

SHOCK THERAPY

by Tom Baum

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COLIN, 40s-50s, a psychiatrist

BECCA, Colin's wife, 40s-50s, a painter

ROSALIE, mid teens, Colin and Becca's daughter

BRANCH, early 40s, a psychopharmacologist

APRIL, 60s, African-American, a psychoanalyst

JACK, 30s

MOSES, 20s-30s, African-American

Setting: A summer house on Cape Cod

Time: The present

The action is continuous.

(The den of a Cape Cod summer house—COLIN's office. An afternoon in early September. Chairs, a couch, a desk, a rug, a fish tank, a stereo, family photos. Stage right, a door leads to an unseen kitchen. Left, a door leads to an unseen hallway. Center, a door leads to an unseen patio. A window looks out on the patio, the view obscured by shrubbery. One wall—probably the fourth—is hung with paintings in various styles. Sound of party noise, off.)

COLIN, late 40s, neatly dressed, is talking to the air, occasionally referring to the notes in his hand.)

COLIN: Do you mind a little flattery, doctor? You've influenced my work....profoundly. Your paper on exhibitionism. The flasher shows his penis to prove it still exists. That's as far as Freud went, but you took it a step further. Why does everyone yearn to be on TV? Because we're anxious. We're afraid we don't exist. We've turned into a nation...a world of flashers....

(Urgent knocking on the patio door.)

BECCA: *(off)* Colin! Are you in there? Open the door!

COLIN: *(checks notes)* What would Freud have made of the obscene phone call? Or the porn video? Can I try something on you, Dr. Maxwell? There's a theme I've been seeing in my practice—two patients in particular—a fascinating couple—total exhibitionists—well, yes, they're movie stars—I see my reputation precedes me—

(More knocking.)

BECCA: Colin, open the door!

(COLIN caves, opens the door. Party noise blasts in. BECCA, mid 40s, enters, in neobohebian party garb.)

COLIN: What do you need? I'm right in the middle.

BECCA: The Bellini mix?

COLIN: Peach schnapps, grenadine, and champagne--

BECCA: I know you know how to make it. You forgot to put it out again.

COLIN: Nobody ever drinks Bellinis.

BECCA: How would you know. You never keep track of the liquor past the first five minutes.

COLIN: Didn't we hire a bartender?

BECCA: Yes, I hired a bartender and so far she's a no-show. *(at window)* Oh God, Lowenstein's here and already he's sitting by himself. If he's not going to make an effort, why does he come early? Did you load the CD player?

COLIN: Yes, I loaded the CD player.

BECCA: *(testing stereo)* Then why can't I hear it?

(BECCA exits to the patio. COLIN resumes his rehearsal.)

COLIN: Dr. Maxwell, did you know the number of women willing to perform sex in front of a camera has risen two orders of magnitude in the new millennium?

(BECCA bursts back in.)

BECCA: The wireless speakers aren't working. Did you hook them up?

COLIN: Yes, but they're not working.

BECCA: Could you try and make them work? And make sure the sprinklers are turned off? Colin? Seriously. You're not just going to hole up here till Maxwell arrives, are you?

(COLIN's cell rings.)

BECCA: Don't answer that.

COLIN: That might be Maxwell. I thought my directions were decent. *(takes out cell, examines number)*

BECCA: Is it Maxwell?

COLIN: No, it's not Maxwell.

BECCA: *(peers at number)* Colin? It's a holiday. Let it go.

COLIN: (*on phone*) Yes, Natalie, what's the problem, I thought you were on your way to location...Nana's in the hospital? I'm so sorry, is that your grandmother? Ah, your labradoodle. You're at the veterinary hospital....

BECCA: Oh spare me.

COLIN: How is it Ryan's fault?....Well, if you can get Ryan to call me, I'd like to get his side of this....Fine....Natalie, I'll call you back.
(*hangs up*)

(COLIN *hangs up*. ROSALIE, a heavily tattooed girl in her mid-teens, enters, in halter and shorts. She texts on a cell as she eavesdrops.)

BECCA: Don't call her back.

COLIN: Her dog ate snail poison. She's having a meltdown.

BECCA: You think you might be projecting? Just a teeny bit?

COLIN: She thinks Ryan's having an affair. She read it in the *Enquirer*.

BECCA: Well, don't let the Great Maxwell catch you. I'm sure the New York Institute frowns on Life Coaches.

COLIN: Becca, that's below the belt.

BECCA: Just stay off the phone. (*sees ROSALIE*) Rosalie, honey, you're supposed to be passing the hors d'oeuvres.

ROSALIE: Dr. Lowenstein's asking for Sprite.

BECCA: Then please go get him one. They're in the back fridge.

ROSALIE: Dad, why do I have to do everything? I put out the chairs.

COLIN: She put out the chairs. (*back to rehearsal*) At this rate all people will be famous all the time--

ROSALIE: And people are asking why no music.

BECCA: Colin? Did you hear that? And the sprinklers?

COLIN: Yes, I heard. I will deal with it. (*as he goes*) —Everybody will appear on a reality show nobody else will see, we'll all have a blog nobody else will read—

(COLIN *exits.*)

ROSALIE: What's Dad so freaked about?

BECCA: He's expecting an important guest.

ROSALIE: A movie star?

BECCA: No, not a movie star. A Dr. Maxwell. A famous psychoanalyst. He's trying to rejoin the New York Institute.

ROSALIE: Is that like a hospital?

BECCA: No, darling, it's more like a club. They train people to be analysts. They trained your dad but he kind of lost his touch. No. I mean "lost touch"...he lost touch with the Institute. He needs a blessing from the top and apparently that's Maxwell. (*peering at cell*) Who are you texting? Not Trevor I hope. (*reading*) "M and D fighting. Perfect time." Perfect time for what?

ROSALIE: None of your business! Who's that woman with Dr. Milsap? What's wrong with her nose?

BECCA: What do you mean, what's wrong with it?

ROSALIE: Did she have a terrible nose job or what? She looks like she's got a nose on her nose.

BECCA: I think Fanny Milsap's nose is beautiful. That's why I asked her to sit for me. Rosalie, were you planning to hook up with Trevor?

ROSALIE: You admit Fanny Milsap has two noses.

BECCA: No, I don't admit that at all. Were you or won't you?

ROSALIE: If you can't see something so obvious, how can you be a painter?

(COLIN *re-enters, still deep in rehearsal.*)

COLIN: —but—and here’s the kicker—when we’re all transparent to each other, and privacy has gone the way of chastity, what becomes of love and romance?

BECCA: Colin, I still don’t hear the speakers.

COLIN: That’s because they’re not working.

BECCA: What about the sprinklers? Colin, are you listening?
Rosalie was texting Trevor.

ROSALIE: Ohmigod why shouldn’t I. You’re always lecturing me about ethics, if Trevor thinks I’m ditching him because of the pot bust he’ll flip out. You don’t know Trevor, he takes things really hard, his dad is like entirely mean—

BECCA: Do you remember what the lawyer said?

ROSALIE: Stop interrupting me! I was trying to explain about Trevor’s family!

BECCA: Yes, I heard you. I wasn’t interrupting—

ROSALIE: Always! Since I was a little kid! It’s amazing I can talk at all!

(COLIN’s *cell rings*.)

BECCA: Colin, can you talk to her please?

COLIN: Talk about what?

BECCA: According to the lawyer, they’re supposed to stay apart until the hearing. And that includes texting.

COLIN: You’re not supposed to be texting Trevor.
(*answers cell*) Hello, Ryan....I’m so glad Nana’s OK. Natalie blamed you for putting out the Snarol....Can you put Natalie on?

BECCA: Never mind. I give up. Both do what you like.

(BECCA *exits*.)

COLIN: (*on phone*) ...Natalie, Ryan says the story in the *Enquirer* is totally recycled....

ROSALIE: If you guys are gonna be my jailers, I might as well go to Juvy.

COLIN: ... Yes, I realize you feel like bingeing, do you remember what we talked about?....

ROSALIE: Actually, I'm thinking of robbing a bank.

COLIN: *(on phone)* ... You threw up your food the way your mother regurgitated her feelings....

ROSALIE: *(going)* Do you still have an account at Chase Manhattan? I'd like to keep it in the family.

COLIN: *(on phone)* ... You're competing with your mom, that's it exactly....

ROSALIE: And Natalie's fat!

(ROSALIE flounces out toward the patio, past BECCA.)

BECCA: What happened with Rosalie?

COLIN: *(on phone)* Yes, we'll talk later, the three of us.
(hangs up; to BECCA) Natalie's starting to binge again.

BECCA: Are you going to speak to her?

COLIN: I have to, otherwise I'll be spending Labor Day in the E.R., fending off the paparazzi—

BECCA: I'm not talking about your movie stars, I'm talking about your daughter! I'm starting to think she bought the joints. That could come out in court and I don't want the lawyer to be blindsided.

(BRANCH, late 30s, enters from the direction of the kitchen, dressed Brooks Brothers casual.)

BRANCH: Well, here you are! You guys boycotting your own party?

BECCA: Hello, Branch.

COLIN: *(coldly)* Hello.

BRANCH: Becca, you look radiant. *(kisses her)* Colin, you look radiant too. Gorgeous day. Have you guys ever been rained out?

BECCA: I don't think so—Colin, have we?

COLIN: Have we what?

BECCA: Been rained out on Labor Day.

BRANCH: Not since I've been coming. The Cape in September, what are the odds? I'm sorry, did I walk in on something? No? Can I spring my good news? I'm bursting.

BECCA: Of course you can. What is it?

BRANCH: A&E's serious.

BECCA: Oh. Branch. That's wonderful.

COLIN: What's wonderful?

BRANCH: They've been sniffing around me for months. Now it's real.

COLIN: What's real? (*to BECCA*) How do you know about it?

BECCA: (*caught*) Tell us, Branch.

BRANCH: One of their higher-ups caught me on *Charlie Rose*. They've been wanting to follow a shrink around.

COLIN: Follow a shrink where?

BRANCH: A hospital environment. God no, not my private patients. No contracts yet, but major discussions.

BECCA: Branch, that's fantastic! (*to COLIN*) Isn't it? Imagine.

COLIN: Yes, imagine.

BRANCH: (*solicitously*) How's Rosalie doing?

COLIN: Rosalie's fine.

BRANCH: I was sorry to hear about the brush with the authorities.

COLIN: We're dealing with it, Branch.

BECCA: Some of us are. The hearing's this week.

BRANCH: God, I feel for you both. She's so gifted. You get child prodigies in music, but rarely in art. (*sees Becca tighten*) What, she's not anymore?

BECCA: She designs her own tattoos. Otherwise, no.

BRANCH: Well...you know...I'd be happy to see her anytime.

COLIN: Not a chance in hell.

BRANCH: May I ask why not?

COLIN: We're not turning Rosalie over to you. You're enjoying this too much.

BRANCH: Schadenfreude is a law of life. I'm joking. Why would you even think that.

COLIN: You're not joking and you're not seeing Rosalie. I don't want my daughter on Risperdal, or whatever the drug du jour is. Not a chance.

BRANCH: What about feeling bad about your friend's good fortune? Is there a German word for that, I wonder.

COLIN: If you're referring to this TV show of yours, I don't consider that good news. For anyone.

BRANCH: Yes, you talk therapists were always phobic about the media.

COLIN: With good reason, as it turns out.

BRANCH: Always behind the curve. When Prozac came along, you guys were the last to prescribe it.

COLIN: And now your patients are jumping out of buildings!

BECCA: Boys! Stop. Colin: Branch is our guest, you are the host, please start acting like one. All right, darling? Go be with everybody. Join the party. Now.

(COLIN *glares at BRANCH, turns on his heels and exits.*)

BRANCH: What crawled up his butt?

BECCA: Please. Colin's been like this for weeks. He's re-applied to the Institute.

BRANCH: Oh Lord. The fossil people. What on earth does he expect to get from them?

BECCA: His self-respect, I think.

BRANCH: I warned him about celebrities. You think you've been cuckolded by movie stars. If those dinosaurs get him in their claws again....

BECCA: But there's not much chance of that, is there.

BRANCH: Almost none. Once you go Hollywood, they don't want you back. (*lowers voice*) You haven't answered my last three emails.

BECCA: I know. I'm sorry. I'm paralyzed. I can't paint, I can't think straight, I'm so worried about Colin. He's swimming out to sea.

BRANCH: I sensed that.

BECCA: No, I mean literally swimming. In the bay. Way beyond his depth.

BRANCH: I'll give you one word of advice. Lexapro. (*re painting*) That's me, isn't it, the nude?

BECCA: Inspired by you.

BRANCH: Does Colin suspect?

BECCA: Suspect what? That you're the model? I doubt it. He hangs my paintings, but he never looks at them.

BRANCH: It's glorious.

BECCA: It is, isn't it.

(BRANCH *sidles up.*)

BRANCH: So what about Philly? I need to book a hotel.

BECCA: Oh, Branch. Don't make me decide today. Not with Colin in this state.

BRANCH: (*closing in*) You know that feeling....You're on the QE2.....Just pulling out of New York harbor.... The boat is moving, but you're not on the ocean yet....I feel that's where we are again.

BECCA: Branch, that's almost poetry.

BRANCH: It wasn't meant to be. The Rittenhouse is convenient to your gallery, I checked. Could be lovely. Spring Lake all over again.

BECCA: That was then. Things are so much more difficult now.

BRANCH: He's neglecting you.

BECCA: It's more than neglect. He's totally oblivious.

BRANCH: Which makes it easier for both of us, don't you see, he's saying, Branch, look after my wife while I go through this sticky patch. Does he still fantasize about us?

BECCA: How did you know he fantasizes about us?

BRANCH: Darling...you told me.

BECCA: Really? I shouldn't have told you that. (*Firecrackers go off.*) Oh God, the Wellish twins brought firecrackers again. Why isn't Colin stopping them?

(*BECCA starts to go. BRANCH stops her. Holds her.*)

BRANCH: Shh. Take it easy, darling.

BECCA: I had such a hideous nightmare last night. Colin found us together and he shot you. Six times. You were bleeding all over my canvas like a Jackson Pollock.

BRANCH: You really think Colin is capable of violence?

BECCA: Isn't that what the dream is saying?

BRANCH: You know I've never set much store by dreams.

BECCA: Maybe you should.

(*BRANCH kisses her. JACK, a man in his 30s, wanders in from the direction of the patio, in T-shirt and jeans. BECCA spots him, breaks free.*)

BECCA: Are you looking for the party?

JACK: Yeah. Did I wander into no-man's land?

BECCA: In a way. This is my husband's office. I'm Becca.

JACK: Nice to meet you, Becca. I'm Jack.

BECCA: And this is Branch.

JACK: I know Dr. McAlister.

BRANCH: (*brightening*) Oh, have we met?

JACK: By reputation, I mean. It's an honor to meet you in the flesh.

BRANCH: Well, thank you. (*to BECCA, as she goes*) Becca, wait up.

JACK: If you have a sec, I'd like to talk to you about your prison work.

BRANCH: Oh? You've done prison therapy?

JACK: Not on your level. But it interests me. The whole chemical castration issue.

BRANCH: Unfortunate term.

JACK: Yeah, very unfortunate. There's a case I'd like to pick your brain about.

BRANCH: Can it wait? I hate to talk shop on an empty stomach.

JACK: Moses Satterfield?

BRANCH: Sorry?

JACK: You don't recognize the name?

BRANCH: Moses Satterfield. (*going*) Come to think of it, yes, it does ring a bell.

(BRANCH *exits.*)

JACK: (*to himself*) Ding ding ding.

(JACK goes to the window, watching BRANCH go. Picks up a photo, studies it. Spots an expensive-looking knickknack, and yielding to an impulse, pockets it. Starts opening drawers. Finds something else. A pistol.

The patio door opens. JACK quickly stuffs the pistol into his pants, peers into an aquarium, taps on the glass. ROSALIE enters, texting.)

ROSALIE: You mind not doing that? Those are my fish you're bothering.

JACK: I didn't see any fish.

ROSALIE: That's because they're asleep. There, in the Parthenon. Pericles and Testicles [*testi-cleez*]. I'm Rosalie.

JACK: I'm Jack. I think I just met your folks.

ROSALIE: No, you didn't. My dad's outside, trying to fix the wireless speakers.

JACK: (*re photo*) So who's this?

ROSALIE: That's not my dad. Eew. That's Branch. He practically lives here, but no. He's a shrink. Are you a shrink or an artist?

JACK: Are those my options?

ROSALIE: You could be either. They all look the same to me. Look at them. No, really, look. (JACK looks out the window.) Now pretend they all work at Stop & Shop. See? Suddenly they don't look like geniuses. Are you the kind of adult who talks to the kids at a party? Those people creep me out.

JACK: I was here. You came in.

ROSALIE: Do I make you nervous? I've slept with guys older than you. Smile.

(ROSALIE takes JACK's picture with her cell.)

JACK: Don't do that.

ROSALIE: Why not? I like taking pictures of cute guys.

(Firecrackers go off. JACK jumps a foot, instinctively reaches for the gun in his pocket.)

ROSALIE: Hey, it's just the Wellish twins. Dude, you seem kind of wired for a shrink.

JACK: Why don't you like Branch?

ROSALIE: Why? Cause he's all over my mom, that's why.

JACK: How long has that been going on?

ROSALIE: Since like forever. My dad can't stand him. He thinks he's just a pill-pusher. Branch wrote her a prescription for Ambien and my dad flushed the pills down the toilet.

JACK: Why do you think your mom likes him?

ROSALIE: To piss off Dad, I hope. Otherwise, yuk.

JACK: They fight a lot about Branch?

ROSALIE: Yeah. Sometimes my dad wants to kill him.

JACK: And how does that make you feel?

ROSALIE: Oh wait. I get it now. You're like a teen analyst or something. My mom's been threatening to do that again.

JACK: Why does she think you need a shrink?

ROSALIE: What, she didn't tell you about the pot bust? How they want to send me to this tough-love school?

JACK: No, that's news to me.

ROSALIE: Well, I hope you weren't counting on big monthly fees, 'cause that's not gonna happen. This is all confidential?

JACK: Sure. Of course.

ROSALIE: (*testing*) I'm leaving.

JACK: Is that right.

ROSALIE: I'm thinking of going to Amsterdam.

JACK: OK.

ROSALIE: That's all you have to say—OK?

JACK: Is that what you really want? To end up on a milk carton?

ROSALIE: Yeah, well, good luck I.D.-ing us. I'll be traveling as a guy and Trevor will be traveling as a girl. (*patio door opens; lowers voice*) And listen, you can't say anything to my parents. If you do, I'll tell my dad you were snooping in his office.

(*APRIL, a woman in her early 60s, has entered. African-American, matriarchal, dignified.*)

APRIL: (*to JACK*) Excuse me, I'm looking for Colin?

ROSALIE: That's not him. If you're the bartender, you're late, my mom was looking for you.

APRIL: I was hoping to speak to your father.

ROSALIE: He's not in charge of anything, but OK. If you need to suit up, there's a bedroom that way.

(*COLIN and BECCA enter from the patio.*)

COLIN: Dr. Maxwell! You made it! I was beginning to wonder. I was afraid my directions weren't clear.

APRIL: Your directions were fine.

COLIN: Thank you for coming. Dr. Maxwell, this is my wife, Becca.

APRIL: April. Please.

BECCA: So nice to meet you, April. We're so delighted you're here! Colin's been talking of nothing else, you have no idea, to the exclusion of....well, everything. This is our daughter, Rosalie.

APRIL: We've just met.

ROSALIE: Yeah, we've met. Sorry, my bad.

BECCA: Sorry for what, dear?

ROSALIE: She'll tell you.

APRIL: No worries, Rosalie. It'll be our little secret. (*re JACK*) I don't think I know this man?

COLIN: Yes, I'm sorry, I don't think I know your name.

JACK: I'm Jack.

APRIL: A pleasure to meet you, Jack.

JACK: Yeah, same here.

BECCA: Jack, you were wanting to talk to Branch, weren't you? And Rosalie, could you make sure the ice bucket is filled?

ROSALIE: Yeah yeah, we can both take a hint. (*defiantly threads her arm through JACK's*) Come on, doctor.

(*JACK and ROSALIE exit toward the patio.*)

BECCA: April, can I get you a Bellini?

APRIL: I'd prefer a gin and tonic. And I wouldn't say no to an hors d'oeuvre. I saw some mushroom thingies looked very tempting.

BECCA: I'll bring some right away. Excuse me, won't you? I know Colin is dying to talk to you alone.

(*BECCA exits, miming encouragement to COLIN.*)

COLIN: Well. Please. Sit down. So. I'll plunge right in. Do you mind if I start with a little flattery?

APRIL: Does anyone?

COLIN: No! Of course not. Exactly. Well, there's no way to say it but to say it. You've influenced my work. Profoundly.

APRIL: Really? We hardly know each other.

COLIN: I'm referring to your paper on exhibitionism. The way you integrated Freud's theory of castration anxiety with the rise of visual media?

APRIL: Castration anxiety? Are you sure?

COLIN: Don't you recall? The flasher syndrome? "Look, Ma, I still have a penis"?

APRIL: Oh, that old thing. What about it?

COLIN: There's a theme I've been seeing in my practice.

APRIL: I've heard about your practice.

COLIN: Don't believe everything you hear. Now did you know, I found this totally by accident on the Net, the number of women willing to perform sex in front of a camera has risen by a factor of ten thousand in the last decade?

APRIL: Follow the money.

COLIN: Yes, well, the economy is always a factor—

APRIL: You've been following the money, haven't you.

COLIN: Not exclusively. I do my share of pro bono work.

(COLIN's *cell rings*.)

APRIL: Do you need to take that?

COLIN: I'll make this quick. I mean, I always do. (*moves left; on phone*) Hello, Natalie, I can give you a minute...Well, I'm sorry, that's all the time I have....Ryan asked for what? A threeway with the dog? Oh, with the nanny. I thought you said Nana.

(BRANCH *enters, followed by JACK*.)

BRANCH: —I'm basically a morning person, so I don't take my Provigil until lunchtime. Then after lunch, I smooth the edges with Xanax. I do miss my martini, but that would play havoc with my binding potentials.

JACK: You don't want to mess with your binding potentials.

BRANCH: Hey, another ten years, we'll all be on these regimens. As usual, the kids are way ahead of us. They're adjusting their moods on an hourly basis.

JACK: And then of course the prisoners.

BRANCH: Oh, with prisoners we're making incredible strides—

(BRANCH *breaks off as he sees APRIL*.)

BRANCH: April! My God. I didn't expect to see you here.

APRIL: I could say the same for you, Branch.

BRANCH: (*with forced concern*) How are you doing, April? How is it going? Did you land anywhere new?

APRIL: I'm doing just fine, thank you.

BRANCH: (*to JACK*) I'm sorry, do you mind? I need to speak with my old friend. I'll catch up with you outside.

(*JACK exits toward the patio.*)

BRANCH: I have no idea who that is. But I'm so glad you're doing well.

APRIL: Are you really.

BRANCH: Of course I am. Means we're both thriving.

APRIL: Yes. I heard a rumor you're going on TV.

BRANCH: Looks very very promising.

APRIL: That'll be fascinating. Watching you write prescriptions.

BRANCH: I beg your pardon?

APRIL: You heard me.

COLIN (*on phone*)... Natalie, if the prospect of threeway sex disgusts you, then by all means think twice about it. Talk it through with Ryan and I'll see you both on Wednesday. (*hangs up*) Sorry, where was I? The New Exhibitionism. Why have we all turned into actors?

APRIL: (*to COLIN*) One second, Colin. (*to BRANCH*) Are you still doing chemical castrations?

BRANCH: God. How this phrase ever got into the literature—

APRIL: And neural imaging?

BRANCH: On selected patients. Why, you don't approve of that either?

COLIN: Of course she doesn't approve.

APRIL: It's a colossal waste of time.

COLIN: Neural imaging has about as much to do with the psyche...as...as what?

APRIL: As finger-painting does with fine art.

COLIN: Yes! Perfect! (*to APRIL*) I'm going to go out on a limb here. Would you be interested?

APRIL: Would I be interested in what?

COLIN: Some sort of collaboration? I know I'm being presumptuous.

APRIL: (*perking up*) No, not at all. Any patient in particular?

COLIN: Possibly, yes. I was thinking about a paper.

APRIL: I haven't written a paper in years.

COLIN: Clinical work takes priority. I couldn't agree more.

APRIL: Papers don't pay the bills. Must be interesting, dealing with celebrities. Tell me, do you ever analyze them in their trailers?

COLIN: Occasionally, yes.

APRIL: Couch analysis?

COLIN: Sometimes. If there's a couch. So...my new take on exhibitionism... do you think it's something I might be able to present at the Institute? I can flesh it out with case histories...a fascinating couple...two rampant exhibitionists...totally co-dependent...

APRIL: (*playfully*) Anyone I know?

COLIN: Well, yes, some of the details are public knowledge—I really can't say more than that--

APRIL: Colin, I'm teasing. Didn't your wife say she was going for hors d'oeuvres? I'm starving.

COLIN: She must have gotten sidetracked. I can check if you want.

APRIL: Would you? And there was a sad-looking man who was asking for a Sprite.

COLIN: That would be Lowenstein. I'll be right back.

(COLIN *exits in frustration*. APRIL *swivels back to* BRANCH.)

APRIL: Let me ask you something, Branch, and I'm serious about this. If Dostoevsky walked into your office tomorrow, what would you prescribe?

BRANCH: Off the top of my head? For the depression, Paxil.
For the gambling addiction, Revex.

APRIL: And if they didn't work? If they had their usual side effects?
Instead of writing *Crime and Punishment*, he'd be living it.

BRANCH: And if Dostoevsky came to you? Would you turn him away?

APRIL: Of course I wouldn't.

BRANCH: Really? Man couldn't pay his gambling debts, how could he afford your fees?

APRIL: They're cheaper than your drugs.

BRANCH: Yes, but I'd give him a choice. Fyodor, do you want to be happy? Or do you want to write depressing novels? Completely up to you. Can the world exist without *The Brothers Karamazov*? Very nicely. Do we need art at all? Art thrived on repression. The unsayable. No such thing anymore. The Sixties opened Pandora's Box and now it's empty. What are artists good for now? Are they truth-tellers? Prophets? Revolutionaries? No. Just a lot of eager beavers trying to get their smiling faces before the public.

APRIL: And why do you think they're smiling?

BRANCH: Because their therapists had the sense to give them Prozac.

(JACK *enters from the kitchen*.)

BRANCH: April, I'm sorry the hospital changed direction. It was nothing personal. We just don't believe in the couch anymore. Do I know anyone who does? I don't think I do.

APRIL: No, and you know why? Because when we see you coming we head for the hills. You're an impossible man, Branch...you're a growing public menace....If you had a shred of human feeling, you'd sell your practice, you'd stay off TV, and yes, you'd never set foot in a jailhouse again.

(APRIL storms away past COLIN, entering with a tray of hors d'oeuvres. She plucks one off the tray and exits.)

COLIN: April? Dr. Maxwell?

(She's gone. COLIN sinks into a chair.)

BRANCH: (to JACK) You know what you just saw there? A textbook case of black paranoia. Woman's convinced I never wanted her on staff. Are you kidding, a black female analyst? She was a godsend! A threefer! But the hospital transitioned to an evidence-based approach. You can guess how she felt about that.

JACK: Wasn't happy.

BRANCH: Still clinging to the old paradigms. You know my philosophy? The past never happened.

JACK: But you remember this Satterfield guy.

BRANCH: Remind me, what was he in prison for?

JACK: Statutory rape.

BRANCH: Satterfield. Right. Big black guy. Did I do an MRI?

JACK: The whole nine yards.

BRANCH: Glucose metabolism down?

JACK: Way down.

BRANCH: Prefrontal cortex of a hyperactive teen. The criminal brain—you can always pinpoint the reoffenders. What did I prescribe? Lithium, probably. We've moved beyond that.

JACK: Oh way beyond.

BRANCH: Did your fellow get his parole?

JACK: Well, that's another story. I feel funny talking about this here. Is there someplace we could go? Maybe get us a real dinner someplace? It would make my week.

BRANCH: *(suddenly wary)* Um, I really don't think so, I've got plans. But listen, it was nice talking with you.

COLIN: *(coming out of his fog)* You goddamn phony!

JACK: *(startled)* What did you say?

COLIN: I wasn't talking to you. *(to BRANCH)* What did you say to April? Never mind, I can guess. The usual anti-analytic bullshit. I've heard it all my working life and I've had it up to here. Please get out, and don't ever come back.

BRANCH: Colin, easy does it, I did you a favor. You're barking up a dead tree with April Maxwell.

COLIN: You refuse to leave my house?

BRANCH: Because I know you don't mean it. The three-way couple—that's the Natalie and Ryan, isn't it.

(Pause. COLIN heads for the drawer where JACK found the gun. Finds the drawer empty. He keeps yanking open drawers, during:)

JACK: So getting back to Moses Satterfield...

BRANCH: *(one eye on COLIN)* Right. If he stayed with the drugs, I'm sure he got his parole. Listen, it was good talking with you. Think I'll go for a swim now.

(BRANCH heads quickly for the bedroom. JACK starts after him.)

COLIN: *(to JACK)* Why are you still here?

JACK: Um, I was going to take a look at your wireless speakers? They seem to be on the fritz.

COLIN: The patio's that way.

JACK: Right. That way.

(JACK exits toward the patio. COLIN continues to yank out drawers. BECCA enters, carrying a second tray of hors d'oeuvres.)

BECCA: Where's April? I thought you two were having a meeting. (no answer) She didn't go for it, did she. Oh Colin. Oh that's too bad. (COLIN *dumps out a drawer*) What are you doing? Oh God, are you having one of your OCD fits? Darling, what are you looking for, I'll find it. Colin, stop. I know you're upset about April...and Rosalie...I mean I hope you're upset... but there's no reason to go round the bend. I'm going to ask April to talk to Rosalie. If we want the arrest expunged, she'll have to have serious counseling, and hey, don't you see, it's a way for you to stay connected with April, scratch her back she'll scratch yours...Hello? Colin? Are you listening to me?

(COLIN's *cell rings*.)

BECCA: Don't answer that.

(COLIN *considers. Answers*.)

COLIN: (*into phone*) This had better be an emergency.

BECCA: I hate you.

COLIN: (*into phone*) Is it? Is it an emergency?

BECCA: Did you hear what I just said?

COLIN: (*into phone*) Why is Natalie screaming at you?

BECCA: Colin, I'm giving you one more chance.

(COLIN *waves BECCA off. BRANCH enters from the direction of the bedroom, in swim trunks and robe*.)

BRANCH: (*to COLIN*) I borrowed your robe, old sport. I hope you don't mind.

BECCA: He doesn't hear a word you say.

COLIN: (*into phone*) Well, did she agree to the threeway or didn't she?

(COLIN *moves away, listening on the phone*.)

BRANCH: What happened to that guy who was hanging around?

BECCA: You mean what's-his-name—Jack? He's trying to fix the wireless speakers.

BRANCH: Figures. He's been sucking up to me too. I'm getting a very strange vibe off that guy--I think he might be gay. Do you have a psychiatrist's directory anywhere? (*no answer*) Never mind. He's probably a social worker.

BECCA: (*sotto*) I'll do it, Branch.

BRANCH: You'll do what.

(*The patio speakers come on with a blast, muffling:*)

BECCA: I'll join you in Philly.

BRANCH: Fantastic.

BECCA: But not adjoining rooms.

BRANCH: What?

(*The speakers go quiet again, as BECCA shouts:*)

BECCA: Separate floors.

COLIN: (*on phone*) Right now I would caution against any more exotic sex...Because it might trigger her bulimia, that's why....Ryan, I have to say goodbye now. (*hangs up, sees BRANCH*) You're still here.

BRANCH: Yup. I'm still here.

(*COLIN turns on his heels and heads for the bedroom.*)

BECCA: Colin, where are you going?

COLIN: Maybe I put it in the bedroom.

BECCA: Maybe you put what in the bedroom?

(*COLIN exits.*)

BRANCH: (*to BECCA*) I'll make us two reservations at the Rittenhouse. The minute I get back to New York.

BECCA: Branch, I don't like the way Colin's acting. I've never seen him like this before, I think he's actually losing his mind.

(BRANCH *puts his arms around BECCA, soothing her.*)

BRANCH: Yes, and the more you worry, the crazier he gets. Didn't you see how I handled him? Total nonchalance. That's the ticket.

(BRANCH *starts to steal another kiss, pulls back as JACK and ROSALIE enter from the patio.*)

JACK: Speakers seem to be working now.

ROSALIE: (to JACK) I need to talk to you.

JACK: Not now, kid. (to BRANCH) I had a couple more questions about Moses Satterfield.

BRANCH: Why don't you send me an email? To the address on my website.

(BRANCH *blows a kiss to BECCA and exits quickly toward the patio. JACK starts to follow. ROSALIE stops him.*)

ROSALIE: (to JACK) Seriously, dude, you need to hear this. (to BECCA) Mom? This is confidential. Client to doctor.

BECCA: Well, thank God you're talking to somebody. I was beginning to lose all hope. (to JACK) Help yourself to hors d'oeuvres.

(BECCA *exits toward the patio.*)

ROSALIE: That thing we talked about?

JACK: Yeah, what thing.

ROSALIE: We're going. Me and Trevor. We're taking off.

JACK: Right. Good luck.

(Pause.)

ROSALIE: Yeah, OK. I guess therapists aren't supposed to judge you.

JACK: I'm not judging you. Go ahead and leave.

ROSALIE: Well, actually, we can't yet. Trevor's not ready. He takes longer than me to dress. He's not used to women's clothes. Well, he's sorta used to them, but not if he has to leave the house.

JACK: For your own good I'm telling you to go. Now.

ROSALIE: (*stunned*) All right. I'm leaving. Thanks...for nothing.

(*ROSALIE storms out. BECCA enters.*)

BECCA: (*calling after her*) Rosalie? (*to JACK*) What happened? I thought you two were talking.

JACK: She got a little upset.

BECCA: Oh God, I know. You look at her cross-eyed and she flies into a tizzy. What did she say to you? I'm sorry, I shouldn't ask that, none of my business. Believe me, I'm not one of those mothers who pump their daughters' therapists for information—

(*COLIN bursts in from the bedroom.*)

COLIN: Have you been in my underwear drawer?

BECCA: I never go in your underwear drawer. Why?

COLIN: That's the only other place it could be.

BECCA: Colin, calm down—what on earth are you looking for?

COLIN: My Browning .25.

BECCA: Your what?!

COLIN: My gun.

BECCA: Oh God, you bought a gun. Why did you buy a gun? Colin....look at me....you weren't going to do something crazy, were you? It's not actually loaded, is it?

COLIN: Of course it's loaded.

BECCA: With a child in the house? An angry child? You're supposed to keep the bullets separate.

COLIN: Why? How does that help? Hang on a second, mister, I have to load my gun.

JACK: He's got a point.

COLIN: We didn't ask for your opinion! (*suddenly*) Wait. Oh wait. I just had a flash. Did I put it in the freezer? Is that possible? Could I have done that?

BECCA: Colin, do you want me to look?

JACK: Don't bother. (*to COLIN*) Relax, you don't have Early Alzheimer's.

COLIN: No? How do you know?

(*JACK takes the gun out of his waistband.*)

COLIN: Oh Jesus. Is that—

JACK: Yes.

BECCA: Ohmigod.

JACK: You will simplify my task by staying calm.

BECCA: Are you looking for money? We don't keep cash in the house.

COLIN: Yes, we do. In your handbag drawer.

BECCA: Maybe a hundred dollars. Two hundred at the most. Jewelry? I'm trying to think. No, only costume stuff.

JACK: I don't want your jewelry. I don't want your petty cash. I've got no grief with either of you people. Yet.

BECCA: Yet?

(*JACK locks the door that leads to the bedroom. And the one that leads to the kitchen.*)

BECCA: What are you doing. You can't keep us in here. They're going to wonder, where are the hosts.

JACK: No they won't. People at a party only think about themselves. (*to COLIN*) Gimme me your cell phone.

COLIN: I don't have my cell phone.

JACK: Don't fuck with me, ace.

(COLIN *hands over his cell.*)

JACK: Yours too, Becca.

(BECCA *hands over her cell phone. JACK shoves both cell phones in a drawer.*)

JACK: (to COLIN) Now go find your friend Branch. He's taking a swim. Go fish him out of the bay.

COLIN: (*brightens*) Oh! You're here for Branch!

BECCA: (*alarmed*) What do you want with Branch?

JACK: That's my business. (to COLIN) Anybody shows you a picture, you never saw me. You try and borrow a phone, tip anybody off, if I feel the slightest tingle in my pinky toe, there's gonna be blood on the carpet. Are we clear on that?

COLIN: Yes, I hear you.

BECCA: We hear you.

JACK: I'll be watching. You may have suicidal tendencies, but that's no reason your wife has to die, OK, pal?

COLIN: OK. (*eagerly*) I'll go get Branch!

(COLIN *exits swiftly in the direction of the patio. JACK locks the door after him.*)

JACK: And you, sit down and relax.

BECCA: (*sits*) Please promise me one thing. You won't harm my daughter.

JACK: Don't worry, she's safe. These all your paintings?

BECCA: Yes, these are mine. What do you mean, she's safe?

JACK: Kind of a hustle, isn't it.

BECCA: What is.

JACK: The art game. I saw this show one time. Every single room, paintings of horrible women, you could hardly tell they were women, all scrawls and splotches, breasts, teeth, every last one of them nasty. And all of them the same damn painting. Guy's name was William something.

BECCA: Willem De Kooning. That show was brilliant.

JACK: What a racket. Like a thief who keeps robbing the same house. But yours are all different, aren't they.

BECCA: To some critics, that means I'm a hack.

JACK: Yeah, the world is full of assholes. (*re painting*) This guy, for example.

BECCA: I'm sorry, which guy?

JACK: In the painting. The naked guy. What are you trying to do, light a fire under your husband?

BECCA: No. Ohmigod. Yes. You saw us?

JACK: I saw enough.

BECCA: Please don't say anything to Colin.

JACK: Either you're trying to get his attention or not. Make up your mind.

(*Shrieks from outside.*)

JACK: Oh shit. He must have said something. Your crazy husband, I fucking warned him—

(*A knock on the patio door. JACK unlocks it. APRIL enters, soaking wet. JACK quickly closes the door and locks it.*)

JACK: What the hell's going on?

BECCA: Oh God. Colin forgot to turn off the sprinklers. Dr. Maxwell, I'm so sorry.

APRIL: Not my day, I guess.

BECCA: Oh God, you don't know the half of it. Do you want to change into something? I'm not sure I have anything that fits you....

APRIL: A towel would be helpful. I'm afraid I struck out with Rosalie. The minute she saw me coming, she took off like a bat out of hell. *(to JACK)* You might be able to make more headway.

JACK: I wouldn't be surprised. Never mind the towel. Can I have your cell phone, April?

APRIL: Why? What is this? Are we playing some sort of game?

JACK: It's not a game. *(showing gun)* And this is not a phallic symbol. Not this peashooter anyhow. Sit down. *(to BECCA)* Never mind the towel.

APRIL: So you're not a doctor. Who exactly are you?

JACK: Never mind who I am. Your cell, please?

(APRIL hands over her cell phone. JACK shoves it in the drawer along with the others. A knock on the patio door. JACK peers through, unlocks it. COLIN enters, in wet clothes.)

JACK: Where's Branch?

COLIN: He's getting dressed. I said you absolutely had to talk to him. I made that crystal clear.

JACK: *(relocks door)* What took you so long?

COLIN: I had to turn off the sprinklers. And get Dr. Lowenstein a Sprite. He was threatening to come in here. Dr. Maxwell, I'm so sorry. Please send me the bill.

APRIL: Will somebody please tell me what's going on?!

(A cell phone rings in the drawer.)

COLIN: I think that's me.

(JACK yanks open the drawer, looks.)

JACK: Who's Natalie?

COLIN: A patient.

JACK: What's she doing, calling you on Labor Day.

BECCA: She calls every day. Especially holidays.

JACK: If you don't answer, what'll she do?

COLIN: There's no telling. Say I'm in a session.

JACK: (*answers phone*) Hello, I'm in a session. (*listens; to COLIN*) Her charity is dropping her. She sounds pretty upset.

APRIL: Becca? Who is this man?

BECCA: He's here to see Branch. I think he might be an escaped convict.

JACK: (*cups phone*) Hey, not escaped, OK? Paroled. (*to COLIN*) Is this the Natalie I think it is?

COLIN: I'm not allowed to say. Yes.

JACK: (*on phone*) It might be because of that sex tape, what do you think? (*COLIN is signaling "cut."*) Catch you later, Natalie. (*hangs up; to COLIN*) That's one hysterical chick. My sympathies.

APRIL: What were you in for, Jack?

JACK: Sorry, what?

APRIL: Why were you in jail?

JACK: That's an excellent question.

APRIL: (*gently*) Did they have the wrong man?

JACK: OK, you tell me. First of all, I didn't know it was her folks' place. She told me it was her house. I wasn't there to rob it. I was just there to bust a nut. We have a few drinks. We get down to it. Find out she's a preacher's daughter. Fine, whatever. I pass out from boredom and the next thing I know she's screaming rape. I get the hell out of there, and what does she do? She smashes a window to make it look like I broke in.

APRIL: I see.

JACK: What do you mean "you see," you don't believe me?

APRIL: I'm listening. I want to hear about this.

JACK: I'm passed out on her bed, she goes and raids her daddy's cash drawer. She stuffs a bunch of ATM twenties in my wallet, all consecutive numbers, and holds a couple back. When they find the bills in my wallet they put two and two together and come up with eleven. Only evidence they had.

APRIL: That sounds horrendous.

JACK: If she put one-tenth of that effort into sex, least I would've had something to show for it. The last pimple on her ass was a liar.

APRIL: I don't blame you for being angry.

JACK: All right, enough of that shit, OK?

APRIL: Because I don't think you want to hurt anybody.

JACK: Try me.

(APRIL lurches for the food, emptying the two hors d'oeuvre platters during all that follows. The door that leads to the bedroom opens. BRANCH enters, dressed.)

BRANCH: I was wondering where you all were. Kudos to you, Colin, those sprinklers loosened everybody up. Except in here, apparently. Who died?

JACK: We'll get to that. Pull up a chair, doctor. *(to BECCA)*
Becca, you got any hard liquor? I didn't see any out there.

BECCA: How about a Bellini?

JACK: You don't keep any Scotch?

BECCA: For people who ask.

JACK: I'm asking. Scotch. Bourbon. Doesn't matter. Bring the bottle. *(nods at BRANCH)* Two glasses.

BRANCH: Please, not on my account.

JACK: *(to BECCA)* No prolonged conversations. Hello and goodbye.

BECCA: I'll be right back.

(BECCA exits in the direction of the kitchen. JACK locks that door and the bedroom door.)

BRANCH: (to COLIN) What's he doing that for? What's going on? Bad news? What? (no answer) Well, if nobody's gonna talk to me, I'm going to go mingle with the wet folk.

(JACK points the gun, simultaneously shoving a chair in BRANCH's direction.)

JACK: Sit the fuck down, McAlister.

APRIL: Do what he says, Branch.

(BRANCH sinks into the chair. JACK pulls up a chair opposite, keeping the gun loosely in his lap.)

BRANCH: Look. Whatever I said to you or did to you, I'm sure there's been a misunderstanding—

JACK: You didn't do anything to me. I wouldn't let you near my ass.

COLIN: He's talking about your prison experiments.

BRANCH: I gathered that.

JACK: The one that killed Moses Satterfield.

BRANCH: Oh no.

JACK: Oh yes.

BRANCH: That never happened. (to the others) There were no OD cases. Not one.

JACK: He hanged himself.

BRANCH: You're mistaken. You've come to the wrong place.

JACK: In his cell. Our cell. After taking your drug.

BRANCH: Not a chance. If there'd been a suicide, I'd have heard of it. I do outcomes on all my patients.

JACK: The outcome was death.

BRANCH: You have me confused with someone else.

(JACK points the gun at BRANCH's head.)

BRANCH: Describe the case again?

JACK: He used to wipe his ass standing up.

BRANCH: I'm trying to be serious.

JACK: Try harder. Moses discussed that very issue with you.

BRANCH: Why would he think I'd be interested.

JACK: Exactly.

BRANCH: He was testing me.

JACK: And you flunked the test.

(Knock on door to kitchen. JACK unlocks it, BECCA enters with a bottle of Scotch and two glasses, JACK relocks the door, all during:)

JACK: Moses was just a number to you. The paranoid in cellblock 9.

BRANCH: Paranoid? That's unlikely. *(to the others)* These people were all pre-screened. All the volunteers.

COLIN: A volunteer? Is that what you call them?

BRANCH: It was his choice to participate.

JACK: *(pouring Scotch)* He was in no position to choose. April, pay attention. *(to BRANCH)* Was Moses your first black subject?

BRANCH: I don't recall. Probably not.

COLIN: Probably not! What's your guess, April?

APRIL: Ninety per cent black.

BRANCH: The Foundation did the culling. I was given a list of volunteers.

JACK: Never mind. I'll stipulate you didn't choose your subjects. You just mixed up the medicine and passed out the pills.

BRANCH: All right, now it's starting to come back to me. Do you remember what drug he was on?

JACK: I not only remember, I have some right here.

BRANCH: No. That's impossible.

(JACK takes a vial out of his pocket, shakes out several pills.)

BRANCH: Where did you get those? They haven't been approved yet.

JACK: Moses checked a few toward the end. I saved them as evidence. Here, have a couple.

(JACK places two pills in BRANCH's palm.)

BRANCH: No thank you.

JACK: That's the dosage you prescribed for Moses.

BRANCH: No. I can't. I won't.

JACK: Wash them down with this.

(JACK hands BRANCH a glass of Scotch.)

What's the matter, you don't want to drink with me?

COLIN: Of course he doesn't. He's already tanked up on Fabulax and Meshugazine.

BRANCH: Did Moses have access to alcohol? That might explain the toxic reaction. Tell you what. Why don't you put away the gun before you do something we'll all regret. I can tell you're an intelligent man, so if you'll just let me make a phone call or two, we can both get to the bottom of this case.

(JACK points the gun.)

JACK: Come on, doctor: I hate to drink alone.

(BRANCH puts the pills in his mouth.)

COLIN: Down the hatch, Branch.

JACK: One...two...three....

(BRANCH *and* JACK *both drink*. BRANCH *shudders*.)

COLIN: (to JACK) May I? (to BRANCH) Open wide.

(COLIN *peers in*.)

COLIN: Anh anh anh. Still one there.

(BRANCH *swallows again, shows his empty mouth*.)

COLIN: That's better.

JACK: So what else do you remember about Moses? Did you know he spent time in solitary?

BRANCH: No, I didn't know that. Why?

JACK: He accused the Group guy of being an undercover cop. When the guy denied it, Moses attacked him. They almost tasered him to death.

BRANCH: Well, I sincerely doubt that. Tasers don't kill anybody.

APRIL: They do if you have a heart condition.

JACK: Exactly. Moses had a heart condition.

BRANCH: You're just saying that because she said it.

JACK: I'm saying it because it's true. Think back.

BRANCH: I'm trying to think. Was Moses on Death Row?

COLIN: (to BRANCH) Wake up. He said he was his cellmate.

BRANCH: Right. A rapist.

JACK: Statutory rapist. Another frame-up.

BRANCH: Oh aren't they all.

JACK: No, they're not all. The girl was 15 and she had two kids already. If that sex was illicit, I'm the Queen of Sheba.

BRANCH: Interesting choice of phrase. No, you wouldn't have made a good subject.

JACK: Why not?

BRANCH: You're not a rage case. You're a closet case.

BECCA: Branch!

BRANCH: Just a wild hunch.

COLIN: Keep your hunches to yourself, you idiot.

BECCA: Branch? You're overramping.

BRANCH: Am I? Could have fooled me. I don't feel any rush. (*takes pulse*)
Stable pulse. Mouth's a little dry, that's all. I haven't felt so...what...so
mellow...in years and years....(*to BECCA*) Not since Spring Lake.

BECCA: Branch, that's enough!

BRANCH: What. What did I say. What were we talking about. (*to*
JACK) Right, your cellmate. He asked to be part of the experiment. Nobody
shoved any drugs down his throat. And wait, it's coming back to me...there
was a history of paranoia, wasn't there?

JACK: He was gaming the system. The sooner you say you're
sick, the sooner they let you out.

BRANCH: Well, you see there? He was a malingerer. Which is why
we went ahead with the experiment.

JACK: And drove him batshit with your fucking drugs! Whatever
people were thinking about Moses, he claimed he could hear it all.

APRIL: Did he hear any positive things, Jack?

JACK: No. Just people calling him names.

APRIL: But you were his friend. You must have said some good
things about him.

JACK: I tried telling him. He wasn't buying.

BRANCH: The cognitive approach. Doesn't always work.

COLIN: In a case of psychosis? It never works. He should have been sent to a special prison. Not thrown in with the general population.

JACK: Yeah, and whose fault was that? You shrinks, you let the politicians cut back on the mental hospitals. Lump the nuts in with the hardcores and drive everybody crazy. Make the world more dangerous. More work for the cops, more clients for you.

COLIN: *Cui bono?* Who profits?

APRIL: Good way to look at it.

BRANCH: It's not a good way to look at it! Those asylums were hideous! The drugs were totally crude. And of course talk was useless.

JACK: Nobody got cured.

BRANCH: Very few.

JACK: Didn't stop you from treating them. Art therapy, group therapy, dance therapy, play therapy, psychodrama, psychopharmacology. More kinds of therapy, more people seeing shrinks, more shrinks making more money...and the world goes crazier by the minute.

BECCA: It's the one in three rule!

COLIN: One in three plumbers knows what they're doing.

BECCA: One in three painters.

COLIN: One in three psychiatrists.

JACK: And you think you're the one. Do you prescribe drugs?

COLIN: Not if I can help it.

BECCA: Well, actually, that's not true. Natalie threatened to leave you when you wouldn't give her Xanax.

COLIN: And I called her bluff. As a matter of fact.

BRANCH: Big mistake. Stars need drugs to get over their drugs.

COLIN: (*to JACK*) You hear that? Incurable.

APRIL: I bet Moses never took a pill in his life.

JACK: That's right, he never did.

COLIN: But if drugs were going to buy him his freedom, he'd be this white man's guinea pig.

JACK: Exactly. Question for you, April: will a white man ever be a black man's guinea pig?

APRIL: When hell freezes over.

BRANCH: But give him half a chance, he'll experiment on his own kind.

APRIL: Say what?

BRANCH: (*pouring himself another drink*) See, that's interesting.

APRIL: What's interesting?

BRANCH: "Say what." That's the black coming out under stress.

BECCA: Branch, stop it.

BRANCH: (*to COLIN*) I told you, Colin, forget the Magic Negress. She's seeing mostly black patients. That's cut into her bottom line. Making half the money she used to.

BECCA: April, is that true?

APRIL: Who wants to know? Yes, it's true. So what.

BRANCH: April can't help you, Colin. She can't help herself. Except to the hors d'oeuvres.

BECCA: Oh gosh. April, this is mortifying.

APRIL: Stop apologizing! This is what happens when a fool gets frontal-lobish.

BECCA: (*to BRANCH*) Hear that, Branch? You're getting frontal-lobish.

APRIL: I said forget it. Let him dig his own damn grave.

BRANCH: Becca, did I tell you how gorgeous you're looking lately?

COLIN: Yes, you told her. Now shut the hell up.

BRANCH: You stand for everything I admire in a woman. You're the star I steer by.

JACK: *(at the window)* Quiet! Everybody!

(Sounds of a new commotion have risen outside. The patio door rattles. JACK peers through, unlocks it. ROSALIE enters, disguised as a boy.)

BECCA: Rosalie?!

(JACK pulls ROSALIE into the room.)

ROSALIE: Ow. What are you doing.

JACK: *(locking door)* What's going on out there?

ROSALIE: Cops are here.

BRANCH: Oh goodie. Is it a SWAT team?

ROSALIE: They're here about the music. And the firecrackers.

JACK: The noise police. Shit.

(JACK lowers the volume on the stereo.)

ROSALIE: Seriously, what's happening?

COLIN: Rosalie, sit down.

JACK: What are you doing here? I told you to go.

BECCA: Rosalie, why are you dressed like that?

ROSALIE: *(to JACK)* Did you tell them?

BECCA: *(to JACK)* Tell what? Oh God. You weren't planning to run away, were you?

ROSALIE: You told them.

JACK: I didn't tell them anything. Everybody calm down.

BECCA: *(to JACK)* You knew about this?

COLIN: Becca, wake up, he was sparing her.

ROSALIE: Dude, what's going on?

APRIL: Branch killed his cellmate.

COLIN: His black cellmate.

BRANCH: Absolutely untrue.

ROSALIE: What, with some experimental drug? Wow. I get it.
(ROSALIE's cell rings.) That's awesome.

JACK: Yeah, awesome. *(to COLIN)* You. Go outside, tell them you're sorry about the noise, before they start looking for the hosts.
(COLIN exits; to ROSALIE.) Gimme your phone.

ROSALIE: Seriously, do you need a hostage to get out of here?

JACK: Seriously, give me your cell phone and cut the bullshit. You keep this up, you're gonna end up some gang girl's bitch in some juvy hellhole. You're rich, you're intelligent, get used to yourself. Stop trying to get your daddy's goat. *(re incoming phone number)* Who's "Punky Brewster"?

ROSALIE: My friend Trevor. He saw the cops and he's wondering where I am. *(reaching for phone)* I better tell him.

JACK: Unh-unh, no you don't.

(JACK shoves the cell phone in the drawer, goes to the window, keeping watch on COLIN, during:)

BRANCH: *(to BECCA)* Do you remember how we met?

BECCA: No, I don't remember. We met here.

BRANCH: Labor Day, twelve years ago. You were the loveliest woman in the room. I said that to your face, and you offered to paint me.

BECCA: No. You offered to pose.

BRANCH: Whatever. I was swept away. My heart almost exploded in my chest. *(takes his pulse)* You know what? I think I'll lie down. Colin, I want to explain.

BECCA: Colin isn't here. You don't have to explain.

(BRANCH lies down on the couch. APRIL, who's continuing to nibble on hors d'oeuvres, is seated in the analytic position just beyond him.)

BRANCH: OK, these were the circumstances. My first wife had just left me. For another woman. You didn't know that, did you, Becca. Neither did I. Till it happened.

BECCA: Branch, we don't have to go into this now.

APRIL: That's all right. Let him talk.

BRANCH: I have to get this off my chest. I'm having palpitations.

APRIL: Why do you think you missed the signs?

BRANCH: I've got a better question. Why did I marry her in the first place?

APRIL: Always a good question.

BRANCH: Well, I'll tell you why. She was a butterscotch blonde. You know why men call blondes dumb?

APRIL: No, why is that?

JACK: *(at window)* Because blondes make men feel dumb.

BRANCH: That's it precisely! We don't know the color of their pubic hair and that makes us all feel stupid.

APRIL: You felt stupid around your wife.

BRANCH: I was taken in by the blonde mystery. And I missed the lesbian obvious.

APRIL: And what color was your mother's hair?

BRANCH: She was a blonde.

APRIL: You were afraid to bond with a blonde.

BRANCH: Exactly.

APRIL: So you picked a lesbian.

BRANCH: Yes, I have lesbian tendencies. It's all that estrogen in the drinking water. But Becca—Becca saved me.

BECCA: No! I didn't save anybody! I'm not a saving person! Rosalie, don't listen. Jack, please order him to stop.

JACK: Order him yourself.

BRANCH: Those foot rubs were delicious.

BECCA: One foot rub! That was all! Rosalie, oh God, I'm sorry you had to hear this.

BRANCH: *(to JACK)* Can I ask you a question, Mr. Parole Violator? Did Moses Satterfield bare his soul to you?

JACK: The night he killed himself? I couldn't keep him quiet.

BRANCH: There, you see? I knew it. You realize what that means? I've invented a truth serum! Completely by accident. I've discovered the Viagra of psychotropics!

BECCA: Branch, shut the fuck up. Rosybee, are you OK? Say something.

ROSALIE: Mom...I knew.

BECCA: You knew? What do you mean, you knew?

ROSALIE: I heard you singing.

BECCA: Singing where? I can't sing. I never sing.

ROSALIE: You came back from that Spring Lake weekend, all of a sudden you were singing while you were painting. It was totally weird. You never sang while you worked.

BECCA: Oh right...All that week I could carry a tune...Is that why you wanted to run away?

ROSALIE: Ohmigod. Jack, see how clueless they all are?

JACK: *(to BECCA)* Do yourself a favor, ma'am. Don't take all the credit.

(Knock on patio door. JACK peers through, unlocks the door. COLIN enters, calling toward the patio as he backs into the room.)

COLIN: *(to the patio)* No, you can't come in. I have a patient here, Lowenstein. The Sprites are in the back fridge, help yourself.

BRANCH: *(rising)* I'll take a Sprite!

JACK: Sit down, I'm not through with you. *(locking door)* What did you tell the cops?

COLIN: I said we'd keep it down. They set up a decibel meter and they're leaving.

BRANCH: That's all?

COLIN: *(brightly)* That's all. *(to BECCA)* Spring Lake?

BECCA: Colin, you were ignoring me. I was blocked. Rosalie was ditching school—I know, I'm sorry, it's inexcusable—

COLIN: Then stop excusing it. *(eagerly, to JACK)* What are you planning to do with him?

BRANCH: What more can he do? He's humbled me. He's given me a taste of my own medicine. What else can you possibly want?

JACK: What would Moses want?

APRIL: He'd want justice.

BRANCH: He wasn't asking you.

JACK: Let's put it this way. What would a jury give the widow?

COLIN: Branch, answer the man.

BRANCH: What widow.

JACK: How much do you keep in your checking account?

BRANCH: The minimum.

JACK: That's a problem, isn't it. You're gonna have to postdate the check, then liquidate some stock.

BRANCH: That's preposterous. How do I know Moses had a widow?

JACK: Let's say a hundred K.

BRANCH: Absurd. I'm not that liquid.

JACK: Your Oppenheimer statement says otherwise.

BRANCH: How do you know that?

JACK: You make friends in the pen. Some of them have computers.

BECCA: Please, Branch.

BRANCH: Please what? You can't be serious.

(JACK has taken the gun out of his belt.)

BRANCH: All right. All right. *(to BECCA)* For you, darling. .

(BRANCH reaches in his pocket for his checkbook. It isn't there. JACK reaches in his own pocket, hands it over.)

BRANCH: How did you get that—

JACK: Make it out to cash.

(BRANCH starts to write, stops.)

BRANCH: No. Not a chance. This is ridiculous. Sue me. I'll take my chances with a real judge.

APRIL: Write the check, fool.

COLIN: Write the check, Branch.

BRANCH: Yes. All right. Anything to get him out of here.
(stops) I don't care what you were told by your hacker buddies, I guarantee this check will bounce, and then where will you be?

COLIN: How about a fifty thousand?

BECCA: Jack, will you settle for that?

BRANCH: What is this, Stockholm Syndrome? This man is a convicted felon.

BECCA: For a crime he didn't commit.

BRANCH: Is that what he told you? And you believed him? Let's see a show of hands.

(BECCA raises her hand tentatively, starts to lower it when she sees neither COLIN nor APRIL has a hand up, then raises it again when ROSALIE's hand shoots up.)

BRANCH CONTD: Oh come on, don't you get it, there is no widow! Moses Satterfield wasn't married. He may have sired some bastard children, in fact I seem to remember he did, but if there's any widow in the picture, it's this man right here. And I mean in the Biblical sense.

APRIL: Branch, the man is waiting.

BRANCH: The Man. Is waiting. See what you just said?

APRIL: *(reaching for an hors d'oeuvre)* No, why don't you tell me.

BRANCH: Identification with the aggressor, pardon my Freud. This guy is aggressing against us, and all you can see is, he befriended a brother. April, we all know how hard it's been for you... a black female analyst? The world's first?When I think of the lengths we went to...to atone for our liberal guilt...And still you had to struggle...Never got your fair share of referrals...Why? We know why. We were surrounded by Jews. To the Jews you were a circus freak....Dr. *Schwarzena*, they called you....We should have been allies, you and I... The Jews never liked me either....I was the house goy. You were the house n—

APRIL: *(overlaps)* Don't you dare!—

(APRIL goes to choke BRANCH. Then starts to choke on a morsel of food.)

JACK: April?

(APRIL's choking. Nobody moves to help her. JACK shoves the gun in his belt, hauls APRIL to her feet and performs the Heimlich maneuver. COLIN rushes over.)

COLIN: Here to help! Here to help!

(COLIN *snatches the gun from JACK's belt. A morsel of food shoots out of APRIL's mouth. BRANCH sees COLIN waving the gun.*)

BRANCH: Bravo, Colin! You the man! I'll go fetch the police.

COLIN: You're not going anywhere.

BRANCH: What is this. What are you going to do?

COLIN: Who knows what I'm going to do.

(COLIN *puts the gun in his mouth. BECCA shrieks.*)

COLIN: Easy does it, Becca. I just wanted to see if you cared.

BECCA: Oh God. Of course I care.

COLIN: Did you really think I was going to kill myself? Is that why you think I bought the gun? Consciously? No. Unconsciously? Yes.

BECCA: Yes?!

COLIN: It crossed my mind. What doesn't. Jung was right. Everything crosses everybody's mind.

BECCA: Colin, please get a grip.

COLIN: I've got a grip. A very good grip. April, are you all right?

APRIL: I'm OK. Thank God for you, Jack. All these doctors in the house, you're the only one who came through.

JACK: Yeah, great.

COLIN: Have a seat, Jack. April, do you want to say anything to Branch?

APRIL: I'd tell him to go fuck himself, but I doubt it'll penetrate. How are you doing, Branch? You got anything more to say to me?

BRANCH: No, I think I've said it all. Was I wrong about your practice?

APRIL: I don't get the referrals I used to. Thanks to assholes like yourself. Times have changed. Look at Colin here. Sucking up to the A-list. I don't blame him a bit. Given half a chance, I would have done the same thing. I've been standing on my dignity too long. Where can I go where no black woman has gone before? That's the question I asked myself. That was my sin of pride. To hell with dignity. Maybe I should go on TV.

BRANCH: Unh unh. Stay off my turf.

APRIL: Colin? You have my permission to shoot him.

COLIN: Shh, April, don't let him get to you. He's the biggest quack in the pond, aren't you, Branch?

BRANCH: Yes. All right. Whatever you say.

COLIN: *(to BECCA)* I knew you were attracted to this chucklehead. I just can't believe you'd go to bed with him.

BRANCH: What do you mean, you can't believe it? You used to fantasize about it.

COLIN: What did you say? I used to what?

BECCA: Colin, it's all right. He doesn't know what he's saying.

COLIN: What did I use to do?

BRANCH: Oh come on, admit it. Whenever a man is attracted to your wife, you make him part of your sex talk. You even pretend you're me sometimes.

COLIN: Oh Jesus. *(to BECCA)* You told him.

BRANCH: So we had an affair, big deal. Twenty million people are cheating on their spouses as we speak. So fucking what. Oh God, I'm getting dizzy. Does anyone have a Compazine?

COLIN: *(to BECCA)* When did it start?

BRANCH: Or a Phenergan? No, not in this house.

COLIN: Becca? I'd like to know the circumstances.

BRANCH: Yes, so you can recreate it in the bedroom.

COLIN: (*points gun at BRANCH*) Shut up. (*points it at BECCA*) Well?

BECCA: Please don't point that gun at me.

COLIN: When did you first sleep with him?

BECCA: Two summers ago. When I had that show in New Hope.

BRANCH: I was stalking her at the time.

BECCA: He used to walk past our place in the city. I'd see him from the window.

BRANCH: Man was born to stalk. It's in his DNA.

ROSALIE: (*to JACK*) Oh here we go.

BRANCH: Misogyny. Rape. Cannibalism. They're all part of our cortical heritage.

ROSALIE: Oh who cares.

COLIN: (*to BECCA*) Did you encourage him?

BECCA: I may have waved once or twice.

BRANCH: Early hominid males ate the females when they were past childbearing age.

ROSALIE: (*to JACK*) This is why I'm so messed up.

JACK: Yeah, I'm getting that.

BRANCH: We give the reptile brain a bad name.

ROSALIE: Surrounded by this bullshit all my life.

BRANCH: Oh my head!

COLIN: (*to BECCA*) How many others were there?

BECCA: None! Zero. I swear.

COLIN: Only Branch. That makes it even worse.

BECCA: Colin, you're not going to believe this: I was trying to save the marriage.

COLIN: Oh boy. April? Sound familiar?

APRIL: If I had a dollar for every time I heard that... I'd be a hell of a lot better off today.

BECCA: I was trying to get your attention.

APRIL: What better way.

BECCA: Someone whose ideas you loathe and despise.
Whose ideas I loathe and despise.

BRANCH: Women have terrible taste in men. That's genetic too.
Diversifies the gene pool. Meet, mate, multiply, and move on.

ROSALIE: Oh gag.

BECCA: But it didn't work.

COLIN: You didn't save the marriage.

BECCA: I didn't get your attention.

COLIN: That's where you're wrong.

BECCA: You knew too?

COLIN: That was the summer I bought this gun.

BECCA: Really? That's amazing.

COLIN: The unconscious.

ROSALIE: (*mockingly*) "It's so powerful."

BRANCH: (*to BECCA*) So I guess we're not meeting in Philly after all?

COLIN: No, Branch. You're not meeting in Philly.

(COLIN *cocks the pistol.*)

BECCA: Colin, no!

BRANCH: Please, what more do you want from me? I've told you everything. My conscience is clear.

COLIN: Jack, do you think his conscience is clear?

JACK: I'm not sure he has a conscience.

APRIL: *(holds fingers two inches apart)* Maybe a little teeny one.

COLIN: Then I'll be his conscience. Sit down, Branch, and write this man a check. Who's got a pen?

(Everybody dives for pens. BECCA hands one to BRANCH.)

BRANCH: Is that a painting or a hologram? The red is starting to pop.

APRIL: Branch—focus.

BRANCH: Must be the shorter wavelength. Right. OK. I'm focusing. What did we agree on?

COLIN: *(to JACK)* If you make it 20, it'll be easier to cash.

BRANCH: Fifteen!

COLIN: Is 20 all right with you?

JACK: Yeah. That's fine.

COLIN: Go on, Branch.

(BRANCH starts to write with his left hand.)

COLIN: Not your left hand. The one you actually write with.

BRANCH: Oh, thank God.

(BRANCH switches the pen to his right hand, writes the check. Hands it to COLIN.)

COLIN: Shmuck, give it to the widow.

(JACK pockets the check, and the checkbook.)

JACK: (to COLIN) Which way's the main road?

COLIN: It's that way. East.

BECCA: Through the bedroom, out the French doors.

COLIN: There's a gap in the hedge that'll take you where you want to go.

JACK: All right, good. Bye, Becca. Bye, April.

APRIL: Nice meeting you, Jack. If you ever need a favor.

BECCA: Goodbye, Jack. Give de Kooning another chance.

JACK: Rosalie, stay out of prison, OK?

ROSALIE: OK. If I can. It was great meeting you, Jack!

(JACK exits in the direction of the bedroom. Pause.)

ROSALIE: Dad, I have to say, that was fairly amazing.

BRANCH: Is he gone? I can't tell.

BECCA: Yes, Branch, he's gone.

BRANCH: Are you sure?

BECCA: We're sure.

BRANCH: I never thought we'd see the end of him. (*slapping pockets*) Oh God, he must have taken my phone.
Becca, can I use yours?

BECCA: Why, who are you going to call?

BRANCH: My bank. The police. No, first the police. Then the bank.

BECCA: Colin? How do you feel about that?

BRANCH: What do you mean, how does Colin feel? That man terrorized me. He humiliated me. In front of my two dearest friends in the world. Whose careers I've always envied and whose marriage I've always revered.... Is that why I was trying to destroy it? Maybe. Was Becca simply acting out your sex talk? That's possible too.... Me, I can't talk and have sex at the same time. Ask Becca. I never make a sound. (*exits toward bedroom, then backtracks in terror*) Jesus God Almighty.

(MOSES and JACK enter.)

MOSES: (*to BRANCH*) You recognize me, punk?

JACK: Moses? It's dealt with. Let's get out of here.

MOSES: No way. I saw a patrol car.

JACK: That was the noise police. Where'd you leave the car?

MOSES: Pamet Road. Where I let you off.

JACK: (*to the others*) We're going now.

COLIN: (*showing gun*) One moment please.

MOSES: Who the fuck is this?

JACK: This is Colin. It's his house. He's OK. He's a good man.

MOSES: He's a shrink?

JACK: Yeah, he's a shrink.

MOSES: A shrink with a pistol? Is this a new kind of therapy?

COLIN: (*to JACK*) So you're not a widow after all.

MOSES: (*to JACK*) Dog, is that what you told them?

JACK: I may have implied it.

MOSES: You been telling these people I'm a faggot.

JACK: Moses? Calm down. (*to COLIN*) If I'd said he was only nuts, you wouldn't have listened.

MOSES: A crazy faggot?

JACK: Send him back to prison, he will hang himself. He came this close.

MOSES: A crazy dead faggot. That's what you told them.

(BRANCH *stifles a laugh—more scream than giggle.*)

MOSES: You think this is funny? What's wrong with him?

APRIL: Same thing that happened to you, Moses.

COLIN: He had a taste of your drugs.

MOSES: Shit. You poor motherfucker.

(MOSES *sits next to BRANCH, takes his pulse.*)

MOSES: Too fast to count. How's your mouth, is it dry? How about the walls, are they breathing?

BRANCH: Just the paintings.

MOSES: Can you hear the fish talking?

BRANCH: Not yet. Are you real? Or just a very stable hallucination?

MOSES: You tell me. You're the doctor.

(BRANCH *covers and uncovers his eyes.*)

BRANCH: You're here. You're not in jail.

MOSES: I paid my way out.

BRANCH: I got you your parole.

MOSES: You burned out my caudate nucleus.

BRANCH: There's no evidence for that.

MOSES: (*to the others*) He's a liar like a snake. He said he'd keep me from urging after teenage girls. Why not put the saltpeter in the Coca Cola, if that's your goal in life.

BRANCH: *(to COLIN)* Tell him to leave me alone. Please. I'm fibrillating.

MOSES: With nipples like that she could've passed for thirty.

BRANCH: Colin, do something.

MOSES: What's the matter, you having trouble breathing? *(to BECCA)* Are you the lady of the house?

BECCA: Yes. That's me.

MOSES: Are you a shrink too?

BECCA: No, I'm a painter.

MOSES: A painter, huh. Take it from me, don't ever go to prison. You lose all your depth perception.

BECCA: Really? Why?

MOSES: The walls! They're all up in your face!

BECCA: Oh! Right! No horizon line!

MOSES: You try living with no horizons! *(to BRANCH)* And you, motherfucker, you made me lose my words.

APRIL: Moses, what meds are you taking now?

MOSES: That old black magic, Mellaril. Why?

APRIL: And how's that doing you?

MOSES: Treats me like shit. Have we met? You remind me of my grandma.

APRIL: In what way do I remind you of your grandma?

MOSES: You have kind eyes, and a beautiful heart. You're not a painter.

APRIL: No, I'm a therapist.

MOSES: You treat ghosts? You got any ghost patients? *(to JACK)* You shouldn't have told them I was dead. That shit's predictive, son. *(to BECCA)* What?

BECCA: I didn't say anything.

MOSES: (to JACK) What did she say?

JACK: Moses, she didn't say anything.

MOSES: "Why is this *shvuggie* in my house?"

BECCA: I didn't say that. I don't even know what a *shvuggie* is.

MOSES: Somebody was thinking it. (to BRANCH) You heard it, didn't you?

BRANCH: Yes. It wasn't me.

MOSES: (to APRIL) You?

APRIL: I picked up some Yiddish, but that's a new one on me.

MOSES: (to COLIN) You?

COLIN: Sit down, please.

MOSES: You gonna shoot me with that puny little gun?

COLIN: If I have to.

BRANCH: For God's sake somebody call the police!

JACK: Moses, take it easy. This guy got us our money.

MOSES: Dog, that's not all we came for.

(MOSES *swivels on* BRANCH. BRANCH *recoils*.)

BRANCH: Colin?!

MOSES: No worries. I'm good with virgins. Tell him, Jack.

JACK: He's good.

BRANCH: (to MOSES) Please no.

MOSES: Take off your clothes.

BRANCH: Colin!!

MOSES: (*to ROSALIE*) Hide your eyes, little girl.

(BRANCH *closes his eyes, starts to undress.*)

BRANCH: Colin, don't let him hurt me. OK. Time for full disclosure.

MOSES: You're not a virgin.

BRANCH: Depends on the meaning of virgin. Half the boys in my school were masturbating each other. I was 12. I was scrawny for my age. I loved uniforms. Locomotives. Bicycle pumps. I didn't take showers because I was ashamed of my hardon. My penis betrayed me.

MOSES: Wanta compare dicks?

BRANCH: That's OK.

MOSES: Afraid you'll get hard?

BRANCH: Yes.

MOSES: Time to overcome your fears.

(MOSES *unzips.*)

BECCA: Colin, stop him.

COLIN: What do you want me to do, shoot it?

BRANCH: Yes!

BECCA: Rosybee, don't look.

ROSALIE: Mom, I've seen Trevor's, OK?

(MOSES *looms over* BRANCH.)

MOSES: You gonna stop them experiments?

BRANCH: (*terrified*) Yes. OK.

MOSES: Or I come back, fuck you so hard you'll be jizzing out your nose.

BRANCH: I'll stop.

MOSES: Drugs don't cure shit. Any more than Advil cures a brain tumor. Drugs are a hoax on the human race. Truth comes by blows.

BRANCH: I promise. Please.

MOSES: You can't wipe us out. No matter what science you dream up. *(re ROSALIE)* You know why this girl's scarifying herself?

BRANCH: She's not my daughter. She's their daughter.

MOSES: She wants to be one with the poor. All that shit's coming back. Mark my words, motherfucker.

(A squawk from a police siren—the sound of a patrol car trying to barrel its way through traffic.)

MOSES: Fuck is that. *(pointing to his head)* Was that here or was that there?

(JACK goes to the window.)

JACK: Which of you called the cops?

BECCA: I didn't call anybody.

JACK: *(to BRANCH)* You?

BRANCH: No! You have my phone!

APRIL: I've been here the whole time.

JACK: Oh Colin. And I thought you were my friend.

ROSALIE: It wasn't Dad.

JACK: How do you know?

ROSALIE: It was Trevor.

JACK: What do you mean, it was Trevor.

ROSALIE: *(to COLIN and BECCA)* Trevor's worried you're gonna lock me up in boarding school and he'll never see me again. He makes these prank calls all the time.

(Another siren squawk.)

JACK: Colin? It's your call, my friend.

COLIN: Go on. Get out. Both of you.

BRANCH: Colin, this is insane.

JACK: Moses? Say goodbye.

MOSES: Bye, Grandma. Where were you when I needed you?

APRIL: Kissing white ass. (*gives him business card*) Call me. I'd like to help you if I can.

JACK: Next time we're in town. Goodbye all.

(*JACK hustles MOSES out. A stunned pause. COLIN takes a handkerchief out of his pocket.*)

BRANCH: Colin, for the love of God.

COLIN: Why, what would you have done, Branch?

BRANCH: I don't know. Something. Anything. At least fire a shot, let people know what's going on. Well, we know what to do now.

BECCA: Do we?

BRANCH: What, you didn't buy that ridiculous psycho act? You heard them. They're lovers. I could tell. Homos like that, they'd say anything to protect each other. (*to COLIN, who's wiping the gun with the handkerchief*) What are you doing? Don't do that. That's evidence. It's got his prints. Oh Jesus, forget it, I'm calling my bank.

APRIL: Branch, I wouldn't do that if I were you.

BRANCH: Why not?

COLIN: The criminal brain, after all. Didn't you see the look on the man's face?

BRANCH: His look when?

APRIL: When he was threatening to devirginate you.

BRANCH: God yes. It was beautiful.

COLIN: Is your life worth 20 thousand dollars?

BRANCH: I think I see your point.

APRIL: It's not going to break you.

BRANCH: I can afford it.

COLIN: You have your own show.

BRANCH: I have my own show.

(Doorbell rings--from the direction of the kitchen.)

BRANCH: What should I do, Colin? Tell me.

COLIN: I'll say it was a false alarm. Rosalie's friend panicked. The police know he's unstable.

BRANCH: Right. So. That's that. Rosalie? Good luck with your court date. April, no hard feelings I trust. Colin, I meant everything I said. I envy you and I always will. Becca, we'll always have Spring Lake. *(digs in pocket)* Oh Jesus.

BECCA: What's the matter?

BRANCH: Oh Christ. Oh shit.

BECCA: Branch, what is it?

BRANCH: He took my keys. They've taken my Lamborghini. That fucking tears it.

(BRANCH bolts out the door to the patio. BECCA scoops up his clothes, starts after him.)

BECCA: Branch! Wait!

(A cell phone rings from inside the drawer. BECCA flings BRANCH's clothes onto the patio. Everybody goes for the drawer—it's COLIN's phone.)

BECCA: Who is it?

COLIN: Three guesses. She'll keep calling.

(COLIN *pockets his phone. Commotion is building, off.* ROSALIE *grabs her cell out of the drawer and exits in a hurry.*)

BECCA: Colin, you were magnificent.

COLIN: I thought I rose to the occasion.

BECCA: That man would have died in prison.

COLIN: You believed them.

BECCA: I wanted to believe them.

COLIN: No, you just wanted to paint them.

BECCA: I'd like to paint you the way you look now.

COLIN: How do I look?

BECCA: Heroic. Like David's (*Dah-veed's*) Napoleon.

COLIN: Wasn't David's Napoleon on horseback?

BECCA: Oh right. OK, without the horse. And the three-cornered hat. Maybe with your Browning .25? Colin?

(ROSALIE *enters.*)

ROSALIE: They're OK.

COLIN: What do you mean, they're OK? Who's OK?

ROSALIE: Jack took everything—Branch's keys, his phone, his checkbook, and his wallet.

APRIL: And how do we know that?

ROSALIE: Branch tried to give the cops his I.D.

BECCA: His I.D.?

ROSALIE: Jack's I.D.

BECCA: Oh. (*at window*) Ohmigod. Colin, they're arresting Branch.

ROSALIE: Yes!

COLIN: Are they? Oh well.

BECCA: No, but they're actually cuffing him. Colin?

COLIN: Yes, what about it?

BECCA: In his condition? Shouldn't we say something?

(COLIN's cell rings. He answers.)

BECCA: I guess a night in jail won't do him any harm....

COLIN: *(on phone)* Hello, Natalie...It's both of you, ah good....Yes, I can talk now....Do I what? Do I think Ryan has a future in politics? As what?....Right...Two orgiasts in the Governor's Mansion, that might actually be refreshing.... Right....Uh huh...

(ROSALIE's cell has rung. Overlapping:)

ROSALIE: *(on phone)* Trevor, it's OK, I couldn't call you. This ex-con guy took us hostage and his psycho friend showed up...

COLIN: *(on phone)* ...Yes, Natalie, I hear you, and now it's my turn to talk. You and Ryan are beyond the reach of current therapeutic knowledge. I am sick and tired of putting Aphrodite and Narcissus on the couch....Look it up.

ROSALIE: ...No, that was my mom's lover who got arrested... I got the video on my phone, I'm sending it to you...

(ROSALIE exits toward the kitchen, working her cell.)

BECCA: April, what am I going to do. We've been so oblivious.

APRIL: There's a cure for that.

BECCA: Oh please, what is it?

APRIL: Try paying attention.

COLIN: (*on phone*)No, I'm not abandoning you. I'm referring you to my colleague, Dr. Maxwell. She has experience with cases of your type, she's a star in her own right....But her fees are much higher than mine...Hold on, I'll ask her if she has an hour. (*to APRIL, who's retrieving her cell phone*) They're yours if you want them.

APRIL: I think I can handle them.

COLIN: She says yes. Goodbye to you both, and I hope I never speak to you again.

(COLIN *hands his cell to APRIL.*)

APRIL: This is Dr. Maxwell, to whom am I speaking?....Right...Right... Why do you think you're fighting so much? (*going*) Maybe because you're both acting like a pair of nitwits?....That's right. The rules have changed. If the shoe fits, Dr. Maxwell's gonna make you wear it...

(APRIL *exits toward the patio.*)

BECCA: Can you ever forgive me, Colin?

COLIN: You told Branch about our sex talk.

BECCA: I was bragging, actually.

COLIN: And how was he in the sack?

BECCA: Oh God. Why are men so interested in that?

COLIN: Penis envy.

BECCA: Oh dear.

COLIN: Mommy loves us, then leaves us for the bigger man.

BECCA: He wasn't bigger.

COLIN: I was talking about Dad.

BECCA: Right. I knew that.

COLIN: Life for us men is Paradise Lost. That's why we invented melodrama. Things go well, then they go badly. Things go badly, then they go well. And the sun always shines in the end....

(COLIN *takes BECCA in his arms. ROSALIE enters from the patio, deep in conversation.*)

ROSALIE: (*on phone*) ... I'm rethinking the whole court date thing. This guy Jack warned me against Juvy and I don't think they'd let us room together anyway.

(COLIN *and BECCA kiss.*)

ROSALIE: (*on phone*) Yeah, well, I don't know about Amsterdam either....This cop saw me in my disguise, he said "Hi Rosalie." We'd never make it off the Cape...

(COLIN *and BECCA have started to dance. ROSALIE stops talking, watches. Then:*)

ROSALIE: No worries, dude, we're gonna be OK. (*then*) Trevor, I know you're disappointed...Take off the dress, meet me in five at Taco Bell.

(ROSALIE *starts to go, stops, turns up the volume on the stereo and exits toward the patio. COLIN and BECCA dance as the lights fade to black.*)

END OF PLAY