

FURIOUS

THESIS

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by

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wife Melissa.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Inspiration	
Synopsis	
Research	
II. PROCESS.....	6
III. THE TEXT OF <u>FURIOUS</u>	12
IV. REFLECTIONS.....	100
REFERENCES.....	103

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Inspiration

Furious began as a short rambling entitled The End of The Line For Rob, a story about a young man with a chip on his shoulder and an imaginary friend named Mr. Sprinkle constantly on his back. The short draft had no direction or focus. It was nothing but a budding idea that had not and could not fully germinate into a coherent play.

Sensing the futility of taking it any further, the original script was put aside for a period of months in favor of other works. It was when two events of nearly ironic similarity occurred at the same time that the idea for the incomplete script came back.

The first was the reading of Jean Paul Sartre's The Flies, the existentialist play based on The Oresteia. The play deals with humans not accepting guilt based on religious dogma. Sartre makes the argument that once people deny the power of religious teachings they will be truly free and happy. While this idea is

interesting and certainly appealing, it fails to address a method for so nonchalantly casting aside such feelings.

It is a belief held by this author that guilt is a defining human quality. It is our safeguard against the inclinations of our more animalistic nature. Guilt is the guard that stands watch between the line of civilization and chaos. Some argue that guilt is a product of religion, that we are taught to feel guilty in Sunday school. I would make the argument that true guilt comes from intelligence and perception. When one can perceive that they have injured or potentially injured another human being, their feeling of guilt acts as a punishment mechanism. This has remained true for thousands of years. The Furies are a perfect example of the universality of guilt, invented by the ancient Greeks to explain these feelings.

The second event occurred when I came across the painting "Orestes Pursued by the Furies" by Adolphe-William Bouguereau while researching for imagery on Sartre's play. It depicts the murder of Clytemnestra by the hand of Orestes, who is instantly attacked by the Furies before her body hits the floor. The look of horror on his face, the strength in his arms used to cover his ears from the voices pummeling his soul, and somewhere in there a sense of being no exit (Sartre pun intended), no escape from their wrath opened a floodgate of ideas. Suddenly a new direction for the old script came to light.

Synopsis

The Furies, ancient avengers of the gods, have returned in the present to lay their wrath on a young writer named Rob for having an affair with his brother's wife. Rob must decide whether to admit his sins to his brother or bear the wrath of the Furies for the rest of his days. However, his brother Eddie is a veritable fireball of rage, and Rob fears for his safety if he were to reveal the truth. Amber, Eddie's wife, is mentally unstable and may fall over the edge if the status quo is disrupted. The crisis comes to a head when an incriminating photograph is discovered. All the while the Furies are there, torturing the characters for their crimes.

Written in the style of a Greek tragedy, Furious is a play about guilt, and the inescapable nature of guilt. The characters each have skeletons in the closet, and the various methods in which they deal with them make up the heart of the conflict.

Research

The amount of research needed for this project was not great. Nearly all of it focused on the historical image of the Furies in order to get an accurate sense of the characters.

The first step in the process was to search out classical references to the Furies. With Aeschylus's trilogy The Oresteia, probably the best-known classical text depicting the characters, I examined how the Furies were viewed in their day by the society from which they sprang. Aeschylus reveals a trio of beings who are unceasing in their torment of Orestes, and may have very well gone on harassing him forever were it not for the intervention of Athena.

The function of the Furies in Greek mythology was to be the vengeance of the gods. Originally they were thought to reside in the Underworld, punishing sinners for their misdeeds in life. The early poets and dramatists broadened their role, depicting them as the tormenters of the living as well as the dead (Hamilton 40).

When people committed crimes, especially crimes against their families, most notably patricide and matricide, the Furies were there to punish them. But it is not until they realize the magnitude of their actions that the Furies are able to fully take hold. Oedipus, though never directly stated in Sophocles's plays, feels the wrath of the Furies for twenty years, which culminates in his arrival at Colonus, where the Greeks believed to be the very place the three sisters inhabited. However, if Oedipus had never realized he was responsible for the death of his father, the story may have ended with him sitting on his throne, wondering why his land was cursed. It is the realization of his crimes that leads

to the true dramatic action and lesson of the story. This goes back to the original argument that perception and intelligence, not religion, are the requirements for guilt.

Aeschylus employs a chorus of Furies to pursue Orestes, while Sartre's play identifies the Furies simply as "Fury 1, 2 and 3." This led to a more thorough search to find if the Furies possessed any specific individual qualities or if they acted more as a unit, sharing the same personality. Research revealed that most ancient sources represent the Furies as a trio with individual names that have specific meanings: Alecto- "unceasing in pursuit", Megaera- "jealous", and Tisiphone- "blood avenger" (Columbia Encyclopedia). It was later in the play's development that these names and meanings were utilized to give each of the Furies specific traits. (This will be discussed more in the Process section).

Edith Hamilton's book Mythology does a fantastic job of not only detailing the birth of the Furies, but also giving excellent descriptions of their appearance. Though they are not physically described explicitly in this particular play, it was her ideas that later influenced their appearance in the production.

CHAPTER II

PROCESS

As mentioned, the original incomplete draft of the play was written before any research was done. The title character, Rob, was presented as a man down on his luck with no ambition. He spent most of his time lounging around his small apartment, watching television. His imaginary friend Mr. Sprinkle (name chosen at random with no particular significance) berated him incessantly, attempting to motivate Rob to take some sort of action, which Rob of course did not. The lack of action and lack of willingness to take action was the inherent flaw of this draft, the main reason why it was scrapped. At this time the works of Samuel Beckett were highly influential on my writing, and I was attempting to find my own absurd voice, detailing a world in stasis where the character(s) do not grow or change. It did not work, to say the least. Just as Mr. Sprinkle could not get Rob off the couch, Mr. White could not move the play toward any sort of dramatic action despite his best efforts.

The second attempt, which was the first to have the title Furious, saw the introduction of the Furies as well as Amber and Eddie. The focus of the play then changed. Instead of being about a man who could not find direction in life, it became about a man racked with guilt over a misdeed he had perpetrated. This was in direct response to Sartre's existentialist idea that guilt is something to be overcome. If the argument of this play is that guilt is unavoidable, no matter your station, then the dramatic action must dwell within that frame. Thus, the focus of the play became how people cope with guilt.

Eddie and Amber make up the typical average family unit that is not satisfied with their present situation. To find solace in their situation, each of them have performed some sort of regrettable action. In the case of Eddie he turns to alcohol to forget his woes. Amber turns to Rob, who has the closest resemblance to the man she once loved, and fulfills her desire for passion in a mundane world.

At this stage in the play's creation the Furies acted as one cohesive unit. Their personalities were almost indistinguishable from each other. At this point in the process the play was divided into two acts, and Tisiphone was introduced at the beginning of the second. It was played up that she would be the most dominant, the most ferocious of the three. However, by the end of this draft the Furies seemed to be preaching, not terrifying and tormenting.

Early on in this draft I had entertained the notion of Eddie killing Rob out of pure rage and the transference of the Furies's wrath to him. The second act would be him sitting in a cell regretting what he had done. In the first act of this draft, the Furies did not affect Eddie and Amber. This made the story completely focus on Rob, and it became rather shallow. But this order of events went against the basic idea of the thesis: guilt is inescapable and universal. If I wanted to show the universality of guilt, all of the characters would have to feel it throughout the play.

Even though there were significant improvements in the second draft, the play still lacked a clear crisis and conflict. I realized that Amber and Eddie were shallow characters with no depth. A change had to be made, and at this point it was decided that all of them would be under the wrath of the Furies and their tactics in dealing with the guilt is what would make them full and lively. Rob tends to bargain, but the conflict comes when he can no longer take the pressure of their rage. Amber, on the other hand, medicates herself. She is fully aware of the guilt but attempts to hide from it under a blanket of prescription drugs. Eddie is a rationalizer. He almost accepts his faults but every time at the last minute turns the tables so he appears to be the victim. If that doesn't work he attempts to destroy the source of his problems with violence, his one sure-fire method of winning.

The Furies began to take on some of the characteristics found in the interpretation of their names. I also began to envision them as the embodiment of the three types of women a man interacts with during his lifetime: mother, sister, and lover. The Furies now took on the role of the observer, occasionally interacting but always present. Rather than lecturers, the Furies became the irrational and unrelenting tormenters that I had envisioned.

At this point the structure of the play changed. I began to visualize this not as a modern play but rather as an updated Greek tragedy. In that sense the two-act structure was eliminated in favor of an episodic progression like that of the plays of Sophocles and Aeschylus. I also decided that the Furies would function similar to a chorus, and added individual monologues at the beginning of each scene that could be accompanied by a dance or some sort of rhythmic movement. This would be left up to the individual director.

It should be noted that I tend to be very minimal with my stage directions. Nothing is said that is not needed. In leaving the directions open to interpretation, I find that directors tend to be much more creative with their vision, allowing for many more possibilities in the aesthetic look of the play as well as making it more enjoyable for those performing. The director, rather than being bound to a set of rules and specific details, is free to make his or her own

choice, and the actors have ample opportunity to take control of their characters and explore them.

The last addition to the play was Father Benson, who acts as a confidant to Rob. Careful consideration was given to this person, who I did not want to be a generic priest. In pursuit of this goal, a back-story for Benson was developed. He also feels the affect of the Furies for a horrible "crime" he had committed. But Benson is different than the other characters in that he accepts his fate. He understands the gravity of his acts, and he deals with them. But the pain still lingers, and in a further break from decorum he copes with it by becoming a heavy drinker. All in all, Benson is my favorite character in this play.

The ending of this play was in question until the last minute. I knew that someone was going to die, but deciding on who was the ideal candidate for this story took some deliberation. As mentioned earlier an older draft had Eddie killing Rob. But this was vetoed by my decision to change the format of the play to a scenic structure rather than two acts. Another factor against this ending was the use of violence onstage, which is in direct opposition to the classical Greek style.

I toyed with the idea of Eddie dying, but this ending seemed contrived and did not work with the rest of the story. Ultimately the decision was made for Amber to take the tragic fall. The mechanism that creates this event is her

instability that is pushed over the edge when Rob reveals the truth about the relationship. Rob blames himself, and the Furies continue their torment. This ending upholds the idea of the play; guilt is inescapable.

CHAPTER III

THE TEXT OF FURIOUS

FURIOUS

by

Jeremy White

CHARACTERS:

ROB – Male, 30's

EDDIE – Male, 30's

AMBER – Female, 30's

FATHER BENSON- Male, 60's

THE FURIES – Female, Ageless

ALECTO

MEGAERA

TISIPHONE

TIME:

The present.

SCENE:

An apartment.

NOTE:

The FURIES may (and should) interact with any of the characters at the director's discretion.

SCENE 1

(Black stage. Lights come up to reveal the shapes of three women in silhouette. These are the FURIES. The sound of a typewriter can be heard plucking away at the keys. At a small desk a man sits at a typewriter cast in shadows. As he types, THE FURIES dictate his words.)

TISIPHONE

He kissed her lips with a passion that he had not known he possessed.

ALECTO

But all the while his mind raced in panic.

MEGAERA

How could this have happened? How could he let himself be lulled into doing this?

TISIPHONE

Already the voice in his mind whispered.

MEGAERA

Stop.

ALECTO

Stop!

TISIPHONE

But he would not stop. Nothing could stop him. No matter how much pain it would cause.

MEGAERA

No matter how wrong the world told him it was.

ALECTO

No matter what was destroyed by his actions.

TISIPHONE

He would not stop. It was what he had wanted all of his life. Her. And he was not about to let her slip through his grasp now that he had her.

ALECTO

He would have her.

MEGAERA

He would... He would...

(The typewriter sounds stop, lights up full to reveal ROB sitting behind the typewriter. His apartment is small and neat with a few nice but conservative furnishings, except for the desk which is swamped with papers. ROB stares at the typewriter for a moment.)

ROB

Shit.

(He has lost his train of thought. He reaches for a pack of smokes that are on the table and lights one up. He stands and begins to pace.)

ROB (CONT'D)

Okay. How do I do this? What can I do? Come on, come on think! Almost done. Gotta get it done. He would do? He would what?

(As ROB speaks to himself the FURIES appear.)

TISIPHONE

Can't find the words Rob?

(ROB takes no notice.)

MEGAERA

Not coming to you?

ALECTO

Touchy subject, eh?

TISIPHONE

How are you going to get around this?

MEGAERA

How will you keep everyone from knowing?

ALECTO

How will you keep him from knowing?

(ROB sits down at the typewriter. He hesitantly begins to type again.)

TISIPHONE

Careful, don't want to give anything away.

ALECTO

Sister I can feel it.

MEGAERA

Me too, it is burning hot.

ALECTO

Like a furnace.

TISIPHONE

Like an inferno with no water to douse the flame.

ALECTO

Yes, be careful what you write. Don't want anyone to know.

MEGAERA

Least of all him.

ALECTO

Or her.

MEGAERA

Oh she knows.

TISIPHONE

She definitely knows, doesn't she Rob?

(MEGAERA rushes her hand against ROB'S face. For an instant he seems to react, then shakes it off and continues writing.)

MEGAERA

He can barely contain it.

ALECTO

Men weren't meant to hold on to it for so long.

TISIPHONE

Can you feel it, Rob? Can you?

ALECTO

Of course you can.

TISIPHONE

Don't you just love our job sisters.

MEGAERA

I would do nothing else.

TISIPHONE

Yes this poor wretch. He doesn't even know what we have in store for him.

(A knock at the door.)

ALECTO

Better see who it is.

MEGAERA

Oh, but what if it's him?

TISIPHONE

But what if it's her?

MEGAERA

Fun, fun, fun!

TISIPHONE

Go see who it is Rob.

(ROB moves to the door and opens it. EDDIE stands in the doorway.)

ROB

Oh. Hey. Eddie. What are you doing here?

EDDIE

Bro! How is my baby brother? Jesus, are you okay?

ROB

Yeah. Why?

EDDIE

You look like ten pounds of shit in a five pound sack.

ROB

Oh, yeah, I've been sick.

EDDIE

Not contagious right.

(MORE)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

(EDDIE walks though the door without invitation and makes himself at home.)

So how is everything? I haven't heard from you in a while. I half expected to walk in and find you face first on the floor dead.

ROB

It's okay. Been busy.

EDDIE

Yeah. Working on the next big novel, huh?

ROB

Yeah.

EDDIE

Well, come on. Tell me about it. What's it about?

ROB

Oh, you know. I can't really explain it.

EDDIE

One of them writers things, huh? Don't want to tell people what it's about, let them make their own decisions.

ROB

Yeah.

EDDIE

That's a bunch of shit if you ask me. If a writer can't tell you what it's about, he doesn't know what it's about.

ROB

It's not that.

EDDIE

Hell, I know what it's about. It's all about making money. Art is dead. Everything has been written about.

ROB

No.

EDDIE

Hell yeah. Look at Hollywood. Every movie you see is based on something else, or ripped off from something.

ROB

Not always.

EDDIE

Please, I haven't seen an original work since, well hell, never.

ROB

I thought you didn't watch movies.

EDDIE

Exactly. Cause they're all unoriginal. What do I have to gain from them?

ROB

Maybe they'll make you look at things differently.

EDDIE

Hell, if I wanted to see the world from a different perspective I'd drive down to Mexico. I don't know how you do it.

ROB

It's a living.

EDDIE

I guess. So what's new?

ROB

What's not?

EDDIE

Hah! My sentiments exactly. But seriously, what's going on?

ROB

Same ol', same ol'. You?

EDDIE

Still working.

ROB

How's the new job? Manager now right?

EDDIE

Eh, same shit, more responsibility.

ROB

So what are you making down at the plant now?

EDDIE

Well, we got this order for a million units of this new plastic, supposed to be top of the line, expensive stuff yada yada yada. Well, the sumbitch wants this stuff in two weeks. Now, at maximum speed, with a man on every line, it takes us four weeks to produce half a million units. So I gotta figure out how to make twice as much in half the time.

ROB

So did you.

EDDIE

Oh I figured out a way all right, but the customer won't be too happy when he gets the product.

ROB

What did you do?

EDDIE

Took the low grade stuff and mixed it in with the high grade. On the surface you can't tell, but once you put one of these containers in the microwave, whoo! Ain't no more container.

ROB

And your bosses don't care.

EDDIE

Hell, if they cared they would have listened to me when I told them we needed more time. Fuckin' slant-eyed Korean sons-of-bitches. They don't give crap so long as the checks are being deposited, so I do the same. Way of the world. What are they going to do, fire me?

ROB

Yeah, I suppose.

EDDIE

Besides, if anything we'll just send the blame back to the lab. Say they didn't test it thoroughly. Those dumbass Koreans will never know.

(Pause. EDDIE gets up and grabs a smoke from Rob's pack, lights it. ROB says nothing.)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Yeah, Amber has been giving me hell about quitting. I've got to hide this from her.

ROB

How are you two doing?

EDDIE

Oh, okay. Been hard lately. Money is tight, even with the new position. Amber's back in therapy, again. And then there's the kid.

ROB

What's wrong with Amber?

EDDIE

Same old shit. Nerves, depression. You name it. I think we've spent enough there to pay for the doctor's third BMW.

ROB

Oh. What about Tyler?

EDDIE

Oh, Jesus, that's another whole fiasco. I can't believe I spent all that money on that private school just to have him fail his first year.

ROB

Too tough for him?

EDDIE

No, he just didn't try. Slackin' off, you know how it is.

ROB

Well, Tyler's just a kid.

EDDIE

Tell that to my bank account. I'm three thousand dollars in debt thanks to him. And now Amber wants me to find another one to put him in. Hell, no. The kid's going to public school. I just can't believe that he's a product of my loins. He's more like you were at his age.

ROB

Well, we went through public schools. We know how worthless those places are. She's right, he should go to a private school.

EDDIE

Where the hell am I going to get the money for that? We barely make it as it is, even with the new job.

ROB

I could help you out.

EDDIE

No. No. I don't want your money.

ROB

Come on. I want to.

EDDIE

I said no.

ROB

Look, I've got plenty.

EDDIE

Stop, all right. Just, don't piss me off. You are not his father and I don't want your money. I'll find a way. It's keeping him from flunking out, that's the problem.

ROB

Maybe he just needs motivation.

EDDIE

Our dad used to threaten to kick our ass if we fail, that was motivation. Can't do that now.

ROB

I know what you mean.

EDDIE

These kids today. They just don't understand. Oh, there are a few that have their head on straight. Gonna be something. But most of them are just floating.

ROB

Well, they're kids.

EDDIE

That's no excuse. I just wish I could wake him up, tell them there are more important things in life. Like me, I work twelve, sometimes sixteen hour days.

(MORE)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I don't get to see my family as often as I like, but it's just what's got to be done. But she just doesn't understand. Sometimes I wonder if she would be better off leaving me.

ROB

Oh.

EDDIE

I'm sorry, I don't mean to rant.

(Silence.)

I think Amber is cheating on me.

ROB

What?

EDDIE

Yeah. I don't know for sure, but something's not right. She seems distant. You ever get that feeling, like there's something else going on only you can't see it?

ROB

Are you serious?

EDDIE

As the plague.

ROB

Well what makes you think that?

EDDIE

It's just, she's lost that lovin' feeling, you know what I mean. She's cold.

ROB

Well, have you tried talking to her?

EDDIE

Yeah. She's just all vague. She says nothing's wrong, but I know her too well. I don't think she's ever forgiven me.

ROB

Oh. That.

EDDIE

Yeah. Stupid, stupid, stupid.

ROB

Well, you did it to yourself.

EDDIE

I know. It was just one time. It happened. I was drunk.

ROB

You still drink.

EDDIE

Not like that anymore. No way. Hard as hell I tell ya.

ROB

Well, she did end up in the emergency room.

EDDIE

Yeah.

ROB

Give it time. She'll come around. She's a good woman.

EDDIE

Don't I know it. It's just, I've loved her so much since I first met her.
Remember? You were there. At the bar. Working her way through school.

ROB

Best bartender in San Antonio.

EDDIE

Yeah, best looking at least. I was proud of her when she got her degree.
Man, you know she was on her way to a great career.

(MORE)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I don't know how anyone could love accounting that much, but hey, whatever. But when the kid came along she gave it up. I wouldn't have it any other way. Our dad did it, you know. Sometimes I get the feeling she resents me for that.

ROB

Don't go thinking about it. I've seen you two together. She loves you. She really does.

EDDIE

I just don't know. Sometimes I think she'd be better off without me. Hell, it might work both ways. Plenty of wildlife out there in the forest and I still have a few tags left, you know what I mean?

ROB

Hah! Yeah.

EDDIE

Yeah, I know you do. I bet you get all kinds of women now that you're a world famous writer. Tell me, any hot librarians coming after you?

ROB

No, mostly old ladies with grey hair and poodles.

EDDIE

Well shit boy, I told you to put your picture on the back of the book. Reel you in some fishies.

ROB

I'd rather remain anonymous.

EDDIE

Makes you more secret like. More mysterious. Oh, hold on, you're turning me on with your mysterious ways!

ROB

Ah, you wish.

EDDIE

Hah! I knew it. That's your pick up line isn't it? "Hi my name is Rob, aka the bestselling writer Wayne Edinburg." "Oh Wayne Edinburg! Oh here's my panties!"

ROB

No, no, no.

EDDIE

With all the money you made you could be rolling in the ladies. Shit I should have tripped over like six of 'em when I walked in. You're blowing your chance man.

ROB

Eddie, I'm not in it for the money or the women. I'm in it because I like to write.

EDDIE

Man, that's a load of crap. Anything that any man has ever done in history was done for one reason and one reason only: pussy. You can't argue it. Not love, not money, not fame, he did it for pussy. Sigmund Freud would agree with me. Unless he's gay, of course.

ROB

You should have been a comedian.

EDDIE

So what's the new book about? Come on, tell me.

ROB

No, no, no. Can't tell you.

EDDIE

Come on.

ROB

No, man.

EDDIE

Well am I at least going to get to read it this time?

ROB

I don't know, it might be above a third grade level.

EDDIE

(Pause. EDDIE stares at ROB.)

What's that supposed to mean? You think you're funny. Huh. Mr. Chuckles over here. What you think I'm stupid? Think I can't understand? Think I can't interpret something?

ROB

Eddie, I'm just joking.

EDDIE

(Stands up, walks toward ROB.)

What do you mean? Think I'm retarded, cause I don't have a degree? Cause I work and sweat for a living while you sit here and type on your little typewriter. Like you're so superior or something? You think you're superior? To me?

ROB

No man, it's not like that.

EDDIE

Man, you know me. You know what happens when people piss me off. Huh? You remember that wetback down in Laredo? Wanna end up like him? No teeth, can't speak. You know me!

ROB

Yeah, I know Eddie, chill out man!

EDDIE

You want to see funny? You want to see something funny?

(MORE)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

(Grabs ROB'S head and sticks it on his butt, then makes a loud farting sound.)

Har, har har! That's funny!! I got you! You dumb shit!

ROB

Man you're an asshole.

EDDIE

Whoo! That's good stuff. So seriously, you gonna let me read it?

ROB

Not after that!

EDDIE

Aw man, I was just playing. Come on. At least let me read the first chapter.

ROB

No, you can buy it like everyone else now.

EDDIE

Uh huh, I see how you are. All right man, well I'm out of here. Hey, don't be a stranger.

ROB

All right.

EDDIE

I'll see you

(He starts toward the door, then turns back.)

Oh hey, Amber wanted to know if you wanted to come to the UT-Tech game Saturday with us.

ROB

I don't know man. I've got a lot of work.

EDDIE

Aw, come on. It's just one night. Take a break, get out.

ROB

(Pause.)

All right.

EDDIE

Okay, I'll see you tomorrow. Don't be late!

ROB

Okay, see ya.

(EDDIE exits and the lights go down.)

(End of scene.)

SCENE 2

(Lights are dim like in the beginning of the first scene. The transitions should be seamless. Typewriter sounds. ALECTO stands out front and recites.)

ALECTO

"As Mark stepped through the door and out of the apartment, Ray felt a sense of relief take over. Too close, he thought. As he sat himself back down into the worn center of the couch cushion, a sense of urgency began to take hold. He must find a way out. He must. Mark was a loose cannon, able to snap in an instant, as Ray had seen all too often. He had seen grown men whimper like children under the furious might of Mark's fists. Something would have to be done. But what he did not know. He knew he needed to speak to Samantha. Something must be done."

(Lights up, same scene. ROB is pacing, smoking. The FURIES are there as well, slinking about the room. A knock at the door. ROB answers. AMBER is standing in the hallway.)

ROB

Hey. What are you doing here?

AMBER

We need to talk.

ROB

Yeah, we sure do. Did you know Eddie came over?

AMBER

So?

ROB

He was just here a little while ago.

AMBER

Guess he stopped by before he went over to his poker game.

ROB

Well we sure as hell weren't playing cards here. Do you know what he said?

AMBER

I don't know? What?

ROB

You're not taking me seriously.

AMBER

Oh, I'm sorry. Let me take you seriously.

(She puts on a 'serious' face.)

ROB

That's not funny.

AMBER

It's not supposed to be. I'm taking you seriously.

ROB

Amber!

AMBER

Listen to me Rob, you worry too much.

ROB

No, you listen. You know what will happen if he finds out.

AMBER

I know Rob.

ROB

Amber! You're not taking this as seriously as me!

AMBER

Rob--

ROB

After all this time of trying to keep it from him.

AMBER

Rob, listen--

ROB

You know what he was saying? He's suspicious! He knows!

AMBER

Rob! Shut up!

(Pause.)

I know. I kinda let something slip.

ROB

What? Kinda let something slip?! What the hell does that mean?

AMBER

Maybe nothing.

ROB

What does that mean, kinda let something slip? What did you say?

AMBER

I didn't say anything!

ROB

What happened?

AMBER

He found something.

ROB

What?

AMBER

The picture.

ROB

Wait a minute. What picture, you mean THE picture? The one I told you to burn?

AMBER

Yes.

ROB

Oh my God! I told you to get rid of that! What the hell were you thinking!

AMBER

I thought I could hide it.

ROB

Great now he knows. We're dead.

AMBER

It's not that bad. I did some damage control. I told him it was that time we all went to South Padre together and someone snapped a photo of us two.

ROB

It rained the entire time in South Padre! We never left the hotel room!

AMBER

But it was a long time ago, he won't remember.

ROB

Oh no, you're wrong! I know Eddie. He still remembers the names of the kids who took his lunch money in second grade. Eddie doesn't forget things.

AMBER

He seemed to believe it.

ROB

Oh man. This is great.

AMBER

Rob, why are you afraid?

ROB

Why am I afraid? Are you joking? You've seen how Eddie gets.

AMBER

Rob, you're his brother. He won't do anything to you.

ROB

Won't do anything? Someone has been screwing his wife for the past ten years and he won't do anything!

(Pause.)

AMBER

So that's it then. Screwing. We're just coupling. Is that all it is?

ROB

No.

AMBER

I can't believe you said that.

ROB

It's not what I meant.

AMBER

What did you mean? That I'm some kind of fuck toy here for your amusement--

ROB

Goddammit knock it off!

(Pause. AMBER turns and starts for the door.)

Wait. I'm sorry. Come back. I'm sorry.

AMBER

(Stops for a moment, then turns.)

Don't ever speak to me like that again. That's how he speaks to me.

ROB

I'm sorry. It's just a, damn, a sticky situation. We're both freaking out. Let's just sit down and think.

(They sit. Silence. The FURIES come up behind them.

They place their hands on ROB and AMBER'S shoulders.)

TISIPHONE

Look here sisters. Here is the point where they start plotting. Like so many times in the past.

MEGAERA

They just don't see the obvious.

ALECTO

We see it.

MEGAERA

This is what has always troubled me about these humans. Always looking for the easy way out.

TISIPHONE

Can you blame them? Their whole lives are spent fighting pain. All they are looking for is a way to avoid it.

ALECTO

Maybe they should try not acting like animals.

TISIPHONE

Agreed. But then, it wouldn't be as fun for us would it?

(The FURIES laugh.)

ROB

Look, I've known Eddie for a long time. I mean, he's my big brother. Now, he's not the brightest guy, but he's no dummy either. He'll figure it out sooner or later.

AMBER

I've known him a long time too, and I know that he'll listen to me if I really press it.

ROB

That's not good enough. When he gets something in his head he won't let it go.

AMBER

Well what do you suggest we do?

ROB

We shouldn't see each other anymore.

AMBER

What?

ROB

We've got to break this off.

AMBER

I don't believe you. What about all those things you said to me?

ROB

I meant them.

AMBER

You said I was your everything. I was your reason for living. I was the reason you write.

ROB

I know, but this changes things.

AMBER

Just run away. That's what you're going to do?

ROB

Why not?

AMBER

You're a coward.

ROB

Hey!

AMBER

You've run from every possible confrontation with Eddie your entire life.

ROB

You don't know nothing about it.

AMBER

I know you, and I know him. You're scared of him.

ROB

Damn right! Who isn't?

AMBER

I'm not.

ROB

You've got more guts than me, then.

AMBER

I knew it.

ROB

Oh, man. Don't give me that. You know how he gets.

AMBER

You have never stood up to him. Never looked him in the eye. He's always just taken what he wants.

ROB

You don't know what it's like to look him in the eye and try to stare him down. It's like looking at a pitbull that has his eye on your throat. And, for your information, I have stood up to him in the past.

AMBER

When?

ROB

You don't want to know.

AMBER

Yes I do.

ROB

No, you don't. You'd... you wouldn't like it.

AMBER

Rob, just tell me.

ROB

No! It's between me and Eddie.

(Pause.)

So what do we do?

AMBER

We go on like normal.

ROB

That's not much of a plan.

AMBER

It's the best option we have. We have to make him think nothing is going on.

ROB

I don't know.

AMBER

It's the best option. For you, for me, for Eddie.

(Slight pause.)

For Tyler.

(AMBER reaches into her purse and pulls out a medicine bottle. She opens it and pops a pill.)

ROB

You need to cut down on those.

AMBER

Don't lecture me, Rob. You know what they're for.

ROB

Yeah, Eddie mentioned you were in therapy again.

AMBER

He did? Well, you know how I am.

ROB

I know. It's just, couldn't you try to go without them.

AMBER

I've tried it. You know how I get.

ROB

It's not that bad.

AMBER

Not until I get knife or box cutter in my hands.

ROB

Amber--

AMBER

Rob, don't start. You were there last time, so you more than anybody know why I take these.

ROB

Yeah, I know. Can you still see them?

AMBER

I'm wearing long sleeves, aren't I?

(Pause.)

ROB

So, you're sure we can keep this hidden?

AMBER

Yes, I'm sure. I'll do a little more damage control.

ROB

You know, it just occurred to me. Why do you even stay with him?

AMBER

That's a stupid question.

ROB

Why?

AMBER

Because we're Catholic. I can't leave my husband. I'll go to hell.

ROB

But it's okay to cheat on him?

AMBER

Rob, don't--

ROB

Okay, okay. I was just kidding.

AMBER

Sometimes you can be such a jerk. Just like him.

ROB

Yeah, I guess so.

(Pause.)

God, why did this have to happen?

(ROB puts his arm around AMBER. They sit in silence.)

ALECTO

That is the question.

MEGAERA

But they know the answer.

TISIPHONE

They know why.

MEGAERA

They just can't admit it.

(Lights fade. End of scene.)

SCENE 3

(Typewriter sounds.)

MEGAERA

To be in love with the unattainable is both amazing and dangerous. Amazing in the sense that one is left in awe when in view of the desired, dangerous because one cannot touch it no matter the temptation. But some do, and they pay a heavy toll. The normal line of thinking is that one can escape punishment, can escape the feeling of guilt. Even now, Ray felt he could escape, though the shadowy claws of guilt were firmly wrapped around his neck. He would find a way. Surely others had done so.

ROB

(Speaking on the phone.)

No... No, Amber... Look, it's for the best...I'll be there...Don't worry...He won't even bring it up...I'll play it cool...Don't worry...Yeah...Yeah...

(Knock at the door.)

I gotta go...I'll see you...

(Whispers.)

Hey, I love you...Bye.

(Hangs up the phone and moves to the door and opens.

FATHER BENSON enters with a bag of groceries.)

ROB (CONT'D)

Father. Come on in.

BENSON

Hello, Rob. Is it on yet?

ROB

No, few more minutes.

BENSON

Oh, good. Here you go.

(Hands ROB the groceries.)

BENSON (CONT'D)

All right, let's get down to business. Crack open one of those for me.

(ROB does so. He then opens one for himself. The two men sit and begin drinking, watching TV.)

BENSON (CONT'D)

I do thank you for inviting me over. Ever since the TV at the church broke it's been hell trying to keep up with the Celtics.

ROB

Not a problem.

BENSON

I suppose I could go to a bar, but that would just be keeping up with stereotypes now wouldn't it? You know, Irish, drunk.

ROB

Hah! Well we wouldn't want that. Although it might bring in some more parishioners if they saw their priest out over at Jack's Roadhouse getting sauced and acting the fool.

BENSON

Lad, I've done plenty of that in my life. Although, I've often thought that it would be prudent to serve pretzels and Mickey's at communion instead of wine and wafers. Being the modern times and all. But the Bishop would hear none of it. Eh, what can you do?

(FATHER BENSON downs the beer in one gulp.)

That's good stuff. Pass me another, if you would please.

ROB

Sure.

(ROB hands BENSON another beer.)

BENSON

So how's it been son? How's the new book coming along?

ROB

(Slight pause.)

It's coming along okay.

BENSON

Good.

(Pause.)

We've missed you the last few Sundays. Been busy I suppose.

ROB

Yeah, I'm sorry.

BENSON

Lad, don't be apologizing to me. You've done no wrong to me.

ROB

I know. It's just been crazy.

BENSON

Well that's alright. Just make sure you make a little time for the Lord. That's all he asks. He's been missing you at confession. Pass me those pretzels.

(ROB does so.)

Okay, got my beer, got my pretzels, now we're set. Game on.

ROB

(Pause.)

Father Benson. I've got something I need to tell you.

BENSON

Can it wait lad? The pre-game show is almost over.

ROB

Father, I really need to talk to someone.

BENSON

You're serious? Alright, duty first I suppose. What's on your mind?

ROB

I've done something. Really bad. To one of my, ah, friends. The problem is that he doesn't know about it. And I want to tell him, but I'm afraid that he'll go crazy if he finds out what happened.

BENSON

And your friend, you don't think he'd understand. Won't forgive, is that it?

ROB

Not this. No he won't.

BENSON

Well what exactly are you speaking of?

ROB

I slept with his wife.

BENSON

How long has it been going on?

ROB

Ten years.

BENSON

(Whistles.)

Ten years. Long time to be holding something in like that.

ROB

Yeah. Well, not all of it. There's been times when we don't see each other for a long time. Months or years even. It's been off and on, you know? It just started getting to me. I don't know, I guess thought I could just get away with it.

BENSON

Everybody does.

ROB

But it's just eating me up inside now. Like I'm going to explode. Or just rot away.

BENSON

That would be your conscience ringing in. Telling you to knock off the crap and clear everything.

ROB

But I don't know how. I mean if I tell him, he'll blow.

BENSON

Afraid you'll lose your friendship?

ROB

Yeah, or worse. I'm afraid he's gonna hurt me.

BENSON

Well lad, I would tell you you should have thought about that before you did it, but that won't be doing you any good now, will it?

ROB

No.

BENSON

In my line of work I've heard this story several times and no matter how plain it is laid out for them, people just don't seem to understand. It'd be absurd if it wasn't real life.

ROB

So what do I do?

BENSON

Well, that's the question isn't it? What do you do? Have you tried telling him?

ROB

No.

BENSON

Well that would be the first step.

ROB

I just don't know.

BENSON

What's the worst that could happen? He'll get mad, maybe knock you in the jaw, give you a couple of lumps. Maybe not be your friend anymore. Would that be worse than what you're feeling now?

ROB

No.

BENSON

Well lad, if it bothers you that much then I suppose you should just take your medicine and get it over with.

ROB

But what if it isn't as simple as that?

BENSON

Well I suppose he may not forgive you. That happens.

ROB

There's more. I love her.

BENSON

Oh. Now we get to it. Not just friendship at stake.

ROB

God, I'm such an idiot.

BENSON

He knows that. But the question remains as to what you're going to do about it.

ROB

I don't know. She wants to keep it going, but I don't think I can do it anymore.

BENSON

So, what do you want to do? Run away with her? Marry her?

ROB

No, I couldn't do that.

BENSON

Well lad, you can't run away with her, and you can't keep it a secret. So what does that leave you?

ROB

I don't know.

BENSON

You're running out of options here, my boy.

ROB

Well, I can't tell him. He's like a bomb waiting to go off. If I told him, I don't know what would happen, to me, to her.

BENSON

Well, maybe you'll get lucky and he'll forgive you. Maybe, but doubtful.

ROB

You're not giving me much confidence.

BENSON

Well, I'm just telling you like it is. In a perfect world, yes. But in a perfect world there would be no reason for one person to seek another's forgiveness. You know, I believe the one thing that separates us from the Almighty is our ability to hold a grudge.

ROB

So you're saying he shouldn't forgive me.

BENSON

No lad, I'm saying he may not be able to. He should, but it might not happen. That all depends on him.

ROB

So what should I do?

BENSON

Tell him. Let God handle the details.

ROB

I don't know. Maybe I should just get out of town.

BENSON

Running away. Not the best answer, but sometimes the clearest option. And where would you run to?

ROB

I don't know. Chicago maybe.

BENSON

And do you think these feelings will stay here, in this apartment, while you start your new life in Chicago?

ROB

Well, I'll be far enough away to where it doesn't matter anymore.

BENSON

Doesn't matter anymore? To whom? Your friend will still be here. She'll still be here. And you'll still be you. It doesn't matter if you're four miles or four thousand mile away. You'll still feel it.

ROB

Well what the hell am I supposed to do?!

BENSON

I've done told you!

ROB

Just tell him, take a possible ass kicking, and leave hoping that he'll still be my friend, that's it?

BENSON

What other options have you got?

ROB

I could just not tell him.

BENSON

You could. No doubt that is an option. But you'll have to live with it. And let me tell you, the Furies don't let up once they've got a hold of someone.

ROB

The what?

BENSON

The Furies. The bringers of guilt. Comes from Greek mythology. They believed that when a man committed a sin against another, the Furies would come for him and tear him apart.

ROB

That's just nonsense.

BENSON

Is it? Tell that to Orestes. Legend has it they followed him for years, making him pay for killing his mother and her lover. Horrible creatures.

ROB

But it's just a myth. A foolish belief.

BENSON

Some would say it's foolish to believe a man can rise from the dead or walk on water, but I believe it to be true. To the Greeks, they were just as real as gravity- you can't see it, but it's always there, working on you. It just depends on your perspective. So tell me, from your perspective, do they seem like just a myth?

ROB

I see your point.

(Pause.)

You know I envy you sometimes.

BENSON

Why's that?

ROB

Because it must be so simple for you.

BENSON

Why? Because I wear a black robe and live in a church. So somehow I know all the answers?

ROB

Yeah. I mean, you always seem to know what to do.

BENSON

Oh my boy, how wrong you are.

ROB

Why is that?

BENSON

The fact that I am a man of God doesn't mean I've been blessed with His wisdom or foresight.

ROB

But have you ever done anything wrong? I mean, morally wrong?

BENSON

Yes.

ROB

You're a priest. How could you?

BENSON

I wasn't always a priest, you know.

ROB

What do you mean?

BENSON

Sure, I've been ordained since you've been a child, but there was a point in time where I was a lot like you.

ROB

What was it?

BENSON

My whole life I have never told anyone this. Why I'm telling it to you now I can't say. Maybe I see some of myself in you. Maybe it's because I want to keep you from making the same mistake.

(Pause.)

When I was a young man, eighteen or so, I was in love. Her name was Esmirelda, and she was a beautiful lovely young woman. I had planned to marry her. But only after I had gone to school. I had a scholarship to Boston College for basketball. Yes I used to be very good. Could have gone professional, so they say. Worn the Celtics jersey perhaps.

ROB

What happened?

BENSON

She got pregnant. And I asked her to get an abortion. Now this would have to be done in secret, of course. Both of us were devout Catholics, and this was during the day and age when abortion wasn't exactly legal. She didn't want to. She wanted to have our child. But I was thinking of myself only, and my future. So I forced her. She did, and a few days later, she was dead. Infection she got from the procedure. Should have known when the "doctor" took us to his office, which turned out to be his basement. Only charged twenty-five dollars. I thought it was a good deal. Twenty-five dollars, that's the cost of a lifetime of regret.

ROB

Oh man.

BENSON

Yes my boy. I couldn't live with myself. Drank myself into a stupor that lasted for three years. Then, there came a point in time when I had to decide whether I was going to get up and do something or if I was just going to keep drinking until I woke up dead one day. I tell you, the latter seemed like the better option at the time. But sense prevailed and I ran away to a monastery. Never wanted to come out back into the real world. Just wanted to stay there with the monks. But in time, the pain subsided and I was left with a gnawing feeling in my gut. So, I did what I thought was right, I joined the priesthood. This was something I had never even considered when I was young. Never occurred to me. But at that time it was the only choice.

ROB

So I guess that's all in the past, right?

BENSON

It's never all in the past.

ROB

But you're forgiven right. Isn't that what you believe?

BENSON

Oh, I'm sure God has forgiven me. But that don't mean too much when you can't forgive yourself, now does it? Rob, you've got a chance that I never had. You can still make things right for yourself. Don't run. Don't ever run.

(Pause. FATHER BENSON downs the beer in a single gulp.)

BENSON (CONT'D)

Pass me another one, will ya?

(End Scene.)

SCENE 4

(Typewriter sounds. Black.)

TISIPHONE

He woke up in a cold sweat that night. Voices, he swore he heard voices. Horrible voices driving nails of damnation into his soul. The light flickered on and he scanned the small room for the source, but none could be found. Silence. The pace of his breath slowed after a few minutes and Ray was finally able to convince himself it was only a dream. 'Maybe I'm going crazy,' he thought. He laid back down in his bed and turned off the light as the tendrils of sleep began to creep over him. And as he drifted into the sea of unconsciousness, for a split second, he thought heard the voices begin to whisper again.

(Lights up. ROB sitting at his desk, typing. THE FURIES circle around him. ROB still cannot see them. Every time there is a Pause, the FURIES whisper into his ear.)

ROB

(Pause.)

Concentrate. Come on.

(Pause.)

No. Come on think.

(Pause.)

No I can't.

(Pause.)

No, I can't do that.

(Pause.)

It's the only way.

(Pause.)

I won't.

(Pause.)

No I won't.

(Pause.)

Just stop.

(Pause.)

No I am not.

(MORE)

ROB (CONT'D)

(Pause.)

I can. I can do this.

(Pause.)

Don't listen Rob. Don't listen.

(Pause.)

No, I won't listen to you.

(Pause.)

Lalalalalalalalala!

(Pause.)

No, you're in my head!

(Pause.)

You're not real. I'm not hearing you.

(Pause.)

You can say whatever you want.

(Pause.)

Oh, I'll find a way.

(Pause.)

Yes there is a way.

(Pause.)

No, you're lying.

(Pause.)

Just leave me alone!

(Pause. No whispers. ROB looks around.)

Oh God. I am going crazy.

(End Scene.)

SCENE 5

(Typewriter sounds. Black.)

ALECTO

Time and space. Both infinite, both incomprehensible in their full scope to the average human. It seems that in an existence so large that it defies definition or even full realization that one event can possibly matter in the grand scheme of things. Perhaps it doesn't. Perhaps we all meander through on automatic pilot, responding to stimuli, like a swarm of jelly fish in the ocean, only with cell phones. So how could it be that Ray felt that the world suddenly focused all of its attention squarely on his shoulders? Perhaps the universe isn't so big, or perhaps it is relative to each of us. Perspective was the word. And in the relative sense, even the smallest object may create great and ungodly storms of chaos.

(ROB is getting ready for the game. He is searching for something. EDDIE comes barging in.)

EDDIE

Ready dude?

ROB

Almost. I can't find my wallet.

EDDIE

You okay? You don't look so good.

ROB

Uh, just a bit under the weather.

EDDIE

Well suck it up man. They ain't gonna wait for us.

(EDDIE starts looking for the wallet.)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Where did you leave it last?

ROB

I don't know. I usually put it on the table.

EDDIE

Just like always. Rob was always the one who's forgetting something.

ROB

Could you just help me find it?

EDDIE

You remember when you were the equipment manager for our high school team and you forgot all the jockstraps?

ROB

Yeah.

EDDIE

And the team we were playing had the pitcher who threw more bean balls than anyone else in our district. Funniest nine innings I ever played.

ROB

Could we just look for the wallet?

EDDIE

Okay, okay, don't crap yourself.

ROB

Where's Amber?

EDDIE

Out in the car.

(Pause.)

Hey, I need your advice.

ROB

About what?

EDDIE

I don't know what to do.

ROB

Go on.

EDDIE

Remember what we were talking about the other day?

ROB

Oh, that.

EDDIE

Yeah. Well, I brought it up to her and it started a huge fight.

ROB

Well, what did you find out?

EDDIE

I don't know. She kept denying it, but in sort of a sneaky way. Just didn't feel right. Hell I don't know. Maybe I'm just thinking crazy but, I just don't trust her.

ROB

Well, what do you want me to say?

EDDIE

Hell, anything. What should I do? I mean, am I right thinking this? Should I press it.

ROB

Look, I'm the wrong guy to ask about this.

EDDIE

You're my brother. You've always been there with advice. What should I do?

ROB

I don't know. It's probably nothing.

EDDIE

Yeah. But it's different this time. I can't put my finger on it. I don't trust her.

ROB

That's a terrible thing to say.

EDDIE

I know. And God knows I'm a asshole. I mean, I wouldn't blame her if she was. I'm not the best guy to be around sometimes, I can admit that. But I've never done that to her because, well, it just ain't right. And I do love her. I do. It's just sometimes I get the feeling she hides things from me, lots of things. Not just this, but other stuff all throughout our marriage. I don't know what to think anymore.

(He reaches into another pocket and pulls out a small picture.)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I found this the other day.

ROB

Oh.

EDDIE

Yeah, you know, that little thing started this whole mess. I just, I swore that it rained the whole time we were there and we never even went out to the beach. But I guess not. It's just, oh man, I feel stupid saying this, but I thought she might have been cheating on me with you.

ROB

Really.

EDDIE

I know, stupid right. Like she'd ever do anything like that. 'Specially with you.

ROB

What's that supposed to mean?

EDDIE

Don't get all offended. I'm just saying, if she was going to cheat on me she wouldn't do it with you. First off you're my brother and second you're...you.

(Pause.)

What I mean is that you're not her type.

ROB

I see.

EDDIE

Yeah, anyway. Hey, for what's worth, not like you knew it at the time or anything, I'm sorry for suspecting you.

ROB

It's okay.

(Pause.)

Why am I not her type?

EDDIE

Let's not get into it.

ROB

Why am I not her type? I want to know.

EDDIE

Man. Come on. I was just saying.

ROB

I want to know. She's with you. Why wouldn't she want to be with me?

EDDIE

Man, you're a pushy little punk today. Alright, you want to know? Because you run away from stuff Rob. You don't stand up and do what you have to do.

ROB

Is that it.

EDDIE

Yeah man. I know her. She likes a guy that will fight for her. Me, I'd do anything. I'd die for her. I'd kill for her. But you. You're just Rob. You're the same kid who ran away from Joe Ripley cause you thought he was going to kick your ass.

ROB

I was in eighth grade.

EDDIE

Yeah, and he was five feet tall and one hundred pounds! And he deserved it. You should have pounded on him. See that's the thing. You've always been too afraid to go out and get what you want. Always afraid about how it will affect other people. Fuck other people, that's what I say.

ROB

So I should just take a stand. Let it all hang out.

EDDIE

Amen. You've got to learn that it's all up to you. How do you think I got the new position at the plant. It wasn't on seniority, no sir, there were three other guys with a lot more experience than me. No, I got it cause I did whatever it took to get it. So I happened to tell them that Bob was skimming money out of petty cash. He was. He shouldn't have been doing it. So what if he's got three kids to feed and makes crap wages. There are some things in life you just don't do, and stealing, no matter what it is, is one of them. So I let the bosses on to it, and now Bob is out of the picture. I move in. No sweat off my sack. Use the advantage, man.

ROB

So you just feed Bob to the wolves?

EDDIE

Hey, if Bob wasn't dirty he'd have the job right now.

ROB

You don't feel any guilt.

EDDIE

Why should I? Hell, Bob could have told them plenty of things about me, but he didn't jump on the ball. His loss.

ROB

I see.

EDDIE

Anyway, getting back to the point, you do what you have to do. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

(Pause.)

ROB

Eddie.

EDDIE

Yeah.

ROB

I need to tell you something.

EDDIE

What?

ROB

It's real hard, but—

(AMBER bursts in.)

AMBER

What's going on here guys?

EDDIE

Hey, hey! We're talking here.

AMBER

I'm waiting, Eddie.

EDDIE

Yeah, well tough.

ROB

I lost my wallet.

AMBER

Where did you have it last?

ROB

I don't know.

EDDIE

Did you look over here?

(EDDIE moves to the desk with the manuscript and begins digging. ROB quickly follows and tries to intercept him.)

ROB

Wait, wait. Don't touch it, you'll mess it all up.

EDDIE

Ah, quit your worrying.

(He finds the wallet.)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Ah hah! I got it.

(Tosses the wallet at ROB, who fumbles then drops it.)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Nice catch. Sam ol' Rob. Rob the Slob, mom used to call him.

AMBER

Oh, it wasn't that bad.

(ROB picks up the wallet then organizes his papers, trying to not so subtly hide them.)

ROB

Thank you.

EDDIE

When am I gonna get to read that thing?

ROB

When it's done.

EDDIE

How much longer you got?

ROB

I just need to know how it's going to end.

EDDIE

Can't think of one?

ROB

Hasn't happened for me yet.

EDDIE

Well, one day it'll happen. When you least expect it. Probably catch you with your pants down.

AMBER

We ready?

ROB

Yeah, I'm ready.

EDDIE

Give me a second, I've got to go take the Browns to the Superbowl, if you know what I mean.

(EDDIE exits to the bathroom.)

ROB

Amber, I don't know if I can do this anymore.

AMBER

What?

ROB

Keep it from him.

AMBER

Rob we don't need to talk about it right now.

ROB

Look it's tearing me up inside! Something like this, you can't hide. Not from people you really care about. You can't. It eats away at you everyday until you can't even hold your guts together and every time that person comes around you feel like puking. I'm tired of my stomach being tied in a thousand knots every time he comes around. I'm tired of breaking out in sweats. I'm tired of it.

AMBER

Well you'll just have to deal with it for now.

ROB

I'm going to tell him.

AMBER

No.

ROB

Yes I am.

AMBER

No you are not. Do you think I want to ruin our marriage? Throw away twelve years for nothing!

ROB

You've already ruined your marriage!

AMBER

No, Rob, damnit listen! I will not have my life destroyed because you're having a moral dilemma. I couldn't handle it. So you're just going to have to buck up.

ROB

Or else what?

AMBER

Or else you will never see Tyler again.

ROB

(Pause.)

What kind of threat is that? I don't even know if he's mine.

AMBER

Listen carefully, Robert, you will say nothing. You will do nothing other than keep your mouth shut and have a good time at this game with me and your brother. And you will continue to do so for as long as it takes. Is that understood?

(Pause.)

Good.

(EDDIE enters.)

EDDIE

Whew! Man, call in the HAZMAT team. I think I just found the missing weapons of mass destruction.

AMBER

Oh God Eddie. Don't be crude.

EDDIE

It's the way I am baby.

AMBER

If I had only known.

EDDIE

I still would have got you in the sack. We ready?

AMBER

Yes, dear.

EDDIE

Well come, Rob. Get your hands off your pecker and get in the car! Let's go!

(They gather their things and exit. Lights fade.)

(End of scene.)

SCENE 6

(Typewriter sounds. Black.)

TISIPHONE

But in the grand scheme of things, there are very few known climaxes in the average life.

ALECTO

There is no saving of the world.

MEGAERA

There is no rescuing of the innocent.

TISIPHONE

There is only an endless stream of pain and suffering by our own design.

MEGAERA

To the untrained and inattentive, the progression seems a level field.

ALECTO

And those involved may never know when the end of their story has come...until it is too late.

(Lights up. Several hours later. EDDIE stumbles through the door being carried by ROB, obviously drunk. AMBER follows.)

EDDIE

How's about them Longhorns! Huh?! Whoo! Thirty-seven to three. That is what we like to call an asswhippin', folks. Whoo!

(ROB sets EDDIE down on the couch.)

ROB

Here you go.

EDDIE

Aaaagghhh!!! I'm a fuckin' caveman! I love it. Violence, man, good ol' fashion gridiron fuckin' action. Tell me bro, was that not one of the finest asswhippins you have ever had the pleasure of seeing?

ROB

Sure was Eddie.

EDDIE

Ahh, indeed, my good man. Hey, don't hold back, hand me another.

AMBER

No, no. You've had enough.

EDDIE

Woman, I'll tell you when I've had enough. Give me another.

AMBER

Rob, no.

EDDIE

Hey, don't ruin the party.

AMBER

Eddie you've had enough.

EDDIE

Why don't you just get off my back, okay?

AMBER

I can't believe this. You make a fool out of us at the game and now I'm the one at fault?

EDDIE

What do you mean, made a fool out of you?

ROB

Eddie, you were acting like a maniac.

EDDIE

I like football, so what?

AMBER

You were jumping up and down, hollering at the top of your lungs.

EDDIE

So what?

AMBER

You broke the seat Eddie. And not just broke it, you picked it up and threw it on the field.

EDDIE

The ref was calling bullshit! It's not pass interference if he doesn't touch the other guy!

AMBER

Oh! I can't stand it, Rob talk to him!

ROB

Eddie, man, you were pretty crazy.

EDDIE

Was it pass interference?

ROB

That's not the point. You almost got arrested!

EDDIE

They would have never taken me alive.

ROB

Oh, man.

AMBER

See, this is exactly what I'm talking about, Rob.

EDDIE

What? What's that supposed to mean?

AMBER

Nothing.

EDDIE

What, you talk about me? With him?

AMBER

No, I--

ROB

It's nothing Eddie, here have a beer.

AMBER

Rob.

ROB

It's not going to hurt anything. Besides, you're driving.

EDDIE

Yeah, ye're drivin'! Way to tell her. Here's to booze, sex and breakin' necks.

(Takes a drink.)

Just between you and me she's always trying to bring me down.

AMBER

Is that so?

EDDIE

Damn straight. Always telling me what to do, making up god-awful stupid rules for me that don't apply to her.

AMBER

Oh God, Eddie. This is not the place to talk about this.

EDDIE

It's true. I swear.

AMBER

Eddie.

EDDIE

Telling me to shut up, that I'm stupid for thinking things. When has someone ever been considered stupid for thinking? Huh? I ask you. When has someone ever been stupid for using their brain? That's stupid. But it's okay. Cause I love her.

(He smashes the beer into the ground.)

ROB

Eddie, calm down man.

EDDIE

Ahhh, both of you are against me. I knew it.

(Pause.)

What? What are you two so quiet for? I'm only joking. Just a bit tipsy that's all.

ROB

Hey, who wants to order a pizza?

AMBER

No, we should--

EDDIE

Hell, yeah! I'm hungrier than a fat guy on fat guys get...oh, wait I messed it up, than a fat guy at FatLand on fat guys eat for free day. Har, har, har! That's fuckin' funny.

AMBER

Eddie, we should really be going.

EDDIE

No, I want to stay, I want to eat pizza and rap with my brother Rob. What is so wrong about that?

AMBER

It's getting late.

EDDIE

Rob, time.

ROB

Eleven fifteen.

EDDIE

Pisshhaw! It's early. Come on baby, don't be such an old rag. Let's party. Let's go out. Like the old times before you became such an old bitch.

(AMBER is shocked, while ROB stands out of the way.
EDDIE thinks it is funny as hell.)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

What? What's wrong with you?

AMBER

Eddie, sometimes you can be a total jerk.

EDDIE

Ahh, whatever. Come on. Let's get this party started. Who's ordering that pizza?

AMBER

What would your son think of you speaking to his mother like that?

EDDIE

Man, I don't want to talk about him. He's with the sitter and we paid her till two so he can think whatever he wants to think. I don't care! So who's ordering this pizza?

ROB

All right Eddie, I think you need to calm down.

EDDIE

Hey! Don't tell me what to do.

ROB

Okay, it's just you need to be a little quieter. I mean this is an apartment.

EDDIE

Are telling me what to do?

ROB

Eddie...

EDDIE

Are you telling me what to do?

ROB

No.

EDDIE

Then what's the problem? Am I too rowdy for little Robby?

ROB

Look Eddie--

EDDIE

No, is that it? You don't like me or something. Am I a burden on you? What, you don't think I'm anything because I work for a living and you were the one who went to college? Because you've written a book and all I have to show for my work are the callouses on my hands. Do you think I'm beneath you?

(MORE)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Do you?

(Pause.)

ROB

No.

EDDIE

You know me man. You know me. I don't like being told what to do. Don't tell me what to do.

(Thick pause.)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Look man, I'm a little drunk. I know that. I'm going to go get a pizza, and then we are all going to sit down and have a nice evening. Okay? That going to work for everyone? Good.

(EDDIE exits.)

ROB

Oh, man.

AMBER

Rob, I'm sorry.

ROB

No. It's okay.

AMBER

No, it isn't. He shouldn't be acting this way.

ROB

He's my brother. He's always been this way. Nobody who ain't us two could understand.

AMBER

And what about me?

ROB

What about you?

(Pause.)

Oh, look I didn't mean it like that.

AMBER

No, I know what you meant.

ROB

Amber.

It's okay. It's always been about you two.

ROB

Look, I didn't mean for it to come out like that.

AMBER

You know, for a writer you sure have a sorry way with words when it comes to speaking with real people.

ROB

Amber, look. I'm sorry.

AMBER

I hate him.

ROB

Don't say that.

AMBER

Yes. I do. I don't know why I married him. I should have my head examined.

(Pause.)

ROB

So what are you going to do?

AMBER

What can I do? Just go on. Like I said before, it's for the best.

ROB

That's not good enough.

AMBER

God, Rob, what should I do? Run away with you. It would never work.

ROB

Why not?

AMBER

Because, it just, just wouldn't.

ROB

So that's how it is.

AMBER

Yes, that's how it is.

(Pause.)

Excuse me, I need to go to the rest room.

(AMBER exits to the bathroom.)

TISIPHONE

Rob, Rob, Rob, what a situation. Why don't you just tell them, get it off your chest.

ROB

That won't do any good.

MEGAERA

How do you know? Maybe Eddie will forgive you.

ALECTO

Doubtful.

TISIPHONE

Definitely doubtful.

MEGAERA

Would you forgive him.

ROB

No.

TISIPHONE

There you have it.

ROB

There must be some other way.

ALECTO

What, run away like you said?

TISIPHONE

Remember the priest. Remember his words. You can never run away.

MEGAERA

We will follow you Rob. We will haunt you ever second of your life until the end of your days and no matter where you go or how far you go, we will be there. Tearing at you. Driving you mad.

ROB

No.

MEGAERA

Yes.

TISIPHONE

Yes.

ALECTO

Yes.

TISIPHONE

We will never stop.

ROB

Just leave me alone.

MEGAERA

Poor fool.

ALECTO

There is no quarter from our wrath. You are guilty.

TISIPHONE

Guilty.

MEGAERA

Guilty!

ROB

Stop it!

MEGAERA

Guilty!

ALECTO

Guilty!

TISIPHONE

Guilty!

(THE FURIES chant guilty as ROB covers his ears and yells. AMBER enters.)

AMBER

Rob, Rob! What's wrong?

ROB

Nothing. Nothing is wrong.

AMBER

Why were you screaming?

ROB

I'm all right. I just need to lie down for a while.

AMBER

Okay. Can I come with you?

ROB

Amber, I don't think...Eddie will be back in a few minutes.

AMBER

Eddie is drunk and he's walking to the pizza place. It will be an hour before he gets back. Rob, I need you. I need to be with you.

ROB

Okay.

(ROB and AMBER embrace and the FURIES surround them. They begin chanting guilty. As ROB and AMBER exit to the bedroom, the FURIES follow, chanting.)

(End Scene.)

SCENE 7

(Black, no typewriter sound. Only the cool voice of EDDIE reading.)

EDDIE

But alas, he knew that he could never really have her all to his own. She was taken, both in marriage and in spirit. He could never be what she wanted, and he began to realize that she was not the woman he had thought. She had a sense of duty, and though she might stumble in her affairs, she would never give in on them. Never give in on him, the child. The child who may or may not be a bastard. So the question remained, what was he to do?

(Lights up. Time has passed. EDDIE is in the room with a half eaten box of pizza. He is reading the manuscript near the typewriter, quietly. He glances over toward the bedroom a few times, then goes back to reading. ROB and AMBER enter from the bedroom.)

ROB

Eddie, didn't hear you come in.

AMBER

That was fast. Did you go to Montezuma's?

EDDIE

Yeah, I did. Lucky for me they had one ready that someone didn't pick up. Thing is, it's been nearly an hour. I thought maybe you two had gone to get some more beer or something, so then I sat down and saw this. Started reading.

(Motions to the manuscript. Pause.)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Is this your new novel?

ROB

Oh, yeah.

EDDIE

What were you two doing in the bedroom?

ROB

Oh, nothing. We were just talking.

AMBER

Talking about Tyler. About, you know, stuff.

EDDIE

Uh-huh. This story, pretty juicy.

ROB

Well, you know. Sex sells.

EDDIE

Yeah. I guess it does

ROB

Hey, lets have some pizza.

EDDIE

Hey Rob, I just can't help but notice here that these people seem kind of familiar.

ROB

Well, you have to write what you know.

AMBER

Let's not talk about his novel, he's not even finished with it yet.

EDDIE

No, no, I'm real interested in how it turns out.

ROB

Eddie, come on, I know what you're thinking and I'm telling you it's not like that.

EDDIE

How do you know what I'm thinking?

ROB

Well, I don't, it's just--

EDDIE

Then you wouldn't know what it is or isn't like now, would you?

ROB

Look Eddie, it's just a story.

TISIPHONE

Just a story.

MEGAERA

Keep the lie going and you will survive. Is that the plan?

ALECTO

Perhaps he'll believe nothing was going on in that bedroom if you try really hard.

EDDIE

I'm having a hard time understanding this. I leave, come back to find neither one of you here. I find these papers that for some reason, and maybe I'm wrong here, seem to describe an affair between a woman who bears a striking resemblance to my wife and a man who bears a striking resemblance to my brother. And then I see the two of you come out of my brother's bedroom and appear generally shocked to see me. Now, what am I missing?

ROB

Eddie, look, it's just--

EDDIE

It's just what Rob? What's going on?

ROB

Eddie, there's nothing going on.

EDDIE

Somehow I don't believe you. You're telling me this is all one big coincidence. That I'm imagining this. That it's all in my head. Well excuse me but I don't think so. I don't believe in coincidences, not like this anyway. Now, who wants to tell me what's going on?

AMBER

Eddie, you are just being paranoid.

EDDIE

Am I? What about the picture? Now, I know that it rained everyday we were in South Padre Island. And I know that all the pictures we took were inside our hotel and inside the bar. So why is it that the sun is shining, there's no rain, the beach is in the background, and you two are alone?

(Pause.)

Somebody better answer me!

AMBER

Eddie, it's nothing. We were just talking.

EDDIE

Rob?

ROB

(Pause.)

Eddie, I don't want to hurt you.

EDDIE

What? What the hell is that supposed to mean?

ROB

Eddie, please.

EDDIE

I want to know what the hell is going on!

AMBER

Eddie, stop yelling!

EDDIE

Shut up!

(He walks up nose to nose with ROB.)

Tell me.

ROB

You don't want to know.

EDDIE

Yes I do.

ROB

Fine. You want to know?

EDDIE

Damn right I do!

ROB

Fine. We've been sleeping together!

(Pause. EDDIE steps back and soaks it in.)

ROB (CONT'D)

It's just, I thought that we could just keep going the way we were, you know. Nobody was going to find out. But you had to find that goddamn picture.

EDDIE

(Pause.)

How long?

ROB

Eddie I'm sorry.

EDDIE

How long!

ROB

Ten years.

EDDIE

Ten years?

ROB

Off and on.

EDDIE

Ten years.

ROB

Oh, Eddie, I'm sorry.

EDDIE

Is this true?

AMBER

(Pause.)

No! No it's not.

ROB

Amber.

AMBER

He's lying Eddie!

ROB

Amber! Stop!

AMBER

I wouldn't do that! It's--

ROB

Amber, it's over!

(AMBER is silent.)

ROB (CONT'D)

I couldn't keep it in anymore.

EDDIE

How could you do this to me?

AMBER

Eddie, it's--

EDDIE

Shut up, I ain't talking to you. You know, I could expect this from her. God knows I've suspected something for a long time. But you. You're my brother. How could you?

ROB

It's complicated.

EDDIE

No it ain't. This kind of thing is real simple, either you do it or you don't. It's either right or wrong. There's nothing complicated about it!

ROB

I know.

EDDIE

We're brothers Rob. We're supposed to be there for each other. You just killed me. You just killed your brother. I should beat you down for this.

ROB

I know. I wouldn't blame you.

EDDIE

Yeah, I guess you wouldn't.

(Pause. EDDIE holds back the rage that's boiling in him.)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

So, ten years. And Tyler?

ROB

Eddie--

EDDIE

I want to know! Is Tyler my son?

AMBER

Eddie, stop.

EDDIE

Answer me!

AMBER

I don't know.

EDDIE

(Pause.)

I don't want to see you, either of you, ever again. You are both ghosts.

AMBER

Eddie, I think you're just upset.

EDDIE

Well no fucking shit! Whose that talking anyway? It sounds like my wife but it can't be. She died.

(Turning to ROB.)

So this is it. This is how it is? I should have seen this coming. I should have known years ago.

ROB

Eddie, don't--

EDDIE

Don't what? You don't have any right to tell me what to do.

ROB

All right Eddie. You're pissed, I understand. I'd be the same. I did you wrong, I know I did. I'm sorry. If you want to hit me, go ahead.

(Long pause as they stare each other down. EDDIE looks as if he's going to turn and walk, then like a rattlesnake he strikes out and clocks ROB in the head, knocking him down.)

AMBER

Eddie, stop!

EDDIE

You want em', you got 'em. I'm through with you.

(EDDIE exits.)

ROB

Well, it could have been worse.

AMBER

You...

ROB

Hey, I'm okay.

AMBER

Do you know what you've done?

ROB

I just took a brick to the face.

AMBER

You... you're so... God, how could you?

ROB

What? Tell him?

AMBER

Yes!

ROB

He had figured it out already.

AMBER

No he hadn't! We could have still--

ROB

Oh, stop kidding yourself!

AMBER

We could have kept going.

ROB

He caught us red handed. It's too late. Now come here.

AMBER

No.

ROB

Come here.

AMBER

No! Don't you see? I'm a failure!

ROB

No. It's alright. Just come here.

AMBER

Don't touch me! I can't believe you! My house, my marriage. It's all over. They'll talk about me at work. My life is over.

ROB

Oh would you just cut the shit! Man, you spent the last ten years living a lie! Just accept it! If you really loved him you would have never been with me. And if I was any sort of a brother I would have never been with you. But we did it. We made our bed, we screwed in it, and now we have to sleep in it. How many times do I have to tell you? It's over. We lost! You lost your husband, I lost my brother. It was bound to happen. So either live with it or, hell, I don't know. Do whatever you want. I'm done with it.

AMBER

So that's it.

(THE FURIES begin to surround her and whisper in her ears.)

ROB

Ah, shit, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to snap at you. Look at me-- It'll be okay. Okay? We'll figure something out.

AMBER

Will we?

ROB

Yeah, I guess. People always do.

(Pause.)

Look, I don't know what to tell you. All I know is that for the first time in a long time I feel good. Free. Don't you? I mean, we couldn't go on like that.

AMBER

You're right. Who could?

ROB

Exactly.

AMBER

That's the way it is.

ROB

I'm sorry. I didn't want this to hurt you.

AMBER

It's fine.

(Pause.)

ROB

So do you think you're going to leave town? I could help you get set up somewhere.

AMBER

No Rob, I'm not going to run. There's nowhere to run.

(She gives him a kiss on the cheek, then turns to walk toward the bathroom.)

ROB

Where you going?

AMBER

I'm going to the bathroom.

ROB

Oh. Okay.

(Pause. AMBER turns to exit.)

ROB (CONT'D)

Oh, hey. I know how my story is going to end now.

AMBER

That's great Rob. Good for you.

(She exits and THE FURIES follow. Silence. The first silence ROB has heard in a long time. He smiles, sits at the typewriter, and closes his eyes. The words begin to flow through him and he types.)

ROB (V.O.)

The voices in Ray's head floated away like smoke, and for the first time he heard the joyful sound of silence. The damage done over the years had finally started to heal itself. He sat back and smiled, his face smarting from Mark's crushing blow; but he still smiled. Would Mark forgive him? Ray didn't know, nor did it bother him at this point. Like the priest had said, the only thing that separates Man and God is the ability to hold a grudge. Ray supposed that he would just have to accept that. And deep down inside, he knew that Mark would come around. Brothers always do...eventually.

(ROB stops typing and looks toward the bathroom.)

ROB

Hey, Amber, you alright in there?

(Pause. No response.)

Hello? Amber?

(ROB gets up and walks to the bathroom.)

Amber? Hey, you need anything? You want something to drink?

(MORE)

ROB (CONT'D)
(He knocks on the door.)

Amber?

(He pushes the door open and peers inside.)

Amber? Amber? Oh, my God.

(He rushes inside the bathroom for a moment, and when he comes back in he has blood on his hands and THE FURIES follow.)

ROB
No! What did you do to her?

TISIPHONE
We did nothing. We only showed her the truth.

ROB
Why! Why did you do that?

ALECTO
You make it seem like we have a choice in this matter.

MEGAERA
She is the one who made the choice.

ALECTO
We made the consequences clear.

TISIPHONE
I guess she just couldn't accept it.

ROB
I've got to do something.

(He moves to the phone but ALECTO stops him as he reaches for it.)

ALECTO
It's too late Rob.

TISIPHONE

She's gone.

ROB

Why are you doing this to me?

MEGAERA

It's not us Rob.

ALECTO

It never was us.

TISIPHONE

You just don't understand.

(ROB picks up the phone and dials.)

ROB

Hello...yes, I've need help. Yes I... I need an ambulance... No, I... What am I going to do? Oh, God, what am I going to do?

(ROB drops the phone and sits on the couch and curls up into a ball. The FURIES approach and surround.)

TISIPHONE

Nothing. There is nothing you can do.

MEGAERA

Come now Rob. Don't look so sad.

ALECTO

You'll have a long time to think about it.

TISIPHONE

And we'll be right here.

(TISIPHONE sits beside him begins to stroke his hair.)

(Lights fade.)

(End of play.)

CHAPTER IV

REFLECTIONS

Overall I am quiet pleased with the outcome of this play. The performances, especially the actions of the Furies, fully met my expectations for the original concept.

The biggest problem I had in writing this play was trying to be too smart, too scholarly, instead of trying to tell the story. This misdirection in focus led to many of the early problems and rewrites. I have realized the most fundamentally important goal of a playwright is to create a script that is playable and performable, not a piece of scholarship. This is a mistake I plan to never make again.

One of the issues that arose in rehearsal was that the first and second scenes seemed to drag. The root of this problem stemmed from a lack of tension that should exist between the two brothers. This was alleviated when the actors added their own pauses and took the time to study each other, looking for the answers they were seeking in each other's reactions, and it then led to a discovery in my own style. I found looking at this script and my previous works

that I seem to write dialogue that calls for frequent pauses. While I do indicate points in this script where pauses would be appropriate, it was found that more perhaps were needed. However, what also needs to be avoided is overusing the pause in order to keep the script from becoming too dictatorial. Somewhere there is a balance between the two extremes. In future works this will be kept in mind in order to avoid the same problem.

Something that had to be clarified in the story after the production was the length of the affair. It was universally agreed that ten years is too long for it to go on without Eddie discovering the truth on his own. I corrected this by having Rob explain to Father Benson that the affair has been off and on, with periods of time where he and Amber would not see each other.

Another bit of knowledge gleaned from this experience is to be present at rehearsals as much as possible, especially when it is a world premiere. Early in the process I made the decision to distance myself from rehearsals in order to give the director and actors room to breathe and produce the play in their own manner without "big brother" hanging over them. This resolution was somewhat affirmed by the actors on the few times I did visit, who would say their lines and then look over to where I was sitting for some sort of confirmation that they were "doing it right."

However, when I sat in on one of the final rehearsals I found that some of the important elements that were envisioned in the script had failed to make themselves present in performance. Luckily nothing was absolutely vital to the piece, and with a little last minute hustle the problems were for the most part corrected. But the play was most certainly not perfect, and it was frustrating to watch in performance. This led to a re-examination of my original stance. I now believe that had I been present at more of the rehearsals many of these home-stretch problems may have been avoided. Not that my faith in the ability of the director and crew was misplaced. It was an over abundance of faith that helped justify this decision. They are all very capable individuals who did an excellent job. But this being a completely new script with no point of reference as far as performance goes, and the short production schedule which allowed very little time for exploration, a bit more guidance on the playwright's part would have gone far in the overall quality of the play.

That being said, I am still very happy with the overall outcome. The lessons learned from this experience will be a great asset to future works. Writing this play was a great challenge, and I believe that I was successful in overcoming many of my shortcomings as a writer.

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VITA

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