

GLASS WALLS

A Play
By
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1924 Pinehurst Road
Los Angeles
CA
90068

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GLASS WALLS

Characters:

JEREMY

A paranoid recluse in his late 30's or early 40's. He has a chronic respiratory condition and clears his throat from time to time, and more often when he is under stress. He doesn't like to sit in the presence of other people but if he does, he finds a seat as far away from them as possible.

WAD

A homeless crazy woman, AWOL from the state mental hospital, probably in her 30's, but could be older. She wears layers of found clothing.

GEORGE

Jeremy's older brother, 45, tall, good looking, successful New York Lawyer.

RALPH

Jeremy's father, late 70's. Once smart, successful and handsome, he is now recovering from a recent stroke, barely able to move or speak.

ANGELA MAXWELL

A psychiatrist with the state mental institution.

LARRY

A mute orderly in the state mental hospital, friend of Wad.

Setting:

The long, rectangular living room of an old ranch style house, built in the late 1950's. It contains a semi-circular couch stage left, a long straight couch stage right forming two separate conversation areas, and two or three easy chairs.

There is something odd about the placement of all the furniture. There is no place to sit where two people can face each other.

Along the back wall are floor-to-ceiling drapes and they are closed. There are a few unusual, and rather good, pieces of original artwork around, paintings and sculptures, and interesting knickknacks, that show a bit of good taste.

There are three televisions in the room. Up stage right is a large screen color console circa 1970 in a wood grain cabinet. On top of it is a new one, cable-ready, with a slightly larger screen. On top of these TVs is an ancient VHS tape player. On a coffee table up center is a small portable that is wrapped in bubble pack and clear plastic, and has both round UHF and "rabbit ear" antennas poking out from it.

A very large ugly, worn recliner faces the two big TVs, with its back to the rest of the room.

The stage right wall is all bookcases, overflowing with books, magazines and videotapes. There is a door to the "outside" on the back wall up left, a hall stage right, with doors to the bathroom and bedrooms, and an exit up stage left to the kitchen. There is a stairway stage left that leads presumably to upstairs bedrooms.

ACT I - SCENE 1 - AFTERNOON

LIGHTS UP

Jeremy comes in the front door carrying a brown shopping bag, and a bag of groceries cradled in one arm.

Jeremy wears his thinning greasy hair in a comb-over. He is lumpy, out of shape. Tall, six foot three or more. His eyes are hollow, red-rimmed with dark circles underneath, his complexion sallow. He wears low-slung, baggy, cotton pants and a worn, stained polyester shirt.

It is dark outside. Jeremy closes the door, then places the shopping bag on the floor nearby. He double locks the door, then takes the grocery bag offstage into the kitchen.

A microwave oven hums, a refrigerator door slams. Jeremy comes out of the kitchen with a paper plate full of pizza, a soda and a bag of barbecue potato chips. He goes to the two stacked TVs, puts the food on the arm of the old recliner, turns on the older TV with the remote control. He sits and begins to eat. An ancient episode of "Gomer Pyle" is playing. After a few moments he falls asleep, snoring softly. (The Gomer Pyle episode drones on throughout all of scene 1.)

Wad, hair damp from the shower and dressed in a pair of baggy slacks and T-shirt, enters from the bathroom. She stands looking at the sleeping Jeremy.

She shrugs, picks up a piece of the half-eaten pizza and takes a bite. She takes the paper plate full of pizza to the couch on the other side of the room and sits in the flickering light of the TV.

A buzzer rings from offstage in the direction of the bedroom. Jeremy sleeps through the buzzer, but Wad looks up a moment then continues to eat. The buzzer rings again. Jeremy wakes with a start, struggles up from the recliner and walks offstage toward the bedroom. Wad watches him go, shrugs, gets up and goes offstage to the kitchen.

In a moment, Jeremy returns to the living room pushing Ralph, slumped awkwardly in his wheelchair. Ralph is dressed in a dingy white cotton dress shirt and cardigan, over which he wears baggy, soiled denim bib overalls.

JEREMY

Okay, here ya go.

Jeremy lifts the old man by the straps of the overalls out of the wheelchair and drops him into the recliner. The old man doesn't make a sound.

JEREMY (cont'd)

Gomer Pyle. This is a really good episode. I'll go get your pills, okay?

Jeremy heads to the kitchen and as he approaches the door he collides with Wad on her way out. He is stunned. He shrieks.

JEREMY (cont'd)

Who are you! What are you doing in this house? How the hell did you get in? Jesus! Jesus! Christ! Oh, Christ!

Jeremy runs back and forth checking the doors, windows. He panics! Wad walks on around him and makes herself comfortable in the living room.

JEREMY (cont'd)

Who are you? Who ARE you? What do you want! You have to leave! Oh, Jesus! Oh, Christ! Jesus! Jesus!

WAD

Oh, now don't get your drawers in a knot. I just wanted to take a shower. Good Grief! Give me a break!

JEREMY

Get out. Get out. I don't even know you! This is my house! You can't be in here. Oh, Jesus. Jesus.

Jeremy paces the room, then starts walking in circles.

WAD

Oh, for heaven's sake stop that! People are going to think you're crazy if you keep doing that!

JEREMY

I'll kill you! I'll kill you. I'll get the gun and kill you. I'll call the police. No, I won't call the police, I'll call...I'll call the paramedics. Yes, that's a good idea. I'll call the paramedics. Let me think. Yes, that's a good idea. That's what I'll do. I'll call the paramedics.

WAD

Who needs 'um. Maybe your old man over there, but you look pretty healthy to me and I'm doing great! Great pizza. Got any more?

JEREMY

You touched my pizza! Oh, Christ! Now there's germs all over the place. Jesus, Jesus!

Jeremy runs offstage into the kitchen.
Cabinet doors open and close.

WAD

Hey, bring me a coke, would ya!

Jeremy comes back in with some Lysol
and a can of diet Pepsi. He gives the
air a cursory spray of Lysol. Then he
gives the soda to Wad, holding it with
the tips of two fingers.

WAD (cont'd)

Thanks.

Jeremy goes back toward the kitchen.
The phone rings. He jumps. He picks
up a cordless phone from a nearby
table. The battery is dead. The phone
rings again. Jeremy finds an old-
fashioned black rotary dial phone in a
corner by the bookcase and picks up the
receiver.

JEREMY

Hello.

A spotlight comes up stage right on
George, who is talking into a tiny
state-of-the-art cell phone.

GEORGE

Jeremy, it's me. I'm leaving out of JFK after work Friday
night. I'll rent a car. The plane lands at...uh.

He retrieves a piece of paper from his
pocket and checks it.

GEORGE (cont'd)

...6:15 so I should be there about 8:00. How's Dad doing?
Sorry I couldn't get away sooner.

JEREMY

Oh, he's great! He's doing great.

GEORGE

Did you talk to the doctor about, you know, what we talked about? The health care thing. I know how you feel about getting those people involved, but don't you think...

JEREMY

We're doing just fine. We don't have to talk about that now. Not right now. Maybe later.

Jeremy hang up on George. The phone rings immediately. Jeremy answers.

GEORGE

I really hate it when you do that, Jeremy. Look, I'm coming Friday.

JEREMY

You don't have to come. Don't come.

GEORGE

Look, I do have to come. I have to check on Dad, Okay? See you Friday night.

Long, long pause. George listens. Waits.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Jeremy? Are you there?

JEREMY

Yeah.

GEORGE

Then I'll see you Friday night.

JEREMY

Okay.

He hangs up. Jeremy starts walking in circles again, trying to think.

WAD

Uh, weren't you supposed to be getting your dad a pill or something?

JEREMY

Oh, Christ!

Jeremy runs back into the kitchen. A blender whizzes, drawers open and shut. He comes back into the living room carrying a a small plastic cup in one hand and some pills in a spoon in the other. He is spattered with drops of white stuff.

JEREMY (cont'd)

Here ya go, Ralph. You have to take this now. Try to swallow it, okay?

He leans down over Ralph and spoons the pills into the old man's mouth. Then he spoons some of the blended liquid in after it. The liquid dribbles on Ralph's lap and down his chin.

JEREMY (cont'd)

Okay, good. Now here's your milkshake. I'll leave it right here for you to drink.

Jeremy sets the cup on the arm of the chair. More stuff dribbles out of the old man's mouth. Jeremy turns to Wad.

JEREMY (cont'd)

If you don't leave, I'm going to have to...I'm going to have to do something. I'm going to have to DO SOMETHING!

He gets right in her face.

JEREMY (cont'd)

I'M GOING TO HAVE TO DO SOMETHING!

WAD

No you're not. You're not going to do anything. And if you feel like killing me, go ahead. I rather die here than where I was.

JEREMY

YOU BITCH! You sarcastic, patronizing bitch. I'm calling the cops, no...I'll call...I'll call...

WAD

...the paramedics.

JEREMY

I'll kill you! I'll kill you! Don't you speak to me. Don't you ever speak to me again, you stupid bitch!

WAD

Hey! Look, you. I like it here.

She stares back in Jeremy's face studying him. He can't move.

WAD (cont'd)

Besides, I think you're an okay guy, you know that?

Ralph's arm spasms and knocks the cup of white blended stuff off the arm of his chair. It lands with a splat on the floor.

JEREMY

Oh no! See what you made us do? It's okay, Ralph.

Jeremy retrieves a filthy dish towel from the kitchen, squats on the floor and rubs at the spot on the floor making it worse.

WAD

You're making it worse. Get some soapy water and a sponge.

JEREMY

You shut up! I know how! It's your fault anyway! Don't talk to me. I have to do this.

Jeremy stands, drops the dirty rag and paper cup on the coffee table and leans over Ralph.

JEREMY (cont'd)

It's time for bed, isn't it Ralph? You want to go to bed now?

RALPH

My won dough med net.

JEREMY

Okay, we'll go to bed.

RALPH

Mo. My don dough met.

JEREMY

Yeah, you do. It's almost ten. I'll take you. Would you like a bath tonight?

RALPH

Mo. Rees mo.

JEREMY

Okay.

WAD

I don't think he wants a bath. Sounds like he said no.

JEREMY

Well, you don't know anything about us. This is our regular routine, and its best for us to keep to our regular routine. It's none of your business anyway. You have to go now. Come on Ralph.

Jeremy hoists Ralph out of the recliner into the wheelchair and rolls him into the bathroom down the hall.

Wad nibbles on the rest of the cold pizza. She looks at an end table by the couch and notices what looks like an intercom with wires draped over the edge and back along the wall.

From off stage the sounds of running water, faucets turning on and off,

water splashing and bumps and thumps as Jeremy struggles with Ralph in the bathroom, speaking to him in a sweet, gentle voice like a mother with a young child.

JEREMY (O.S.) (cont'd)

Okay, Ralph. Step up now. Lift your foot.

Wad hold down the button on the gadget and hears the activities in the other room, amplified. She giggles and pushes the button on and off playing with it.

RALPH (O.S.)

Met ne new nit. Umph!

JEREMY (O.S.)

Now the other foot. Good. You're doin' great.

A big splash. Wad keeps pushing the button on and off.

JEREMY (O.S.) (cont'd)

Oh. Sorry, Ralph. You okay? Here, let me pull you up a little.

Wad finishes the pizza, stretches and yawns. She stands, turns off the lights and exits into the guest bedroom.

RALPH (O.S.)

Mumph!

JEREMY (O.S.)

There. That's better. Okay, here's the soap. I'll be back in a minute, Okay?

Jeremy peers back into the living room. He sees that the lights are all off except for the glow of the muted TV. He walks in, looks around, and doesn't see Wad. He goes to the kitchen and

looks in. Not there either. Jeremy goes to the front door. Opens it. Looks out. Closes and triple locks it. He stands for a moment in the darkened room, listening. Satisfied that Wad has gone, he goes back to the bathroom.

A big thump from the bathroom.

JEREMY (O.S.) (cont'd)

Did you hit your head? Let me see. Ooooh! I don't see any blood. Oh, wait. I'll get a band aid.

Sounds of movement. More bumps and thumps as they move to the bedroom. The bedroom light goes out and Jeremy comes back into the living room.

JEREMY (cont'd)

'Night, Ralph.

Jeremy exits through the kitchen. Soon he returns with some tools and black electrical tape. He turns on a small table lamp and check the wires on a cheap Radio Shack burglar alarm hidden behind the couch.

He opens the curtains which line the back stage wall to reveal an vast unruly web of trip wires. It appears to be pitch black outside. He surveys the front yard and confident that no one can see him, he fiddles with some wires looking for loose connections. He gets a little shock.

JEREMY (cont'd)

OW!

He fixes the broken connection with the electrical tape and needle nose pliers.

Suddenly, offstage, a radio comes on full volume, playing rock and roll

music. Jeremy jumps up and rushes off into Ralph's bedroom. Wad comes running out of the guest bedroom door in a panic.

WAD

Shit! What the hell!

Wad notices the open curtains and all the wires.

WAD (cont'd)

You've got to be kidding. I don't believe this.

The music stops and Jeremy re-enters.

WAD (cont'd)

What the hell was that!

JEREMY

Oh, no. You're still here. I thought you left! Go away! I don't have to tell you anything. Go away!

WAD

What's wrong with your window?

She starts to touch the wires.

WAD (cont'd)

What is this?

JEREMY

Shut up! Shut UP! Don't touch that! You don't know anything! This is my security system. It works great! I've got a camera rigged outside too, so I can see who's coming from the monitor in my room. No one can get in without tripping these wires and setting off the alarm. It really works great. I just didn't have it fixed quite right. That's how you got in, but I figured it out. Now it works perfect. These Radio Shack products are great!

WAD

Sure. Right.

She laughs, then crosses and walks offstage into the kitchen. The telephone rings and before Jeremy can get to it Wad has answered the cordless kitchen extension.

A spotlight comes up stage right on George, who is talking on his cell phone.

WAD (cont'd)

Yeah?

GEORGE

Is this 455 555 4555?

WAD

How should I know?

She walks out of the kitchen with a box of cookies and a glass of milk. The phone is tucked between her shoulder and her ear.

GEORGE

Who is this?

Jeremy grabs the phone away from Wad.

JEREMY

Who is this?

GEORGE

Jeremy? Is that you?

JEREMY

Hi George. Yeah, it's me.

GEORGE

Who was that answering the phone?

JEREMY

I don't know her. She just came in here and won't leave.

GEORGE

What? What are you talking about?

JEREMY

She's this woman. She was here when I got home this afternoon and she won't leave.

GEORGE

Are you serious? How the hell...you don't know her? That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard. Why didn't you just throw her out?

JEREMY

I didn't want to touch her.

GEORGE

Oh, for God's sake, Jeremy. Why not? Oh, never mind, I know why. Did you call the cops?

JEREMY

No.

GEORGE

Jeremy, you have to call the cops, right now.

JEREMY

I don't want to call the cops. Should I call the paramedics? Yes, I think that's what I'll do. I'll call the paramedics, okay. Bye, George.

He hangs up the phone. It rings again immediately and Jeremy lets the answering service get it. The voice on the service is Ralph's, recorded sometime in the distant past, before the stroke.

RALPH'S VOICE

Hello, this is Ralph Dolan. Please leave a message.

GEORGE

Jeremy, pick up! I mean it! Pick up. (long pause) Okay, God damn it! I'm flying out there right now. Tonight! I'm

telling you, if anything has happened to Dad, you are in big trouble. I'll be there as soon as I can.

He hangs up. Jeremy walks in circles again.

JEREMY

Oh, Jesus, Jesus! Now he'll come out here and upset everything. This is bad. This is really bad. And you! Jesus. Jesus. I have to think.

He begins to sweat and gasp and clear his throat.

WAD

Stop that. You're going to explode. Why don't you go to bed. Get some sleep. I'm going to take an aspirin.

JEREMY

Oh, sure. Sure. Aspirin. Everybody always wants you to take pills all the time. I hate pills! Ralph hates pills.

WAD

It's just aspirin...

JEREMY

Shut up! Shut up!

WAD

Hey! I can take an aspirin if I want.

JEREMY

You...you...this is all your fault! Why won't you leave? You have to leave. You have to leave now!

WAD

I need some sleep. I'm going back to bed. Great bed. Comfy. Best bed I've ever slept in. (yawns) See ya later. Want a cookie?

She hands Jeremy the cookie box. He takes it and she exits to the bedroom.

Jeremy eats cookies from the box and continues to walk in circles.

BLACKOUT:

ACT I - SCENE TWO - THE NEXT MORNING

Morning light is shining underneath the closed curtains. Jeremy is fast asleep and snoring in one of the easy chairs.

Wad comes in pushing Ralph in his wheel chair. Ralph is clean, and neat and dressed in a nice pair of pajamas. There is a soft pillow behind his back and a small blanket on his lap.

WAD

I bet you're hungry aren't you? Let me see if I can find anything for you to eat.

She parks his wheelchair just outside the kitchen. She straightens him in the chair a bit, tucks his blanket and robe around him neatly, and goes into the kitchen. The alarm clock goes off, Jeremy wakes with a start and runs offstage toward Ralph's bedroom. He comes back in a panic.

JEREMY

Jesus, what's going on! Ralph! Where are you?

He sees Ralph parked next to the kitchen.

JEREMY (cont'd)

Oh, no. Ralph. You're not supposed to be over here.

Wad comes out of the kitchen.

JEREMY (cont'd)

Hey, you! What's your name. What do you think you're doing? You're going to get your germs all over him. Get out of

here! Leave us alone. We have a routine and I can take care of everything.

She doesn't respond.

JEREMY (cont'd)

Come on Ralph. I'll put you in the recliner and you can watch some Laurel and Hardy tapes I got.

He rolls Ralph's wheelchair away from the kitchen toward the TVs. He starts to lift Ralph into the huge chair, but realizes that he isn't wearing his overalls.

JEREMY (cont'd)

Oh, no. This won't work, Ralph. I'll change you back into your overalls.

Wad follows them in from the kitchen with a small bowl of scrambled eggs and a spoon.

WAD

Can't. They're in the washer along with his sheets and towels. Everything was wet. Here ya go, Ralph.

She sits next to Ralph on the edge of the recliner.

RALPH

Mumfy. Mumfy, new.

He leans a little toward the food. Wad begins to spoon small amounts into his mouth and it opens hungrily after each bite like a baby bird.

JEREMY

Oh, no. I have to get the overalls. You're getting germs all over us and now he'll be sick and get constipated and I'll have to give him more pills. Those eggs will make you constipated, Ralph. You remember what eggs did the last time? They'll make you constipated and then we'll have to rubber-glove it again.

RALPH

Mo. Mit mas may. Mo may.

Jeremy sweats and paces the room for a few moments, then stops. He goes to Ralph and wrestles him awkwardly into the recliner. Ralph groans.

RALPH (cont'd)

Mumff! Mummff!

JEREMY

I have to go out for a while, Ralph. Will you sit in the chair and not get up? I have to go out. I just have to go out. You just sit in the chair and don't fall. I'll be back soon. Don't get up, okay?

RALPH

Mmmm.

Jeremy grabs his jacket and the brown shopping bag and leaves. Wad continues to feed Ralph.

In a moment, Ralph leans toward the edge of the recliner and tries to push himself out of the impossibly deep chair.

WAD

You want to get up, don't you?

RALPH

Mes.

WAD

Can you get up, Ralph?

He nods.

WAD (cont'd)

Wait. Let me help you. Hold on.

Wad slides her arm under Ralph's arm and around his back. Using leverage, she is easily able to guide the frail old man to a standing position. Holding on to Wad, Ralph walks a few steps across the room before he starts to lean and she sits him down in a nearby chair.

RALPH

Moo. Mired. Nanks.

WAD

What do you know. That was pretty good. I'll get your blanket and a pillow.

She tucks his blanket and pillow around him.

WAD (cont'd)

You want anything else?

RALPH

Mookie. Meanut Mutter Ookie.

WAD

Cookie? Hmm, I don't know. Oh, what the hell, I'll see what I can do.

She exits to the kitchen with the breakfast dishes. Cabinet doors open and close. After a moment, Ralph starts to curl slowly forward in the chair. His head gets lower and lower and soon he rolls forward onto the floor like a slinky. He lies still, curled up in a ball.

There is the sound of keys in the door. The doornob turns. The door won't open. Georges curses on the other side.

GEORGE (O.S.)

Shit! God Damn it!

After more keys turn and more locks are opened, George enters, ruffled and tired from flying all night, talking on his cell phone. He sets a small suitcase by the front door.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Okay, okay. I know they don't want to settle, but damn it, we don't want this in front of a jury. How many times do I have to tell you. Work on it. I'll...

He looks over and sees Ralph curled up on the floor.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Shit! Hold on!...Dad!

He runs over to Ralph and muscles him back in the chair.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Dad! What the hell? What happened to you. Where's Jeremy?
(he calls out)

JEREMY!

RALPH

Mumf. Mumfy.

George settles Ralph securely in the chair and talks into the cell phone.

GEORGE

Ted, I'll call you back, okay.

He shuts off the phone and drops it in his pocket.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Dad, are you all right sitting there? Should I get your chair?

Ralph nods, then shakes his head.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Jeremy! Where the hell are you?

Wad comes back into the room with some peanut butter cookies and a cup of milk. She stops short.

WAD

Who are you?

GEORGE

I'm George Dolan. This is my father and this is my father's house. The question is "who are you and what are you doing here?".

WAD

No. I believe the question is still "who are you?".

GEORGE

I just told you. Now if you don't mind...

WAD

How do I know you're telling the truth? I've never seen you before. I think you should leave. You don't look like you belong here. I'm going to scream if you don't leave.

GEORGE

Where's Jeremy, MY BROTHER!

WAD

He said he had to go out, so Ralph and I had a walk and now we're going to have some cookies and milk. Are you going to leave and let us have our cookies and milk in peace?

GEORGE

What have you done with Jeremy? I am going to call the police. This is beyond belief!

He picks up the kitchen phone and dials 911. It connects.

GEORGE (cont'd)

I...yes. There's...

Wad screams bloody murder.

WAD

AHHH! AHHH!

GEORGE

What? Damn it! Damn It!

WAD

Ahhh! Help! Help! He's trying to hurt us!

George drops the phone and charges her. She gets by him, scoops up his phone and runs into the living room. He chases her. She screams. They circle each other.

WAD (cont'd)

Help! Help! He's chasing me!

GEORGE

Shut up! Shut UP! Give me that, you...you. I'll get you!

George and Wad stalk each other around the furniture, George grabbing for her when she is within reach.

Behind them, Ralph manages to push himself up from the couch. He staggers sideways toward the tray of cookies and milk. Wad and George don't notice.

Ralph picks up a cookie, stuffs it in his mouth, then tries to pick up the cup of milk, but knocks it on the floor. He tries to bend over to pick it up, but instead propels himself forward into the wall. He bounces backward against the kitchen door frame, knocking himself silly, then plops to the floor with a thud. Only

his feet can be seen sticking out from the kitchen.

The front door opens and Jeremy comes in. George and Wad stop when they hear the front door shut.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Jeremy! Where the hell have you been? Help me get the phone from this...this crazy woman!

JEREMY

Where's Ralph?

Wad and George look over at the chair where he had been sitting.

GEORGE

What the fuck!

WAD

There he is! Oh, no. Oh, Ralph.

She runs to him, with George and Jeremy following. George's cell phone rings and he pulls it out of his pocket.

A siren screams outside and red flashing lights strobe through the cracks in the curtains.

GEORGE

I can't talk right now, Ted...no...I gotta go!

He hangs up. Wad is giving Ralph CPR and Jeremy is trying to help.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Shit!

BLACKOUT:

ACT I - SCENE THREE - THE NEXT DAY

George and Jeremy are sitting in the living room. Jeremy is in the recliner, his back to the room, eating barbecued potato chips and watching a slasher movie on the old TV, with no sound. George is sitting on the curved sofa drinking a cup of coffee, staring straight ahead. He looks like he hasn't slept in a month.

GEORGE

What do you suppose happened to her? That was bizarre.

JEREMY

I want to watch this, okay?

George gives Jeremy the finger, then goes to the kitchen phone and dials.

GEORGE

Hi, babe. Just checking in. We're back from the hospital. Dad's okay, but I'm beat. He's in bed asleep.

Long pause.

GEORGE (cont'd)

What do you mean she's been sent home... Again! Amy's a top student!...For Christ's sake, why would they...It is not my fault.

George's cell phone rings. He looks around for it.

GEORGE (cont'd)

What do you mean I always...I do not always...There you go again, Patty...Don't start this now...

She hangs up on him.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Shit!

He finds his cell phone, looks at the screen and hits the call back button.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Yeah, what is it, Ted? What's up? Okay, look, I told you they're just trying to stall. They have nothing to lose. God Damn it, don't let them intimidate you like that. Do I have to do everything myself? Okay, I'll call their chief counsel.

He hangs up and dials again, pushes buttons on the phone, listens to recorded messages and looks around desperately for something to write on. The doorbell rings.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Jeremy, get the door, would you? I'm on the phone.

The bell rings again. Jeremy doesn't budge. It rings again.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Jeremy, God damn it! Get the door!

No luck. George hangs up and goes to the door. A perky, attractive woman wearing thick glasses and dressed in a business suit is about to ring the bell again. She smiles broadly at George.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Can I help you?

ANGELA

Yes, is this the Dolan residence?

GEORGE

Well, yes but...

ANGELA

I'm Dr. Angela Maxwell. I'm on staff over at Central State Mental Hospital. The Sheriff called me. I understand you had a visit from my patient, Wanda Haverhill.

Angela smiles again. It is disconcerting.

GEORGE

Well, yes, I didn't get her name, but I guess that was her they took back to the hospital but...

ANGELA

May I come in a moment?

She pulls on the screen handle and squeezes her way in. She grins up at George. He shudders.

GEORGE

I don't see what...

ANGELA

I want to talk to you about her for a few moments. You see, she's gone again and I thought she might be here.

She peeks around George into the living room. She smiles again.

GEORGE

May I see some identification, please?

Angela shows him her hospital I.D. and gives him a business card.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Thanks. Look, she's not here and I don't think we can help you.

She keeps smiling at him and doesn't move. George sighs.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Jeremy, this lady...

ANGELA

Y...you can call me Angela if you want to.

GEORGE

Uh, Dr. Maxwell is here to ask about that woman that came in. She's escaped again. Jeremy?

Jeremy stands up from the recliner and turns to face them, but doesn't come near, doesn't make eye contact. Angela smiles at Jeremy and gives him a little wave.

JEREMY

I have to go out right now. I'll be back later.

GEORGE

But you know more about this. I think you should talk to Ms., I mean Dr. Maxwell.

JEREMY

No, you do it. You can do it. I have to go out.

GEORGE

Dr. Maxwell, I uh...Jeremy?

Angela walks by George in to the room and sits on the curved couch. Jeremy goes to the door taking a wide berth around George and Angela.

JEREMY

I'll see you later. I have to go out. I have some things to do.

GEORGE

Jeremy, wait! Don't go yet.

Jeremy picks up his shopping bag and goes out the door.

GEORGE (cont'd)

I'm sorry. My brother has a lot of problems. Anyway, I can't help you. I don't know anything about her except that she acted very strange. She just started screaming, for God's sake! Out of the blue. For no reason.

ANGELA

Do you have any coffee? I'm dying for a cup of coffee.

George goes into the kitchen. Angela looks around the room. The slasher movie is still running on the TV. George returns quickly with a mug of coffee. He sees her staring at the TV.

GEORGE

Excuse me, just a moment.

He finds the remote and tries to turn it off. No luck. He hits the power switch on the TV.

GEORGE (cont'd)

The woman was obviously dangerous, Dr. Maxwell. I have an elderly father and I was concerned for his welfare. I don't know anything that would help you, but I'll let you know if we hear from her.

Angela smiles and takes a sip of lukewarm coffee.

ANGELA

This is good c...c...coffee.

GEORGE

It's instant.

They sit for a couple of moments in awkward silence. Suddenly Angela bursts into tears. George is startled.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Oh Jesus. Dr. Maxwell, are you all right? What is it? Is it the coffee? I can heat it up some more...

Angela sobs.

GEORGE (cont'd)

I could brew some if you want...

Angela sobs louder. George looks for a tissue, finds one and gives it to her.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Uh, is there anything I can do?

Angela sniffs and wipes her nose.

ANGELA

No. It's me. I'm such a screwup. None of my patients seem to be making any progress and I was hoping Wanda would be my first success. Wanda isn't dangerous. She would n...n...never hurt anybody. And she seemed to be doing so well. I just can't do anything right. I'm so stupid.

GEORGE

She, uh...she gave my dad CPR yesterday.

Angela's sobs diminish a bit and she wipes her nose with the tissues.

ANGELA

She was a nurse before she was hospitalized. Maybe her little adventure d...d...did her some good.

She makes small whimpering sounds.

GEORGE

Dr. Maxwell, are you okay? Should I call someone or something? Would you like an aspirin?

Angela stands and goes to the door.

ANGELA

No. Please. I'm so embarrassed. Please forgive me. I've been a bit fragile lately. Personal problems and stress at work, you know.

GEORGE

Uh, yes. Yes, I understand, I think.

ANGELA

I'm sorry to have bothered you. I have to get back to work. I have fifty more patients to see today.

She stifles a cry, wipes away a tear.
George opens the door and pushes open
the screen for her.

GEORGE

Oh, okay. Drive carefully, Dr. Maxwell.

ANGELA

Oh, I don't drive. I have a cab waiting outside. Poor
eyesight.

GEORGE

Oh, that's good... I mean that you have a cab waiting, not
that...

Angela smiles at him.

ANGELA

Thank you.

She leaves and he closes the door
behind her.

GEORGE

Christ! What was that!

He goes into the kitchen. Sounds of
cabinet doors opening and shutting. He
returns with a bottle of Jack Daniels
and a glass.

He holds the bottle up and takes a long
look at it.

GEORGE (cont'd)

No. No!

He takes the bottle and the glass back
into the kitchen. More cabinets slam
and George returns with a bag of
cookies. He stuffs them into his mouth
one after another staring into space.

Jeremy comes in the front door.

GEORGE (cont'd)

What the hell! You must have been outside just waiting for her to leave. You could have helped me out you know.

JEREMY

There was a guy in a cab outside on the driveway. I watched him. I wanted to make sure he didn't steal anything and I needed a cigarette.

GEORGE

You don't smoke. You have athsma!

JEREMY

I needed a cigarette anyway.

He sits in the recliner, tries to turn on the movie he was watching with the remote. Nothing happens. He turns the TV power switch on.

JEREMY (cont'd)

Somebody must have fooled with the remote. Don't touch the remote control anymore, okay? We have it set up just right, okay? If you fool with the remote the TV won't work right. I had to re-do everything when somebody fooled with it last time you were here.

George ignores him.

GEORGE

It's so stuffy in here. What time is it? It's so dark in here you can't tell if it's day or night.

George goes to one of the drapery pulls and opens the curtains. Blinding daylight spills into the room. Jeremy springs out of the recliner, grabs the drapery pulls and closes the curtains.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Hey!

JEREMY

We keep the curtains closed here. We always keep the curtains closed.

GEORGE

Why?

JEREMY

Because that's our system.

GEORGE

But look, it's a beautiful day and...

JEREMY

I said WE KEEP THE CURTAINS CLOSED HERE!

GEORGE

Oh, for Christ's sake. I don't care. I just don't care! I've got to get some sleep! Stick around for a while, okay? I'd like to try to get some sleep!

JEREMY

I may have to go out.

GEORGE

Then wake me up, damn it!

George trudges off down the hall to the guest bedroom and Jeremy goes back to his recliner.

In a few moments George comes back into the living room dragging Wad, still half asleep, by the arm.

WAD

What's going on? Hey, leave me alone! Let go of me! I didn't do anything!

GEORGE

Listen. You sit right here and don't move.

George pushes her into a chair, stands in front of her and uses his cell phone

to call the number on Dr. Maxwell's card.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Yes, I need to speak with Dr. Maxwell. She just left here. It's about one of her patients, Wanda something... Haverville..Hooverville. Anyway she's here and I was told you were looking for her.

WAD

My name is Wad. Everybody calls me Wad.

He ignores her.

GEORGE

Okay. You'll send someone? Right away? Yes, I'll see that she doesn't go anywhere. Okay, thanks.

He hangs up.

WAD

I won't go anywhere.

GEORGE

I don't know what the hell you think you're doing, but if I see you anywhere near this house again, I'm calling the cops and having you locked up in the city jail! I've had enough.

WAD

I'll stay right here. I'll be quiet.

She scoots her chair around without getting up so that it faces the TV.

WAD (cont'd)

I'll just sit here and watch the movie with Jeremy.

Jeremy turns and they look at each other.

WAD (cont'd)

That's okay with you isn't it, Jeremy?

JEREMY

Yeah. That's okay. This is a really good movie. It's really scary. I've seen it five times.

They turn to the TV.

JEREMY (cont'd)

This next part is where throw the dead guy in the lake. It's my favorite part. Look. They're dragging the bag with the body parts down to the water. That bag must be really heavy. Oooh, look!

George sits on the circular couch, hunches down, stares into space and continues to eat cookies.

BLACKOUT:

ACT I - SCENE FOUR - LATER

George is passed out on the couch, snoring softly and lying in a pile of crumbs. The empty cookie bag is on the floor. Ralph and Jeremy are seated in front of the TVs, both of which are on, a news broadcast with sound on the lower, and an action movie on the upper.

Ralph has a small bandage on his head but otherwise looks clean and neat and so does Jeremy. Wad, also freshened up, enters from the kitchen with a TV tray, sandwiches and chips, and Ralph's pureed dinner in a bowl.

RALPH

Mall meet meek. Nurnon na ninanal neport.

JEREMY

It's already on, Ralph! Channel four. It's what you always watch. See.

He nods toward the upper "new" TV.

WAD

He wants the financial report. Turn on FNN.

JEREMY

What's that? Is that cable? We don't have cable.

WAD

Why not? Good grief, everybody has cable.

JEREMY

We don't want cable, do we Ralph?

RALPH

Mes, me noo!

JEREMY

Once you let those cable guys in they'll know everything about us. They can see everything we're doing through the little camera chip they put in those boxes they give you. Isn't that right Ralph?

RALPH

Mo. Mo!

WAD

He wants cable. So you can watch the financial report, right Ralph?

RALPH

Mes! Nable.

JEREMY

Well, we aren't getting cable.

Jeremy takes a sandwich and some chips. Wad drapes a towel beneath Ralph's chin and feeds him with a spoon, grabbing a bite of sandwich now and then. Ralph eats gratefully.

WAD

You should get cable. You only get six stations, and two of those are just a bunch of preachers flying bibles and asking

for money. NBC doesn't even come in very well. How am I gonna watch ER tonight?

JEREMY

Be quiet! Just be quiet. I'm trying to watch my program.

WAD

YOU be quiet!

George's cell phone rings and George jerks awake, sits up, searches for the phone and finds it.

GEORGE

Hello. This is George.

A long pause.

GEORGE (cont'd)
(to himself)

Oh, shit! SHIT!

(into the phone)

No, I haven't had a chance! I'll do it now. What time is it there? He won't be in his office now. I'll get him before court tomorrow.

(to himself)

Damn it! DAMN IT!

(into the phone)

Six AM. Yes, that'll be 4 AM here. No problem. Sorry. I had a family emergency to attend to and was up all night. Ted was supposed to be handling this and...I know. Okay. Yes.

He hangs up. He stands and paces back and forth, sweating. He goes into the kitchen. Sounds of water running. George re-enters drying his face with a towel. He sees Wad, Jeremy and Ralph all staring at him. He looks at his watch, and dials Dr. Maxwell's number again on the kitchen phone.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Shit! Nobody there. Jeremy, didn't anybody come for this...this person?

JEREMY

I don't know. I didn't hear the doorbell.

George sees Wad give Ralph another spoonfull of food.

GEORGE

What are you doing to my father? Get away from him. Get away from my father, damn it!

JEREMY

That isn't the beany weenies I pureed for you a little while ago, is it Ralph? He really likes the beany weenies with ketchup.

RALPH

Manamas.

WAD

It's bananas. He likes it. It's healthy, has lots of Potassium.

JEREMY

Oh, no. You can't have bananas, Ralph. You'll get the runs.

Jeremy snatches up the dish of bananas with a napkin and heads for the kitchen.

RALPH

Mo! Mait.

WAD

Hey! We were eating!

JEREMY

He likes the other stuff. I'll get it for you, Ralph. I'll get the beany weenies and some hot barbecue sauce. Then you'll be able to taste the meat.

GEORGE

Jeremy, we have to talk! This can't go on. I have to get back to New York. We have to resolve this situation as soon as possible.

JEREMY

That's a good idea. We'll have a family meeting. Tonight we'll have a family meeting. We'll all sit at the dining room table and have dinner and have a family meeting. That would be a good thing to do, don't you think, Ralph?

George suddenly bounds up the stairway stage left and returns immediately with his jacket and rental car keys. He goes over to Wad, jerks her out of her chair. The pureed food goes flying off her lap and onto the floor. He drags her toward the door. Ralph leans over and tries to scoop up some of the spilled bananas in his fingers.

WAD

Hey! Let me go! What are you doing?

GEORGE

Come on, you. I'm taking you back to the hospital now. Just come along quietly now.

Wad tries to shrug him loose, unsuccessfully.

WAD

Wait! Wait, Ralph hasn't finished his dinner, besides it's too late and...

GEORGE

Don't worry about Ralph. Let's go! Hey, Jeremy, I'll be back as soon as I can. Clean up that mess and keep an eye on Dad, okay?

George hustles Wad out the door. Jeremy comes back with Ralph's Beanie Weenies. He pauses at the kitchen door and stares at the closing front door.

JEREMY

Okay, I guess.

Jeremy takes the bowl of food to Ralph.

JEREMY (cont'd)

Here, Ralph. You like this, remember.

Ralph turns away from the food.

JEREMY (cont'd)

Aren't you hungry?

Ralph shakes his head.

JEREMY (cont'd)

Come on. You should eat. Just have a little, okay?

Ralph pulls away.

JEREMY (cont'd)

You want to go to bed?

Ralph shakes his head, but Jeremy has already gone to get the wheel chair.

JEREMY (cont'd)

Okay. Let's go to the bathroom first, okay?

He loads Ralph into the wheel chair and rolls him off stage into the bathroom.

JEREMY (O.S.) (cont'd)

Now, Ralph, stay right there while I get your pajamas, okay?
Don't get up. Okay?

Jeremy goes from the bathroom into the bedroom. Immediately there is a muffled thump from the bathroom and Ralph comes out wearing only his undershorts and shirt.

Ralph lurches across the living room, first to the front door which he can't open, then into the kitchen. In a moment, he comes back into the living room struggling mightily with a huge electric vacuum cleaner. Jeremy comes out of the bedroom with Ralph's

pajamas, goes into the bathroom and panics.

JEREMY (O.S.) (cont'd)

Ralph! Oh, no! Ralph! Where are you?

He comes into the living room and sees Ralph with the vacuum cleaner. As soon as he moves toward him, Ralph scurries away, but Jeremy finally overtakes him, plops him down on the couch and drops down beside him. They sit in silence for a long time catching their breath.

RALPH

Naura.

JEREMY

I know, Ralph. She never showed me how. Mama was the only one who used it. I'm afraid I'll break it. She'd be mad. So I don't think we should fool with it, okay? Mama would be mad, Ralph. I'll just go put it back where it was, okay? But you have to sit here and not get up. Okay?

Ralph nods, slowly.

RALPH

Naura.

Jeremy looks at Ralph for a long moment. Then he looks down.

JEREMY

I know, Ralph. She used to keep it real clean in here. It was real nice.

They look around the dingy room.

JEREMY (cont'd)

It's not so clean right now, is it? Don't get up, now.

He finds an ancient *Time* magazine, which he gives to Ralph.

JEREMY (cont'd)

Here. Read this. I'll be right back.

Jeremy takes the vacuum cleaner back to the kitchen. Ralph lets the magazine slide off his lap, reaches over the end table toward a framed photograph of the family. He can't reach it, but unable to pull himself back to a sitting position, he just stays as he is, draped over the arm of the couch.

The front door opens and George and Wad come back in. Jeremy returns from the kitchen and stares at them.

GEORGE

I couldn't find anybody at the hospital. It was dark. Gates all closed. I didn't see anyone, no night watchmen, nothing. I tried calling the hospital, it was one of those automated systems. I finally got an emergency number but nobody answered. Then I took her to the city homeless shelter and she kept telling them she wasn't homeless. They were full up anyway.

WAD

I told you!

GEORGE

SHUT UP! Jeremy, find her someplace to sleep. I'm going upstairs to my old room to bed. I have to get up early tomorrow to call New York. I'll take her back in the morning.

He sees Ralph on the couch.

GEORGE (cont'd)

What the hell is he doing lying there in his underwear?

JEREMY

Getting ready for bed.

George turns and marches up the stairs to the bedroom. Wad helps Ralph to his

feet, slips her arm under his, and holding him securely, guides him unsteadily to the bedroom. Jeremy slumps to the couch and stares at the floor.

BLACKOUT:

END OF ACT I

ACT II - SCENE ONE - NIGHT

The room is dim and silent. Jeremy is sitting on the floor in the middle of a circle of vacuum cleaners. The vacuum cleaners are from different eras, an old Hoover upright circa 1950, a couple of canisters and the newer one that Ralph had struggled with. Jeremy is examining an attachment. Wad shuffles in, rubbing her eyes. Jeremy doesn't see her. She comes up behind him.

WAD

That doesn't go with the Electrolux.

Jeremy jumps, startled.

JEREMY

Jeeze! You scared me! Jeeze, oh, jeeze.

He gets his breath, clears his throat.

WAD

Sorry.

JEREMY

It's okay. I was going to do some vacuuming.

WAD

In the middle of the night?

JEREMY

No. But I wanted to check out the vacuum cleaners.

WAD

Let me see.

She squats down and reaches for the attachment. He jerks it away.

JEREMY

NO! Get away! These are mine!

WAD

The heck they are. You don't even know which end goes where.

JEREMY

I do too. I know. I do too know.

WAD

Come on Jeremy, you never vacuumed in your life.

Jeremy starts to whimper.

WAD (cont'd)

Oh, damn, I'm sorry. I didn't mean...

Jeremy bristles.

JEREMY

You think I can't do it. I know how. I was just too busy to vacuum. Anyway, Mama used to do it. She cleaned all the time. Ralph and I were too busy to clean. Ralph had to go to work. I had to work on my...well, I had to work, too.

WAD

Work on what, Jeremy? I was wondering...

JEREMY

None of your business. I don't have to tell you.

WAD

Okay.

She sits down on the floor and there is a long silence.

WAD (cont'd)

I know how to vacuum. This place could use a good cleaning. Want me to...

JEREMY

No! Don't touch any of these. Don't ever. You'll break them. They're mine. I'll do it. I'll vacuum.

WAD

Okay, you really should though. Vacuum. It's better for Ralph.

JEREMY

I know that. Why don't you shut up. I hate you and your patronizing attitude. Trying to tell me what to do all the time. You think you are so smart just because you can do CPR. You can't do everything. Do you know what an arpeggio is, or a glissando...besides, you don't even belong here.

WAD

I don't belong anywhere.

JEREMY

Well, you sure don't belong here. You won't be here long either.

(making a joke)

No one is here long. Ralph sure won't be here long.

He looks at her. They stare at each other for a long time. She starts to giggle. He snickers and they both crack up. Wad places her hand on Jeremy's shoulder for support. He stops laughing, but doesn't pull away. She pulls back her hand.

WAD

It's nice here.

JEREMY

It's okay, I guess. I've never been anywhere else much. We went to California once when I was a kid. Mom and Dad took us to Disneyland. That was pretty awful.

He clears his throat. Several times.

JEREMY (cont'd)

Oh, and I went on some band trips in high school.

WAD

You played in the band? I always wanted to play the drums.

JEREMY

I played the french horn. I was pretty good.

WAD

Really? I wasn't much good at anything in high school.

JEREMY

How come you know how to do CPR, then?

WAD

I went to nursing school.

JEREMY

Did you wear those ugly white shoes? I never liked those shoes. I hate nurses. And doctors are worse. I haven't been to the doctor since I got something stuck in my ear and couldn't get it out.

WAD

You should kill me. Put me out of my misery.

Long silence as Jeremy thinks.

JEREMY

I don't want to kill you.

WAD

Okay, then I'll just go. I can do it myself later.

Another long silence.

JEREMY

You don't have to go. You could vacuum. You could stay here and vacuum in the morning. I'll let you vacuum, okay? Or maybe you could...wait, let me think.

WAD

Your brother will take me back to the hospital in the morning. They don't want me either, but at least they get money from the government to keep me.

Wad gets to her feet.

JEREMY

They get money? I guess you ought to go back, then. But I wouldn't care if you stayed.

Wad turns away and walks back into the bedroom. Jeremy calls after her.

JEREMY (cont'd)

But if you stay, you can't open the curtains or keep any lights on in the summer when it's really hot and the air conditioner is on.

Wad has disappeared into the bedroom.

JEREMY (cont'd)

Cause I think something is wrong with the electrical circuits and you'll get a shock.

BLACKOUT

ACT II - SCENE TWO - THE NEXT DAY

George comes racing barefoot downstairs in his pajama bottoms.

GEORGE

Oh, Jesus! Jesus!

He searches for his cell phone.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Dead! Oh, no. NO!

He throws it on the couch and grabs the kitchen phone. Dials.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Hi, hon. Do me a huge favor? Would you get my Palm Pilot and look up...it's in my gray suit, I think...

He waits. He scratches an itch on his leg.

GEORGE (cont'd)

It isn't? Well never mind. I'll call information. Thanks anyway. I can't talk right now, Patty...I'll call you back.

He dials information.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Yeah, New York City. Roach, Burnham and Ash. It's an accounting firm.

He waits, then presses a button on his phone and connects.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Hello, this is George Dolan, with Prince and Silverman. I need to speak with Joe Burnham. It's urgent.

He waits. He scratches another itch, this time on his arm.

GEORGE (cont'd)

What the hell?

(back on the line)

Well, do you know where I can reach him. I have to speak to him before he goes to court.

(another pause. Now something is really itching.)

Give me his god damned cell phone number! Now!

He grabs a pencil and writes down the number. He scratches, then looks to see what is causing the itching. There are several red welts on his arms and legs.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Something bit me! Fuck!

Wad comes in with her stuff, ready to go back to the hospital. She watches George scratching, sees the red spots.

WAD

Oooh! That looks awful. Let me see.

She comes close to George and tries to get a look at the bites.

GEORGE

Get away from me you nut case!

WAD

Oh, that looks like spider bites.

GEORGE

Christ Almighty!

WAD

I'll get some Calamine lotion, or some Solarcaine. That'll keep it from itching.

GEORGE

It's driving me crazy!

He scratches. Dials the phone. Wad exits toward the bathroom. Jeremy comes in the front door with his shopping bag. He looks like he hasn't slept all night.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Jeremy! Damn it! What's with that upstairs bedroom! I got bitten by spiders. Don't you ever clean up there? Christ!

JEREMY

I never go in there. Too many spiders. I hate spiders.

He wanders off into the kitchen.

GEORGE

(into the phone)

Joe! Glad I got you. George Dolan, Prince and Silverman.

Listen, Ted said he spoke with one of your associates yesterday. We're going to file a continuance...

He is interrupted. He waits.

GEORGE (cont'd)

But it's only 10 am your time. Court was scheduled for 11 and...

He waits. Scratches. Wad approaches with some Calamine lotion and cotton balls. She starts to dab at his bites.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Hey! (into the phone) Now Joe, we've been very cooperative until now, but our clients want to get this matter settled before it becomes a media event... (to Wad) Stop it! (into the phone) Sorry Joe. Not you. Yes. Meet us in our offices, Friday morning, 11 am.

He hangs up. Grabs the Calamine.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Give me that and get away from me! Jesus fucking Christ!

Jeremy comes out of the kitchen with a paper plate of beans and franks and some barbecued potato chips. George dabs some calamine on his bites.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Nice breakfast, Jeremy! How can you eat that shit? Don't you ever eat eggs or toast or cereal for breakfast?

WAD

That sounds good. Would you like me to make us all some scrambled eggs and...

GEORGE

Shut up!

JEREMY

I like beans and franks! Sometimes I have Cheerios, though. They're pretty good.

WAD

I like Cheerios, and Special K is good if you put a lot of sugar on it and bananas, or have you tried that Quaker granola? It's really good.

GEORGE

I'm going to make some coffee.

He goes into the kitchen. Wad sits on the couch. Jeremy sits nearby eating his beans and franks.

JEREMY

You want a hot dog? I could make you one. But if you want there's some Cheerios in the cabinet.

WAD

No, I'm not very hungry. They'll feed me back at the hospital anyway. They make you eat. If you don't eat they'll give you a shot of something. They give way to many shots.

JEREMY

I hate shots! I never go to the doctor.

The doorbell rings, something sets off Jeremy's jury-rigged alarm system and a loud piecing, whooping sound comes out of a hidden speaker. Jeremy jumps up.

JEREMY (cont'd)

Oh sorry. I must've forgotten to turn it off this morning.

He looks around for the switch. The sound continues. George comes running out of the kitchen. The doorbell rings again.

GEORGE

What the hell is that! God! Turn that thing off! And somebody get the door. I'm not dressed!

Wad looks around and sees that Jeremy is fiddling with wires trying to stop

the noise so she goes to the door.
Angela Maxwell is standing there with a
burly orderly from the hospital.

ANGELA

Oh, hello Wanda. Glad to see you. I came here myself to
pick you up.

Wad shuts the front door leaving them
standing outside. George peeks out
from the kitchen. Jeremy finally gets
the siren turned off.

GEORGE

Was that the doctor from the hospital? It sounded like her.

Wad nods.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Damn! DAMN!

He runs to the door opens it, peeks
out.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Dr. Maxwell. Wait! Listen just give me a minute to put on a
robe, would you? Thanks.

He closes the door and runs up the
stairs. Wad disappears into the
kitchen. Jeremy gets his shopping bag
and goes out the front door past Angela
and the orderly and is heard locking
the door behind him and turning the
dead bolt with the key from outside.

George returns to the door tries to
open it. I won't open. It takes him a
few moments to figure out the locks and
let Angela and the orderly in.

ANGELA

Hello Mr. Dolan. This is Larry, one of our nurses. I
thought Wanda might be more comfortable if he came along.
They're friends.

GEORGE

Hi. Great! Okay I'll go get her. She was just sitting here a minute ago.

He goes into the kitchen. Comes out.
Goes into the bedrooms. Comes back.

GEORGE (cont'd)

She must be out back. I'll go check.

He exits through the kitchen. In a moment he is back.

GEORGE (cont'd)

I can't find her. I don't believe it! She was just here!

The loud radio hooked up to Ralph's bed comes on full force. They all jump.

ANGELA

Oh my!

GEORGE

Shit!

George runs in to Ralph's bedroom. The radio goes off, and in a moment George returns.

GEORGE

Sorry, Dr. Maxwell. That was my brother's idiot baby monitor for Dad. False alarm. He's okay.

He slumps down on the couch.

ANGELA

Maybe she will come right back. We can wait a few minutes. Has she...uh, hurt anyone or damaged anything? She never causes any problems at the hospital.

GEORGE

Look, In spite of what you say, I think that an inmate just walking out of a psychiatric hospital, breaking in somebody's house, and making herself at home is a "problem". For my dad and Jeremy, having a mental patient they don't know around is not a good idea, even if she isn't dangerous.

ANGELA

She came to the hospital diagnosed with severe depression and they prescribed antidepressant meds for her.

GEORGE

It's really none of my business, Dr. Maxwell. I have no interest in...

ANGELA

I don't think she really needs them anymore. She lost her family in a drive-by shooting or something. Anyway her whole family, mother, father, two brothers. Gone. Poof! Just like that. All in one day. But that was some time ago. Do you have any coffee?

GEORGE

Uh, yeah, should be ready by now. I need a cup myself. Caffeine withdrawal. I don't think I'm making any sense.

He looks over at the orderly.

GEORGE (cont'd)

You want some?

The orderly shakes his head.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Do you talk?

ANGELA

Actually he doesn't. He was working with the World Health Organization...I think it was in Africa somewhere. That was a few years back and...

The orderly frowns at her. George's curiosity is piqued. He turns to Larry.

GEORGE

Oh, really. That's really interesting. You know I have a friend, a doctor actually, who went to...

Larry stands up and makes a threatening move toward George. George pulls back. Angela puts a hand up to stop Larry.

ANGELA

Larry, it's okay. I didn't mean to bring it up. Please sit down, okay? (to George) He gets upset if anyone talks about it but Wanda. They have a special relationship.

Larry sits down. Long silence.

GEORGE

Okay, then. I'll get the coffee.

He exits to the kitchen. The orderly goes over to the TV and looks through a stack of video tapes. He slips one in the VCR, finds the remote control and tries to turn it on. Nothing but loud static and snow appears. He quickly turns it off and sits back in his seat next to Angela. George comes back in a moment with two mugs of coffee. He sits next to the doctor and the orderly.

ANGELA

So anyway I think Wanda has PTSD. You know, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. It can look a lot like depression. This is good coffee. You make good coffee, you know.

GEORGE

I know what PTSD is. I live in New York. Look Dr. Maxwell, as her doctor you really shouldn't be discussing her medical condition with me. It's...

ANGELA

Nobody will listen. I've been trying to find a way to help her, but the other doctors keep medicating her and nobody on staff will listen to me. It's just so awful. I feel so useless. I just don't know how to...

(She starts to sniffle))

Oh no, I'm not going to start this again.

The orderly quickly pulls a tissue out of his pocket. He hands her a tiny pill which she takes with a drink of coffee.

ANGELA (cont'd)

Thanks, Larry.

GEORGE

Uh, maybe you should be getting back now...

ANGELA

It's just so infuriating! I'm new on staff and the old farts don't want to hear anything about any alternative treatments or ideas I might have. We could be helping so many of our patients return to productive normal lives but..Nooo! Noooo!

Angela stands up and starts to pace back and forth, pounding her fist into her hand.

ANGELA (cont'd)

It makes me so mad, I could just...

George jumps up and takes Angela's arm.

GEORGE

Look Dr. Maxwell, Angela. I'll call you when what's her name shows up and I'll bring her back to the hospital.

He pulls her toward the door. The orderly rises and follows along glaring at George.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Okay?

Wad comes back in from the kitchen and stands defiantly in the doorway.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Oh, here you are! Great! You can go back with your friend and Dr. Maxwell. They came over to pick you up.

WAD

I'm not going! Jeremy and Ralph want me to stay here and vacuum.

GEORGE

Look you! I have to go back to New York. I have a multimillion dollar case hanging in limbo because of you. And I can't leave a crazy person in my invalid father's house. You have to go back where you belong. Now!

ANGELA

Mr. Dolan, I don't see why she can't do some light housekeeping...we have a new program that I think would...

GEORGE

No! Enough! You're are going back to the hospital, now. All of you. All together.

George goes to Wad, grabs her by the arm. He grabs Dr. Maxwell with his other hand and drags them both roughly toward the door. The orderly shoves George away from the two women and George glares at him.

GEORGE (cont'd)

What the hell are you doing? I want them out of here. I want all of you out of here.

George grabs the two women again and when the orderly pushes him, he turns and throws a badly aimed punch at the man. He is off balance and the orderly easily knocks him to the floor. He gets up, lunges toward the orderly and they wrestle to the floor. Wad goes toward them and begins to punch and pull, trying to help the orderly.

Finally, Dr. Maxwell begins to scream. It is blood curdling.

Everyone freezes. They stare at Dr. Maxwell who continues to scream. The front door opens and Jeremy steps in with his shopping bag and a small bag of groceries.

Dr. Maxwell faints and drops to the floor. Larry and Wad go over to Dr. Maxwell. Larry pats her face until she comes to, puts his arm under her arms, and he and Wad help her to the door. Jeremy steps aside to let them pass.

JEREMY

(To Wad)

Where are you going? You can't go. You're supposed to vacuum and then we were going to watch Bonanza.

WAD

Ask your brother, Jeremy. I've got to go. Bye.

JEREMY

Wait. You don't have to go. I got some of that Quaker Granola you talked about...and some onion flavored taco chips. And some of those little tiny powdered sugar donuts. They're really good.

GEORGE

Oh, for God's sake Jeremy. She's a mental patient. Let her go back to the hospital.

WAD

It's okay, Jeremy. Maybe I'll see you around sometime.

She and Larry walk Dr. Maxwell out the door shutting it behind them. George slumps down on the couch.

GEORGE

God damn it, I was in trouble. Where were you? I could have used some help, you know.

Jeremy stands rigid, fists and teeth clinched.

GEORGE (cont'd)

What's the matter? They're gone. You can lock all the doors now and turn on all your stupid alarms again. That should make you happy.

JEREMY

You don't know anything! All you want to do is come in here and tell everybody what to do all the time! How do you keep a job telling everybody what to do all the time? Always walking around, poking into everyone's business and telling them what to do.

There is heavy tension between them.

GEORGE

That's what I do. People pay me a lot of money to tell them what to do. It's my job! But you wouldn't know anything about that, would you? You don't even know how to get a job, much less keep it!

JEREMY

I had jobs.

GEORGE

Oh. Oh. Sure. Sure.

JEREMY

I had jobs!

GEORGE

When was the last time you had a job? You lived off Mother and Dad from the time you finished college.

JEREMY

I had plenty of jobs.

GEORGE

Oh, really? You mean at the Burger King and that shady telemarketing company?

JEREMY

I had other jobs and I saved money too. Lots.

GEORGE

You had lots of jobs and saved lots of money. Well, you probably did save money, not ever having to buy your own car or pay for food or even pay rent. You never even chipped in for groceries!

JEREMY

You weren't here. You don't know anything. You were off in New York at your job telling everybody what to do.

GEORGE

Oh, shut up Jeremy. You're the same spoiled kid you always were. You always had everything your way.

JEREMY

I didn't either.

GEORGE

When we were kids you wanted my Spiderman comics and, because you had asthma, I had to give them to you. And I had to move into the guest room so you could have a room all to yourself. I hated that because Mom and Dad could hear me all the time. They even made me give you my soldiers.

JEREMY

You were too old for them. That's what Mom said. I thought you didn't want them anymore.

George and Jeremy are shouting at each other.

GEORGE

Well, I did, God Dammit! And she knew it, and she knew you wanted them. And I liked my room upstairs and just because you were sick all the time...

JEREMY

You're a stupid shit! You're really stupid! I stayed here and took care of Mom and I wasn't sick all the time either! Okay, I guess now we're enemies. You hate me! You've always hated me. And Patty hates me. She's made you hate me. She always hated me!

GEORGE

I don't hate you! You hate me. You hated me for getting a good job and moving to New York. You've hated me ever since you didn't get in the New York Philharmonic. You thought they should just give you the job, like everything else that is handed to you on a silver platter.

JEREMY

I didn't either!

GEORGE

I've had to work hard. I paid my own way through law school. You never spent a cent on your education. You hate me because I'm independent. And now look at you! You are just a pathetic parasite, a loser trying to squeeze the last penny out of your poor old sick father!

JEREMY

Yeah, but you didn't take care of Mom all the time when she was sick and...I bought cigarettes with my own money.

There is a long moment of silence. The air is charged.

GEORGE

You'd better shut the hell up about how you took care of Mom, Jeremy. God damn it, she needed home health care and you wouldn't let anyone come in here...

JEREMY

She said she didn't want anybody to come in.

GEORGE

Bullshit! She just told you what you wanted to hear. She told me different.

JEREMY

No she didn't. She told me she didn't want anybody.

GEORGE

I tried to do something but you and Dad kept ignoring me and then look what happened to her. Mom shouldn't have had to die like that. She was beautiful. She should have died peacefully in her sleep, in a room full of flowers and family instead of on the bathroom floor in a pile of shit and blood!

After a moment, Jeremy lunges at George and punches him in the face, they wrestle and soon they are locked in a test of strength. Neither has the

advantage. After a few moments George is able to break free.

GEORGE (cont'd)

You didn't know anything about caring for someone as sick as she was. And now with Dad...The only thing you know anything about is how to play a french horn, for God's sake!

Jeremy makes a move toward George. George runs to the fireplace and grabs a poker. He turns and faces Jeremy. They stare at each other a moment then Jeremy grabs his paper shopping bag and leaves through the front door, slamming it and locking it behind him. George sinks to the floor, exhausted.

BLACKOUT

ACT II - SCENE THREE - THAT EVENING

George is on his cell phone. He is alone in the living room holding an ice bag on his eye.

GEORGE

Patty, I'm about to loose it. Now I know how those guys feel. You know, the ones that get a uzi and go shoot up a McDonald's or something. I'm ready to explode. I just...I...I...

He starts to hyperventilate, stops and listens for a moment, then takes a deep breath.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Okay.

He breathes.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Yeah.

Another deep breath.

GEORGE (cont'd)

I remember. Anger management.

Another breath and he's calmer.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Thanks honey. I wish you were here and...Yeah, I know. I wish I were home. I'll come home as soon as I can. I have to get back to work, assuming I still have a job.

George sighs.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Give it a rest, Patty. Of course I still have a job. I'm their fair-haired boy. Next in line for full partner.

A thumping noise and Ralph's voice come from Ralph's bedroom.

RALPH

May! Morge! MORGE!!

GEORGE

Gotta go, Patty. Dad's calling me. Jeremy has gone out somewhere. I have to get Dad's pills and his dinner. I don't have a clue what Jeremy's been feeding him. There's hardly anything of nutritional value in the kitchen.

RALPH

MORGE!

GEORGE

I'll call you later, honey.

He hangs up and goes to the bedroom. In a moment he wheels Ralph into the living room and parks him near the kitchen. He goes into the kitchen, brings out a small, convenient tray table and sets it up in front of Ralph. He returns to the kitchen then comes quickly back with a bowl of something pureed, a spoon and some crackers and milk.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Here, Dad. I'll get your pills.

He exits to retrieve the pills from the bedroom. While he is out Ralph tentatively picks up the spoon and slowly scoops up some of the pureed stuff. He raises it to his nose and sniffs it

RALPH

Marm.

He manages to get most of it in his mouth, then slowly and with determination goes for the next spoonful. George returns with the pills. He sees his dad trying to feed himself.

GEORGE

Hey, Dad, I'll do that.

Ralph holds the spoon away from George.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Well, okay. If you think you can do it, okay. But at least let me give you your pills. I think your supposed to take them in the evening with food, right?

Ralph ignores George and concentrates on eating. George just stands there holding the pills and milk and waits.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Dad?

He waits.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Dad, come on. You have to take your pills. Give me the spoon.

Ralph doesn't answer George, but holds up his free hand for the pills. George drops them in his hand.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Can you take them by yourself?

Ralph nods, slowly puts the pills in his mouth and spoons in some pureed food after them. George leans over Ralph to observe.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Did you get them in?

George watches with suspicion. Ralph concentrates on slowly moving the mixture around in his mouth.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Did you swallow them? You have to swallow them, Dad. Make sure you swallow them, okay?

Ralph continues to maneuver the food in his mouth and finally appears to swallow. As soon as it looks like Ralph isn't going to choke, George drops down in a nearby chair.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Dad, this is awful. What do you want me to do? No one seems to think you aren't able to make your own decisions, so help me out here.

Ralph stops eating and turns to look at George.

GEORGE (cont'd)

I could take out a restraining order on Wad or Wanda or whatever her name is, but I don't think it would do any good. She'll probably be back. And who's going to enforce it?

Ralph stares at George. He slowly lowers his spoon.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Dad, do you understand what I'm trying to say? Just answer yes or no. You don't have to talk.

George waits.

RALPH

Moo muts me nazy.

GEORGE

Oh, for God's sake, Dad! I know you understand me. Just nod or shake your head or something, okay?

Ralph moves his head in a circle.

GEORGE (cont'd)

God Damn it! This is serious, Dad! You had a bad fall and things could get worse...

RALPH

Mings ur nine!

GEORGE

Dad! Stop it! Why do you always do this to me? We've never been able to have a serious conversation. You never took anything I ever did seriously.

George gets up and walks away.

GEORGE (cont'd)

I remember once I tried to talk to you my first year in law school about all the trouble I was having, and you said I should just quit and get a job working for the newspaper. As a reporter, you said. You just pulled that out of thin air. That stopped me cold. Then when Patty and I were having trouble, I started to tell you about it and you just kidded around until I gave up. Later I overheard you make a joke about what I told you, to Mom.

Ralph's spoon falls off the tray table.
George turns around, picks it up.

GEORGE (cont'd)

I think that was one of the lowest moments of my life.

He puts the spoon back on the tray.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Once Patty told me she thought you were mean. It was right after I told you I had joined Prince and Silverman. She was really proud of me and you made some lame joke about lawyers. Everybody laughed, but Patty said later that night that she didn't see why, for once you couldn't have just said "Hey, that's great!", or something. I told her that was just you. I've always thought you were...well, the way a real man should be.

Ralph lowers his head. He can't look at his son.

GEORGE (cont'd)

None of that really matters does it? It was all such a long time ago. It doesn't really matter in the long run.

RALPH

My no.

George stares at Ralph.

RALPH (cont'd)

Nit mus me. Ny Malt.

GEORGE

Dad, I'm worried about you. You don't eat right, it seems so dark and stuffy and unhealthy in here with the curtains closed all the time and...and, I don't think Jeremy is together enough to take care of you anymore. I could have him declared incompetent, and appoint a local guardian, but then you would probably have go to the Veterans Home. It's not so bad, you know. I checked it out.

RALPH

Mokay. Mike! Mo!

GEORGE

For god's sake Dad. All you do is watch TV and go to a doctor appointment every couple of months.

Ralph puts his hand on George's shoulder.

RALPH

Mood dun.

GEORGE

Dad. Please. Let me help you.

He takes a long deep breath. He looks down.

GEORGE (cont'd)

You're my hero.

Another long pause.

GEORGE (cont'd)

You need...

RALPH

Mo! Dough nome.

GEORGE

I know. You think I should go home.

George looks down.

RALPH

Mes, mer nine.

GEORGE

Dad?

Ralph stares at his son and George looks away.

RALPH

Net me nay mome.

George turns away from Ralph.

GEORGE

Okay, Dad. Okay. I'll...I'll go home. I won't bother you anymore.

After a moment Ralph tries to spoon the last of the food into his mouth, misses. George turns back to his father, takes the spoon and gives him the last bite. He picks up the napkin with a trembling hand and dabs at his father's mouth.

George picks up the food tray and escapes into the kitchen. The front door opens and Jeremy enters with his stuff.

JEREMY

Hey Ralph. You eat already?

Ralph nods.

JEREMY (cont'd)

Want to watch Gunsmoke? I got it on tape here.

Jeremy wheels Ralph over to the TV, helps him into the recliner and pops a tape into the VCR. George comes out of the kitchen.

GEORGE

Jeremy, I gave Dad his pills and his dinner. He seems better tonight. You're better, aren't you Dad?

Ralph nods. Jeremy ignores George.

RALPH

Mookie.

George walks over to Jeremy but as he gets close, Jeremy gets up and goes to the far side of the room and sits down.

GEORGE

Jeremy. We have to deal with this. We have to talk. We have to talk about Dad.

Jeremy doesn't answer.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Look. Forget what happened earlier. Forget what's between us. It's not important. It's Dad I'm concerned about.

Jeremy still doesn't answer.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Jeremy, don't do this. Please.

George moves toward Jeremy but Jeremy gets up and won't look at George. He keeps as much distance between them as physically possible.

JEREMY

I'll get the cookies, Ralph.

George looks over at Jeremy and Ralph, sighs, then walks toward the stairs and exits slowly up the steps. Jeremy exits to the kitchen.

BLACKOUT

ACT II - SCENE FOUR - THE WEE HOURS OF THE MORNING

It is dark. There is one small lamp on in the living room. Jeremy is sitting on the couch no one ever sits on, staring straight ahead. Wanda comes in from the kitchen with her stuff. Jeremy is surprised, but happy to see her. He stands up.

JEREMY

Oh, hi. I didn't think you were going to come back.

WAD

I was going to come tomorrow but I decided to get here early. I left after everyone was asleep. I came in the back door again.

JEREMY

Okay.

WAD

I thought I could take a little nap for a while.

JEREMY

Okay. But if you want to talk it would be okay too.

WAD

Okay. You know your brother talked to the doctors and they said it would be okay for me to help with Ralph and do some vacuuming.

She puts her stuff on the table and sits down next to Jeremy. They sit side by side and are silent for several moments.

JEREMY

I can do stuff myself, and we don't need cable or anything but...you're nice to Ralph, you know. You help him eat, and even if you get some germs on him, I guess it's all right.

WAD

Thanks, Jeremy.

JEREMY

I keep everything locked so people won't get in and take our stuff. But I have all the keys so if I need to get Ralph anything...

He reaches in his pocket and pulls out a cluster of key rings containing at least 100 keys, all shapes and sizes. Wad's eyes go wide in awe. Jeremy smiles.

JEREMY (cont'd)

See. Everything is locked up so nobody can get it.

WAD

That's impressive.

Jeremy swells with pride.

JEREMY

I have some organs and electric keyboards that they don't make anymore, in a room upstairs. I've got a Farfisa, and a Hammond B-3, and some Leslies. You know what Leslies are?

Wad shakes her head.

JEREMY (cont'd)

That's okay. Anyway, they are probably really valuable, now. I could show them to you if you want. And I have some old Spiderman comics. But you can't touch anything if we go in there, okay?

Wad sighs, gets up and goes toward the bedroom. Jeremy stands up.

JEREMY (cont'd)

I had this girlfriend once.

Wad turns to him.

JEREMY (cont'd)

She moved away. She got a job playing violin in an orchestra in Germany. That was a long time ago and I don't know where she is now.

WAD

I love music. All kinds. Maybe, if you want, you could play the french horn for me sometime.

JEREMY

Okay.

Wad exits into the bedroom. Jeremy gets up and goes out the front door. The sound of a car door slamming is

heard. In a moment Jeremy comes back in with a french horn case. He opens it, assembles the instrument and begins warming up the mouthpiece, making a buzzing noise. He puts the mouthpiece on the horn and blows into it. It is a lovely, loud, clear tone.

He picks up the horn and exits into the guest bedroom. In a moment the muted strains of a sweet and expertly played Mozart french horn concerto are heard coming from the bedroom.

LIGHTS DIM:

ACT II - SCENE FIVE - JUST BEFORE DAWN

George comes tip-toeing down the stairs in his traveling clothes with his bags. He puts his bags near the door, checks his watch and goes into the kitchen.

Jeremy comes out of the bedroom, barefoot, shirt unbuttoned, and hair messy. He goes to the front door, picks up his paper shopping bag and steps outside, closing the door behind him. George peeks out the kitchen door at the sound, ducks back in and emerges with a steaming mug of coffee.

He sits on the couch and takes a sip of coffee. In a moment Jeremy comes back inside. He sees George sitting on the couch.

GEORGE

I called the hospital and made arrangements for Wanda to do some house keeping and help out with Ralph. They have some kind of "work therapy" program over there that subsidizes it. You won't have to talk to anybody. And Ralph seems okay with the arrangement. If you don't like it, call me and I'll have it stopped. Or you can just lock her out.

He looks at Jeremy.

JEREMY

It's okay. She can come.

GEORGE

You don't have any shoes on. I don't think I've ever seen you without your shoes on. I mean not since we were kids at the lake. It's funny. You look...Oh, never mind. I gotta go. Plane's at 8:30.

He sips the last of his coffee and takes the cup back into the kitchen. Jeremy waits near the door.

JEREMY

That's good about that work therapy thing, Wad coming to help and all. I guess you really know how to do that stuff. That's pretty good. Really.

GEORGE

(From the kitchen)

I left some money for the phone calls and food.

George comes out of the kitchen, picks up his bag and goes to the door. Jeremy awkwardly holds out his hand to his brother. George takes it, smiles, holds it for a moment, then breaks away.

JEREMY

You can come back any time you want. I want to make it so you can come anytime, and stay if you want.

GEORGE

Okay, Jeremy, fine. Gotta go. Call me. Take care of Dad.

He opens the door.

GEORGE (cont'd)

And take care of yourself.

JEREMY

I'm sorry about the spiders.

George exits. Jeremy sits in a nearby chair and stares at the closed door. After a long moment he goes to the door, double locks it and begins to fiddle with his burglar alarm wires.

BLACKOUT:

ACT II - SCENE SIX - SEVERAL DAYS LATER

The room is neat and clean, and somehow brighter. There is a music stand set up in a corner with Jeremy's french horn next to it. The french horn has a chain bicycle lock wound through it which is attached to the leg of the heaviest piece of furniture in the room.

Jeremy is sitting in front of the TVs watching a Laurel and Hardy movie, laughing his head off. He is wearing new, better fitting clothes and looks like he has lost some weight.

Ralph is in his wheelchair, eating soft food out of bowls on the tray table in front of him. Wad comes in from the kitchen with a load of clean laundry in her arms. She stops to watch a funny Laurel and Hardy bit.

JEREMY

This is great! Watch what he does with the hat.

WAD

I've seen it! You've got to get some new tapes, Jeremy.

JEREMY

We don't need any new tapes.

WAD

Ralph would like to see a new one, wouldn't you Ralph?

Ralph nods.

WAD (cont'd)

See!

JEREMY

No. Ralph, we don't need any new tapes do we?

Wad drops the laundry on Jeremy.

JEREMY (cont'd)

Okay, Okay! Jeeze!

She gives him an affectionate pat on the cheek. Ralph smiles. The Laurel and Hardy movie plays on in the background.

CURTAIN