mister Finnigan, we've got to do something.

(A pause.)

We've got to message the police, let them know we're here.

MR. FINNIGAN

They know we're here. When they get the situation under control, they'll sweep the school and bring everyone out okay.

WYATT

Do they even know something's going on? We haven't heard any sirens.
(to PATRICK, motioning downstage)
Want to check outside?

MR. FINNIGAN

Don't!

(A pause.)

In lockdowns, we have to keep the blinds closed and stay away from the windows. If someone's outside the school, they'll be able to see us and shoot through.

WYATT

The only people who would be outside are the police.

MR. FINNIGAN

We don't know that for sure. We're just going to have to sit tight.
(WYATT makes as if to stand.)

Wyatt!

(MR. FINNIGAN bares his teeth fiercely.)

You've got to sit tight.

(After a moment, WYATT settles again.)

JOHN

How long do we have to sit tight, Mister Finnigan?

MR. FINNIGAN

Until the cops show up at the door.

WYATT

How will we know it's them?

MR. FINNIGAN

They'll tell us.

WYATT

How will we know it's not the shooter, pretending to be them?

MR. FINNIGAN

We'll know!

(A beat.)

WYATT

(to PATRICK, but not discreetly)

You haven't heard anyone outside, have you?

(PATRICK shrugs.)

Maybe they're all at Saint Tom's.

PATRICK

The cops?

WYATT

Yeah. Lockdown there could have been a diversion.

(A brief pause.)

John, who were you messaging earlier?

JOHN

I wasn't messaging anyone.

CESAR

He's lying, Wyatt.

WYATT

(to CESAR)

Mind your own.

(to JOHN)

Did you get a reply?

JOHN

No.

WYATT

Was it Ian?

JOHN

It was nobody!

PATRICK

Mister Finnigan, did you see my mom today?

(Abruptly, MR. FINNIGAN moves away from the barricaded door and crosses aggressively to JOHN, who, instinctively intimidated, starts to crawl away. MR. FINNIGAN stands right over him, almost straddling him.)

Give me your phone!

MR. FINNIGAN

(CESAR, terrified, jumps to his feet and plants himself in MR. FINNIGAN's vacated position against the upturned desk. He looks to his peers for help.)

Whoa.

JOHN

Give me your phone!

MR. FINNIGAN

Mister Finnigan!

CESAR

Give it!

MR. FINNIGAN

(JOHN regains his composure and tries to stand, bracing himself against the back wall. MR. FINNIGAN pushes him down roughly, into ROB, who yelps.)

Give me your phone!

MR. FINNIGAN

You can't –

JOHN

Give it to me!

MR. FINNIGAN

No!

JOHN

Help me!

CESAR
(to WYATT, pleadingly)

(WYATT stands and crosses right. CESAR moves over, to make room for him at the barricade, but WYATT walks past and continues to MR. FINNIGAN, who doesn't see him coming.)

Wyatt!

CESAR

(WYATT pushes MR. FINNIGAN, who, unsteady in standing over JOHN, falls forward, almost on top of JOHN and ROB. As he falls, he tries to balance himself by walking forward, but in doing so brings his foot down hard on JOHN's hand. JOHN screeches with pain.)

At the door, CESAR falls into a crouch, his back still to the desk, clenching his eyes closed and holding his hands over his ears.)

Ah, you fucker!

JOHN

(He clutches his injured hand and groans. MR. FINNIGAN reaches for him.)

John, oh, hell ...

MR. FINNIGAN
(reconciliatory)

My fucking hand!

JOHN

(He kicks at MR. FINNIGAN, who falls backwards, away from the blow.)

Hey!

MR. FINNIGAN

(MR. FINNIGAN looks over his shoulder, sees WYATT.)

Was that you?

MR. FINNIGAN (cont.)

You were threatening him.

WYATT

(MR. FINNIGAN stands and crosses aggressively to WYATT, who waits for him, retreating only slightly. In the up right corner, ROB is balled up, sobbing. JOHN continues to cradle his injured hand.)

MR. FINNIGAN

You just assaulted me! You just assaulted a teacher!

WYATT

You were threatening him!

MR. FINNIGAN

I wasn't threatening anyone!

JOHN
(screaming)

You broke my fucking hand, you fucking asshole!

PATRICK

Shut up, dude!

MR. FINNIGAN
(flustered)

Wyatt pushed me!

WYATT

I was protecting him! I was doing what you're supposed to be doing!

MR. FINNIGAN

I am protecting you!

WYATT

Then let us call the cops!

MR. FINNIGAN

What if they trace us? They'd know where we are!

WYATT

The only people who can trace phones are the police!

MR. FINNIGAN

We don't know that!

(Suddenly, CESAR stands, stumbles to the left side of the door, and pushes the desk violently away, sending it toppling onto its side in front of JOHN and ROB and behind WYATT and MR. FINNIGAN. Before anyone can stop him, he grabs the doorknob, opens the door as much as he can, and sprints through the threshold.

There is a pause.)

Oh my god.

PATRICK

(WYATT takes a small step and stares, disbelievingly, toward the door.)

Cesar?

WYATT

(Suddenly, MR. FINNIGAN lunges at the door and slams it shut. He braces himself against it, trying to stay low, under the window.)

Get it up.

MR. FINNIGAN
(to JOHN, hoarse and frantic)

(JOHN remains sprawled on the floor, holding his hand and staring dumbly up at MR. FINNIGAN.)

Mister Finnigan?

WYATT
(stunned)

Get it up! Up!

MR. FINNIGAN
(to JOHN, more frantic)

(PATRICK stands and crosses hurriedly to the desk, which he tips back onto its side and pushes into MR. FINNIGAN, who springs away from the door to make room. MR. FINNIGAN scrambles to PATRICK's side and helps him push the desk back into place, and then he moves to the desk's bottom, as he had positioned himself before, and braces himself against it. For a moment, he and PATRICK stand in place, staring at each other and panting.)

Good. Good.

MR. FINNIGAN
(hoarse)

Cesar's out there.

WYATT
(stunned)

MR. FINNIGAN
(to PATRICK)

Can you hold it?

PATRICK

Yeah.

(PATRICK moves alongside MR. FINNIGAN and braces himself against the desk.)

MR. FINNIGAN

You can't open it.

(PATRICK nods.

MR. FINNIGAN steps away from the door, up right, toward ROB and JOHN.)

MR. FINNIGAN

Where were you?

WYATT

Mister Finnigan...

JOHN

You broke my hand.

MR. FINNIGAN

The door is wide open and you just lie there?

JOHN

You broke my fucking hand!

WYATT

Finny! Cesar is out there!

(A beat.)

MR. FINNIGAN
(to WYATT)

I know. We have to keep the room secure.

WYATT
(uncomprehendingly)

We have to keep ... Are you ... ?

(He shakes his head, disbelieving.)

WYATT (cont.)

We have to go get him! We have to bring him back!

MR. FINNIGAN

We can't.

WYATT

The hell we can't!

MR. FINNIGAN

We can't go out there.

WYATT

Cesar is out there!

MR. FINNIGAN

The room has to be secure.

WYATT

Patrick?

(PATRICK shakes his head.)

PATRICK

The room has to be secure.

WYATT
(incredulous)

Did you not just see Cesar? The room is not secure!

(MR. FINNIGAN rejoins PATRICK at the barricade.)

MR. FINNIGAN

As long as we don't open this door, and as long as we keep the window covered, we're safe.

(A pause.)

But we can't open this door. You guys have to do what I say.

JOHN

Fucking shitbag asshole.

MR. FINNIGAN

If you do what I say, you'll be safe. We'll all –

(Offstage, the popping noises sound again, closer than

they were and sounding more like gunshots than they had. PATRICK shudders. ROB stops crying.)

PATRICK

Do they sound closer to you?

MR. FINNIGAN

Yeah.

(MR. FINNIGAN reaches into his pocket and pulls out WYATT's phone.

MR. FINNIGAN

Here.

(He tosses the phone to WYATT. WYATT tries to catch it, but doesn't.

Up right, JOHN reaches into his pocket for his own phone, which he taps a few times.)

MR. FINNIGAN
(rattled)

Call the cops. You want to call the cops? Call them.

(WYATT picks up the phone and unlocks it, then shuffles through his contacts.

JOHN looks up from his phone.)

JOHN

Ian says we're on every channel.

MR. FINNIGAN

Good.

(ROB looks up.)

ROB

You're talking to Ian?

JOHN

Yeah.

(WYATT holds the phone up to his ear. He is starting to cry.)

What does he say?

ROB

He says we're on every channel.

JOHN
(irritated)

He says we're on the news. He says the news doesn't know anything.

(ROB sniffles.)

Don't tell him where we are!

MR. FINNIGAN
(suddenly)

You broke my hand, you fucking asshole.

(MR. FINNIGAN steps away from the desk and makes a move toward JOHN.)

I won't tell him.

JOHN

Ellen?

WYATT
(into the phone)

(MR. FINNIGAN suddenly turns on WYATT, his eyes wide.)

Who?

MR. FINNIGAN

Ellen, I'm all right!

WYATT

Who is that?

MR. FINNIGAN

Ellen, I love you.

WYATT

(MR. FINNIGAN crosses to WYATT and tries to take the phone, but WYATT resists.)

MR. FINNIGAN

Give me that!

WYATT

(into phone)

I don't know. I haven't seen him. God, I'm sorry. I'm sorry, Ellen!

MR. FINNIGAN

Goddamn it!

(He gets his hand on the phone and rips it away from WYATT, shoving him down as he does. WYATT collapses, sobbing and trembling.)

MR. FINNIGAN

(into the phone)

We have to call the police!

(He moves the phone away from his face and thumbs it a few times, trying to disconnect the call. In his agitated state, he can't quite do it, and he crosses up to PATRICK and hands him the phone. PATRICK takes it and holds it to his ear.)

PATRICK

Ellen? Wyatt's fine, but we have to call the police. He'll call you back.

(He moves the phone away from his face and thumbs it, then extends his hand to give it back to MR. FINNIGAN.)

MR. FINNIGAN, though, has already moved away from PATRICK and back to WYATT. As he stands above WYATT, looking down at him, he takes his own phone from his pocket and types into it.

PATRICK pockets WYATT's phone.)

MR. FINNIGAN

You got what you wanted.

(He holds the phone to his ear.)

I gave what you wanted. And you called your girlfriend?

(speaking into the phone)

My name is Lee Finnigan. I'm the gym teacher at Saint Ignatius. I'm locked down with four students in the principal's office.

Is he talking to the police?

ROB

Yeah.

JOHN

MR. FINNIGAN
(into the phone.)
Can they trace us to where we are? Through the phone?
(A quick beat.)
The shooters.

ROB

Are they going to come get us?

JOHN

Man, I don't know.

MR. FINNIGAN
(into the phone)
How long?

(ROB's eyes start welling up. He takes JOHN by the shoulder and shakes him gently.)

ROB

Hey. Why is this happening?

(JOHN shrugs off ROB's hand.)

JOHN
(impatiently)
Fuck, man, I don't know.

MR FINNIGAN
One's pretty shook up. No one's— one guy's hurt, but he's okay. One's pretty upset.

ROB

This shouldn't be happening.

MR. FINNIGAN
(into the phone)
All right.
(He crosses to ROB and holds out his hand, offering him the phone.)
Here.

(ROB looks stupidly up at him, not understanding.)

ROB

What?

MR. FINNIGAN

Take it. It's a policewoman.

(ROB takes the phone and holds it to his ear.)

ROB
(into phone)

Hello?

JOHN

What'd they say?

MR. FINNIGAN

Nothing. They wouldn't tell me anything.

ROB
(into phone)

Rob LeFaivre.

JOHN

Can they trace our phones?

MR. FINNIGAN

No.

ROB
(into phone)

Yes.

JOHN

How long do we have to stay here?

MR. FINNIGAN

They don't know.

ROB
(into phone)

I don't know. I play basketball.

(MR. FINNIGAN crosses down left, to WYATT, who

is still sprawled, face-down, on the floor, but who has stopped crying. He looks up at PATRICK.)

MR. FINNIGAN
(to PATRICK)

You okay?

ROB
(into phone)

Not really. I used to be good. Not anymore.

PATRICK

I'm fine.

(MR. FINNIGAN considers WYATT. After a moment, he crouches next to him.)

MR. FINNIGAN

Wyatt?

(He touches him, gently, on his shoulder. WYATT spasms and cries out, and MR. FINNIGAN recoils at the sound.)

MR. FINNIGAN

Wyatt, hey.

ROB
(into phone)

Yes. He was just scared. Mister Finnigan scared him.

(A beat.)

He just touched him.

(MR. FINNIGAN sits, cross-legged, behind Wyatt. MR. FINNIGAN touches WYATT's shoulder, and, again, WYATT spasms, but not as forcefully as before. He whimpers. MR. FINNIGAN moves his hand and begins to gently rub WYATT's back.)

ROB
(into phone)

He's trying to make him feel better.

MR. FINNIGAN

I'm sorry. I'm really scared.

ROB
(into phone)

He's apologizing.

MR. FINNIGAN

I'm just really scared about what's happening, and I feel really bad, really bad. I want you guys to be okay. I'm desperate that you'll be okay.

ROB
(into phone)

One of my friends was going to have a party tonight.

MR. FINNIGAN

Hey. Can I ask about Ellen? She sounds like she really cares about you, like she likes you a lot. Where'd you guys meet?

JOHN

Ellen is Phillip's girlfriend.

ROB
(into phone)

Yes.

(MR. FINNIGAN looks back at JOHN, confused.)

JOHN

Phillip Smith.

ROB
(into phone)

I like to meet girls, to hang out with girls.

MR. FINNIGAN

That's okay. It's okay to date around.

JOHN

They were together. They'd been going out for years.

MR. FINNIGAN

Hey, John ...

JOHN

He's probably dead, you know that, Wyatt?

(MR. FINNIGAN motions violently at JOHN. JOHN stares back, unrelenting.)

ROB
(into phone)

He probably isn't still having the party, though.

JOHN

He's probably dead. Good thing she's got you to fall back on, eh? Sloppy fucking seconds.

(WYATT doesn't react to this at all, but MR. FINNIGAN lurches to his feet and crosses to JOHN. JOHN struggles to get upright, his good hand planted on the floor and his wounded hand held against his chest. He manages to stand and cock his good hand in a fist just as MR. FINNIGAN reaches him.)

PATRICK

Mister Finnigan?

(MR. FINNIGAN halts, tenses.)

ROB
(into phone)

Yeah, but this was going to be a good party.

MR. FINNIGAN
(alert, hushed)

What is it?

PATRICK

Can you ask if my mom's okay?

(MR. FINNIGAN lunges at JOHN and grabs him by his wounded hand, squeezing. JOHN howls in pain. His knees buckle, his eyes wet, and his uninjured hand flails briefly and ineffectually at MR. FINNIGAN before clutching, again, at his injury.)

MR. FINNIGAN

You fucking creep.

(He lets go. JOHN crumples.)

ROB
(into phone)

It was just John. He was being a dick.

(JOHN groans.)

Mister Finnigan?

PATRICK

What?

MR. FINNIGAN

Do you know if my mom's okay?

PATRICK

ROB
(into phone)

Mister Finnigan stepped on his hand earlier. By accident. And John was being a dick. So Mister Finnigan grabbed his hand and squeezed it.

JOHN
(muffled, pained)

He broke my fucking hand.

PATRICK

Mister Finnigan?

(A pause.)

I'm sure she's fine.

MR. FINNIGAN

ROB
(into phone)

Yeah, but he deserved it.

PATRICK

Do you really think so?

(JOHN groans.)

MR. FINNIGAN

Yes. She's smart. She's been doing this for a while. How long has she been teaching?

(PATRICK shrugs.)

A while.

PATRICK

Sure.

ROB
(into phone)

(He pushes the phone into JOHN's shoulder. JOHN doesn't look up.)

She wants to talk to you.

JOHN
(muffled)

Who is it?

ROB

It's a policewoman.

(JOHN rolls slowly, gingerly, onto his back.)

MR. FINNIGAN

She got here way before I did.

PATRICK

She took some time off.

MR. FINNIGAN

How come?

PATRICK

Family stuff. My brother got hurt skiing, that one year.

(JOHN holds out his hand for the phone. ROB gives it to him, and JOHN brings it to his ear.)

JOHN

Yeah?

MR. FINNIGAN

I remember your brother. How's he doing?

PATRICK

Good, I think. Better than us.

MR. FINNIGAN

We'll be all right.

JOHN
(into phone)

John Jurries.

(MR. FINNIGAN crosses back down to WYATT and kneels beside to him.)

MR. FINNIGAN

Wyatt? I'm going to touch your shoulder.

(He does. WYATT flinches.)

Did you hear what I said to Patrick? We're going to be all right.

(He rubs WYATT's back, as he had been before.)

JOHN

(into phone)

Yeah, I've got a broken fucking hand is all.

(ROB crawls to WYATT and MR. FINNIGAN. He sits, his legs crossed underneath him.)

MR. FINNIGAN

(to ROB)

You all right?

JOHN

(into phone)

He fucking attacked me!

ROB

I'm fine. John's not happy.

MR. FINNIGAN

Nope.

ROB

What are you going to do?

MR. FINNIGAN

What do you mean?

JOHN

(into phone)

Yeah, 'cause he's a psycho.

ROB

Do you think they'll fire you?

MR. FINNIGAN

Don't worry about that.

ROB

The policewoman says we should try to focus on everyday things.

JOHN

I was just sitting there!

(A beat.)

ROB

You're not scared about getting fired?

MR. FINNIGAN

Nope.

ROB

How come?

MR. FINNIGAN

Ah ... I'm already not coming back next year.

ROB

How come?

MR. FINNIGAN

My contract wasn't renewed.

JOHN

(into phone)

Absolutely nothing.

ROB

What does that mean?

MR. FINNIGAN

They don't have room for me in the budget.

JOHN

(into phone)

He's absolutely crazy.

ROB

So what are you going to do?

MR. FINNIGAN

Go somewhere else, I guess.

(WYATT uncurls and rolls slowly onto his back, revealing his face, which is flushed and soiled. He looks up at MR. FINNIGAN.)

WYATT

What a way to go out, huh?

(Someone knocks, lightly but quickly, four times, on the door. PATRICK shudders, startled, but remains at the desk, his shoulder pressed firmly against it.

MR. FINNIGAN scurries upstage in a crouch, his finger pressed firmly to his lips as he motions frantically for the boys to get up against the wall. ROB and WYATT follow his lead, taking positions on either side of the barricade – ROB on the right and WYATT on the left – while JOHN holds the phone at his side and sits upright, scooting upstage until his back is against the wall.

MR. FINNIGAN reaches PATRICK and, taking him by the shoulders, pulls him away from the barricade and takes his place. PATRICK crosses right and sits against the wall, between JOHN and ROB.

Again, someone knocks, just as lightly and as quickly as before, but eight or nine times.

MR. FINNIGAN looks down at WYATT and holds up a closed fist against his chest. WYATT doesn't react.

A long silence. Then several more knocks.)

CESAR

(offstage, quietly, from behind the door)

Mister Finnigan?

(MR. FINNIGAN lets out a breath and raises his hand, reflexively, to cover his mouth. WYATT's eyes widen, but he doesn't move. PATRICK tenses, and JOHN and ROB lean forward, listening. MR. FINNIGAN puts his finger back to his mouth.)

CESAR
(offstage, from behind the door)

Mister Finnigan? Are you there?

JOHN

We're in here.

(MR. FINNIGAN's eyes flash furiously. He starts to cross to JOHN, but then redoubles on his position braced against the door.)

CESAR
(offstage, from behind the door)

John? Is Mister Finnigan there?

MR. FINNIGAN
(whispering)

Don't say anything.

JOHN

He's right there, Cesar, holding the door closed.

CESAR
(offstage, from behind the door)

Mister Finnigan, can you let me in?

JOHN

He's not going to let you in, you dirty fucking beaner.

CESAR
(offstage, from behind the door)

What?

(MR. FINNIGAN motions to PATRICK to take over at the barricade. PATRICK slides to his feet and replaces MR. FINNIGAN, his shoulder pressed hard into the desk.

MR. FINNIGAN hurries to JOHN and grabs him, with both hands, by his jersey. JOHN doesn't resist, but he holds his injured hand protectively.)

MR. FINNIGAN
(hissing)

What the hell is wrong with you?

CESAR
(offstage, from behind the door)

Mister Finnigan?

JOHN

What does it matter? It's just Cesar.

MR. FINNIGAN
(furious, hushed)

We are locked down.

(PATRICK looks frantically from JOHN and MR. FINNIGAN to the barricade.)

JOHN

Yeah? Are we allowed to use our phones in this lockdown? Are we allowed to talk? Are you going to make us stand for prayer and pledge when the cops come save us?

CESAR
(offstage, from behind the door)

Mister Finnigan? Are you there?

PATRICK
(whispering)

Cesar! Can you hear me?

CESAR
(offstage, from behind the door)

Patrick?

MR. FINNIGAN

Will you shut up and think about what you're doing?

JOHN
(quietly, but with severe conviction)

Fuck you.

PATRICK

Do you know if my mom's okay?

(MR. FINNIGAN pushes JOHN to the ground, looking disgustedly at him. JOHN sprawls out, and stares right back at him.)

MR. FINNIGAN turns toward the door.)

CESAR
(offstage, from behind the door)

I think she's dead.

(A pause. PATRICK straightens and drifts away from the door, though his eyes remain fixed firmly on it and away from the audience. After a moment, he turns and looks blankly down right.)

CESAR
(offstage, from behind the door)

She's in Father's room, with Phillip and A.J. and Tomasz and Max. There's a lot of blood.

(WYATT looks up at MR. FINNIGAN, at PATRICK. Slowly, he stands and moves to the position guarding the door.)

PATRICK

She's in Father's room?

(He looks at MR. FINNIGAN.)

We were in Father's room.

(A pause.)

Mister Finnigan?

MR. FINNIGAN

Patrick ...

PATRICK

We were in Father's room.

(PATRICK falls and MR. FINNIGAN crosses quickly to him, dropping to his knees to catch him, to hold him. He looks up at WYATT.)

MR. FINNIGAN

The room has to be secure.

(to PATRICK)

Patrick, it's all right.

CESAR
(offstage, from behind the door)

Is Mister Finnigan there?

WYATT

Cesar, it's Wyatt.

CESAR
 (offstage, from behind the door)
 Hey, Wyatt.

WYATT
 Hey.
 (A pause.)
 We can't let you in. We have to keep the room secure.

CESAR
 (offstage, from behind the door, frightened)
 What?

WYATT
 We can't let you in.

CESAR
 (offstage, from behind the door)
 You've got to, Wyatt! You have to! There are men coming down the hall! They have guns! Mister Finnigan! Are you there?

WYATT
 Cesar, you have to be quiet!

CESAR
 (offstage, from behind the door)
 Mister Finnigan!
 (He knocks on the door repeatedly.)
 Mister Finnigan! You have to let me in! Tell Wyatt to let me in! Mister Finnigan!

(ROB stands.)

ROB
 We have to let him in.

JOHN
 (simultaneously with MR. FINNIGAN)
 No!

MR. FINNIGAN
 (simultaneously with JOHN, hushed)
 No!

CESAR
 (offstage, from behind the door)
 Mister Finnigan! Mister Finnigan!

ROB

He's not going to go away, and he's not going to be quiet. If we don't let him in, he'll give us away.

MR. FINNIGAN

Wyatt ...

(A pause. CESAR knocks several more times.)

CESAR

(offstage, from behind the door)

Mister Finnigan!

MR. FINNIGAN

We can't ...

ROB

We have to.

CESAR

(offstage, from behind the door)

Mister Finnigan, please!

MR. FINNIGAN

(to WYATT)

Get him in here.

(WYATT moves away from his position at the barricade and gets to the left of the desk, pushing it away from the door. As he does, MR. FINNIGAN half drags, half carries PATRICK up right, out of the door's line of sight. ROB crosses to the door, and, as soon as the desk is clear, he opens it just enough for CESAR to squeeze through and onto stage.

Immediately, ROB closes the door and takes CESAR by the arm, leading him up right to JOHN, MR. FINNIGAN, and PATRICK, while WYATT moves the desk back into place and stands, braced, against it. ROB and CESAR drop to their haunches and get down against the wall next to JOHN, who is still cradling his injured hand. As he squats, CESAR loses his balance and falls into JOHN, who hisses with pain and shoves him away.)

Shh!

MR. FINNIGAN

(Several long seconds pass. Everyone is still.

PATRICK looks up at MR. FINNIGAN, his eyes glazed.)

PATRICK
(slowly, numbly)

You were in Father's room.

MR. FINNIGAN
(hushed, terrified)

Patrick, I'm so sorry.

A pair of heavy, shuffling footsteps can be heard offstage moving incrementally toward the office. They reach the office door and stop. There is a short pause.)

Mom...

PATRICK

(Someone knocks on the door.)

FADE OUT

END OF ACT II

A STATEMENT

“The hull drives on, though mast and sail be torn;
 The roof-tree sinks, but moulders on the hall
 In massy hoariness; the ruin'd wall
 Stands when its wind-worn battlements are gone;
 The bars survive the captive they enthrall;
 The day drags through though storms keep out the sun;
 And thus the heart will break, yet brokenly live on...”

Child Harold's Pilgrimage

CHARACTERS

SEAN GILCHRIST	Forty-nine.
CARMEN GILCHRIST	Forty-four.
JAIME TURNER	Thirty-two.

SETTING

The Gilchrists' living room. The space is decorated warmly and without kitsch. On stage, near center, a couch and easy chair arranged in an “L” shape on an angle. A coffee table at the foot of the couch. Upstage right, on a line that runs perpendicular to the couch, a front door. At left, a fireplace and mantle with several picture frames. A few are empty.

TIME

The early part of an evening, May 2000. It has been a beautiful day.

(Enter SEAN, wearing a suit and tie, from the front door. As he steps in, he scans the room, apprehensive, then moves aside and holds the door for CARMEN. She enters slowly, detached and lethargic, in a conservative black dress and pearl stud earrings. SEAN shuts the door behind her and crosses down right.)

SEAN

I'm going to have some water. Would you...?

(CARMEN crosses gradually to center and sits on the couch. SEAN watches her.

After a moment, SEAN exits stage right.

From offstage right, an electronic beep. Recorded voices speak.)

VOICE 1

Good morning. This is a message for Mr. and Mrs. Gilchrist. My name is Xavier Cost, and I'm calling on behalf of *The L.A. Times* in regard to your son's passing. Due to the nature of his –

(The voice is abruptly cut off by a harsh, electronic beep.)

VOICE 2

Hi Auntie Carmen. Hi Uncle Sean. It's Carey. I'm just calling to say I stopped by to take out the garbage and pick up some more food for Huron. He's still fine. Makes a great playmate for Bobbie.

(Offstage, glasses clink and water is drawn from a faucet.)

VOICE 2

I cleared out the answering machine while I was there, too. Don't hesitate to call if there's anything else I can do. I've got no plans.

(A pause.)

Take care of yourselves. Oh! And my mom made a lasagna. It's in the fridge, on the bottom shelf. I had to move some things around, but I didn't think you'd mind. Hope it's okay.

(A pause, and a soft electronic click.

CARMEN removes her right earring and places it on the coffee table.)

VOICE 3

Hello. My name is Matt Grissom and I'm calling from *The New York* –

(A harsh, electronic beep abruptly cuts off the voice.)

CARMEN turns her head toward the fireplace and mantle and begins to remove the left earring, but then stands and moves to the mantle, where she lifts one of the empty picture frames. She considers it.)

VOICE 4

Hi. This is a message for Mr. and Mrs. Gilchrist. This is Natalie Damon with the *Philadelphia* –

(The beep cuts off this voice.)

VOICE 5

Good morning. I'm calling from the *New York* –

(Another beep cutting off the message.)

CARMEN, holding the empty frame, moves to the couch and sits. She looks indiscriminately outward.)

VOICE 6

Doctor Gilchrist, this is John Wiscott calling from *The Boston* –

(The beep cuts off this message as well.)

VOICE 7

Hi Sean. This is Vicki.

(CARMEN looks offstage, listening.)

I've been trying to –

(A beep cuts off this message.)

VOICE 8

(coldly)

Hassanah Al Mer won Paxton's Emerging Engineer's Award, and had been accepted to Berkeley on a full scholarship. Abigail Anson and her fiancé were planning a move to Florida, to be closer to his family. Joseph Cairn had just achieved the rank of Eagle Scout. Christina Carson-Briggs had won an award from the *Globe* for a poem she wrote.

(CARMEN stares unfocusedly out.)

VOICE 8 (cont.)

Olivia Case had been recruited to play basketball at Missouri. Over the summer, Shawn Celiani was planning to serve as a counselor at a Worcester camp for autistic children. Christina Fould was going to Amherst to run cross-country. Tommy Harrison was beloved by his younger brother, Corey, who hasn't spoken since Thursday. Marsha Heeders had been back for only three months after maternity leave.

(Here, CARMEN looks up. She stands and crosses purposefully toward the kitchen.

Before she reaches the kitchen doorway, SEAN enters, having removed his jacket and loosened his tie, and stands in the threshold. He holds a glass of water, half-empty, and another, full. When he enters, CARMEN stops in her tracks. They stare at each other.)

VOICE 8

Garth Henderson had taught math at Paxton for thirty years; he taught more than two thousand students. Lee Hendricks was a member of the Massachusetts All-State Choir; he sang tenor. Anna Karrick had plans this weekend to go to her brother's graduation from West Point.

(Abruptly, CARMEN turns away from SEAN and crosses back to the couch, where she retakes her seat. SEAN watches her from the doorway.)

Carri Lloyd enjoyed modeling for a local clothing chain on the weekends, and she had appeared as an extra in several movies filmed near Boston. Rosa Mann and her cousin founded a charity for disabled veterans in the greater Bos –

(A soft electric click – the message reaching its time limit. There is a brief pause, as the machine moves to the next message. SEAN sighs silently.)

VOICE 8

(seething)

Mary O'Doule was going to Brown, Andi Robinson to a small liberal arts school in Pennsylvania.

(SEAN tenses and looks into the kitchen, then at CARMEN, who does not visibly react.)

Cassie Soferretto and her mother had been planning on shopping for graduation shoes Thursday afternoon. Christina Stilson had recently taken up rock climbing with her best friends. William Trevors was going to try to walk on with the Boston College football team.

(SEAN turns and exits into the kitchen.)

Alaina Walden was an amateur stand-up comic who preformed at open mic nights on weekends. Micah Yanderton was going to Harvard; he was the class president.

(A pause.)

I hope you never forget these names. These are the people your son killed. These are the people you let die.

(A soft electric click.)

VOICE 9

Mister Gilchrist. This is Ashley Alcott from the *Daily* –

(The voice suddenly goes silent. There is a loud and startling sound of hard plastic hitting the floor – SEAN has smashed the answering machine.)

Onstage, CARMEN doesn't react. There is a long, uncomfortable pause.

SEAN reenters with the water glasses. His eyes are red and irritated.)

SEAN

Your, uh, sister sent lasagna over with Carey.

CARMEN
(quietly)

Was that Vicki Strauss who called?

(SEAN stops moving.)

SEAN

Huh?

CARMEN

Was that Vicki Strauss on the phone?

(SEAN continues his cross to CARMEN.)

SEAN

Maybe. I don't know.

CARMEN

What did she want?

SEAN

I don't know.

(SEAN sets the glass of water that is full on the coffee table, but immediately picks it up and looks for something.)

Where are the...?

(SEAN pauses for CARMEN to look up, to answer him. She doesn't. After a moment, SEAN pulls a

folded handkerchief from his back pocket and puts it on the table, placing the glass on it. He sips from his own glass.)

SEAN (cont.)

What is that?

CARMEN

A picture frame.

SEAN

Can I take that for you?

CARMEN

I want it.

SEAN

Please?

(A pause.)

You need to try, Carmen.

(CARMEN does not answer.

After a moment, someone knocks on the front door. SEAN looks at the door, back at CARMEN, and, sets his glass on the coffee table. He again looks for a coaster, but then moves CARMEN's glass and unfolds his handkerchief, setting the glasses next to each other on top of the cloth. He turns and crosses to the door as the person knocks again.

When SEAN's back is turned, and while remaining seated, CARMEN picks up one of the glasses and moves it off of the handkerchief, away from the other.

SEAN opens the front door. JAIME, carrying a satchel, stands outside.)

JAIME

Mister Gilchrist?

SEAN

Are you press?

JAIME

I'm from the *Telegram and Gazette*, yes.

SEAN

No comment.

JAIME

I know. My name is Jaime Turner. I'm wondering if there's anything I can do.

(A beat.)

SEAN

Excuse me?

JAIME

(earnestly)

I'm wondering if there's anything I can do to help.

SEAN

What?

JAIME

Help, Mister Gilchrist.

(CARMEN sets the picture frame on the table, stands, and crosses to them.)

SEAN

Help?

JAIME

Well, I figure what you've been reading about... about you, I guess. And I can't imagine how much of it isn't true, and how much that must pain you. You deserve better. But... I mean, really, I just want to know if you're okay.

CARMEN

(not aggressively)

We're not.

SEAN

Shh.

JAIME

I'm sorry. I can see you're suffering. But most people can't see that, Mister Gilchrist.

SEAN

We have no comment to make.

JAIME

Wouldn't it make it better if people knew what you're going through?

SEAN

No comment.

(He shuts the door. Immediately, Jaime knocks again, and, after a beat, again. SEAN opens it.)

JAIME

Mister Gilchrist, please excuse me –

SEAN

You've got a lot of nerve –

JAIME

– but you're making a mistake. The people that don't talk to the press are the ones that have something to hide. Readers are going to make assumptions –

SEAN

Let them.

JAIME

– which will only make this harder.

(SEAN shuts the door. JAIME knocks again, and again. SEAN stands still, an outstretched hand propped against the door, his back to the audience and to CARMEN.)

CARMEN

Sean?

SEAN

Bill says we can't talk to the press.

CARMEN

What?

(SEAN turns back into the room.)

SEAN

It's an open investigation.

CARMEN

You said we could make a statement.

(A beat. JAIME knocks again, softer.)

CARMEN (cont.)

You told me Bill said we could.

SEAN

We can't.

CARMEN

Why?

SEAN

We can't.

(He pauses.)

He's just trying to bait us, Carmen. He's a parasite, trying to get something out of us. His big scoop.

CARMEN

But he's right. We're making him right. And he only wants to help.

SEAN

What do you want to tell him? He knows more than we do. We don't know how...

CARMEN

We raised him. We loved him. We weren't abusive. We weren't cruel. Can't we tell them that?

(JAIME knocks again. SEAN breathes, collects himself. There is a long pause.)

SEAN

Look. Listen. He knows what he's doing. He doesn't want to help. He's in it for him.

(CARMEN sits on the couch. Again, she picks up the empty frame.)

We're not going to be able to stay here. How long can Carey watch the dog?

(CARMEN is silent.)

I don't want to go back to your sister's. Molly offered us her bungalow on the panhandle. We can leave tonight. We can leave now.

CARMEN

I'm not going to Florida the day...

SEAN

We can't stay here, Carmen.

(JAIME knocks on the front door.)

CARMEN

They'll leave us alone if we make a statement, won't they?

SEAN

We can't.

CARMEN

Why not? We wouldn't be asking for anything except privacy.

SEAN

We can't.

CARMEN

The longer we hide, the longer they forget that we're suffering, too.

(A beat.)

I'm doing it.

(She stands and takes a few steps toward the door.)

SEAN

Carmen!

(CARMEN stops.)

If you say one word to this guy, every other reporter who's called in the last five days is going to be hammering on our door asking us to elaborate, to clarify. Asking for more.

CARMEN

So what are we going to do?

SEAN

He'll get tired soon. He's probably already gone.

(They pause, listening. There is no sound.)

CARMEN retakes her seat on the couch. After a moment, she picks up the picture frame.)

CARMEN

Where did this picture go?

SEAN

What?

CARMEN

Someone took the picture out of this frame. Where is it?

SEAN
What was it?

CARMEN
His senior portrait.

SEAN
It's not there? Let me see.
(SEAN joins CARMEN on the couch. CARMEN shows him the frame.)
Do you think Carey might have taken it?

CARMEN
Why would she have done that?

SEAN
The press needs photos.
(CARMEN considers this.)

CARMEN
Have you seen it? On the news?

SEAN
I don't remember.
(A brief still, which someone interrupts by knocking on the front door. SEAN breathes in quickly, agitated, and looks over his shoulder, perhaps to yell something.)

CARMEN
If you yell, they'll know you're listening.

SEAN
They know already.
(A beat.)
You didn't take it, did you?

CARMEN
No.

SEAN
It had to have been Carey. She's the only one with a key. Rita might have told her to...

CARMEN
My sister would not –

Okay.

SEAN

She wouldn't.

CARMEN

Well, can you be sure of that?

SEAN

She wouldn't!

CARMEN

Others are gone, too.

(A beat.)

What?

SEAN

Look.

CARMEN

(She gestures to the mantle. SEAN stands and crosses to it.)

Do we know what's missing?

SEAN

Carmen?

(CARMEN does not answer.)

Carmen.

(A pause.)

What?

CARMEN

Do we know what's missing?

SEAN

You need to try.

(Faintly, CARMEN shakes her head, shrugs.)

I am trying.

CARMEN

You need to try harder.

SEAN

(A beat.)

CARMEN

The photo we took for the Christmas card. And the one of him playing with his Legos. On his stomach. They're missing.

(SEAN looks toward the mantle at the empty frames.)

SEAN

I might have seen that one on the news.

CARMEN

How much would a reporter pay for that?

SEAN

I have no idea.

CARMEN

Fifty dollars?

SEAN

I don't know.

(The phone rings. Neither SEAN nor CARMEN moves to answer it. It rings again, and again. It rings a fourth time, then a fifth, and then a sixth.)

CARMEN

Want me to get it?

(SEAN doesn't answer. Instead, he stands and crosses right to the phone. As the phone is in mid-ring, SEAN yanks its cord out of the wall and it abruptly cuts off. Another phone, faint and from stage left, continues to ring. SEAN crosses left.)

CARMEN

You're not going to answer it?

SEAN

No.

(The phone rings again.)

CARMEN

What if it's Molly?

She knows I'll call her.

SEAN

(He exits stage left. The phone rings again.)

What if it's Vicki?

CARMEN

(Just as before, the phone is in mid-ring when it abruptly cuts off. But another phone – fainter, from backstage, continues to ring. SEAN can be heard moving from offstage left to backstage.)

The phone stops ringing. There is a long beat.

SEAN reenters from stage left.)

Who was it?

CARMEN

I don't know.

SEAN

Did you pull the cord out of the wall?

CARMEN

No.

SEAN

Why did it stop ringing?

CARMEN

I guess they got tired of waiting.

SEAN

What if it was Vicki?

CARMEN

His door is open.

SEAN

(There is a long silence.)

Could the police have come back?

CARMEN

SEAN
They would have let us know.

CARMEN
What did you do?

SEAN
I closed it.

CARMEN
Was anything missing?

SEAN
I didn't check.
(A pause.)
Our computer is gone.

CARMEN
The police said they would take that.

SEAN
When?

CARMEN
Before.

SEAN
Did they say they would take any of the pictures?

CARMEN
I just remember they said they would take the computer.

SEAN
That bastard. All of them. All of them ... bastards. It's not enough that he's gone. They have to take everything else, too. They take his clothes, his books. I gave him that psychology book. That was a ... And what does that do for them, anyway? What are they going to do with evidence at this point? What do they have to investigate? He did it. It's done.

CARMEN
(quietly)
Not yet.

(SEAN sits. There is a long pause.)

SEAN

Everything's changed, hasn't it? We were putting our extra toward dorm supplies. We were reviewing his essays after work, reading orientation booklets before bed. We were writing financial aid appeals, driving him to work, driving him to school. Dinners were set around his schedule. All that work ... All that time ... We thought this was the start of something special. And we thought we'd want to remember it. We took pictures for his yearbook, we took pictures of his college visits. Like we were documenting ... But what are those good for now? They aren't worth fifty dollars. They're fake. There's nothing real about them. All those ... Everything we invested ... into nothing. Less than that, even. With everything we gave him, with all that time and effort, he could have done ... Nothing would have been better. If he had done nothing, it would have been better.

(He weeps.)

God. Oh, god.

(CARMEN stands.)

Where are you going?

CARMEN

Upstairs.

SEAN

Please don't leave me.

CARMEN

Sean...

SEAN

Why don't you cry?

CARMEN

I've been crying for five days. I can't cry anymore.

SEAN

Please. Please don't leave me.

(A pause.)

CARMEN

I'm not going to leave you.

(SEAN wipes his face, tries to collect himself.)

SEAN

I hate them for what they're doing. The police, the reporters. I hate that they're taking him away in bits and pieces, in books and clothes and photographs, and making this profile. They're showing it around, and they're saying, 'Here: This is who he was.' And they're saying that it won't be long before they know why he did it and what was wrong with him and who was to blame ... but how can they? How can they say that when their profile is wrong?

(His voice breaks, hitches.)

That person they keep talking about on the television, the person they keep showing pictures of ... That's not him. That's ...

(Faintly, a phone rings. SEAN and CARMEN listen. It rings again. CARMEN begins to cross left.)

CARMEN

I'll get it.

SEAN

No, don't.

(CARMEN stops. The phone rings.)

CARMEN

It might be important.

SEAN

If it's important –

CARMEN

I'm going to get it.

(The phone rings. SEAN stands.)

SEAN

No! I'll do it.

(SEAN crosses left.)

CARMEN

I want to –

SEAN

Let me, Carmen!

(He takes hold of CARMEN's waist and pulls her aside, then exits left.)

CARMEN stands still, her hands on her waist where SEAN grabbed her, as listens as SEAN makes his way to the phone, which rings a few more times before stopping. When it does, CARMEN crosses right, slowly, and exits to the kitchen.

Immediately after CARMEN exits, SEAN reenters on stage left. His eyes are down, and it takes him a moment to notice that CARMEN is not in the room.)

SEAN

Carmen?

(After a pause, CARMEN enters from the kitchen. She is holding the smashed answering machine.)

CARMEN

Who was it?

(A pause.)

SEAN

I don't know.

CARMEN

You didn't answer it?

SEAN

No.

CARMEN

What did you do?

SEAN

I disconnected it.

(CARMEN considers the broken answering machine.)

CARMEN

Sean, why did Vicki call here?

SEAN

I don't know.

(A beat.)

CARMEN

Please don't lie to me.

SEAN

I'm not.

CARMEN

I can't take it. Not on top of everything else.

SEAN

I'm not lying –

(CARMEN lifts the answering machine above her head and makes as if to throw it at SEAN. He flinches, shields himself, and CARMEN smashes the machine on the floor between them.)

CARMEN

Stop it! Stop it, Sean! How can you do this? With everything else, how can you possibly do this? Do you think you're being kind? That you're protecting me? That you're protecting us? There is no "us" anymore! There's nothing here! There's nothing left to protect! You keep saying that he couldn't have done it, that he knew better, that he knew how good he had it. How can you think that?

SEAN

You really –

CARMEN

What didn't you have? You had everything you wanted! Your son was going to Colgate. You got a publisher for your book. You just had a whole semester off to write and nap and watch baseball every night. Was that not good enough? What did she have? What did she give you that you couldn't get here?

(A beat.)

SEAN

I –

CARMEN

Don't. I don't want you to answer.

(SEAN crosses slowly to CARMEN.)

Don't –

SEAN

Carmen.

Get away from me!

CARMEN

(CARMEN evades SEAN, walking quickly downstage, then immediately crosses left, past SEAN, who scrambles upstage to catch her.)

Carmen, please!

SEAN

No!

CARMEN

(SEAN grasps CARMEN's wrist, pulls her toward him. He wraps her roughly in a bear hug. CARMEN thrashes against him.)

Let go of me!

CARMEN

Shh! Shh...

SEAN

(SEAN sinks to his knees, pulling CARMEN to the floor. CARMEN's legs give out from under her and she falls into SEAN. Her sudden weight causes SEAN to lose his balance, and he lets go of CARMEN to brace himself as he falls backwards towards stage right. Released, CARMEN pushes away from SEAN, scrambling left and stumbling to her feet. Both are breathing heavily.)

Don't you dare touch me, you...

CARMEN

(SEAN sits up, gets on his knees.)

Carmen...

SEAN

You had everything. Everything you could have possibly wanted. You selfish, rotten bastard.

CARMEN

Carmen, please...

SEAN

CARMEN
 What? What do you want now?

SEAN
 Please, I just want –

CARMEN
 What?

SEAN
 I just want to hold you.

CARMEN
 I'm sure Vicki would be happy –

SEAN
 She has nothing to do with this!

CARMEN
 He loved you. He loved you so much.
 (A pause.)
 He probably knew. He did. I'm sure he did. The police asked if there had been anything that had happened recently. Anything that could have upset him. He must have found out.

SEAN
 No.

CARMEN
 He must have.

SEAN
 That's impossible.

CARMEN
 Did you think you weren't going to get caught? That you were too careful? She called our house, Sean. She called our house! How careful could you have been?

(Backstage, the phone rings. CARMEN is only a little surprised.)

CARMEN
 You said you disconnected it.
 (A pause.)
 Is that her, do you think? Calling to see how you're doing?

(SEAN does not answer.)

The phone continues to ring. For a moment, CARMEN and SEAN stare at each other. Then, CARMEN crosses left.)

SEAN

Don't.

(CARMEN ignores him, and exits. After a few seconds, the phone cuts off mid-ring. SEAN collapses back against the chair, leaning against it. He looks hopelessly defeated.

After perhaps half a minute, CARMEN enters slowly from left.)

SEAN

Who was it?

CARMEN
(not cruelly)

Who do you think?

SEAN

What did she say?

CARMEN

It was the press.

(A beat.)

SEAN

What did you tell them?

CARMEN

I hung up.

(A beat.)

You said you had unplugged it.

(SEAN is silent.)

You asked me, earlier, if we knew what was missing.

SEAN

And you didn't say anything.

CARMEN

Because that's not how it works. If you know something and I don't, that's not us knowing.

SEAN
It's just a way of saying –

CARMEN
You lied to me.

SEAN
I thought it was important for us –

CARMEN
Stop. You can't think about 'us,' anymore. We have changed. Everything has changed.

SEAN
That's why it's so important that we stay together, that we support each other and stay strong!

CARMEN
We are not strong.
(A beat.)
Why did you say you unplugged the phone?
(SEAN does not answer. CARMEN moves behind the couch.)
CARMEN (cont.)
You want us to support each other? Help me understand. Why did you tell me that you had unplugged the phone?

SEAN
I don't want the press to bother you.

CARMEN
So why lie to me? Why tell me it's unplugged and then leave it plugged in?
(SEAN hesitates.)
Convince me.

SEAN
I keep hoping someone will call.

CARMEN
Vicki?

(A beat.)

SEAN
Maybe.
(He pauses.)

SEAN (cont.)

Anyone. Anyone who can say something kind or comforting. Anyone who doesn't need to watch the news to remember us, to remember that we're –

CARMEN

Breaking.

SEAN

I don't like that word.

(A beat.)

I never thought Rita would come through for us. I know I shouldn't say so, but I didn't. And when my sister called... I hadn't heard from Molly in seven years before this. And she called us at Rita's... I should have asked... I wish I had thought to ask how she got the number. But now I keep hoping it will be someone else, just one more person who can say something, who can offer anything. I don't want to talk to the press. I don't want to have those conversations. I just want to listen, to hear someone, to know someone's there.

(He pauses.)

CARMEN

I was there.

SEAN

No. Yes. Not really.

(A beat.)

But when Vicki –

CARMEN

Don't.

SEAN

It was the first I had heard from her since last summer.

(A beat.)

CARMEN

What did she want?

SEAN

What do you think? She wanted to know how we were.

CARMEN

She wanted to know how you were.

SEAN

No. Both of us. And I panicked. I asked where she got off calling after what happened. All I could think was that she didn't care, that, in her mind, we didn't have anything left to lose, so what the hell, right?

CARMEN
(flatly)

Right.

SEAN
(intently)

I don't believe that's true.

CARMEN

You don't.

SEAN

No.

(They regard each other.

CARMEN turns and takes a few steps toward stage left.)

CARMEN

I'm going upstairs.

(SEAN stands.)

SEAN

Please don't.

(CARMEN doesn't move.)

I can't do this by myself. I need –

(CARMEN turns.)

CARMEN

What do you need? What is it? Do you need it so badly that you'll go to my sister's? The woman you call a "bitch" when she isn't up to watching the dog? Or Molly? Will you go to her, even though it's been seven years since she's bothered to talk to you? What about Vicki? Can't she give you what you need?

SEAN

She can't.

CARMEN

Maybe she's not trying hard enough!

(A pause.)

I know I did. I tried very hard. When you thought family dinners were a good idea, I stopped coaching debate to have them ready. And I went to work later so I could take him to school, like you wanted. And when Michael ...

(A deathly quiet.)

CARMEN (cont.)

That's... That's the first time. That's the first time, Sean. That's the first time I've... That's the first time since he did it. The first time since he went in there and ... That's the first time since he went in there and he did it. That's the first time ...

(And she is broken.)

... since he killed them.

(SEAN moves, hesitantly, to her. His hand is outstretched.)

SEAN

Carmen?

CARMEN

Don't. Don't touch me.

(She breathes.)

CARMEN (cont.)

I don't need you to touch me.

SEAN

What do you need?

CARMEN

I need you to be honest.

SEAN

I'm sorry. I will. I can do that.

CARMEN

I need you to talk to the press.

(SEAN is silent.)

I need you to tell them how we're doing. And I need you to answer their questions, and ask them to give us space.

SEAN

I don't think –

CARMEN
You don't want to.

SEAN
No, I don't.

CARMEN
I need you to.

SEAN
Why?

CARMEN
We haven't done anything, the last five days. We've been hiding in Carey's room and sleeping and crying and counting on Rita to scare away the reporters. I don't want to do that anymore.

SEAN
Okay. That's okay. We don't have to.

(CARMEN sits on the couch.)

CARMEN
I want them to leave us alone.

SEAN
They're not going to do that. It's their job.

CARMEN
(quietly)
Sean, people hate us. They hate us for what he did. Things are going to get a lot harder. They're going to be looking for us at school, at Worcester, at The Big Y. They're going to be watching us, whispering about us. They're going to come up to us in our classes and when we're packing our groceries and when we're getting our mail. They won't bother hiding behind the answering machine.

(SEAN moves to CARMEN, but does not sit.)

SEAN
We can leave, you know. We don't have to stay here.

CARMEN
This is my home. This is our home. I don't want to leave.
(She pauses.)
I want you to talk to them.

SEAN

What would you have me say?

(CARMEN looks up.)

CARMEN

I just want you to remind them that we lost a son, too.

SEAN

I can't do that.

CARMEN

We're in the same position as the other parents.

SEAN

No, we're not.

CARMEN

We're grieving, just like them –

SEAN

Their children were victims, Carmen! Our son was not a victim!

(A beat.)

I'm sorry.

(SEAN turns away from CARMEN and takes a few steps past the chair, then looks back, returns to it, touches it.)

SEAN (cont.)

At New Year's, we were having cocktails, and Michael was sitting on the floor with the dog on his lap, laughing at Rita slurring her words. You were here, and I was rubbing your shoulders because you were furious with her for spilling wine on the tablecloth. I said to you, 'What a way to start the year, huh?' Michael wanted to know what I had said, and I winked at him. And he smiled. He understood and winked at me, and he smiled.

(He pauses.)

I remember that so vividly, the way he looked, rocking with laughter and the dog on his lap. I wouldn't have believed it, then. And now ...

(A beat.)

CARMEN

Neither do I.

(A pause.)

SEAN

I can't talk to them.

CARMEN

We need to. We need to do something to get moving, or just something that feels like we're moving. And we can. We can do it right now.

(A pause.)

SEAN

More will come.

CARMEN

We'll ask for privacy.

SEAN

The families. They'll hate us.

CARMEN

Yes.

SEAN

I don't know if I can.

CARMEN

I can help.

(A beat. SEAN is weeping.)

SEAN

I don't know if I can, Carmen.

(CARMEN stands, moves to SEAN. She wraps her arms around him, guides his head into her shoulder, holds him. He trembles in her arms.)

CARMEN

We'll go slow.

(They are quiet.)

SEAN gathers his breath. He crosses slowly upstage, toward the front door.)

CARMEN

I can look, if you want.

Okay.

SEAN

(CARMEN crosses up, passes him, and reaches the front door. She opens it and peers out, offstage.)

Is he out there?

SEAN

Yes, he's in his car.

CARMEN

(CARMEN gestures slightly to someone offstage. There's a brief pause.)

He's coming.

(SEAN moves to the couch and sits. He waits. JAIME appears outside the front door with his satchel.)

Missus Gilchrist?

JAIME

Will you come in?

CARMEN

Is Mister Gilchrist here?

JAIME

He's right here.

CARMEN

(JAIME enters. CARMEN closes the door behind him.)

Mister Gilchrist.

JAIME

(SEAN acknowledges JAIME from the couch.)

Would you like some water?

CARMEN
(to JAIME)

That would be nice, thanks.

JAIME

(CARMEN crosses down right, and exits.)

JAIME

Mister Gilchrist, thank you for having me.

(SEAN nods. He gestures to the easy chair.)

SEAN

Here.

JAIME

Thank you.

(JAIME sits in the chair.

CARMEN reenters with a glass of water and a coaster, crosses to center, and sets the coaster and glass on the coffee table in front of JAIME.

JAIME

Thank you.

(CARMEN walks around the coffee table and takes a seat on the couch, close to SEAN. She leans forward and drinks lightly from the glass SEAN brought her earlier, then sets it on top of the handkerchief, next to SEAN's.

While this is happening, JAIME takes a notebook out of his satchel. He does not open it.)

JAIME

Thank you for letting me in. I really appreciate you giving me the opportunity to sit down with you.

SEAN

Sure.

JAIME

I was just writing you a letter.

CARMEN

What did it say?

JAIME

I was asking you to reconsider. Just repeating what I said earlier, that I wanted to know how you were doing, and that I wanted to give you the opportunity to make a statement.

CARMEN

Oh.

JAIME

(with compassion)

So, how are you doing?

(SEAN is quiet. CARMEN takes his hand, holds it.)

SEAN

We're broken.

END

APPENDIX A
SCENARIOS

Preliminary Scenario of *The Year Of*

1. Working Title: *The Year Of*
2. Action: To learn. The students of the school will learn how to resist, how to argue, how to be constructive and destructive in having their own voice. The faculty, meanwhile, will come to terms with the fact that their students are free-thinking individuals who have more power than they are aware.
3. Form: This play is a tragedy, starting with the faculty members and students enjoying comic moments together and making the most of their teenage years before the school day is interrupted by a violent act.
4. Circumstances: The play is set during the homeroom, first, and second period of Friday, March 18 2016. It is set in Fr. Echevarria's classroom during homeroom and first period, and in Mrs. Manahan's classroom during second period.
5. Subject: This is a play about being a teenager in an all-boys school, and the cruelty that comes with that environment, both toward peers and teachers. The play is about fitting in and standing out, about learning how and when people can and should distinguish themselves, and when they've overstretched their boundaries.
6. Characters: Extensive character sketches have been completed in separate documents.
7. Conflict: The teachers are fighting to retain control of their students, to instruct and inspire in an interesting way while respecting their students as individuals. Their students, meanwhile, are failing to understand the power that they have over their instructors, and are, in fact, fighting for control that they don't know they already have.
8. Story: Play begins with Mr. Finnigan substituting for the ill Fr. Echevarria. During the homeroom period, he wrestles with the control of his students, struggling to maintain a balance between "coolness" and approachability and disciplinarian and instructor. The students test him on a few occasions, including not standing for the pledge of allegiance, which prompts Mr. Finnigan to remove one of the students for insubordination, leaving the students to chat among themselves. Some of them bully others, establishing a dynamic. Others keep to themselves or laugh along with the bullies. Sexuality comes up a few times, as Cesar points out Royce's homosexuality in an effort to divert attention to him. Sports come up, too, as does Mrs. Manahan's project. Mr. Finnigan returns and asks about the project. Someone explains it to him, and he asks to chat about it. Integrates discussion of faith into discussion of choice, of being an American, and having free will. Student calls him out on running off Marcus from classroom. Finnigan demands he won't be questioned in his classroom. "It's not your classroom," says one student." Students are, literally, saved by the bell. In the second act, the scene begins with students filing into Mrs. Manahan's room. Some of them are already sitting when the other students arrive. They talk about Finnigan, demonizing his behavior and portraying him as an asshole. Mrs. Manahan arrives and passes out her assignment, to prove the existence of god through mathematics. She begins going over the assignment.

Students begin questioning the assignment, asking for alternatives. She's unwilling to accommodate them. Students make arguments for doing other assignments, for there being no god, for there being alternatives that Mrs. Manahan's not open to. She eventually slams down her book and demands that her students stop. One, Wyatt, stands up and says no. And Mrs. Manahan backs down, incrementally backs down lower and lower. The bell rings. Students leave. Wyatt remains standing. He's confused. He asks Mrs. Moynahan, "Why didn't you tell me to sit down? Why didn't you stop me? Why didn't you take control?" Mrs. Moynahan is crying. Gunfire erupts from outside the classroom. A couple students come inside and take shelter. One is bleeding. Gunfire hits the door. Students run away from it. The door swings open and the play ends, the stage going black.

9. Thought: The play is meant to be a commentary on the danger of disrespect, both of students to students and students to teachers. It's a piece about growing up, about fitting in, and about standing out. It's a piece about high school. Not about dealing with a tragedy or preventing it, but about the natural ways in which we interact with each other that dictate how we act.
10. Dialogue: Students are marked by their dialogue. Some are crude and cruel, others are prim and upright to the point of unnaturalism. But dialogue in this play will serve to illustrate the dynamic between students, teachers, and each other in a way that entertains, is memorable, and inspires thought.
11. Schedule: I want to finish a rough draft of this play by the middle of this summer, 2015. I want to have insight from a reader or two by the end of the summer, and be working on a rewrite by then.

Revised Scenario of *The Year Of*

1. **Title:** *The Year Of*
2. **Circumstances:** The play is set during homeroom and the first two periods of Friday, March 18 at St. Ignatius High School, a Jesuit high school located in upstate New York. Homeroom and first period are set in the classroom of Father Echevarria, absent the day of the play, and second period is set in the main office, locked down because a shooter has entered the aforementioned classroom.
3. **Characters:** Are described in individual detailed character sketches in separate documents.
4. **Narrative/Outline:** The play opens with Mr. Lee Finnigan, St. Ignatius' gym teacher, entering Fr. Echevarria's classroom with a satchel and a cup of coffee. He tries turning on the lights, but the lights don't turn on when he flips the switch. He swears, then, noticing a crucifix above the door, moves uncomfortably to the instructor's desk, where he sets down his things.
Mr. Finnigan stands behind the desk then, and pantomimes as if he were interacting with students, but is surprised by the Dr. Legwand, the school's principal,

who enters. She asks whether she can get him anything, but Mr. Finnigan says he's fine. Legwand is about to leave, but asks first whether Mr. Finnigan would like her to turn on the lights. He says he had some trouble with them, but she turns them on without incidence. He comments that he must look like an idiot, which she only halfheartedly refutes. Mr. Finnigan remembers that he is scheduled to substitute for another class, but that he has a conflict teaching gym during that period. Legwand says she'll take care of it, and exits.

Finnigan moves self-consciously around the room, grimacing at how he must have looked to Dr. Legwand. He sits behind his desk, going through his materials, then going through the desk. After a moment, he stands, leans on the front of the desk, and again begins pantomiming having a conversation with students.

A.J. enters, looking for Fr. Echevarria, but when Finnigan tells him he's out with the flu, A.J. moves to leave. Mr. Finnigan offers his own ear, but A.J. declines politely. Finnigan uses the same language Legwand had used when she offered her own services. A.J. leaves. Outside, in the school's hallway, people open and close lockers and chat indistinctly.

Finnigan moves to follow after A.J. but stops when he sees the date on the whiteboard. He erases it, thinking it is incorrect, but then replaces it with the same numbers, having to do it twice in order to maintain a sense of consistency between his own handwriting and Fr. Echevarria's, or whoever wrote the date there originally.

Cesar enters carrying a hefty stack of books close to his chest. He moves quickly and frantically as he enters, and gives a surprised hello to Mr. Finnigan before sitting down at a desk and taking out notecards, which he uses to quiz himself on chemistry terms. Finnigan attempts to make polite conversation with Cesar, but Cesar doesn't bite. So, Finnigan sits down at his desk and makes a note, having to replace one of Father Echevarria's pencils when he breaks the tip.

Royce enters then, carrying a worn, stuffed, but sophisticated briefcase. He greets Finnigan politely, then asks whether Fr. Echevarria is out. When Finnigan says yes, Royce asks whether Fr. is sick. When Finnigan says yes, Royce says that Father Echevarria had himself said that school ought to be closed with all the sick students and teachers. Mr. Finnigan humors him, says not everyone is sick. Royce laughs, then chats with Cesar, asking whether Cesar is studying for Chemistry, then asking whether Cesar is feeling good. Cesar admits some concern regarding his grasp on the elements (specifically, moles and molar mass) but Royce assures him he'll do fine, asking about his most recent score. Cesar does not tell him. Royce then asks Mr. Finnigan, who is texting at the instructor's desk, what the students will need for class that day. Mr. Finnigan puts away his phone and says they'll be having a study hall. Royce removes a notebook from his briefcase and exits.

At the same time, Phillip sticks his head in the classroom and asks whether Finnigan will be having a study hall in lieu of class. Finnigan confirms, and Phillip exits. Finnigan takes out his phone and begins texting again.

Ron enters at this time, moving lazily to his desk, where he sits down, puts his head down, and makes as if to sleep.

John enters then, whapping Ron with his notebook as he moves to his desk, playfully telling him to wake up. Ron tells John to fuck off, which Mr. Finnigan hears and warns him about. But when John again swats at Ron, Ron again tells John

to fuck off, which Mr. Finnigan scolds more severely. Ron responds by claiming he is being harassed in a less than serious manner. Mr. Finnigan tells him to knock it off, which John then teases Ron about. John asks Mr. Finnigan whether he is coming to the big hockey game that weekend. Ron claims that Finnigan is coming to basketball, not hockey, and Mr. Finnigan confirms this, offering that he doesn't want to drive so far to go to a hockey game when basketball is right around the corner. Ron and John continue to butt heads in a friendly way, bragging about their respective sports while deriding the other's, while techno music begins to play over the intercom indicating that it's nearly time to begin homeroom. John mimics a girl, and asks Ron whether he wants to dance. Ron declines, and the two joke about overweight women before Finnigan interrupts and asks them to be quiet. Royce reenters as Finnigan counts out attendance.

Tomasz and Wyatt enter then. Tomasz is wearing sneakers and eating a muffin, and Mr. Finnigan asks him to go put on his dress-code-approved shoes. Tomasz exits and Wyatt takes his seat.

Ron asks Mr. Finnigan what they'll be doing in gym that day, and says that he forgot his shirt. Wyatt asks whether they'll be playing handball, and Finnigan says they might. Marcus enters.

Over the intercom, the music stops and Phillip begins to read off the morning announcements. Mr. Finnigan moves to close the door, but as soon as he does, Corey tries to enter. Mr. Finnigan sends him to the office to get a late slip. Over the intercom, Phillip invites the students to stand for the pledge of allegiance and prayer, but the students in Mr. Finnigan's room do not stand. Mr. Finnigan tells them to, and Royce and Cesar do so. Wyatt says, however, that Father doesn't make them stand for the pledge of allegiance. Mr. Finnigan asks, again, that they stand, and Wyatt, Ron, and John do. Marcus, however, refuses. And as Phillip says the Lord's Prayer over the intercom, Mr. Finnigan asks why Marcus doesn't stand. Marcus doesn't offer a good reason, and after pressing the issue, Mr. Finnigan acquiesces. Over the intercom, Phillip says the last few lines of the Lord's Prayer without any of the students talking over him. At the prayer's end, John complains good-humoredly about having been made to stand, which Mr. Finnigan questions. Over the intercom, Phillip invites students to buy tickets for the Spring show – *Into the Woods*. John jokes that standing unquestioningly for the pledge seems like a communist thing to do, which Mr. Finnigan also questions. Meanwhile, Wyatt and Royce speak about the upcoming play. Wyatt is curious whether Royce is involved, but Royce is not. Over the announcements, Father Max makes a long pitch for a blood drive St. Ignatius is hosting in honor of one of the school's former teachers. The conversation in the classroom continues, with Mr. Finnigan asking students why Father Hechevaria doesn't make them stand for pledge and prayer. Royce offers that Father values freedom of choice. Mr. Finnigan asks Marcus whether his inaction represents a statement of types, whether Marcus is Catholic, and whether Marcus is simply being lazy. When Marcus does not respond, Mr. Finnigan uses his behavior as an opportunity to teach the students about the seven deadly sins. However, the students divert the lesson to a discussion of the movie *Se7en*, and Mr. Finnigan asks them for quiet. Cesar, who has been taking notes, asks about the movie, but is scolded by Mr. Finnigan. Over the intercom, Dr. Legwand makes an announcement inviting students

to support the school's hockey team in its upcoming state championship game. John tells everyone they had better show up. Tomasz makes a quick, playful announcement over the intercom, and Mr. Finnigan goes out in the hall incredulously to look for him. While he's gone, Ron and John roughhouse, and Cesar looks on, earning a punch from John for flinching.

Corey returns with a late slip, high fives John. As Mr. Finnigan observes the room, he sees that Ron is not wearing dress shoes. When he asks Ron why, Ron offers that members of the basketball team have been allowed to dress down for their upcoming playoff game. When Mr. Finnigan expresses doubt, John teases Ron and curses. Mr. Finnigan berates him, asks whether Father tolerates that kind of language. John offers a reply similar to the one made by Royce – that Father values freedom of expression and speech, to which Mr. Finnigan takes as a sarcastic comment. Marcus snorts in response to this, and Mr. Finnigan asks him whether he has something to say. They challenge each other nonverbally, before Mr. Finnigan defers. He takes attendance and asks about the people in the class.

Tomasz returns, and Mr. Finnigan tells him to go get a late slip. Tomasz protests, but Finnigan replies that Tomasz was, by going to get his shoes, late. He shuts the door on Tomasz, and Tomasz makes faces in the window before fleeing. Mr. Finnigan then tells Ron to go get his dress shoes. Ron protests, and Mr. Finnigan makes a point that if Ron is lying, he'll likely be in trouble with administrators. He then counts off attendance, and the room is quiet as each person involves himself in his own things. Mr. Finnigan texts, John starts tearing up some paper, and Corey and John chat between themselves about an upcoming party. When Mr. Finnigan asks John why he's tearing up paper, Cory asks Finnigan whether they're allowed to use their phones. When Finnigan says no, Corey asks whether he can use Finnigan's. Mr. Finnigan says Corey could, except he's using it right now, which throws Ron into an exaggerated bedlam in response to the "dis." Cesar is offended by this outburst, inordinately so, and he berates Ron for being disruptive when he's trying to study. Ron replies that Cesar should have studied at home.

Tomasz returns, but he has still forgotten his shoes, and Mr. Finnigan sends him to get them. Cesar is offended by Ron's implication that he did not study enough, and becomes indignant. Mr. Finnigan threatens Cesar with sending him down to Dr. Legwand's office. Ron continues to quietly tease Cesar, and Mr. Finnigan tells him to be quiet.

Outside the classroom, students can be heard moving around, transitioning from homeroom to their first period class.

Tomasz reenters with dress shoes as John and Corey continue to talk about their plans for a party that evening. Corey asks whether they can go to their first period class, and when Royce offers that it's ten after, Mr. Finnigan dismisses them. Royce and Corey exit with their things, and John and Ron exit, asking Mr. Finnigan before they go if they can run down to the vending machines. Mr. Finnigan asks if they can be back on time; they reply that they can and will. He tells them they can go. Marcus asks if he can use the bathroom. Mr. Finnigan asks that he be as quick as he can. Mr. Finnigan moves to his desk to flip through a few documents. Cesar approaches him, and apologizes for having been disruptive. Mr. Finnigan accepts the apology. Cesar asks more about the seven deadly sins, and Mr. Finnigan says that he won't be

quizzing Cesar or anything, but Cesar says he'd be interested to learn more anyway. Wyatt departs, uninterested in the conversation, and finding an excuse to walk around.

A.J. enters, takes a seat, and begins to follow Mr. Finnigan's explanations of the sins with interest. Phillip also enters, makes sincere hellos and greetings to those present. He asks what Mr. Finnigan is teaching, pays attention for a bit, but begins, over the course of the scene, to examine his own notes in between greeting the others that enter, which include Bryce. After Bryce has entered and Phillip has greeted him, Mr. Finnigan asks him about his shirt, interrupting his own lesson briefly to ask about the show. He asks Bryce if he'd like to make an announcement inviting people, and Bryce declines. Mr. Finnigan then asks A.J. how he's doing, and A.J. replies that he's okay.

Patrick Collins-Manahan enters, as does Wyatt. Wyatt sits next to Phillip, asks him how he's doing, whether he's finished reading the Koran. Cesar is intrigued by this, but is repulsed more than genuinely interested. Mr. Finnigan shuts the door and asks why Phillip is reading the Koran. Phillip replies that he's reading it for pleasure, that he finds the language beautiful. A.J. asks how Phillip is reading it, and if the language in Phillip's English translation is so beautiful. Bryce comments that the original language in the Koran is supposed to be quite poetic, but through this, Cesar is disturbed by the genuine interest. He makes a disparaging comment, questions Phillip's commitment to God. Tomasz pokes fun at Cesar, but Phillip responds tolerantly, and says that his faith is based around the tenets shared by the three major world religions – the golden rule. Mr. Finnigan chips in, comments that they were just, earlier, talking about the seven deadly sins. He asks whether religion is a common topic of conversation in Etch's classroom. Phillip suspects that they've been thinking about religion more because of the assignment Mrs. Manahan has recently introduced in precalculus. He explains that Manahan has required her students, through the use of mathematical proofs, to prove the existence of God.

Marcus knocks on the door. Mr. Finnigan tells him to go get a pass. Marcus, irritated, says that he told Mr. Finnigan he only went to use the bathroom. Mr. Finnigan says that it's the responsibility of the student to be in the classroom, on time. He tells Marcus to go get a slip. Marcus responds "fuck this," and storms offstage. Mr. Finnigan follows to an extent, demanding that Marcus come back. Marcus refuses. Mr. Finnigan pursues Marcus to the office.

In the classroom, the students ask each other what prompted such an excessive reaction from Mr. Finnigan. Wyatt brings the students who weren't there up to date.

Ron and John reenter, each with a snack from the vending machine. They greet Phillip and ask where Finnigan is. Phillip says he's stepped out. John asks Tomasz how the office was. Tomasz tells them to piss off. The students talk openly for a bit about Mr. Finnigan and Marcus, and Cesar jumps in and says his peers should be more respectful toward their elders. Ron replies by insulting Cesar and making a vulgar joke about his mother. Cesar is extremely flustered by this. He is almost hysterical, questioning why the boys bully him when he tries to do so hard to be a good person. He points out Bryce for being gay, and asks why the boys don't pick on Bryce like they do on him. Bryce is extraordinarily embarrassed by this, and he points to his having a girlfriend as proof he's actually straight. Tomasz says to Cesar

that he just committed a big no no – leave Bryce out of it. “Divert attention to someone else? That’s just low.” Cesar is furious. He nearly is screaming that he tries so hard; he tries to be a good student, he tries to keep to himself, why don’t they let him just be?

Mr. Finnigan enters at that point, calls out Cesar immediately and tells him he needs to go to the office, and calls out Ron for, he believes, provoking Cesar. Mr. Finnigan walks them both down to the office, leaving Wyatt, A.J., John, Tomasz, Phillip, Bryce, and Patrick. A.J. apologizes to Bryce, says that he’s sorry Cesar put him on the spot like that. Bryce shrugs it off, says he might have been more offended if there was any truth to it. John laughs at this, calls bullshit.

Phillip, who is on his phone, suddenly announces that one of the neighboring schools, Saint Tom’s has been locked down, according to “Ellen,” whom an audience is left to assume is a girlfriend, friend, or relative. Confusion within the classroom ensues as the students attempt to make sense of what’s going on. Wyatt and Phillip stand near the window, looking out and seeing if they can see Saint Tom’s from where they are. Of course, they can’t, but they stand there anyway as the rest of the class becomes for flustered. At one point, Wyatt tells Bryce to “shut up,” and Tomasz hypothesizes that Tom’s is locked down because someone brought a clock to school. John makes fun of A.J. for being Middle Eastern.

At his desk, Patrick is texting Ian, a classmate of theirs. He asks John to call him, as Ian’s dad has a police scanner, and he thinks that information on why Tom’s is going on lockdown may have gone to the police. John, however, doesn’t have Ian’s home phone number. Wyatt does, however, and he gives Ian a call at home. It goes right to the answering machine, and Wyatt yells into the machine for a bit, trying to wake Ian if the machine broadcasts the message aloud while recording. John snatches the phone away and begins leaving a more sexual, racist message, but then quickly hands the phone back to Wyatt to continue the message when, suddenly, Ian’s mother picks up. Wyatt tries to clear things up, and John yells at him from across the room. This is just in time for Mr. Finnigan to come back and catch Wyatt and John in action. He immediately carts them away. The few remaining students are left alone, and they try again to get in touch with Ian. As Phillip calls Ian’s cell phone, Tomasz and Bryce feud about Bryce going outside to keep watch. After a bit, Tomasz goes outside, and is caught immediately and punished by Mrs. Collins-Manahan when she comes in to proctor the class. Phillip asks if she knows if anything is happening at St. Tom’s. She doesn’t. For a few minutes, all is quiet. Then, a student we haven’t previously seen, Adam, knocks on the door and asks if Father Hechevarria is in. When Mrs. Collins-Manahan tells him he’s not, Adam takes stock of the room. Mrs. Collins-Manahan, confused and uncertain, asks him what he wants. Adam draws a gun and the lights black out.

The second act begins only a few minutes after the first has ended. Mr. Finnigan is in Dr. Legwand’s office, locked down along with Wyatt, Patrick, John, Ron, and Cesar. The six of them have barricaded a large desk against the door, and are sitting against the wall, their backs to the door. Cesar asks whether he’s still in trouble. Finnigan tells him not to talk. Cesar makes a lame attempt to blame Ron for Cesar even being there. Ron, who is visibly shaken by everything that’s happened, tells

Cesar to fuck off, that can't he see that that doesn't really fucking matter right now? And Finnigan tells both of them to knock it off.

Wyatt asks Mr. Finnigan whether he can have his phone. Finnigan is unwilling to return it, saying that a shooter could trace a phone call. Wyatt argues with this claim, saying that a shooter probably doesn't have the ability to trace calls or anything like that. He asks Patrick for assurance, and Patrick backs up the assumption that it's probably a disgruntled student. John chimes in, argues that it's probably A.J. Or maybe even Phillip, having been reading the Koran. Cesar latches on to this, says it probably was. Finnigan tells them all to shut up.

Wyatt insists that no one's tracing phones except maybe the police, but Finnigan points out that if it's a coordinated attack, that someone's gone and put Saint Tom's under lockdown as well, then the attackers may be more sophisticated than merely disgruntled students. Wyatt argues that they could determine what's true if they could get in touch with Ellen. Patrick says they could call his mom. She might have a better idea of what's going on. Finnigan shoots this down for the same reason as before, that trying to send a message could compromise their safety.

John, meanwhile, takes out his own phone, and begins to text someone covertly. Cesar, who sees, and has been listening to Mr. Finnigan, tattles on John, who gets pissy. Ron lays into Cesar, and breaks down a little. John restrains him, a mini-struggle breaks out, and Ron kicks Wyatt in the chest. Patrick and John calm Ron and, after Ron has gotten a grip, he crosses to the chair and sits in it, moving back and forth noncommittally.

John takes out some weed and takes a drag. He then gives Ron the cigarette, invites him to take a drag and calm down. Ron does. Patrick crosses to them, and also joins in.

Finnigan, seeing this, asks John what he thinks he's doing. John tells him, bluntly, asks if Finnigan wants some. Finnigan is appalled, and reprimands them. He tells them that they can't smoke in school, let alone in Legwand's office. John says it'll help, that it's no big deal, and that it'll be okay. Finnigan continues to scold the three as they pass the joint back and forth.

In the distance, there are a few popping sounds.

Finnigan demands that they puts out the joint, and Patrick complies. He and John scoot back to their positions at the wall, and Ron joins them, trying to squeeze between John and the wall and put some distance between himself and the door. John resists this at first, but relents after a couple seconds. Cesar, watching Ron, is delighted by Ron's cowardice. When John questions him, Cesar affirms that Mr. Finnigan will protect them. Patrick says he can't believe they smoked in Dr. Legwand's office. John calls it the highlight of the day.

Wyatt, meanwhile, tries appealing to Mister Finnigan, and argues that they need to do something. He petitions Mr. Finnigan that they have to message the police, but Mr. Finnigan says that the police know what's going on. Wyatt doubts this and asks Patrick if he wants to look out the window, but Mr. Finnigan orders them back to their positions. Wyatt briefly makes as if to disobey, but Finnigan shoots him down.

Wyatt asks John who John was messaging earlier. John denies having been on his phone. Patrick asks Mr. Finnigan if he saw his mother today.

Suddenly, Mr. Finnigan leaves his position barricading the door and crosses to John. He stands over John, threatening him and pushing him and demanding his phone. Cesar, terrified with Mr. Finnigan having left his post, replaces him at the barricade, shouting for Mr. Finnigan and begging Wyatt for help. Wyatt stands and moves to Cesar, but passes right by him and crosses to Finnigan, who he pushes over. When Mr. Finnigan falls, he stamps on John's hand, breaking it. The office panicks. Finnigan confronts Wyatt, John is screaming at Finnigan, and Ron is sobbing.

In the pandemonium, Cesar pushes over the desk, opens the door, and flees.

Mr. Finnigan throws himself in front of the door and blocks it, and orders John to replace the desk at the door. John doesn't move. Patrick, however, does the job, and once the desk is firmly in place, and Mr. Finnigan has checked that Patrick can hold it, he scolds John, who defends himself, citing his broken hand. Meanwhile, Wyatt accosts Mr. Finnigan, arguing ineffectively that they have to open it up for Cesar. Patrick sides with Mr. Finnigan, arguing that their security is imperative. Mr. Finnigan elaborates, says that the door is locked from the outside, and that as long as they don't open it themselves, they'll be safe.

More gunshots sound. They sound closer.

Finnigan suddenly relents and tosses Wyatt his phone, telling him to call the police. Wyatt makes a call, and John announces that Ian has responded to his texts, saying that they're on the news and that the news isn't reporting anything. Mr. Finnigan yells for him not to tell Ian where they are, and although John initially gives him guff, he acquiesces when Mr. Finnigan moves threateningly toward him again.

Suddenly, Wyatt begins to talk to Ellen, starts to profess his love for her. Finnigan rips the phone away from him, knocking Wyatt down and saying into the phone that they have to call the police. He tries to hang up, but when he can't, he gives the phone to Patrick, who completes the job. Mr. Finnigan calls the police and reports where they are. He then gives the phone to Ron, as the police officer has asked to speak with him, being told he's shook up. Ron takes the phone and answers the officer's questions, his answers contrasting somewhat with the answers Mr. Finnigan provides in reply to John's queries about what the officer said.

Mr. Finnigan moves to Wyatt and tries to comfort him, but when he first touches him, Wyatt spasms and cries out. Mr. Finnigan sits down next to him and tries to console him. He even rubs his back a little. He asks about Ellen. Asks how they met. John, listening in, reveals that Ellen is Phillip's girlfriend. Mr. Finnigan starts to let this go, but John calls Wyatt out for his infidelity. Mr. Finnigan squeezes John's broken hand and incapacitates him, which Ron reports to the police officer. She asks to speak with John. Patrick asks Mr. Finnigan whether he thinks Patrick's mom is okay. Mr. Finnigan assures him she is. Mr. Finnigan then presses, asks Patrick about random things to keep Patrick's mind off the situation, including how his brother is. Patrick replies that he doesn't know, but he's probably better than they are. Mr. Finnigan assures him that they'll be alright, and he crosses to Wyatt, kneels next to him, and tells him the same thing. John continues to talk to the police officer via the phone.

Ron approaches Mr. Finnigan and Wyatt. Mr. Finnigan asks him how he's doing, and Ron says he's fine, but points out John and asks what Mr. Finnigan's going to do about him. He asks if Mr. Finnigan thinks they'll fire him, and Mr.

Finnigan tells them that “they” already have, as there’s no room on the budget for him. Wyatt lifts himself up and apologizes to him, empathizing.

Suddenly, someone knocks at the door, lightly but firmly. Everyone retakes their locked down positions and waits, tense, for something to happen.

Cesar speaks from outside the door, asking for Mr. Finnigan. Mr. Finnigan frantically tries to motion for them to be quiet, but John speaks out anyway. Mr. Finnigan confronts him angrily, and John says he shouldn’t have been such a dick earlier.

Cesar continues to call through the door, asking what’s going on. Patrick, who has been looking back and forth from the door to Mr. Finnigan, tells him they can’t let him in, that they have to keep the room secure. But he asks what’s going on, if Cesar’s seen anyone, if he’s seen his mom. Cesar tells him that she’s dead, that Phillip’s dead, that lots of people are dead. There are more people with guns down the hall, he says. He says they’re coming toward them.

Patrick, Wyatt, and Mr. Finnigan are quiet as they await their fate. Cesar begs to be let in. Mr. Finnigan prohibits them. But Ron argues that if Cesar’s out there yelling, shooters will know they’re in there anyway. Ron says he knows how lockdown works, but they’ve got to let Cesar in, for all of their sakes.

Mr. Finnigan relents, and he pushes the desk aside as Ron gets the door and opens it slightly for Cesar, who enters without incident. They sit quietly. Outside the door, footsteps move down the hall, approaching the office. Someone knocks. They announce themselves as the police.

Preliminary Scenario of “A Statement”

BASIC CONFLICT: This play will chronicle the brief period in the lives of Sean and Carmen Gilchrist five days after their son, Michael, murdered eighteen of his peers and two of his teachers in a school shooting that received extensive media coverage due to the seemingly random yet extremely brutal nature of the crime. At the time the play occurs, the parents have returned from their son’s private funeral service. Within this setting, the primary conflict of the play will therefore be built upon each parent’s struggle to find balance and forgiveness – both toward their son and toward each other, as each cannot help but look to the other in finding fault for their tragedy. More tangibly, the couple will find conflict in the husband’s admission of an affair, in the decision whether or not to speak with a member of the press, and in evaluating each other’s response to the event.

THOUGHT: The subject of this play will be grief. The theme will be how friends and family of a violent criminal reconcile the acts committed by the perpetrator with their previously held feelings of unconditional love toward him or her.

CHARACTERS:

- **SEAN GILCHRIST;** 49; Father to Michael Gilchrist and husband to Carmen Gilchrist. Wants, most, for the tragedy his son committed to have never occurred.

However, he more tangibly hopes to support and offer love and affection for his wife, while hoping she might return the gesture. He is disturbed and heartbroken by his son's actions, and feels that he has lost everything – not just his child – in the events of the last week. Unlike Carmen, he recognized hints of instability and danger in his son's demeanor, and his prime regret is that he did not do more to address his son's unhappiness. He is the chair of the English department at Worcester State University.

- CARMEN GILCHRIST; 44; Mother to Michael Gilchrist and wife to Sean Gilchrist. Is, at the time of the play, almost irreparably broken by her son's violent act, having known both the victims and their parents of the school quite well and having absorbed their grief in addition to their own. What she wants most, where the audience finds her, is sleep – she has not been getting enough rest, as she has been so disturbed by what she's learned over the last five days. But, more than that, she wants rest – an end to the pain, perhaps by any means necessary. Carmen never once suspected her son's admittedly abnormal behavior would lead to the tragedy it did, instead believing her son was in control of his life. She has been working, for the last several years, as the head of a nonprofit refugee and asylee accomodation organization located in Worcester.
- ANDREW TURNER; 32; Reporter for the *Telegram & Gazette* in Worcester. Wants to gain access to Sean and Carmen and provide his readers with a complete portrait of their son, instead of the decidedly vilified picture gathered over the last five days.

GENRE: Realist, in the sense that the play will attempt to depict life realistically, but drama, foremost.

LENGTH: One-act: around 45 pages.

SETTING: The play will be set in the Gilchrist's home – specifically, the living room – in Paxton, Massachusetts, a suburb of Worcester. It will be a beautiful day, and golden light will be shining in through the windows. This beauty will contrast unsuitably with the play's content yet will offer a subliminal sense of comfort near the play's conclusion. May, 2005.

THE BASIC STORY: The play opens with Sean and Carmen's return from their son's memorial service. When they return, Sean goes off-stage to check their answering machine, while Carmen sits passively on their couch. They have twenty-seven new messages on their answering machine. The first and second of these messages are from reporters, and Sean, as he does for the subsequent calls from reporters, deletes them before they finish playing. The third message is from a relative, letting them know that he deleted the messages and is taking fine care of their dog. Messages 4-9 are from reporters. Message #10 is an automated message from their bank. Message #11 is a reporter. Message #12 is a female neighbor calling for Sean, asking for him, asking how he's doing. Message #13 is a reporter. Message #14 is a man naming all of the victims of their son's rampage, and identifying them by their interests, ending by placing blame on the parents. Message #13 is a reporter, and message #14 is a reporter, and, at that point, Sean smashes the answering machine. There's a long pause.

Sean enters, and Carmen asks him whether the neighbor who was calling was a particular person. Sean says yes. Carmen asks why that person would be calling. Sean says that he's been sleeping with her. There's a long pause.

Carmen asks why Sean would tell her that. Sean says he doesn't know, that he can't lie to Carmen – not in a time like this. Carmen becomes agitated, says she would have preferred if Sean had lied to her, says that he's only thinking of himself, that Can't he think of anyone else? Doesn't he realize that anyone else is suffering?

There's a knock at the door. Sean has collapsed onto a sofa, and doesn't answer. Carmen gets up, answers. Andrew Turner is there. He introduces himself, asks if he can talk to them. From the couch, Sean yells "No comment." Andrew presses, asks whether there's anything he can do for them. Asks if he can help. Carmen says of course you can't help. How could you help? Andrew says he doesn't think their son is evil, and he doesn't think either of them are evil. He says they deserve better than what the newspapers have been reporting. If they don't want to talk to him, to go on the record, he'll respect that, but he wants to know, personally, and as a father, how this could have happened. He wants to know what could have happened.

Revised Scenario of "A Statement"

TITLE: *A Statement*

LENGTH: One-act: 35 pages, but as long as it can be beyond that.

GENRE: Realistic drama.

SETTING: Around 3:45pm on Tuesday, May 10, 2005. The living room of Sean and Carmen Gilchrist in Paxton, Massachusetts. There is a large picture window, a couch and chair, a couple end tables and a coffee table, doorways leading off into other rooms. There are also several bookshelves, a small bar, and flowers. It is a beautiful day. Golden light shines brilliantly in through the windows. This beauty will contrast unsuitably with the play's content yet will offer a subliminal sense of comfort near the play's conclusion.

THE CHARACTERS: See detailed character sketches. NOTE: This play will not feature traditional protagonist/antagonistic characters. Instead, the main characters – Sean and Carmen – will serve aspects of each role in separate places, supporting but also challenging each other in a way that will – I hope – hold true to most marriages when placed under significant stress.

THOUGHT: The subject of this play will be grief. The theme will be how friends and family of a violent criminal reconcile the acts committed by the perpetrator with their previously held feelings of unconditional love toward him or her.

BASIC CONFLICT: This play will chronicle the brief period in the lives of Sean and Carmen Gilchrist five days after their son, Michael, murdered eighteen of his peers and two of his teachers in a gruesome school shooting that received extensive media coverage due to the extensively brutal and sexual nature of the crime. At the time the play occurs, the parents have returned from their son's private funeral service. Within this setting, the primary conflict of the play will therefore be built upon each parent's struggle to find balance and forgiveness – both toward their son and toward each other, as each cannot help but look to the other in finding fault for their tragedy. More tangibly, the couple will find conflict in the husband's admission of an affair, in the decision whether or not to speak with a member of the press, and in evaluating each other's response to the event.

WHY NOW?: This is the first time in five days that the Gilchrist's have been home, having previously taken refuge in a family member's home. They are returning only now because they don't know what else to do. Jaime Turner is there because he's been looking to understand the parents and their son's actions and this is the earliest he's been able to get a hold of them.

BEATS: The play opens with Sean and Carmen's return from their son's memorial service. When they return, Sean goes off-stage to check their answering machine, while Carmen sits passively on their couch. They have twenty-five new messages on their answering machine. The first of these messages is from a reporter, and Sean, as he does for the subsequent calls from reporters, deletes them before they finish playing. The second message is from a relative, letting them know that he deleted the messages and is taking fine care of their dog. Messages 3-7 are from reporters. Message #8 is a female neighbor calling for Sean, asking how he's doing. He deletes this message before it finishes, or before it gets very far. Message #9 is a reporter. Message #10 is a man naming all of the victims of their son's rampage, and identifying them by their interests, ending by placing blame on the parents. Message #11 is a reporter, message #12 is a reporter, and, at that point, Sean smashes the answering machine. There's a long pause.

Sean enters, and Carmen asks him whether the neighbor who was calling was a particular person – "Vicki, from Streeter." Sean says yes. Carmen asks why she would be calling. Sean says he doesn't know.

There's a knock at the door. Sean answers. It is Jaime Turner. He introduces himself, asks if there's anything he can do for them. Sean says, "No comment," then, "Anything you can do? What is that supposed to mean?" Jaime asks if he can help. Sean says, "Of course you can't help. How could you help?" Jaime says he's sorry. He knows what they've been reading about themselves, about their son. He says he doesn't think much of what's been written is true. He says they deserve better than what the newspapers have been reporting. If they don't want to talk to him, to go on the record, he won't ask that. He says he doesn't want to crucify them, or put blame on them. He only wants to listen. He wants to know if they're okay.

Carmen interjects, says they're not, that of course they're not. Sean shushes her. Jaime says he can see they're suffering. He says most people can't see that, though. He asks whether Carmen wants people to see that.

Sean says that if they wanted to make a comment, they would. Jaime, again, asks whether Sean and Carmen think the world should know what they're going through. Sean says the readers can put it together on its own, and closes the door.

Jaime knocks again. Sean opens the door, says, "We have no comment to make." Jaime says he thinks they're making a mistake. People who don't talk to reporters do so because they have something to hide. He says the press is wondering what Sean and Carmen knew, how much they knew, and when they knew it. And the assumption is that they must have known something, because why else would they be hiding?

Sean shuts the door, tells Carmen he doesn't want to talk to the press. Carmen asks him why not. Sean says they have no right. They cannot be pitied, not when there are so many innocents dead because of the child they raised.

Carmen presses, asks, "Aren't we innocent, too?" She says Sean didn't know. She didn't know. How could they have known?

Sean says Jaime's trying to bait them – to get them to talk. He's looking for a big story. He's nothing but a parasite, draining the Gilchrist's for his own gain.

Carmen says it's true, though. It does seem they have something to hide. And we didn't know.

Sean replies that it doesn't matter – Michael was theirs.

Carmen asks what they could have done, says they did everything they could – encouraged him, gave him a home...

Sean screams at Jaime who has been knocking persistently. Sean says that they can't stay at the house, asks how long Carey can watch the dog, and proposes they go to Florida, to Sean's sister's beach house. Carmen is hesitant to leave. She asks whether the press will leave them alone if they make a statement. Sean says they can't. He says that if they indulge this one reporter, everyone else whose been knocking at their door will come back.

Carmen asks where the picture in the empty frame went. Sean surmises it was probably stolen by someone to sell to the press. Carmen asks whether Sean has seen the photo on the news. Sean doesn't remember. Carmen and Sean debate over who could have taken the photos, as there are a few missing. Sean asks if "we" know what's missing, and Carmen questions his pronoun usage. Sean is confused by Carmen's resistance, but moves on.

The phone rings. Sean moves through the house pulling out the cords, but doesn't pull out the last one because the ringing had stopped. Carmen asks whether it might be Vicki, but Sean doesn't answer. Instead, he says that, in passing their son's room, he saw the door was open. This is, apparently, unusual. Carmen asks whether anything is missing. Sean says the computer, which Carmen says the police told her they would take.

This is what breaks Sean. He questions the need for the police to investigate, to take everything, and then laments the poor investments they made in their son, and how cruel it is that all they worked to achieve is now worthless, because their son is gone. He cries. Carmen attempts to move away from Sean, and he asks that she doesn't leave him. He then asks why she isn't crying, and she responds that she's all cried out.

Sean says how much he hates what the people are doing – the reporters and the police. He hates that they've been taking away their son's things, their memories of their son, bit by bit. And all those memories are becoming distorted. The things they say on the news about their son he doesn't recognize. He doesn't know. He feels lost and hurt and helpless. Sean also questions his son's actions. He can't understand, for the life of him, why he did what he did. He can't see how he could be so selfish and spurn all the love they gave him, all they did for him.

The phone rings again. Carmen says she's going to answer it. Sean says not to, that he should have unplugged it. Carmen says she can do it, but Sean goes and does it himself. When he returns, Carmen asks, again, whether it was Vicki. Sean says he doesn't know; he didn't answer it. Carmen asks why Vicki had called here. Sean says he doesn't know. Carmen asks him not to lie to her, not now. Sean replies that he's not lying, but Carmen cuts him off by smashing the answering machine on the floor and screaming at him, demanding that he stop lying to her. She wonders whether he's lying because he thinks it's the compassionate thing to do, that it will protect her, but she says that there's nothing left to protect. Carmen says that Sean, like their son, had everything he could have wanted. What didn't he have? What could have driven him to Vicki. He

starts to speak, but Carmen tells him not to talk. He tries to move toward her, but Carmen tells him to stay away. Sean comes closer, tries to hug his wife. She screams, she thrashes, she pushes him away, she strikes him across the face, crawls away and stands over him, and calls him a bastard. Sean continues to lie on the floor, nursing the spot where Carmen has hit him.

While he lies there, Carmen scolds him, calls him a selfish bastard. From the floor, Sean begs for her. Carmen asks how she could possibly hope to satisfy him. Sean says all he wants is to hold her. Carmen says that she's sure Vicki would be happy to hold him. Sean collapses onto his hands and knees and is almost sick. He cries and cries.

Carmen speaks, says that Michael loved his father so much. She speculates that he must have found out about his father's affair. That must have been what drove him over the edge.

Sean responds, promises that Michael didn't, but Carmen interrupts, asks how careful Sean could have been if Vicki was calling the house.

The phone rings. Carmen says she had thought Sean had disconnected it. She taunts him a little, asks whether he thinks it's Vicki calling to see how he's doing. Sean doesn't respond. Carmen crosses left and exits to answer the phone.

When she returns, Sean asks who it was. Carmen asks who Sean thinks it was. Sean assumes it was Vicki, asks what she said. Carmen says it was the press. Sean is embarrassed. He asks what Vicki told them, and Vicki says she hung up and unplugged the phone. She asks why Sean didn't do that. Sean is hesitant to answer, and Carmen asks about Sean asking him, earlier, whether they were together. Sean is resentful, accuses Carmen that she didn't even respond. Carmen asks how she could have, and that everything has changed. She asks why he didn't unplug the phone, and Sean finally offers that he was hoping someone would call. That anyone would call. He claims that Vicki called him, asking how they were, and that he freaked out in response. He says that she must have thought they didn't have anything left to lose. But he says he doesn't believe that.

Carmen makes as if to leave and Sean asks her to stay, saying that he needs her. She is furious with him saying he needs something; she's accommodated so many of his needs, so many of what he thought Michael needed.

She realizes that this is the first time she has said her son's name since he died. She is broken by this reveal.

Sean moves to comfort her. She tells him not to, that she doesn't need him to. He asks what she needs. She needs, she says, some sign that she can move forward. Sean asks if there's something he can do to make them move forward, the two of them. She doesn't know. He says he doesn't want her to be alone. He goes to the front door, opens it, beckons Jaime to come over, to come in. Jaime enters. They invite him to sit. He takes out his notebook, asks them how they are doing. Broken, Sean or Carmen tells him. We feel broken.

The play ends with an epigraph:

"...thus the heart will break, yet brokenly live on." Lord Byron.

APPENDIX B

CHARACTER SKETCHES

Arash Jahan (A.J.) Johannes

Periods Present: Homeroom (appears, but isn't enrolled), 1st, and 2nd

AGE: 17

BIRTHDAY: June 28th

HEIGHT: 5'5"

WEIGHT: 145 lbs.

EYE COLOR: Brown

HAIR COLOR: Dark brown

SKIN COLOR: Brown (Iranian)

POSTURE: Keeps neck slightly down, suggesting sheepishness or insecurity.

VOCAL QUALITY: A little bit of a lisp. Speaks little because he's self-conscious.

GENERAL APPEARANCE: Little bit of a receding hairline.

FAMILY SITUATION: Father (Bahadur, 49) owns a small deli and convenience shop in the heart of the city. He was born in the Netherlands to a Dutch policeman and an Iranian attendant to the wife of the Ayatollah, who abandoned her post to be with her husband. Bahadur moved to America to get his education and met his wife in college. She (Nima, 48) works as a cosmetician. They have two boys: Darius Javad (D.J) (20, studying mechanical engineering at a private Jesuit university in the midwest) and Arash Jahan. They also have a girl: Nousha, 10. D.J. also studied at St. Ignatius, where he played soccer very well. A.J. and D.J. get along, but have different personalities. So, they're not best friends. The family is traditional and happy, for the most part. Bahadur drives both his wife and his children in a way that is excessive, but not hateful. He is an exaggerated patriarch, though. A.J. has gone to a couple school dances, but he's never been on a date nor had a girlfriend. He doesn't have any close friends either, though he had a couple when in elementary school.

PLACE IN THE COMMUNITY: A.J. is a senior at St. Ignatius. He is not a member of any clubs or groups, though he sometimes goes to He-Man club. Earns a few bucks by helping out at his Father's Deli, but spends most of his time on his computer – he enjoys programming and hopes to study software design in college, and has been accepted to several large but prestigious schools within the state, including Syracuse. He does not expect his parents to help him pay for college, so he's preparing to go into debt – this worries him, as money has consistently been a stressor in the home he grew up in, which often made do with tightened belts. A.J. does not claim membership in the Christian faith, but he does believe in god, and he does participate in masses. He's quiet, mostly because he's self-conscious of his lisp, and he often falls into obscurity when in school – just one of the crowd. Considers himself a republican because it seems the more practical and responsible political party.

LEISURE ACTIVITIES: A.J. likes to read, and one of his favorite things to do is to visit with Fr. Echevarria and talk about books. Otherwise, he sometimes plays tabletop games with himself.

PERSONALITY: Very intelligent as far as computers go, but more introverted and pessimistic. Hides his emotions, and has a deflated sense of self worth. Rarely thinks of himself or others sexually – When very young he was caught masturbating by his father and reprimanded severely. Thus, sex has a very strong negative connotation. Would like to be more well liked, and has a friendship with Fr. Etch, but otherwise has few goals – only to go to college and to break away from the life he dislikes here.

Cesar Bojos

Periods Present: Homeroom, 1st, and 2nd

AGE: 17

BIRTHDAY: April 16

HEIGHT: 5'7"

WEIGHT: 170 lbs.

EYE COLOR: Blue

HAIR COLOR: Black

SKIN COLOR: Black

POSTURE: Somewhat hunched. Keeps his head lowered.

VOCAL QUALITY: Speaks quickly, frantically, and skims over some pronunciations, as if he doesn't have time for them.

GENERAL APPEARANCE: Glasses are often askew. Wears a grey dress coat almost every day. Hair is a curly black afro cut close to his head, but bouncy.

FAMILY SITUATION: Cesar is the son of a single mother – Jackie (43). He does not know his father, and she has asked him not to ask about him. He is an only child, and his mother works as a manager of a fast-food restaurant on par with Applebees or TGI Fridays. Her mother, Ada, is 70, and often babysat for Cesar when he was younger – he called her Nana. Now she is suffering from poor health – she is overweight, diabetic, and also is showing signs of Alzheimer's. Nana lives alone, but nearby, and Jackie is concerned for her health, causing concern to Cesar. Cesar has not ever had a girlfriend, nor has he ever explored sexuality. Sexuality repulses him, and he would likely define himself as asexual if he gave it a thought. He has no close friends, though values his family deeply, as well as his two nieces.

PLACE IN THE COMMUNITY: Cesar is a senior at St. Ignatius. He is not a member of any clubs or groups, instead devoting every iota of time he has to his studies in a way that is unnatural and perhaps demented. He not applied to colleges, instead planning to take a year off and look at schools when he doesn't have to focus on his current classwork. Because of his mother's job, he and her share a small one bedroom apartment, though he and his mother are considering upgrading to a two-bedroom to accommodate Ada. He knows the bible obsessively well and considers the stories to be true events, so much so

that he believes that humans have been on the planet for only six thousand years. He cannot reconcile or completely understand why biology suggests otherwise, and his misunderstanding led to him having a poor showing in his AP biology class the previous year. This is a failing he is befuddled, confused, and saddened by. His peers perceive him as a strange, strange person – invested outrageously in his work. People are kind to him, and he'll show courtesy in return. But he's an anomaly. He's also a ferocious basketball player. He's not good. In fact, he's terrible. Awkward and ungainly and he doesn't know how to dribble. But he'll run right at the person holding the ball with his hands in their face.

LEISURE ACTIVITIES: Cesar doesn't do much for fun, but he does take some satisfaction from cleaning, from studying hard and performing well in school. However, his interest is somewhat clinical.

PERSONALITY: Cesar works very hard to learn – he takes his education very seriously. So he appears smart as far as his education. However, Cesar does not always understand social cues or what's considered proper etiquette. He is introverted until engaged, at which point he becomes awkwardly extroverted. He is more pessimistic, but can be prone to hopes. He has little confidence in himself, and has never thought of himself as being a sexual being, though his mother somewhat repulses him for her more lax sexuality, even by her conceiving of Cesar without a spouse. Blindly spiritual, believes unflinchingly in Jesus and riches, and bases his morality on the teachings of the bible. He has a hard time, for example, reconciling Royce's homosexuality with the teachings of the bible. His greatest secret/regret was that a schoolteacher in elementary school fondled him. This has in part contributed to his repulsion from sexuality.

Sean Gilchrist

AGE: 49

BIRTHDAY: June 16, 1956

HEIGHT: 5'8"

WEIGHT: 182 lbs.

EYE COLOR: Blue

HAIR COLOR: Blonde

SKIN COLOR: Caucasian – pale.

POSTURE: Slight slouch.

GROOMING: Hair is cut cleanly and professionally. There's some salt and pepper stubble, typically, but it's shaved close at the time of the play.

VOCAL QUALITY: Deeper rather than higher, but polished and clean.

GENERAL APPEARANCE: Dresses professionally and smoothly. Attractive with a bit of a belly, though not too much. No outstanding physical problems.

FAMILY SITUATION: Sean was born to Peter and Claire Gilchrist on June 16, 1956 in Detroit. He was the youngest of four – an eldest sister, Anna (56), a sister, Molly (54), and a brother, Al (51). In 1963, the family relocated to Pensacola, Florida, as Peter followed

his own family down south in the hope of finding a job – he had previously been employed as a line worker at a GM auto plant, but was fired when his foreman accused him of improprieties. Though Peter considered remaining in Michigan, he ultimately decided to use the change as an opportunity to move closer to his family, including his older twin brothers – Daniel and Conor, both of whom held jobs with Gulf Power Company – Daniel as a technician; Conor as a serviceman. Peter trained directly under Conor for two years and lived with him and his wife, Cecelia, but then moved the family to Panama City, Florida, to get out of his brother’s hair and to give his family their own place. He bought a little three-bedroom cottage only four blocks from a public beach, and settled in nicely – Anna and Molly in one room, Al and Sean in another. Though the family was financially comfortable, Claire struggled with the transition, complaining constantly of the weather, the lack of familiar people, and that the soil didn’t take to her vegetables. Sean did not remember their house in the Chicago suburbs well, but he had enjoyed living with his uncle, who always cracked jokes and seemed willing to make time for Sean and his siblings. He saw his mother, conversely, as a dour, unhappy woman – no fun. This was actually a hinting of depression, and Claire killed herself in the oven – Sylvia Plath style – in 1969, when Sean was 13. It was he and Al who had found her after coming home from school. In response, Peter moved his children back in with Conor while he sold the house. They lived there for a couple months but found an apartment of their own, where they lived for two years. During this time, Anna became pregnant with her boyfriend, a coworker of her father’s. She moved out of the apartment and in with him, and they married not long after. Molly began school at a local community college, and earned an associates degree. After the graduation, Peter announced his plans to move back to Detroit. He did, finding a job on an assembly plant, and an apartment in a bit of a lousy part of town. Al stayed behind, having dropped out of school and taken a job with Conor, but asked Sean to come with him, at least while he was starting high school. Sean wanted to be close to his father, to support him, and liked the idea of being able to start his life anew in a somewhat familiar, somewhat new place. He and Al had never been able to see each other without being reminded of the day they, together, found their mother, and he did not miss Al, and enjoyed the separation. He did miss his sisters, but recognized that they wanted their own space as well. Little by little, he became lonely, and his father’s declining health began to exacerbate his feelings of loss and sadness. He did well in high school, but did not anticipate going to college. However, his father was killed in an automobile accident – it may have been suicide – whether or not was never determined. With this, Sean felt he needed to be closer to his family, and applied to schools in Florida. He entered Florida State University in 1974. While he had been in school, he had enjoyed studying English immensely – specifically Shakespearian theater – and though it was not practical or in line with his family’s tradition with the power company, he graduated with top honors in 1978 and was offered the invitation to continue his studies with a masters degree through Florida State, which he accepted. He graduated with an M.A. in 1980, and then entered the doctoral program at the University of Florida the following fall. While completing the second year of his degree, he met Carmen, at the time a senior undergraduate at the University of Florida. They dated for the next three years, with her moving in with him, before they married after his graduation in 1985. He shopped around for a few months before taking a tenure track position at Worcester State University in Massachusetts. They lived in downtown

Worcester for a year before moving to a small home in Paxton, where he and Carmen gave birth to Michael in 1988. In 1989, Al disappeared. He had been depressed and unhappy with his job. Family members speculate he committed suicide, and they held a memorial service for him in 1998. This disappearance brought Sean and Anna closer together, but Molly felt somewhat crippled by the loss, and she withdrew from her siblings. Today, she is a nurse in Pensacola, living single – she divorced her husband ten years ago. Michael, meanwhile, was a great joy to Sean. He poured his love into Michael, supporting his every quest, helping him with school projects, and giving him all he wanted. Because of his premier position as an authority of Shakespearian literature, Sean has visited a number of Shakespearian theater companies, and has travelled, also, to London. Michael was often invited on these trips, though Carmen, due to her being a nervous traveler, was not, and Michael and Sean bonded immensely over these trips. More recently, Sean had been helping Michael apply to colleges, and had assisted him with his essay and offered help with S.A.T. prep. Michael, who had been particularly interested in studying Psychology, had applied to Wellesley, Williams, Amherst, Swarthmore, Bowdoin, Haverford, Vassar, Hamilton, Middlebury, Colby, Bates, and Colgate, and had been offered acceptance by Colgate and Bates. He had committed to Colgate, and his father had bought a Colgate sweatshirt. Both had been very excited for Michael's upcoming college career. With his wife, Sean is loving and doting, but can be quick to frustration or aggravation though never violence. They have a dormant sex life that comes alive once a month or so, but they had previously both been comfortable with that. Carmen has long been his closest friend, and though Sean has had others, she has remained the most consistently and amiably at his side.

PLACE IN THE COMMUNITY: Chair of the English Department at Worcester State University in Massachusetts. Leading scholar on Shakespeare's comedies, in particular. Upper middle class, earns about \$78,000 a year. Democrat who values with equal rights for all people, decries unnecessary loss of life and unnecessary spending – that being said, he is very quiet about his political allegiances. Went to church (Irish Roman Catholic) off and on with his parents when he was younger, but hasn't visited a church in years. Outside of his position with the English Department he tends to keep his schedule otherwise open, though he serves as mentor to a number of undergraduate and graduate students. To others, he's a humorous, engaging, and memorable instructor, one who remains among students' favorites long after he's graduated.

LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES: Grew up a huge fan of *Star Wars*, and in his free time he enjoys watching, talking, and reading about the *Star Wars* universe. Mostly, though, he enjoys the work he does for his university, finding it very gratifying and rewarding. He is a big baseball fan – Detroit Tigers, and tries to go see them most summers when they come to Boston or New York, and also makes at least one trip to check out the minor league Tigers team in Norwich, Connecticut.

PERSONALITY: A fairly scholastically intelligent man, prone, at times, to brilliance. He is extroverted, in that he is a bubbly, excitable, and happy presence, which is a big change from his upbringing. He's genuinely happy with his life, and has been for a long time, thinking that, despite all his struggles, all the deaths and disappearances, he's found a

wonderful kind of happiness. Quick to irritate, but slow to anger – optimistic and cool with ample self-esteem but even more humility, he’s a man who recognizes he’s smart but would never make it obvious for others if it weren’t his job. Not a terribly sexy man, nor is he terribly interested in sex. He has been having an affair, over the last two years, with a colleague’s wife. This is a great secret of his. He is not terribly spiritual, and, in fact, would be an atheist if he gave himself the time to think about it. But he is deeply moral, and holds himself and those with whom he works and teaches to a strict code of proper ethics, one he has rarely strayed from. He’s working on a book – his fifth – on bawdy humor in Shakespeare’s writings and is most excited – and most frustrated by his editor – with this project.

Carmen Gilchrist

AGE: 44

BIRTHDAY: February 3, 1962

HEIGHT: 5’5”

WEIGHT: 134 lbs.

EYE COLOR: Green

HAIR COLOR: Black.

SKIN COLOR: Caucasian – tan.

POSTURE: Prim and upright.

GROOMING: Haircut is short – a near pixie cut – to keep it out of her eyes and face. When styled, it looks quite lovely.

VOCAL QUALITY: Hard-spoken but measured.

GENERAL APPEARANCE: Often dresses sloppily, reusing old clothes until they’re completely worn out. But can look quite beautiful when she tries.

FAMILY SITUATION: Born to Carmine and Eliza Acardi on February 3, 1962, in Boston, followed three years later by Rita (41). The children were born late in Carmine and Eliza’s marriage, when Carmine was 59 and Eliza was 42, and in 1972, Carmine “retired” by moving to Florida and getting a job as a desk clerk with the St. Augustine (Florida) Police Force, a more relaxed position following his previously held job as a sergeant with the Boston P.D. Theirs was a happy, if old-fashioned marriage, with nightly family dinners that Eliza cooked dutifully, and weekends spent in each other’s company. Carmen excelled as a student, showing an early aptitude for math and English, and she skipped second grade. When she was 17, Carmine suffered a heart attack, and died after a two-week hospitalization. Carmen bore the loss well, however, as did her mother, and she was able to continue her studies without taking an extended period of mourning. Rita, however, suffered mightily through this loss, having been babied and beloved by her father, and she took a year off from school, returning less well off. She entered beauty school after barely graduating from high school, and received her degree and a job as a hairdresser in St. Augustine, which she held until she met her husband, married, and relocated to the suburbs of Boston. There, she opened a beauty salon with her husband, and she moved from a hairdresser to an owner. She had two kids – a boy and a girl. Carmen is glad that her sister is happy, but worries about her stability, as she was always

an emotional person. Carmen earned admission to the University of Florida, where she majored in English. There, she met Sean Gilchrist, a doctoral student at Gainesville, and when she graduated, she moved in with him. For three years, they lived happily in a small apartment in downtown Gainesville before marrying in 1985. Then they moved together to Worcester, and then Paxton, Massachusetts, as Sean took a position as a tenure-track faculty member there. Carmen took a job as an English teacher with the local middle school, which she held for only a year before she became pregnant with Michael. She gave birth to Michael on April 21, 1988. For the next six years, she stayed home with her son, caring for him and their home, and making friends with the neighboring families. In 1995, however, when Michael entered first grade and was out of the house for more than half the day, Carmen – at her own desire and with Sean’s encouragement – retook a position teaching 5th grade English in nearby Wachusett. She held that position until 1997, and then taught 9th grade English. She was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2002, but caught it early, receiving good treatment through radiotherapy. Her mother, however, died the same year, at the age of 82, after an extended battle with Alzheimer’s. Carmen was declared cancer-free the following year, and has since been clean as a whistle. She, Sean, and Michael had been quite happy together, taking great pleasure in each others’ successes and supporting each other in their times of need. However, she was not as close to Michael as Sean had been, and she sometimes resented Michael’s allegiance to him. However, as her child, she loved Michael dearly, though she never spoiled him, but instead made him work for his wants. Practiced a dormant sex life with Sean, hooking up around once a month. Closest friends are the friends she’s met through Michael – his friends’ mothers. Particularly, she’s close with Deirdre Macintosh, Shauna Walker, and Priva Andala.

PLACE IN THE COMMUNITY: As the freshman English teacher at the nearby Wachusett, Carmen was in the peculiar position of teaching kids as they struggle with their difficult transition from childhood to adulthood. She has had a number of situations over the years that made her question her position, including a number of angry parents, but she finds her efforts deeply gratifying. She was tough as nails to her students, but encouraging and particularly friendly with a certain few. Sean has teased her for being a “policeman’s daughter” with her kids, which Carmen takes complimentarily. But she has not taught the last three years, instead opting to be closer to home, and closer to Michael, following her cancer scare and the death of her mother. She, like Sean, aligns with the Democrats, and she, like Sean, was raised Roman Catholic, but doesn’t practice. As a member of the community, she’s a particularly active and respected member of the Wachusett PTA, and has also been volunteering, as of recent, for the local public library. Her peers and colleagues see her as an asset, a contributing and constructive member of the community.

LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES: Carmen never took to baseball, but she often participated in the trips that Sean and Michael would take to see teams – as long as they were playing nearby; Carmen is an extraordinarily nervous traveler, and often makes things uncomfortable for her family. So, for the past few years, she’s instead stayed home, opting to take care of the family dog, Grover, or simply claiming other things she’s wanted to do. She loves to read, and can sometimes spend whole days sitting in an

armchair with a hardcover book. She also, in the past few years, has taken up running, which she finds gratifying and encouraging.

PERSONALITY: Intelligent, complemented by a great memory for what she reads. More extroverted, though has a bit of a worrying nature that makes her prone to pessimism. Can be hot-tempered, too. Has a strong sense, however, of confidence and self-esteem, though has long accepted that, sexually, Sean and she have gotten to a point where she's lucky to get *any*. Though this was initially difficult to accept, she has since come to terms with the change. She is more spiritual than Sean, going to church when she's in a difficult place and turning to the priest sometimes for consultation, but she considers it more of a healthy philosophical interest than anything else. She has a sense of morality derived from her father's perspective, and is hard-edged but just. She does secretly harbor a sense of resentment toward her sister, who seems – from Carmen's perspective – to have been given more for less in life. She also has been concerned – and embarrassed – by Michael's behavior, which ranged in his youth from obnoxiously extroverted to brooding and quiet. She took her son to a therapist last year when she was concerned about an extended period of quiet brooding on his part, but after a few sessions all agreed sessions weren't worth continuing. This failure will weigh heavily on her for years to come. She had made a goal in the last few years to run the Boston Marathon, and has been working steadily up as far as training goes. However, she has been unable to break the ten-mile mark, a point of frustration and disappointment for her. She is an excellent scrabble player, as well as fairly adept at Jeopardy, and almost was a contestant in the early 90s.

APPENDIX C
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