

BLIND DOGS AT THE MEAT HOUSE DOOR

CM Campbell
14 Concord Avenue
Toronto, Ontario

BLIND DOGS AT THE MEAT HOUSE DOOR

ACT I SCENE ONE WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

SCENE TWO SO'S YOUR OLD MAN!

ACT II THE FAMILY THAT PRAYS TOGETHER.

TIME THE DAY OF FINAL JUDGEMENT

PLACE OUTSIDE THE COURTROOM DOOR

THE CHARACTERS

GRIFFITH GREYBURN

- Griff
 - the taxi driver - an aging hippy dressed in remnants of the era.
 - 30-ish
 - a wacko with a little method in his madness
 - a militant non-believer
 - an existensualist

MICHELLE SKINNER

- Miki
 - the scientist-30-ish
 - smartly dressed in a business/academic style; glasses
 - graduate engineer and MBA
 - obsessive about her professional skills and scientific management
 - sceptical of "men" in the best feminist tradition but not above sexual ~~cunning~~ cunning
 - she approaches Judgement as an experiment in good management

PHYLLIS MARSHALL

- Phyllis
 - the social worker
 - 50 - 60
 - greying hair in a bun
 - sensible clothes favoured by her sort
 - perpetually concerned and smiling though the things she says are less than friendly
 - selfrightous and believes in her final reward
 - a failed romantic

DIXON GRAND

- Grand
 - the President
 - 50 - 60 - balding - commanding elegantly dressed in a business suit
 - the arrogance of those with real power - the quintessence of smooth a well-cultivated manner of speaking with 'the people' as if he shared their concerns
 - a lady's man
 - concerned for his place in "history"

SAMUEL CORONA

- the old lawyer
- 60
- gorgeous silver hair and flamboyant dress; ~~and~~ cynic's cynic

ROBERT BURNS

- Bobby
 - the young lawyer
 - a "jock lawyer" concerned most for his win/loss record - smart but inexperienced
 - a farm boy from Iowa; college football star; short tempered;

ACT I

SCENE ONE

What Are You Doing Here?

The Scene:

A pair of opaque glass doors centre stage bear the words FINAL JUDGEMENT - ROOM 26. The rest of the backdrop is a nondescript corridor, walls painted institutional yellow or green. There are two benches, one on either side of the door.

As lights go up we see Miki carefully examining everything making notations on her clipboard.

Griff enters unnoticed by her. He follows her around, posing. She ignores him until he is unavoidable.

Miki Thanks, but no thanks.

Griff I haven't even asked you yet.

Miki I know the question.

Griff But I'm terrific!

Miki Why should I believe it!

Starting to take off his pants.

Griff I'll show you.

Miki gestures that he stop, slightly amused.

Miki Alright, I believe you.

Griff Great, let's go to my place.

Miki We can't go anywhere. Not now.

Griff This'll be boring. Let's go right now. Before the spooks get here. I'm more fun.

Miki This is important!

Griff Ah, come on! Don't believe it!

Miki Why not? There has to be a day of reckoning. What do you believe?

Griff In the redeeming power of great orgasms.

Miki looks at him disapprovingly.

I get it. I'll be more intellectual. (Griff re-arranges himself.) My approach is existential.

Miki So what are you doing here?

Griff I came looking for chicks.

Miki Do you even understand what an existentialist is?

Griff I don't understand anything. That's why I'm an existentialist.

Miki Existentialists believe life is ultimately meaningless.

Griff That's it!

Miki What if you're wrong and there is a God? What'll you do?

Griff I'll repent. Why not? I once won a long shot at Hyalea.

Miki God won't listen now.

Griff What kind of a dad is that!

Miki I don't think you know what you've got yourself into.

Griff Hey, I'm meaningless, not dumb. I've got a whole theory.

 Why don't we go back to my place and I'll tell you all
 about it. O. K? (She refuses)

(Griff turns his back to Miki and takes a set of index
note cards from his pocket.)

It's really good.

He checks the meaning of Final Judgement/
Existential, then turns back to Miki and says:)

We believe Final Judgement as a process arises from the
inherent contradiction of meaninglessness and nothingness
transformed at the moment of death which requires the
distillation of life into its essence. This in itself denies
meaninglessness and nothingness in the context of finite
time. Right? However in infinite time this apparent
transcendence of man's meaningless condition is but the
occasion for the ultimate triumph of limitless absurdity.
(Pause) I think. (Pause) Wouldn't you agree? (Pause)
Come with me the casbah. We have so little time!

Miki We have infinite time.

Griff You were listening too close.

Miki Habit.

Griff Did you go to Harvard? (Pause) It ruined your mind. Too
 much Ralph Nader and not enough fucking.

Phyllis enters.

Phyllis Griffith, dear, why don't you leave the nice young lady
 alone.

Griff Hark. Do I hear the whining cry of a yellow-bellied moral
 platitudinist?

Phyllis Yes darling, it's me.

Miki (to Phyllis) Do you know him?

Phyllis Thoroughly. From birth. (indicating 18" with her hands)
This thick.
 Miki doesn't comprehend.
His file. I've handled his case from the beginning.
 Miki nods in comprehension, and moves to sit with
 Phyllis. Griff grabs her away.

Griff Don't let her touch you. It won't come off for a week.
Phyllis My powerful moral influence? It never stuck to you more
 than ten minutes.

Griff I'd go out and roll in fresh cow pies after every visit.
 Enter Dixon Grand and Samuel Corona. They survey
 the scene. Corona seems to recognize Phyllis.

Corona Ah, Miss Marshall, you've come on ahead. All set for the
big day?

Phyllis These young people were saying their case comes up today
as well. You didn't tell me that!

Corona What can I say? I don't make up the schedule.
Phyllis Will there be time?
Corona Let's not worry about that now. Come and meet my other
client.
 Grand approaches.
Phyllis Marshall, I'd like to present Dixon Grand.
 Long pause as they eye each other-unspoken
 recognition.

Phyllis I believe we've met.
Grand I have that feeling too.
Corona Well, allow me to say the obvious...It is my great honour
to present Mr. Dixon Grand, the distinguished former
Commander of Allied Forces in the Western Perimeter, and
of course, our beloved President for oh so many years.
And Mr. President, this is Phyllis Marshall, salt of the
earth, friend of the friendless, the senior social worker, at
the Casework Institute of Philadelphia.

Griff (to Mike) Better known as Tits of Steel.

Corona I want to say this is one of the highlights of my career, having two such clients, on a single day.

Grand Was it politics, my dear lady? I hope you'll forgive me if I don't remember.

Phyllis is silent.

Griff dramatically butts in.

Griff No need to be shy, Mr. President. Griff's the name. Griff Greyburn.

Grand Have we met?

Griff Sure. Sure. In Washington. Remember me, "Bong the Cong", "Hell, no, we won't go". I came down with some friends to visit you in the Big House.

Grand I hope you won't be offended son, but I don't recall the face...of course your name is on file.

Griff I thought Phyllis had my file.

Phyllis We share.

Griff (to Grand) This is Miki Skinner. A really great little girl engineer. So hands off.

Grand I'm charmed. The test driver in Nadar's last Pinto car crash. A dedicated lady.

Miki Nice to be noticed.

Griff I write poetry.

Grand Chicago Bio-engineering '73. Harvard MBA '75. Feminist socialist.

Miki Your files are quite good.

Griff This is worse than I thought.

Grand I've always been interested in your generation. The idealism of youth is food for the soul.

Griff That line never got me anywhere.

Miki You're not the President.

Grand

(to Miki, with snobbish glances to Griff) I enjoyed certain aspects of the beatnick culture. Marijuana was amusing. But the beatniks never did anything. But, you, young lady, you seem like a more practical sort of person. I knew Ralph, of course. Not much "fun"....if you know what I mean.

he starts to lead Miki off to one side when Burns strides in, clip board in hand, tie loosened. He speaks to Corona ignoring the others.

Burns

Hey Corona, you old Fag.....

He takes Corona by the hand as if to shake hands. Instead they start indian wrestling. Corona isn't at all surprised. It is obviously their customary form of greeting. Despite his age Corona is no push over for the younger Burns, though he is eventually overcome. Their conversation while they wrestle is full of grunts etc.

Corona

Morning, you muscle bound meathead

Burns

I'm going to whip your ass so bad old man....

the others watch in amazement

Corona

Need more than deltoids to beat me kid.

Burns

I've got it!

Corona yields

Ah ... Wew ... You're not bad, for a greasy old turd. How many ya got? I'm on for two. Give me eight to five and you're in for twenty. (looking at his clip board) Skinner & Greyburn. Who's pitching. St. Pete? or Mother Mary? Boy is she a ball buster.

Corona

Bobby I'd like you to meet my client for today....Dixon Grand.

Burns

(snappy to attention) Mr. President, Sir.

Corona

Mr. President, I should like to present Mr. Robert Burns. (aside to the President) He from Legal Aid. All-American running back, two times, from Iowa State.

Burns (reverentially) Mr. President.
Grand Nothing made me happier, son, than carrying Iowa the day after you carried against Purdue. We're soul mates.
Burns (reverentially) Mr. President.
Corona You can call him Bobby. That's his name around here.
Burns Bob.
Grand Bobby.
Burns Mr. President.
Grand Just call me Dick. I'm not the President anymore. I'm just one of God's children like all the rest.
Griff Shiiiiiiiit!
Whispering ferociously and contemptuously.
Kiss his ass! Kiss his ass!
Burns stands dazed and in awe.
Corona Bobby, this is Miss Skinner. And this is Mr. Greyburn. Your clients. Remember.
Miki She and Griff rush him off to one side of the stage. Are you for real? Are you really a lawyer?
Griff You really were going to kiss his ass!
Burns No I wasn't! I mean....the President! Have you ever seen the President before? I was just pretending. I'm great on faking stuff.
Corona From the other side of the stage where he is conferring silently with his clients.
Better hurry Bobby, we go in for pre-trial conference in three minutes. Don't be late.
Burns Yes sir, yes sir.
Burns puts arms around Griff and Miki as in a huddle. Burns is trying to get his act together - the jock lawyer
O.K. team, we can take him! I'm not afraid of the President. We'll eat him raw. I get to cross-examine the President. Me. Robert Burns from Culver Creek, Iowa. I get to cross-examine the President.

Griff Ask him about the war.

Miki And the ERA.

Burns What's the ERA?

Miki I'm not feeling well.

Burns I'll do alright, really. Hey, I'm first string stuff. You'll see. So who's the lady? Do you guys know who the lady is?

Miki She's a social worker.

Burns Shit! This is the third time Corona's got the social worker and I got the hippy. Shit. We gotta start handicapping. I might as well tell you, a social worker is bad news. Social workers were four out of five in the last week. That's 80% in a fifty-two percent week!

Miki So what! Each case on its merits. Justice is justice.

Burns You're cute when you "demand justice." But it's not like you read in the books. I sure wish you and me had more time.

Griff ~~She~~he worked for Ralph Nader.

Burns Ralph Nader couldn't get in here for three minutes to give candy to his grandmother. Who needs the trouble? Eh! Who needs it!

Miki We've had complaints that the cubicles don't meet the minimum standards. ~~I know, we've been researching.~~ Furthermore our garbage tests show that the food is one third artificial filler with nutrition on average 23% less than minimum necessary for average person over fifty-eight.

Griff She came prepared. Aren't you glad she didn't bring Ralph.

Burns Aw, shit, lady, not today. Not with Mr. President. And a social worker. Look, if you want to make speeches you go right ahead, but I'm telling you, you'll go straight to hell. They don't like trouble makers around here. We don't have time!

Miki I thought you'd want to know that. About the cubicles.
Don't you care?

Burns No I don't care! I'm not hired to care about the size of
the cubicles! We don't have time for that kind of bullshit.

Miki Time! But this whole thing has to take time! How can
you cross-examine the President in ten minutes. Just to
review the tapes will take three months.

Burns We don't have time for the tapes.

Miki I'm ... I'm ...

Griff You've upset her! She's here for ultimate justice. I'll bet
she's doing a report on you right now.

Burns Look, the average trial is forty-five minutes. The Statistics
say that nobody, nobody, who took more than two hours
ever, ever, got in.

Miki But that's impossible!

Burns He's a busy guy.

Griff Wanta go back to my place.

Miki It's ... It's arbitrary and unprofessional. He won't know
all the facts. This is no way to make important admission
decisions!

Burns Who says you're important. Here, fill in this form.

Miki But how can you do it? Don't you have any professional
pride.

Burns What can I say? I take cold showers. I work on my
delivery. I'll make Senior Counsel. Where in my contract
does it say I have to care?

Miki Is this what you learned in law school?

Burns I played football. Two Rose Bowls.

Griff (mocking to Miki) So there!

Burns So look, I gotta have some info. On these forms.
 He gives them forms and pencils. They sit and write.
 Who are you, where you're from, ... that kind of stuff.
 Last thoughts. Favourite movies.

Griff Do you want my best mantra?

Burns Write it down, jerk.

Griff Who's Mother Mary.

Burns Mary's a bitch. Plays real hardball. Sent some Mexican
 clients of mine right to the Pit last week. Boy, was I
 pissed. I think she personally hates me. No shit. She did
 it to spoil my average. There is no other good reason.
 (to Griff) Keep your fingers out of your nose if she's on
 your case today. Look just fill in these forms ... I
 gotta get going don't forget number eight
 extenuating circumstances and personal disabilities. Last
 week I got a convicted rapist in because he had the
 heartbreak of poriasis. You never know, you never know.

Miki What are the rules?

Burns They're out of print. You'll be alright. You've got tits.
 Griff and Michelle fill out forms; Burns watches them
 like a teacher;

 Centre stage doors open; loud creaking, Burns and
 Corona come to attention. Motion the others to do
 the same. They all do, except Griff, who sits defiantly
 sprawled out and insolent. Jason comes out, an old
 man with a long white beard, the court attendant.

Jason Are you gentlemen ready now? St. Peter will see you in
 his chambers.

Burns Relax everybody. It's only Jason. He's okay. Hey, Jason,
 ~~is Mother Ma~~ Hey, Jason, is Mother Mary with him? Is
 she there? Is she dressed for Court?

Jason She's in there. But I didn't see whether she was putting
 on her court gown.

Burns What did the old guy have for breakfast?

Jason Oatmeal. Grapefruit juice. Toast with honey. Two coffees with cream, no sugar.

Burns (to Griff and Miki) Alright! I've been doing 65% on the days he has grapefruit juice. But keep your fingers crossed it's not the mother.

Corona (to Jason) Splendid. Tell Mother Mary and St. Pete we will be there as soon as Mr. Burns is finished interviewing his clients for the first time.

Burns Don't tell them that! Tell them we're waiting for Corona to stop pulling his bone.

Jason I'll tell them you will be along momentarily.
exit through door, closed behind him

Grand (cooly, to Corona) So what's all this about?

Corona Well, the usual procedure is that we go for a pretrial conference with the prosecutor before Court starts. To discuss things.

Burns Are you guys done with the forms? Jesus, hurry. I gotta go in.

Miki I knew it! What do you mean, "to discuss things"? Plea bargaining?

Griff What's happening man?

Burns Just give me the forms.

Miki (to Burns) You're not going to make any deals, are you?

Burns We're just going to talk. We always talk. Pete tells us what he's thinking. We all look at the forms.

Griff (still working on his form) How do you spell guru?

Miki No deals!

Corona You're making a mountain out of a molehill.

Burns (to Griff) Gimme the form! (to Miki) We do it all the time. It's the only way we can finish all the cases.

Miki No deals!

Burns We're just goin' talk. Like we always do. Don't make trouble. Are you some kind of feminist?

Phyllis Is that bad?

Burns

(impatiently) Gimme the fuckin' forms, dammit! I gotta go! Gimme the forms!

He takes them from Griff and Miki

Burns and Corona pull open centre doors with a loud creak, and exit through the door pulling it shut behind them. Long silence. Grand comes centre stage, lights dim except on him, he arranges himself to make a speech, as if talking to an audience - a small group, not a large group. He is nervous.

Grand

Our final question then is a complex one. How well did this man serve history. Yes, history, not his country, or his party, or his religion, or his ideals, or his friends, or art, or truth. But history. And only history can judge history. This is a difficult problem because we must rise above specific disagreements over mere politics, above individual loyalties, above petty moralisms. It is said, for example, that Grand was corrupt in election practices. Now you may look into that. You may find it true or not. I say it doesn't matter. I say in the eyes of history it is nothing. They say that Grand did nothing for the oppressed. Or that he oppressed the oppressed. I ask - did he do anything different than destiny dictated and history commanded? They say that Grand fought unjust wars. But, I ask you what is an unjust war? Winners never complain of unjust wars, only losers. Wars happen, heroes perish. I just happened to be the leader at the time. I did my job. Was that wrong? I did my job well. Is that not honourable? But what is history, you ask, to stand astride justice, and morality and dwarf the certainty of right and wrong. The answer to this, is I submit, self evident. History is those of us who are remembered. At this moment, right now, at final judgement, what else matters? Blessed may be the just and the moral, but who

cares if they are forgotten. We are the immortals. And how can Heaven survive through all eternity without the immortals. It is we who will be remembered, not its empty chambers and golden arches. I am not unfriendly to the simple folk. I am even a modest man, it's just that I have been touched by destiny. Perhaps you didn't like my policy on Afganistan, or Korea, or nuclear power. I ask you to recognize that that is not important. I alone embody the spirit of the age, our hopes and dreams, our values and our genius. I alone can symbolize these things in the dark nights of the future. The simple truth is that Heaven needs me. And I say that not because I seek its minor luxuries for all eternity, but because it is my duty, I am the reminder. (pause)

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. (pause)

I think that will do it. Right to the point. (wandering off stage.) I hear he's going senile. The administration has been very shaky recently.

Lights out. End Scene 1.

- 13 -

SCENE TWO

So's Your Old Man!

Lights up; Griff pacing nervously on one side of the stage; Phyllis sits calmly knitting on the other; suddenly Griff rushes over.

Griff (imploring) So you don't need to tell Miki.
Phyllis But, dearest, she'll find out soon enough.
Griff Don't call me dearest.
Phyllis Griffith, I like you ^{but only as a} ~~as a~~ person. ~~even when you're rude.~~
I dislike ~~only~~ your manners - which are bad all the time.
Griff So don't tell Miki about my mom!
Phyllis She was a dear lady. But she just couldn't keep you. It doesn't mean she didn't love you.
Griff Why don't you let me and Miki work that out.
Phyllis Miki and I, you mean.
Griff No, I don't mean you two, I mean us two.
Phyllis But don't you think she and I could work it out better than you and she?
Griff Shut up! Please pretend you don't know me.
Phyllis I'd be delighted if no one here ever found out about our - what shall we call it - our relationship. They might think I'm responsible for your atrocious manners and vulgar language. But, dear boy, this is the day of reckoning.
Griff You love it, don't you? Don't you? Admit it!
Phyllis Why yes, it does give one a certain sense of grim satisfaction.
Griff But aren't you nervous?
Phyllis Of what?
Griff What if the old guy doesn't like you?
Phyllis Don't be silly. He'll like me. I'm a social worker!
Enter Grand and Miki from stage right.
Griff Where have you two been?
Miki Talking politics.
Grand She is such a charming idealist. A rare quality - in a scientist.
Corona Bobby Bobby Hurry.
Burns enters. Groups form - each lawyer reporting to his clients.

Burns I'll tell you straight out, you trust me, right? I'm your lawyer, right?

Griff Out with it little guy!

Burns They'll take three out of four.

Griff What do you mean they'll take three out of four!

Miki It's a deal!

Burns It's a good deal. It's good. It's been 62% last six months. Three out of four is good.

Corona Very interesting discussion Mr. President. It seems because of scheduling problems they're prepared to "make a deal" St. Peter said - and I wouldn't want it to go any further than this group -

Phyllis Confidence is my only business.

Corona He said that if we guarantee to finish the four cases on today's list by one o'clock then they'll agree to three out of four.

Grand Three out of four?

Burns Any three. That helps you, Griffith.

Corona They don't even care which three. As long as they're finished by one.

Grand Golf?

Corona We should be so lucky. No, just a heavy day tomorrow.

Miki Which three?

Burns They don't care. Any three.

Miki They don't care!

Griff We could have had more fun at my place!

Miki But I thought justice was thorough and meticulous.

Phyllis What do you mean they don't care?

Corona They have a very busy day tomorrow. Two busloads of worker priests, and nuns. They're afraid there might be a spot of trouble, if you know what I mean.

Phyllis Of course, I know what you "mean". But do you "mean" that we draw names out of a hat? Does Griffith get to put his name in my hat?

Miki How do we decide - the one with the freshest breath?

Griff Let's smell.
Miki Get away.
Burns Three out of four is the best deal I've had in six weeks.
Don't complain.
Grand Isn't this rather arbitrary?
Corona To be perfectly frank, yes, I agree, Mr. President. Mind
you, it must get awfully boring, day after day, apologies
and excuses, you know.
Phyllis I won't be boring.
Griff The only time.
Burns Mary says she wants to know at a quarter to ten who'll
take the rap. Or else the deal is off. She'll have a trial
for everybody. You all could get the pit.
Griff (laughing) The pit!
Burns Yes, the pit. That's what we call it.
- as if reading a travel brochure -
"A precipitous descent through a jungle of barb wire and
broken glass, choking with sulphur fumes, through seven
concentric circles of filth to an inner burning bog of stench
and despair. Tormented by betrayed lovers and forgotten
friends. Forever until eternity to labor at fulfilling broken
promises and beg forgiveness for things that might have
been."
Corona Very good, Bobby.
to the others; like a snake oil salesman
Any volunteers? Yes folks, take a look around. If you
know you're out-classed ... why not save us all some time.
long silence
Miki Miki
takes her by the arms to a few steps away from the
group
I've been thinking. You're a very accomplished and
emphatic young woman. And very attractive too, if you'll
permit me. Very professional - and I respect that, believe
me.
Miki I only want what's fair.

Corona

Trust me. I have learned something growing old ... You won't be happy in "there". I know it. It's all tea parties and croquet. Nobody wants anything. They'd be grateful to be a doormat if God had shit on his boots.

You won't be able to ~~be~~ organize anything. Not even tea time. On the other hand the other place there's a real need for some expertise, a leader, organization. You'd be a great strength. And you could really make a name for yourself. Of course, it would be a little uncomfortable at first. But, hell, you could have the place air conditioned in no time.

Miki

I do hate tea. Do you really think I'd be unhappy? Is that what it's really like? A lot of satisfied upper crusters lazing around eating cakes and singing hymns.

Corona

Mitch Miller.

Miki

That's not what I expected.

Corona

It's not you! Sunsets and charades.

Griff

Don't believe it. It's electric waterbeds and rock'n'roll.

Miki (to Griff)

You don't even believe in it!

Griff

Yea, but I'm not gonna let the President take the big yellow pickle without a fight. I'm in for the full fifteen rounds.

Miki

Mr. Corona, your personal interest is touching. I'm moved. Truly I am. But I promised the National Committee I'd report on the cubicle problem. But anytime you want to try to sell me a dead skunk, feel free to speak your mind.

Burns

Nice try, you old greaseball.

Griff

I thought you were going to cop out there.

Miki

And leave you alone with Phyllis! No way. She needs protection.

Burns takes his turn at selling snake oil.

Burns

But what about you, Miss Marshall

Phyllis Me ...

Burns Ya, you. Have you thought about your responsibilities ...

Phyllis Whatever are you talking about?

Burns Your principles. Your values. Your professional training. I mean you're the only one among us fit to minister to the wretched and the damned. Think of the suffering, the squalor, disease, filth. You trained for it.

Phyllis Who's on staff down there?

Burns (feigning great surprise.) Hey, they're looking for a new director.

Phyllis Really.

Burns Ya. They're an Equal Opportunity Employer. The next director has to be a woman.

Phyllis Really. Does the director have separate quarters?

Burns Oh ya. Isn't that right Mr. Corona?

Corona barely gets out a word before Burns continues

Phyllis seems very interested

Corona Yes

Burns But I don't think you could cut it, Phyllis, I mean as much as I admire you. It's a pretty dirty job. It would be a lot to expect

Phyllis of an old woman! Is that what you were going to say? Is it?

Burns ... well

Phyllis (triumphantly - resuming her knitting) You're right young man. I couldn't handle it. But thank you for asking.

Corona (to Burns) She's smarter than she looks. What about the beatnick here? You're not serious about him, are you? He's got loser stamped all over him. Think of your average Bobby.

Griff Mr. Corona, sir, could I bite your leg?

Burns I'm not afraid of a trial, sir. I've got secret evidence - on the President.

Corona Oh, go on! If you don't have brains at least you've got spirit! What secret evidence? Mr. President's life is an open book, a testament of dedication to duty and justice. Isn't that right Mr. President?

Grand Absolutely.

Burns What have you got against Griff? He's just a stupid freak.

Griff A beatnick, damn it, not a stupid freak. I write poems.

Corona Nothing personal. I'm paid big money to get Mr. President and Phyllis inside. Somebody's gotta go. It's either him, or maybe Joan of Arc here. (motioning to Miki)

Burns Talk is cheap. Talk is cheap. This man can take you any time. Any time. Can't you Griff?

Griff Sure. Sure.

Burns Ask him a question? Go ahead. Ask him a question?

Griff sits on one bench and Corona stands to question him. The others sit or stand at the other bench watching.

Any question.

Corona Who are your parents?

Griff Hey, that's not a fair question.

Corona Please instruct the witness to answer the question.

Griff I don't need to answer the question.

Burns You have to answer the question.

Griff What kind of a lawyer are you? You let him ask me a question like that. I refuse.

Corona Into the firey pit.

Burns (shouting) Answer the queston!

Griff (humbled) My mother was Henrietta Westlake, and my father was Franklin Prendergast.

Burns So what's so bad about that? I never heard of them. I was expecting J. P. Morgan and Eleanor Roosevelt.

Phyllis What's wrong with Eleanor Roosevelt? She was a great lady.

Burns I didn't mean to suggest she was a lesbian, but thank you ma'am for expressing your concern. I'll remember that.

Corona So how did you feel about your parents, Griffith?

Griff I hated them.

Corona Need to hear any more Burns?

Phyllis Griffith, you didn't even know your parents.

Griff Who really knows their parents?

Corona and Burns change places. Burns berates his own client.

Burns So what! So what! So, he hated his parents. Big deal! Maybe they deserved it? They were drunks. They beat him. They sent him to a girls camp. Who knows.

Corona Try and tell that one to Big Daddy.

Burns (to Griff) Whatdaya mean, you hated your parents! Maybe she couldn't cook; maybe he was a democrat but you didn't hate them. What are you trying to do? Ruin my case? Nobody hates their parents.

Griff They're my parents!

Burns It's my case!

Corona He said it. Print it.

Burns What kind of a schmuck are you?

Griff I told you not to let him ask me the question.

Phyllis Excuse me, Mr. Burns, excuse me for interrupting. But I think I can help you.

 Phyllis crosses the stage and sits beside Griff.

Burns What can you do to help me, Miss Marshall?

Phyllis Well, this is my field of professional expertise.

Burns You're a pro, are you?

Griff She's a social worker, watch out.

Phyllis Oh, he doesn't bother me. I'm used to adolescent boys.

Griff I'm thirty-seven.

Phyllis I'm flexible. Besides, I rather like him.

Griff Holy shit. Where did I go wrong?

Corona Don't do them any favours, Phyllis.

Phyllis Duty calls, Mr. Corona. Duty calls. (to Griff as Burns makes notes) Do you hate all the mummies and daddies in the world, Griffith?

Griff You're not going to let her ask me questions, are you?

Burns Why not?

Phyllis I can save you from the firey pit.

Griff Where is the gate? I'll jump. I'll jump.

Phyllis (with syrupy kindness) No Griffith. You won't do that. We are your friends. We want you to stay. You really want to stay. You are only afraid to love. Do you hate me, Griffith?

Griff (a pause) I'm thinking.
Phyllis Can I be your mummy?
Griff No, no, no yes yes oh dear God a mummy.
Now I have a mummy. Take me. Take me.
Griff throws his arms around her but she has moved away, turning it off like well-schooled actor

Phyllis There you have it, Mr. Burns. Relatively simple case of perceived rejection, probably rooted in a difficult weening, a fanciful, rather than a reality based, oedipal transformation, and an hysterical overlay of millinarianism. A not uncommon conjuncture.

Griff Bitch!

Phyllis Is that any way to talk to your new mother?

Griff Slut.

Burns (to Phyllis) What do you call it again? (making notes)
Oedipal

Miki O - E - D - I

Griff You don't call it anything. She's not testifying for me.

Phyllis Who said I was testifying for you?

Burns I think it's terrific. A desperate psyche struggles for love, a tortured soul what matters the sins and crimes when at last there is this reconciliation that ultimate reunion mother's love I like it. Except he's thirty-seven.

Griff I look younger.

Phyllis Who's he going to be reunited with?

Burns Why you're his new mother.

Griff No way I'm going anywhere with that psychic whore.

Phyllis Mr. Burns, I only do this professionally. Taking this moronic twit in my lap for all eternity goes far beyond the call of duty, don't you think. Isn't it time for my reward?

Phyllis returns to her seat with the others

Griff Awww mummy, mummy, I want to come with you. Take me with you, mummy. I want you. Mummy, mummy, mummy.

Phyllis Griff pursues her stamping his feet in ^atemper tantrum. (blows her cool) Get away from me, you, you lazy scumbag. I hope you roast! Never worked an honest day in your life, never. Rotten little turd. Burn in hell. Get away from me. Don't touch me. Don't touch me.

 A long pause. All stare at Phyllis for her uncharacterist outburst.

Burns Extra! Extra! Social Worker Charged With Mercy Killing. Charred body found at Pearly Gates. Extra!! Extra!!

Corona That didn't make your case any easier.

Grand Phyllis, my dear, you have the charming knack of making motherhood seem as repulsive as possible.

Phyllis (recovering) (sarcastic) I have had assistance, Mr. President, from the most eminent sources.

Burns triumphant - (reads as from a transcript)
"Griffith: Awww, Mummy, mummy. I want to come with you. Take me with you, mummy. I want you. (Burns rendering of Griff's words is pleading and forelorne) Mummy, mummy, mummy. Miss Marshall: (Burns reads with great relish and sarcasm) Get away from me, you, you lazy scumbag. I hope you roast! Never worked an honest day. Never. Rotten little turd. Burn in hell. Get away from me. Don't touch me. Don't touch me." (pause - triumphant) Let's hear you explain that away, Mr. Corona.

Griff Got ya last, Phyllis.

Corona Your client was faking it. He didn't mean a word he said. We can all see that.

Burns What was your client doing?

Corona She was talking professionally.

Burns What you're saying is that she didn't mean a word she said. She was stringing him along.

Corona She's got a degree. He doesn't. It's therapy.

Griff That's it! That's it! He's got no respect. No respect. No more questions from him.

Lights suddenly down. Phyllis comes centre stage into the only spotlight. Folds her hands to a prayer position and kneels.

Phyllis

Dear Heavenly Father,

You can see I have less than the patience of Job. But when will these trials end! Imagine asking me to mother this cretmous drug-crazed hippy for one more moment! I am by profession even-tempered. I am a professional, looking after those less able. But now is the time, surely Lord, that this burden be lifted from me. It can not go on! I can not go on.

(standing)

Perhaps I should confess. I have lied! Quite often actually. White lies, of course. In line of duty. It was required, by the circumstances, as I know you understand. I was repensible for so many. They wanted to be happy. I had to be practical. But you know the problem. We are, after all, roughly in the same line of work.

Now, Heavenly Father, about Judgement. I wouldn't be so presumptuous to tell you how to do it. This group looks pretty easy anyhow. But I do wish you'd get it over with! If I have to smile patiently one more time I must say that I do feel I have earned my reward. I really don't understand about drawing lots. I shouldn't have to do that. After all I've done. Looking after all those people, Lord knows they couldn't look after themselves. Every appointment. Every visit. Always smiling. (She gives a forlorn meaningless smile) And kind. I can say it! I can. I was! (a pause; Phyllis becomes intensely emotional)

Dear Heavenly Father,

I believe there is a reward for me. I do! I've always trusted you. I've always looked after them. Now I want someone to look after me. I've earned it. I want someone to worry about me. And visit me. And smile at me, even

when they're tired and sick. (Phyllis becomes dreamy and in places almost tearful) And sit in the garden ... and grow dahlia's and drive to Carolina in the spring ... and a man to hold me when I'm old with strong hands to whisper to me by the fire and sit with me when I die Dear God I'm not so tough I don't need it I do I do

lights dim on Phyllis and brightens on the others, she resumes her place with the others in perfect composure. Phyllis takes a seat with Grand; lights up on the balance of the stage - Burns, effecting a Brooklyn street talk.

Burns So, Mr. President, why don't we go a couple 'a rounds for warm up a couple 'a questions wanta try'a a few shots? Whadda ya say, pal? Whadda ya say?

Grand What have you got in mind?

Burns Just a couple'a practice questions. Easy stuff. Just for fun. Whadda ya say?

Grand Alright.

Burns Alright!

Griff Alright!

Grand takes Griff seat alone on the bench. Griff sits with the others to watch.

Burns Burns drawing himself up to full height and pacing dramatically

Mr. President, where were you on the night of May 7, 1980?

date should be the actual date of the performance

Grand As I recall that was the night I died.

Burns (very sharp and cross) Don't be evasive, witness, I said where were you, not what you were doing.

Grand I was in a bed.

Burns Was it the conjugal bed, witness, or merely (with great scorn) a bed?

Corona Burns, this is garbage!

Burns dismisses him with a wave of the hand

Grand I don't remember.

Burns The witness doesn't remember!

Grand No.

Burns Well, will this help you remember!
thrusts a piece of paper under his nose.

Grand What's this.

Burns It is a paid receipt from Quik-Trip Ambulance Services for the removal of one dead body on the night of May 7, 1980 identified as Mr. President.

Grand That must be me.

Burns From the premises of one Amelia Amsterdam to One Pennsylvania Avenue. And who is Amelia Amsterdam?

Grand I thought this would be Afganistan.

Burns Who is Amelia Amsterdam?

Grand I why for some inexplicable reason that section of the tape seems to be blank.

Burns Let's give you the benefit of the doubt, witness. Let's say she was your 5 o'clock diversion, your special friend.

Grand Oh, please, don't tell Eleanor!

Miki Eleanor doesn't care, you schmuk!

Griff She's a dyke!

Phyllis No. Really!?

Grand I have a responsibility to the people. You mustn't tell the people!

Miki By all means, keep it a secret. It could ruin Amelia's reputation!

Griff What about Eleanor, witness?

Burns (with great sarcasm and glee each time he changes President's wife's name) Isn't it true, you paid Mammie one million dollars a year to stay with you?

Grand That's ridiculous! Why would anyone pay her to stay.

Burns And isn't it true that you drove her to pills and booze by your philandering?

Grand Bullshit! She was a drunk before we got married.

Phyllis Mr. President!

Grand Stop this, instantly! Now is the time we must come together.

Burns And isn't it true that you promised Marilyn Munroe the Rose Garden if she's take off her slip in the Blue Room?

Grand Don't make fun of the President!

Burns And didn't you promise Nancy you'd buy her a whole new set of dishes if she'd keep her mouth shut.

Grand the Blue Room? (weakly) No not the Blue Room.

Corona Where'd you get this junk?

Grand Never!

Burns The Pink Room?

Grand Never!

Burns The Oval Office?

Grand (pause) Why should I answer these insulting questions? Nobody wants to know that except you and your weirdo friends.

Miki I do. I'm not a weirdo.

Burns And isn't it true that you gave Lady Bird a radio station back in Texas just to get her out of town on the weekends.

Phyllis Mr. President, you have betrayed everything that is sacred!

Grand She was impossible. Just impossible.

Burns And tell us, witness, did you ever screw your wife, Pat?

Grand (indignantly) I never touched her!

Burns Then who's are those children?

Phyllis Ohhhhhhhhh!!!! I don't have to hear.

Grand They're Jack's!

Burns And who is Jack?

Corona Don't answer that! That's hearsay!

Miki I know who Jack is! I know who Jack is!

Griff Even I know who Jack is.

Grand Now see here you young whipper-snapper. I have to protect the honour of America. That's more important than all those damn women!

Miki Go on! Go on! Those damn women! Our biggest mistake was teaching them to read.

Grand I never said that!

Miki "All those damn women".

Phyllis I heard it!

Miki I heard it!

Griff I guess I heard it too!

Grand (to Griff) Coward!

Griff Hey, man, I gotta live with these birds for a long time. You don't need to worry, not where you're going. Pit-city for you, pop!

Burns (to Corona) Your witness, Counsellor!

Grand (aside) Pittsburgh! Damn! Democrats!

Door creaks open again.

Jason Mother Mary wants to see you gentlemen in chambers. Are you ready to proceed?

Burns Oh shit!

Corona We'll be there in just a moment. So, who's it going to be? Miki? Going to make the big sacrifice? Can we relay the message?

Burns Phyllis. Your generosity is overwhelming.

Corona Griff, be a man, admit you're licked.

Burns Mr. President, you must see the writing on the wall. A nobel gesture. To be well remembered?

Miki He should go! (pointing to Grand) He started the war!

Jason disappears behind the open door.

Subsequent dialogue is a furious quarrel among the four.

Grand It wasn't my war, I bought peace.

Griff A piece of Cambodia.

Miki No, the Cong got Cambodia.

Phyllis Griffith is the one. He's the one. Never heard such a foul mouth. Never!

Griff Phyllis, it's you. It's you! I've always wanted to throw you into a firey pit.

Burns Who's the most Christian!?

Phyllis It's me! It's me!

Griff Then you should make the sacrifice. It's the Christian way!

Phyllis Bullshit!

~~Griff~~
~~Griff~~

What did you say! (Shouting in mock Shakespearean anguish)
Ohhhhhhhh most foul tongue. Most wicked tongue. Out
foul tongue. Out I say! (Aside to Miki and Burns who
laugh.) Let's cut out her tongue. (Resuming Shakespearean
grandeur) Burn in hell ye damned blasphemer!

then he sticks out his tongue at Phyllis, she stamps
her feet in speechless rage

Corona

You twit!

Miki

Clearly, it's the President. He's the patriarch. Phyllis and
I agree. Don't we? (Phyllis nods weakly, then vigorously)

Grand

Phyllis, this is outright vengeance! It's not Christian. I'd
never been to Ohmaha before.

Burns

Oh - ma - ha - ha - ha - ha ! What's in Ohmaha Mr.
President?

Grand

It should be the ballbuster. Not me!

Griff

(to Miki) That's you.

Phyllis

What about your children, Griff dearest. Your three
illegitimate children.

Griff

Two! Two little bastards.

Corona

Two's enough.

Griff

They'll find somebody.

Burns

(to Phyllis) Privilege! Dammit! You can't use that!

Corona

Watch me.

Griff

(to Phyllis) Whose friend are you, anyway?

Phyllis

I'm everybody's friend.

Griff

Look out God!

Phyllis

I'm sorry Griffith. The whole truth has to be told sometime.

Miki

And now's a good time, because it'll save your ass, right
Phyllis?

Jason reappears from behind the door.

Jason

Gentlemen, hurry please, she's waiting.

Griff

Oh shit.

Burns

Oh shit!

Corona

It sesems like a consensus, then.

Grand

Yes, Griffith, it is.

Phyllis

Yes, Griffith, it is.

Griff No way Jose. Not this time, Charlie.

Miki This is very unimpressive.

Burns Not my boy!

He hugs Griff.

Jason Hurry please.

Corona Come on Bobby!

Burns Got to run.

Griff Don't suck out on me.

Burns This game isn't over yet!

Corona and Burns disappear behind the door; characters pair off on each side of the door; lights down as door rumbles and squeaks shut. Grand and Phyllis leave stage; in dim light Griff and Miki talk.

Miki He's not bad actually.

Griff Burns. You like him! I think he'd burn me for three Willie Mays baseball cards. Wanta go back to my place?

Miki No morals. (shrug). Hired guns. The deal was alright. Even though I don't like deals. Three out of four is good odds.

Griff Great odds. But I don't play cards.

Miki What do you mean! An existential gambler like you.

Griff I forgot. I don't care.

Miki speaks, ignoring Griff, thinking out loud.

Miki You can't say he's incompetent. But I don't even know whether he's above average, at least not yet. His client relations are less than ideal, wouldn't you say. So far.

Griff So far! What do you mean, "so far"! How far do you go?

Miki How do you think he'll do at trial. That's the critical skill.

Griff is quite bored and restless as she talks.

Griff Right.

Miki Advocacy can be graded. We did an experiment in Chicago three years ago on just that point. It's a fascinating problem. How do you evaluate performance where there is totally random input? Hardly fair to downgrade a

Griff stands on his head; she doesn't notice.
lawyer because he has the bad luck to draw a turkey for a client. Some clients are born losers.

Griff He starts kicking his legs in the air; she ignores him
 she's talking to herself.

 Absolutely.

Miki Random input is a staggering personnel problem. Usually
 you get a promotion pattern riddled with personal
 favouritism and arbitrariness. The long run result is always
 bad for morale. And disastrous for the credibility of the
 organization. But is there any objective standard of
 excellence? That is the real question. And (she is
 triumphant) I have the answer! (turning to Griff)
 That's the sort of question that ought to interest an
 existentialist such as yourself.

Griff (stops kicking his legs) Why?

Miki (turning to talk to him) Because it might prove your
 theory.

Griff What theory?

Miki That life is meaningless and absurd, and that those who
 believe in a better world are fools.

Griff Oh, that theory! Who needs proof.

Miki What are you doing?

Griff What?

Miki What are you doing?

Griff What are you talking about?

Miki Why are you standing on your head?

Griff How do you really know that it's me and not you that's
 upside down?

Miki That's what I am talking about. Why are you doing this
 to me?

Griff I'm trying to get attention. Are people looking at me?

Miki Only me.

Griff (moves to a sitting position at her feet) Didn't you do
 any drugs at all when you went to Harvard?

Miki In effect these lawyers are totally unsupervised.

Griff So am I but you don't seem to care.

Miki How can you expect the judgment process to

Griff I don't expect it to do anything except fuck up your head.

Miki We developed a ten point system for grading advocacy skills, but instead of basing rank on final result or opinion which obviously would be quite arbitrary we based it on response to disruptive intervention.

Griff Wait a minute. Who is "we"?

Miki The National Committee.

Griff I give up. You're impossible. You believe in everything.

Miki I need your help.

Griff I can see that.

Miki I want to do an intervention. Here. We've got to clean up this judgement process. I mean this whole thing is embarrassing. If people knew there'd be no incentive

Griff (eyes light up) An intervention?

Miki We could do a fabulous expose. I know the National Committee would publish it. We could force them to appoint a Citizen's Management Committee up here. All we need to do is prove the viability of identifying and quantifying deviance in critical performance.

Griff Deviance?

Miki It's perfect for you.

Griff You're not making fun of me, are you?

Miki It will be historic!

Griff I'm just a dumb beatnick. I get confused.

Miki Your chance for a major performance.

Griff I have felt like I was being ignored.

Miki Your theories are on trial too, you know.

Griff I have only one theory.

Miki I want you to do something totally outrageous.

Griff How long is it since you've climbed the magic mountain.

Miki Knock them off their feet.

Griff (starting to undo her blouse) I'm terrific! Don't you recognize the symptoms of extreme horniness?

Miki Absolutely off the wall, as they say. And I'll do an observation evaluation on the Harris-Cornell scale. (she gently pushes him away)

Griff Is this a deal?

Miki Well, yes, kind of.

Griff (with mock indignation) I don't make deals!

Miki This one's alright. A good cause. (she touches his ear gently) Truth and justice.

lights dim

Griff This is outrageous. What a scandal.

Miki It's for a good cause!

Griff Poor Bobby. I have to think of my friend. I'm so vulnerable.

Miki You'll do it won't you? (Griff is undoing her blouse)

Griff You're so domineering!

Miki Ultimately it will help him do a better job. It will help everybody.

Griff I have no will of my own. I'm so intimidated by girls from Harvard.

He continues to undo her blouse; she undoes his shirt.

Miki You see, I'm not so difficult to get along with.

Griff Do I have to be on the bottom?

Miki Not if you don't want to.

Griff Do you really love me?

Miki Don't get maudlin.

Griff I need to know.

Miki I don't know yet.

Griff I'm a tiger, everybody says.

Miki If you're good you'll get a good grade. I'm fair.

Griff But do you really love me?

Miki I like variety in the rhythm.

Griff I want to be loved.

Miki Otherwise I get bored.

Griff Did Jesus get set up like this?

Miki Not quite. Same idea, but it was different.

Griff Don't explain.

a pause; stage is almost dark

Miki Can you do something completely outrageous?

Griff Sure.

A shrieking laugh from Miki - she has been tickled
or whatever

Miki That's not what I meant! (another shriek) Stop it.
(a sigh)

Lights out. End Act I

- 34 -

ACT II

The Family That Prays Together

Burns and Corona on stage; lights up; Burns is sitting; Corona fiddles with a tape machine; angelic choral music begins to play; stops tape; Corona signals to the lighting man for centre stage spotlight; steps into spotlight; Burns starts the tape over again for him; Burns sits with notebook; Corona speaks with great flourish

Corona

Here is a man who served his country

Burns

....Ah, 7D. I love 7D.

Corona

in fields of battle, in industry and government. Here is a man whose selfless dedication is legend, whose wisdom is an anchor, and whose charity is the standard of a generation. And not for any greater glory to himself, oh no. Why? Because he was a humble man doing his duty. No doubt there are petulant detractors (motioning to Burns who hangs his head) whiners, malcontents, who would criticize and complain. Of course, this great man made mistakes, many more mistakes than those self same Elijas who never erred - because they never did anything. Perhaps there were a few personal indiscretions. But measure these minor matters against the greater accomplishments. Who among us more richly deserves a reward. He gave to friends and country all that they demanded and everything that they deserved. What more could be asked of any man? Surely this is a man who has won our eternal gratitude.

Lights up, music ends

Burns

That was swell, Mr. Corona. Just swell. Gee, you're terrific. That's one of my favourite speeches. I had a video of you doing it for Rasputin. I played it all the time. Drove mom crazy. You'll get another Golden Gavel for sure.

Corona

Why thank you Bobby, I really appreciate that. But are there any little things....?

Burns

Well, there are two little things.

Corona What are they? Tell me. Tell me.
Burns (Burns checks his note book) Try for more resonance in
 "those self same Elijas". It was a little flat.
Corona (seriously trying for more resonance) Self same Elijas
Burns The other thing — It's a tissue of lies!
Corona Of course it is!
Burns That last line "He gave to friend and country all that
 they demanded and everything that they deserved." Don't
 you really mean

Burns postures in mockery of Corona at the end of
his speech and speaks with ironic drama deliberately
overdone for effect.

He gave vassalage to the obsequious, napalm to the
Vietnamese, and bribes to the Koreans. He put his finger
in every pie, his hand in every pocket and his pecker in
every hole This man should get what he deserves - The
Pit!!

Corona (mocking rage at Burns taunts) Did you learn disrespectful
 junk like that in college?
Burns Three times.
Corona Communist professors!
Burns Nope. Tenured professors!
Corona We eat fresh college kids like you for breakfast!
Burns A threat! Oh my God, a threat! Did you hear that
 everybody. The old faggot is threatening me! Help! Help!

They laugh uproariously and exit.

Griff and Grand stroll on stage sharing a joint. They
are wearing each others hats.

Grand So you're on. Ten dollars. The Pirates over the Cubs.
Griff Sucker!
Grand Ain't Phyllis something else.
Griff Phyllis - the wicked bitch of the North.
Grand You know her, obviously.
Griff She's been on my case from the beginning.

Grand What exactly do you mean?

Griff She's, like my supervisor. My social worker. Tits of steel, man. Tits of steel.

Grand I see.

Griff See Nobody ever adopted me, so I stayed with Phyllis. Every Thursday I'd go down to the agency, sit in the hall for twenty minutes while she had coffee with Marsha the Turtle. She'd ask me the same dumb questions every time. Were you late for school? Would you rather go to the museum or paint the fence. As soon as I was eighteen I ran away to San Francisco. When I came back I had to get a probation officer, if you know what I mean, and do you know who it was? Phyllis. Were you late for work? Did you go to the disco this week? Would you rather drive a truck or fix the telephone? Then I got this girl pregnant and when she had the baby she put it up for adoption, and who was the social worker? Phyllis, of course. Would you rather play darts or jerk off in a phone booth? Man, she's everywhere! She's been on my ass since the beginning of time. Do I know Phyllis?! Fuck Phyllis!!

Grand Yes, well, I rather suspect I have. It's the way she keeps looking at me. Damn embarrassing not to remember. But I'm getting on.

Griff Fuck Phyllis! (laughs)

 Dick, you jerk! You're lucky you've still got your prick left.

Grand She likes you.

Griff Ya, when Phyllis likes you the pit has no terror. I can't believe it! You want to score with Phyllis! Now I know why we invaded Cambodia. You're crazy. Out of your gourd. And what ho, what lumination rises in the east.

 Grand spotting Phyllis and Miki coming on stage quickly exchanges hats and rearranges himself in proper Presidential decorum.

Enter Phyllis and Miki.

It is the devil we know and the devil we don't!

Phyllis I'm the one you know, dearest, she's the one you don't.
And I wouldn't try any of your tricks on her. She's got
your number now. Well Dixon, are you ready for that final
blast. I hope you're not allergic to feathers.

Grand What

Phyllis This is when the chickens come home to roost.

Griff Chicken Little just dropped a big load, on your head, Dick.

Grand I'm just a humble servant of the Lord waiting for judgment.

Miki That's what you were in Act I. Act II has higher standards.

Suddenly Griff turns and starts pounding on the centre
door.

Griff Hurry up in there! Hurry up! I gotta go! I gotta go! I
can't hold it. I'm gonna have an accident.

Phyllis Griffith!

Griff What's the matter? There's only one pisshole around her
and they're in it all the time!

Burns and Corona come out.

Griff Finished? I'll be back in a minute. I gotta pee pee.

Dashes for the door; tries to enter the centre doors
but they clang shut in his face.

Grand Nice try.

Griff So what's the scoop, Captain Poop?

Corona I'd say they're somewhat impatient today.

Miki That doesn't sound too good.

Phyllis Is Mother Mary feeling tired? I can understand. It is a
difficult job. Looking after God.

They all look at her bewildered.

Little boys never really change.

Griff I think you guys go back there and smoke up. Look at
his pupils.

Grabs Burns who wrestles free.

Burns Let go you nutbag.

Griff You're stoned! You're stoned! (becomes mock hysterical; imitating distressed mother) I've come all this way, a lifetime of trouble and tribulation. (starts crying) I bore you. I fed you. I helped you with your spelling. I washed your filthy jock strap. And now this! This! My baby hallucinating on false drugs.

Burns Oh, shut up!

Grand (to Phyllis) A few years in the infantry would do him a lot of good.

Griff (returning to "normal") So the least you could do is pass it around.

Burns I'm not stoned.

Miki (aside to Griff) You can do better than that. He wasn't even rattled.

Burns Mary wants to know if there'll be a plea.

Corona We told her it was almost decided.

Burns So, look folks, we gotta decide.

Miki No deals. This is Final Judgement. Do it right!!

Burns Aw, come on, be a sport! You're better off with a deal. Draw straws, for Chrissake! You can't go in there for a trial! You should see the file she's got on you. (to Miki) And what can I say about Him. (pointing to Griff) Make a deal, be reasonable, lady.

Miki No deals. I want a trial. We all want trials.

Phyllis Not me! I'll make a deal. Make a note that I was prepared to cooperate. But if we're going to have a trial, I'm ready any time you are Mr. Corona.

Miki Burns, it's your job to say something nice. Even about Griffith. What are you going to say about him?

Griff Ya, say something nice about me.

Burns You want speeches! We've got lots of speeches. 4B! 10G!

Miki Well, which one will it be?

Griff Friends, ~~romanes~~, cabbages, lend me your heads ...

Miki Rule 47 ... Every applicant has a right to present, or have presented, an oral plea without restraint.

Grand A great speech is a work of art. Remember my Inaugral Address! The first one.

They all ignore him. He silently orates.

Burns Aw, come on. Draw lots.

Miki We all havæ our careers, our goals, our ambitions. Everything is at stake. We will not draw lots.

Griff Ah, Come on, let's hear it.

Phyllis Oh, let's hear his speech, Bobby. I can't imagine what you could say.

Corona (Shrugs) Give them a speech.

Burns Alright.

Griff Alright.

Burns Listen up, real good, 'cause nobody else will.

General commotion as Miki, Grand and Phyllis shift one of the benches to listen; Burns confers with Corona as set out below; Griff stands just behind the three seated on the bench. Phyllis knits.

Weep for him

Corona moves his arms to pleading posture

Weep for him

Corona pokes the back of his knee so he pleads "on bended knee"

Phyllis I think he's cute.

Corona Now really turn it on. You've been holding back in the finales.

Burns Weep for him No no. Where is justice, Lord?

Corona motions the others to be quiet; Miki takes out her notebook and writes during the following sequence.

Where is justice, Lord? Where is mercy? Weep for him that has lived in fear.

He gestures toward Griff who mocks tears; as he proceeds to speak Griff wanders casually to the other side of the stage; there is a nondescript wooden box on floor by the wall; he stands on it back to the wall; he stretches out his arms so they rest on two cornices on the wall; he hangs his head; satisfied with the position he looks around; he can barely reach a small lampshade and a wall lamp which he puts on his head; he positions himself again; satisfied with the display he makes pained expressions as the speeches continue; no one notices him for the time being except Miki who nods approvingly.

Weep for him that has lived without love, without hope, in the depths of despair. Yea, Lord, let those tolling bells be hymns of mercy for this one poor lost soul.

Corona

Bobby

Burns

On knees that have never bent before

Corona

Bobby

Burns

.... with eyes that

Corona

BOBBY

Burns

What? I'm just getting started. Is it all right? What's wrong? Is it my modulation? Jesus, I've been working on this speech for weeks! What's wrong?

Corona

It's "those grim tolling bells of final judgement" - remember? This is 8F, isn't it?

Burns

Yes sir. I just forgot the "grimness".

Corona

Let's go again. And calm down.

Grand

(to Corona) Loosen his tie. He'll look more sincere.

Corona loosens Burns tie as he starts to speak.

Burns

Yea, Lord let those grim tolling bells be hymns of mercy for this one poor lost soul. On knees that have never bent before.

Burns

He bounces up and down on his bended knees to make sure they're bent, trying for the right angle. Griff writhes in agony.

I beseech you take this crazed forgotten man. He has never known a father, Lord. If he has erred, he has now found home and is repentant. If he has sinned, he has now found forgiveness and is grateful. If he has been vain and boastful, he is humbled now in your house. Take him, dear Lord, lest the fires of damnation consume the sad chatter of his meaningless conceit. He is more willing than he knows. Take him, on the grounds of mercy, and I shall ask no more this day.

Griff dies.

Polite applause from the spectators; lights up.

Burns notices Griff.

(shouting) What are you doing! What are you doing! You dingbat.

Miki continues making occasional jottings during the following sequence.

Peter will see you! Get down! Holy shit, get down! Mary will crap her nightie! (Burns starts pulling him.) Jesus Christ! Now you think you're Jesus Christ! This isn't the place. They'll see you!

He lifts Griff off the box; Griff keeps his arms extended; Burns pulls them down to his side but they spring back out again

Phyllis

I get all the losers. Jesus Christ get down off that cross. Griffith, this is going absolutely too far! Stop it this instant! Stop it! You'll spoil everything!

Miki

(clinically) He seems to be in some sort of trance. Wake him gently.

Burns

Gentle! Gentle! This guy is a nutbag.

Miki I think you should be gentle.

Burns Lady, I don't have all day. We have to go in right away!

Griff (to Griff in a temper) Stop it! I can't stand it! I hate you! (snapping out of it) Hey, man what a terrible thing to say. I mean really. You should be gentle like the lady says.

Burns Don't do things like that!

Miki Be calm and gentle. He's testing you.

Griff Ya, I was just testing you, man.

Burns Just when did you decide you were Jesus?

Griff I was testing you.

Phyllis He is like that, you know.

Burns What were you testing me for?

Griff I wanted to see how nice you would be to a guy without a dad.

Burns What are you talking about?

Griff Jesus didn't have a dad. Not a real Dad.

Burns Well, you're about to meet him.

Phyllis What he's trying to tell you, Mr. Burns, is that Griffith never knew his father.

Burns Oh, I'm sorry.

Phyllis So naturally he's a little nervous.

Burns Of course.

Phyllis He identifies with Jesus, who never knew his father, until the end, of course. And this is the end. So he's quite excited. Aren't you Griffith?

Griff No.

Burns I though he had "perceived rejection, difficult weening, fanciful Oedipal transformation and an hysterical overlay of millinarianism."

Phyllis Precisely. This is the hysterical overlay.

Griff (to Miki) Aren't you going to say anything?

Miki Burns, you really don't seem very sympathetic. I mean after all, the boy has no father.

Burns What do you want me to do? Adopt him?

Griff You could teach me to play football.

Burns I doubt it.

Miki Aren't you supposed to be more sympathetic and supportive to your clients.

Burns I'm supposed to get better clients. This guy isn't worth two baseball cards!

Griff See!

Miki I think you could do better if you tried.

Burns Lady, I've got the revolutionary priests tomorrow. They sing rock mass with electric guitars. Between them they've started fourteen revolutions, and five thousand petitions. I'm going to be up all night reading their goddamn pastoral letters. And you want me to be nice to this knucklehead!

Miki We think you should be nice to everybody. It was in the job description.

Burns Yea. Well that job description was written by a guy who never played ball.

Miki It was in the description.

Burns (Burns fumes; long pause) Alright! Alright! Just get off my back.

Burns sweeps Griff aside, arm on shoulder for a coach-like chat.

Troubles at home son?

Griff I got no dad.

Burns Gee, that's tough.

Griff Mom said he was a sailor.

Phyllis (interjecting from across stage) A drifter. But that's alright. You boys just go ahead with your chat.

Burns Maybe he was killed in the war?

Phyllis No he wasn't!

Griff What if he comes back to get me?

Burns Why don't you invite him to practice. He could help you
with your pushups.

Griff You really mean that?

Burns (winces) Yup. Tell me son, when did you get the idea
you were Jesus? I mean Jesus didn't play ball. A guy
like that could even make the junior squad.

Griff Gee, coach!

Burns Promise me one thing, son.

Griff What's that, coach?

Burns Promise me that you won't go round anymore acting like
Jesus. People might get the wrong idea.

Griff I only did it to see if you really liked me.

Burns O.K. kid, I like you; now get outa here.

 Griff runs off like a kid, hides behind Phyllis.

Corona Marvellous, Burns. Marvellous. I couldn't have done better
myself. You're really maturing! I'm truly impressed.

Burns Aw, he's an alright kid. Feel kinda sorry for him.

Grand Inspiring, to all red blooded Americans.

Corona Well, don't get carried away. You're a professional.

Miki Miki gets up surveying her notes as she talks.

 No. No. It was very nice. Very nicely done. Once you
got started. I'd say 9.4 for the second part. Not the
first, mind you. But once you got going it was really quite
good. But you didn't recognize the millennial Oepidal rage,
at first, did you?

Burns The what?

Miki (Turning to Corona with notebook in hand) Mr. Corona,
on observing the trance what would you have done to wake
the boy?

Corona I would approach him in a non-threatening manner, and ask
a series of simple orienting questions that do not directly
challenge his assumed dillusional state.

Miki

What father substitute would you offer?

Corona

Well, I do several. There's the kindly old priest, the stern teacher, the kung fu master. (he poses Kung-Fu style) I've just learned that one. I also do "the coach", but more of a Knute-Rockne style, more Catholic.

Griff

I'll bet you do a great diddler.

Miki

Would you always go with a father substitute in response to a Jesus-dillusion opening?

Corona

Invariably. (to Burns) You did alright, Bobby! 9.4 is very good.

Burns

9.4! Gee. 9.4.

As Burns ponders this, looking very pleased with himself, Miki steps forward, lights go out on all the others.

Miki

Look at him! Look at him! 9.4! What incredible reward responsiveness! (consulting notes and speaking as if dictating) Duty Counsel, a white male mesomorph, 5'11", estimated 195, appeared nervous, harassed, untrained. Apparently unconscious of any greater significance of his work The intervention consisted of the subject feigning a psychotic episode and proclaiming self to be Jesus. Duty Counsel was at first openly hostile. He had to be instructed by the observer as to the rudiments of sympathetic response. Once instructed, range of response limited but appropriate timing good, emotion, coloration, empathy and conclusion all excellent. Actual response rated 9.4. But recognition skills be graded unsatisfactory. Subject apparently culturally deprived and unsuited for intake work. Recommendation: separate intake personnel and upgrade subject's recognition skills. (Pause) Senior Counsel present an older gentleman, estimated fifty five years, apparent good health, made text book correct observation. Suspected atheist and cynic.....

(she pauses; then she speaks again to herself and the audience, this time in a conversational manner). So the National Committee publishes my Report. 'Girl Systems Analyst Recommends Reform'. I've done this before. The papers. The talk shows. I know that schicht. Everybody listens but the Man who should! He'll call me an 'inexperienced egghead.' Maybe a 'busybody'. The problem is those kind of people always take it so personally. But it is science. Totally objective! A controlled intervention. But not their control. So they hate it. And then they hate me! But I am right. And it is very important. Something I can be really proud of. I'm going to have to push it! All the way! The rationale of our whole system of ethics is at stake. God, I can't stand this silliness about who gets into heaven. What I put myself through! But it's the only way to get to the man in charge. My proposals really are rather simple. Historically he's been so stubborn. (She takes off her glasses, unbuttons her blouse to show a little bosom and practices looking sexy.) The things I do for scientific management!

Lights suddenly up; conversation resumes as if uninterrupted.

Burns

9.4!

Miki

Don't let it go to your head, Burns. Your recognition skills get a two.

Burns

(wailing) Two! (to Griff) You punk! I outa tear your face off.

Phyllis

Don't be so hard on him, Miki, he's only a boy.

Miki

He's not your lawyer! (to Burns) I have to put it in my report. There must be standards.

Burns

Two!

Griff

Sorry. She made me do it.

Miki

Relax. Relax. I'm only making procedural recommendations.

Burns God Damn lady egghead! Busybody!

Miki Let's face it. You shouldn't be doing intake assessments. That's all.

Burns Ya.

Miki You might make a terrible error. Think of the consequences.

Burns looks dumb.

Griff This is incredibly important, she thinks.

Corona Madame, your theories are very interesting but we've been doing it this way for thousands of years.

Burns (to Griff) I don't know what she's talking about. Do you know what she's talking about?

Griff It's very simple, good buddy. This chick is going to re-organize your life.

Burns No fuckin' way!

Miki Don't take it so personally. You'll be trained. I'll mention the 9.4 to Mr. Big. (wink)

Burns Alright! Promise.

Miki Absolutely!

Burns Look out, Sammy! Burns is taking off!

Corona Well, then it's settled. Griffith will take the pit ... and we can play squash this afternoon. As usual, right.

Griff What!?

Burns Sorry, kid. It's the only way.

Grand It was a terrible sacrilege. Just what you'd expect!

Burns I need the points.

Griff No fuckin' way!

Phyllis Griffith, darling, it was an unfortunate ... display.

Miki (to Griff with an ambiguous twinkle in her eye) You were very good. Really. (then coldly) But your case is hopeless now.

Burns (nodding) What can I do - freakface.

Griff (hollaring) Just a fuckin' minute. Just hold on one whole goddamn fuckin' minute. Who says I'm taking the pit?

Grand Consensus politics at its finest!
Griff (to Miki) You tricked me!
Miki You voluntarily agreed for the betterment of humanity.
And we're all very grateful.

Griff Griff paces madly around the stage.
That's it! That's it! Cut! Somebody's doing a number.
How the fuck to I get out of here? It was a gag! A joke!
Corona and Burns both shake their heads - no exit.

Griff pulls and bangs frantically on the Courtroom door.
Cut! (Starting to sob.) How do I get out of here? (He speaks to the door.) I didn't mean it! I didn't know! Forgive me! Dear God, forgive me! Give me another chance! Please God, another chance! (Pause)

Griff Griff then turns quite deliberately and confronts Phyllis. He starts wheezing and choking. They look on in disgust. He gasps for air.
Griff I can't breathe! I can't breathe!
Burns What is it! What is it! Are you alright?
Griff Awrrrrwwweeeeee!! (becoming loud and thrashing violently)

Phyllis Oh Griffith, stop it! You won't get me going. You won't.
Griffith gets louder and more spasmodic.

Stop it!

She kicks him, he gets worse.
What's wrong with you? I don't care. I don't. Stop it!
Somebody get a Doctor. I'm so embarrassed.
Grand Don't spoil the ceremony. There may be reporters around.
Miki Griffith, are you alright? Are you o.k.?

Phyllis rushes off stage; comes back with blankets; Burns follows her; comes back with pillows; Miki stands over him incredulous. Corona and Grand stand to one side.

Centre doors open, creaking but fairly quickly; Jason comes out; nobody but Corona notices; Jason just stares at the centre stage scene, amused; comes over and speaks to Corona.

Jason They're all set to go. Will there be a plea?
Corona (aside to Jason) We'll be about ten. He going for a PTR.
Phyllis Griffith, don't do this to me! Please.
Jason Saint Peter is partial to a sincere performance.
Corona All the existentialists are very sincere at this stage.
 Jason exits. Corona sits down with Grand. They
 watch Griff's performance.

 Phyllis and Burns rush around lost. Phyllis goes off
 stage. All the time Griff is moaning, coughing, and
 gasping.

Burns Jesus! What should we do?
Miki (sarcastically) We need plenty of hot water.
Burns (rushing off stage) Right.
 Miki grabs him.

Miki Come back here, you dope! He's not having a baby! Here,
 hold his hand. Comfort the suffering. You're his lawyer.
 Burns pulls back in disgust. Just as he is about to
 take Griff's hand, Phyllis rushes back in with a pillow
 and blanket. She sits on the pillow and covers Griff
 with the blanket cradling him in her lap.

Phyllis Oh Griffith. Griffith.
 As this is going on Corona talks to Grand. Miki takes
 a seat on the other bench and makes notes. Burns
 stands over Griff staring in disbelief, pacing and
 muttering quietly. "I don't believe it".

Corona (to Grand confidentially, rather bored.) It is a post-terminal
 repentance. PTR! Rule 52. I didn't think this goof could
 read.

Phyllis May-be he needs blood.
 Phyllis drops Griff's head on the floor and runs off
 stage. Burns approaches and kneals.

Burns Easy there kid.
 Griff moans, etc.

Corona The kids a gambler. But it's his only chance. Sincerity
 is everything. Pete's watch ~~is~~ on closed circuit.

Burns You'll make it. You'll make it.

Corona (to Grand) Last week we had a bank president who said
he didn't believe. Until the final bell. And he signed the
donnation slip right on this bench. Pete came out to
receive the offering in person. They put in a new west
rose window. Quite lovely.

 Phyllis comes back with a blood transfusion bottle.
 She resumes her position and causes Griff to drink
 the blood. He gags. She looks to Burns puzzled.

Burns (to Phyllis) Maybe it's not warm enough.

Phyllis I boiled it.

Corona (to Grand) There was a prostitute Easter Sunday who said
she only did it to support her baby. You can appreciate
my scepticism. But Peter fell for that one too. She had
a nice ass.

 Phyllis and Burns are force feeding Griff. He's gaging.

Corona Four to one he starts with the dirty books.

 lights dim on Corona, Miki, and Grand; centre
 spotlight on Griff; he's now quiet and weak looking;
 Phyllis kneeling behind him to prop him up toward
 the audience; wrapped in army blankets; Burns kneels
 to one side; Griff slowly comes to as from a deep sleep.

Griff Mom Dad

Burns It's o.k., kid, it's o.k. (aside to Phyllis) Who was his
real dad anyhow?

Griff Mom mom

Phyllis whispers to Burns; he looks shocked; takes out
notepad and writes then leaves the spotlight and
stands off to the side.

Mom where's dad? Where's dad?

Phyllis He's coming, son. He's coming.

Griff Remember when you caught me with those dirty books,
mom? Do you remember that?

Phyllis Oh, Griffith.

Griff You were so mad. And dad wasn't home. I shouldn'ta
touched myself, mom. I shunt'a. I know it. I know it.
Please forgive me, mom.

Phyllis My boy, my boy.

Griff It was the war, mom. The war made me do it.

Miki But, Griffith, you didn't go to war. You went to Canada.
Griff Ya. Canada. It was so cold up there mom. So cold.
Please, God don't send me back to Canada. Mom, remember
when you came to visit me in Canada? Dad couldn't come.
Remember we went to this rock concern? Did you like
that?

Phyllis Yes, Griffith.

Griff You're lying, mom. It o.k.! I was such a bad kid.

Phyllis It'll be alright now, Griffith. It'll be alright now.

Griff Are you goin' away, mom? Where are you? Where's dad?
Phyllis (starting to sob) He's at the ball game. He left you a
note. (she fumbles as she opens it; reads) "Make sure
the grass is cut before I get home or else!" He's thinking
of you Griffith, I know he is.

Griff I didn't cut the grass. Do you think he'll give me another
chance.

Phyllis I'll do it, Griffith! I'll do it!

Griff

Mom, you're a real pal.

Dramatic moan, as if giving up the ghost; Miki comes closer.

They're coming for me. I can see them. They're comin'. They've got starry, starry eyes and angel wands. Gee. I was a bad kid. Where's dad? Is dad here?

Griff is sounding increasingly more delirious.

Burns gets up and crosses stage to Grand and Corona; a dim stage light on Grand; Burns takes out his notebook which is like a police notebook; comes on like a gentle cop breaking bad news.

Phyllis

Be brave, Griffith, be brave. Make mommy proud.

Griff

Fading, Griff repeats almost silently while Grand and Burns converse.

Dad. Mom mom.

Burns

Excuse me, Mr. President Sir, it's about the beatnick, Greyburn. He wants to speak to you, sir. I'm afraid he won't last much longer.

Grand

I'm busy, ~~son~~. Does he want to come back from Canada? You can tell him where to go, can't you?

Griff

(to Phyllis) They've got torches. Are they going to burn me, Mom? Don't let them take me!

Burns

He's dying, sir.

Grand

Call Hubert. I can't be on call every time some wasted beatnick wants a pardon.

Burns

Only you can give it, sir.

Grand

I suppose he's sorry he didn't cut the grass.

Burns

Is that important, sir?

Grand

Yes, damn it. And everything else! Isn't it a little late to be sorry, Sgt. People are laughing at us all over the world.

Burns

I think you should come, sir.

Grand

He's just like his mother. (then angry) Tell him I'm busy.

Burns She didn't cut the grass, sir?
Grand At the last moment, so full of regrets.
Burns He's one of our's, sir.
Grand I suppose I must.
Burns I'll get your car, sir.

Burns goes back to Griff and Phyllis; Grand slowly rises and follows him at a distance to the spotlight at centre stage.

Griff They're cold, mom. Please don't make me go with them, mom.

Phyllis They'll be good to you Griffith. You be good. Promise you'll be good.

Another crescendo of moans and writhing; Grand approaches; Burns resumes position kneeling at Griff; Grand stands over Griff like tough rancher over a sick calf; Miki crosses silently to the benches; sits with Corona; they exchange bored and cynical smiles; Grand speaks authoritatively and firmly.

Phyllis Daddy's here.

Grand Well, son, not feeling so hot?

Griff Dad, I'm sorry, dad, I didn't cut the grass.

Grand That's all right, boy. It can wait until tomorrow. How'd the practice go?

Griff Dad, I got cut from the team. I'm too short to play end.

Grand Ah, that's a shame. Who're they goin' to get?

Griff I don't know. Some guy from Minnesota. I don't know him.

Grand Oh, that Henderson kid. He's way better than you. That's terrific! For the team, I mean. It's O.K. I forgive you.

Griff Dad, I got this girl pregnant.

Strenuous sobs and sniffles from Phyllis.

Grand Which one?

Griff Louise Plotkin. From over in Elmvile.

Grand Say, she's a real honey. Great knockers. Did you get her fixed? Do you need any money?

Griff We used a knitting needle. (to Phyllis) Not one of the good ones, I promise. Mom, dad, I don't want to go with them. My hands are cold.

Grand Mother will get your mittens, son.
Griff They've got silver swords. They're goin' cut off my balls.
Phyllis That's all right Griffith. You're a lucky, lucky boy.
Grand Do what your mother tells you, Griff. And make sure that you get that grass cut, kid. Dad's counting on you.

Griff Griff goes into spasms of dying rage.
I don't want to go with them. I don't want to go. Don't make me go. Please mom. Please dad.
Phyllis But Griffith, what do you want to do?
Griff I I

Everyone leans forward to hear his words, including Corona and Miki.

Grand I want to smoke the grass, dad.
Long pause.
Just don't burn the house down, son.
Griff Forgive me, Mom? Forgive me, Dad?
Phyllis I do. (She cries.)
Grand Sure, son. Can I go now?

Griff dies with a big smile on his face. Long pause. Lights up. Grand takes Phyllis to one of the benches. Burns covers Griff with a blanket. Burns and Corona speak together as Grand perfunctorily comforts Phyllis as she weeps.

Burns So how do you like those apples?
Corona The boy does have a talent. And you were terrific, Bobby. You'll be a real threat - next season.
Burns Want to deal now?
Corona I'll hold.
Burns He's a shoe in! Why don't we just cross off the President? 'Dad' to every boy in America!
Corona Don't be too hasty.
Burns I think it could be shown that Mr. President has been somewhat wanting in compassion. How 'bout it, Corona.
Corona Oh it was just another one of those official functions. You can't get it up every time. I know you know that.

Burns approaches Grand and Phyllis.

Burns What shall we do with the body Miss Marshall?
Grand (tenderly to Phyllis) Why don't we send him back to
 Omaha? (she nods through her tears) Yes, that would
 be fine.
Burns (suspiciously) Omaha?
Grand (defensively) Yes, she's from there, originally.
Burns That's pretty far away.
Phyllis It was a long time ago.
Grand Lights focus on Phyllis and Grand on the bench. Grand
 blurts out ...
 I was just passing through.
Burns The drifter!
Grand I just got out of the army.
 Grand lapses into his apologetic. He becomes tender
 and sentimental.
 (to Phyllis) You were such a girl! (to Burns) You
 know what it's like?
Phyllis (dreamy) He was the most handsome man I ever saw.
 Real squinty eyes. Lots of muscles. All the boys in town
 were jealous.
 Miki comes over and gets interested.
Miki Phyllis, go ahead, call it lust.
Phyllis Oh, no (embarrassed and defensive) I was only
 seventeen.
Grand You were pretty as a picture.
Burns Did you tell her that, Mr. President?
Phyllis He called me his "cow girl"! I was from town.
Miki What else did he call you, Phyllis?
 Miki motions to Burns to ask questions.
Phyllis Nebraska honey pie sugarpuss
Grand (to Burns) Women like to talk a lot. You gotta say
 things to them. You know!

Burns What else did he tell you? Did he force you?
Phyllis He promised me we'd have a good time. He tickled me.
 He was so strong.
Grand I was always real gentle.
Phyllis We were in the barn, behind the hotel. I never went there
 with a boy before. He was tickling me. He said we could
 take our clothes off. He kissed me real hard. I got scared.
 He said "could I love him?" I said yes. I didn't know. I
 couldn't get away.
Corona Consent. This is lawful consent.
Grand They're all frightened the first time.
Phyllis He was so strong. He was kissing me so hard I couldn't
 scream.
Burns (to Corona) Ha! Rape. You're cooked, Corona.
Corona (to protect his client) Didn't you like it? Wasn't it good?
Phyllis It was amazing.
Corona (to Burns) See!
Burns Did he hurt you?
Phyllis Oh yes.
Grand (chuckling) Of course it hurt, always does the first time.
 We had a good time. Now I remember!
Corona Wasn't it good?
Phyllis Then he left me. And I cried.
Burns (triumphantly to Burns) See!
Corona (aside to Miki) Perhaps defilement under 16. But you'll
 never get him on a rape Bobby. She won't even charge him.
Phyllis I never saw him again. He left town.
Grand I missed you, Phyllis honey. I really did. I didn't want
 to hurt you. I was no good for a girl like you. I was just
 a drifter. I needed to be somebody. For a girl like you.
Phyllis I had a baby.

Grand Now I had nothing to do with that. I was clear out of town. Never saw the kid (He notices Griff peering out from under the covers grinning at him) until today. Except in Washington. (Grand in great consternation) Griff goes back under the cover.

Burns Did he give you money?

Grand Did I give her money? Did I give her money? What kind of guy do you think I am?

Burns So what did you do with the baby, ma'am?

Grand We'll get married, Phyllis, honey. We'll get married. We'll find the kid. (looks with disgust to Griff)

Miki Don't do it Phyllis. Don't do it.

Phyllis Promise, Dixon, promise?

Grand Yes, I promise.

Miki shrugs in disgust; Burns makes a note - shrugs; Corona shrugs helplessly. Lights go out, except for spotlight on Griff's body which is dim at just, when becomes brighter Griff emerges from under the cover with a storybook. He reads in the manner of an affected kindergarden teacher. This is the first character of several in Griff's silliloquy. To change characters Griff steps out of the spotlight and then re-enters. He obviously relishes the play acting.

Griff/Teacher The next morning when the handsome prince awoke he discovered that the beautiful princess he had been fooling around with had turned into an ugly old hag and his ankles were chained to the bed. Just then the woodcutter came in. "So you want to marry my daughter," he said with a wry grin as he put down his double-barrelled shotgun on the table by the door.

"I was just passing through," said the handsome prince.
"She needs help with the children", said the woodcutter.

"But look at her", he said with disgust. "She's at least sixty years old!"

"You promise to love, cherish, and pay the rent?"

"I do", said the prince with a sigh.

"And so do I" said the old hag, with a big grin.

long pause, Griff hugs the book like a dreamy teenage school girl, sighs wistfully.

Griff/Teenager

Oh, papa, home at last!

(singing) Oh, my papa, to me he was so wonderful,

Oh, my papa, to me he was so true

Griff rises and steps out of the spotlight. He reenters it enpointe and flings his arms in the air in the style of famous T.V. commercial

Griff/Model

I dreamed I was the son of the President in my Mode-In-Form jockstrap.

Griff steps out of the spotlight, then returns again, this time as two characters. Howard Cossell and John Wayne, the former interviewing the latter.

Griff/Cossell

John Wayne, you're America's favorite hero. And here we are in Number One Court where you've just told the judge "I'm guilty." You told the judge you raped the old lady and stole all the money out of her cookie jar. And now you want to marry her. How does it feel?

Griff/Wayne

Howard, America's a great country.

Griff/Cossell

Any regrets?

Griff/Wayne

A real man don't have regrets, Pilgrim.

Griff/Cossell

Thank's a lot, big John.

Griff again steps out of the spotlight, and quickly as a Mob tough.

Griff/Tough

Hey, shitface, the Boss wants to see you.

Griff/Griff

Who me?

Griff/Tough

Yea, you! Punk. (seizing the imaginary Griff by the collar) And talk nice, see, or we'll scatter yer face all over the east riva. Ya punk! (he throws him down) In there.

He steps from the spotlight again. We hear The Godfather theme music. Griff re-enter the spotlight again. This time we expect Marlon Brando as Don Corlioni. We get Truman Capote.

Griff/Capote

Ew, aren't you in a wot of twable. The Pwesident isn't wary happy. Do you know wot we do with naughty boys?

Griff spins out of the spotlight and rapidly re-enters as Clark Gable

Griff/Gable

Frankly, Scarlet, I don't give a damn.

Griff pauses in the spotlight, obviously thinking of another character. One comes to him. He changes poses. It is Maureen O'Hara, as Melanie from Gone With the Wind. Grand approaches unnoticed.

Griff/Melanie Oh, Scarlet. Oh, what ever will we do, Tara is (bumps into Grand, pauses) all that I have ever known. I can't leave now. But I must.

Grand (Grand projects his most authoritative President demeanor) I suppose you thing this is funny.

Griff (sheepish) Ya, well, you know. Keeps the chin off the floor.

stern silence.

Hey, what else can you do? Sitting around waitin' all the time. Ain't nothin' goin' happen anyhow. So let's have a few laughs. You know.

Grand When are you serious, son?

Griff All the time.

Grand I can't tell when you're talking straight and when you're talking crazy.

Griff (sincerely) That's the point, pop! You got it!

Grand I don't know when to believe you.

Griff Anytime you want. You can trust me. Like I was one of your very own speeches.

Grand But when are you telling the truth?

Griff Ah shit, pop, I never lie! You know that. Just like you, and mom and that girl.

Grand You've hurt Phyllis, son, she's deeply troubled.

Griff Aw, don't worry about her, pop! She'll bounce back. Like a yoyo. But how 'bout you? You alright? I mean you'll never win the Oscar now!

Grand I've got Phyllis!

Griff Ya, I know. And ... I've got herpes.

Grand Why don't you go back to bed until this is all over.

Griff lies down on the floor again.

I'll call you in the morning.

Grand covers Griff like a child, head exposed, tucking him in like a six year old.

Griff (from under the cover) Can I listen, pop?

Grand Sure, son but don't make any noise. And don't ... you know.

Light shifts suddenly back to Phyllis. She is sitting calmly knitting. She is chatty and relaxed; gone is the casey catty professional social worker. Grand returns to his seat beside Phyllis.

Miki is already beside Phyllis listening intently.

By the time Grand resumes his seat Phyllis is part way through the following speech.

Phyllis

So there I was! Seventeen, pregnant. And in Omaha! Oh my! Well I don't need to tell you that was no picnic in 1944. Or whenever it was. My folks kicked me right out when they found out my predicament.

Centre doors open. Jason comes out. No one notices but Corona who signals him by holding up four fingers. Phyllis goes right on talking; Jason leaves.

Next thing I know I'm in this home. This home for blessed but unmarried young girls that kind of a home. Run by the Virgin Mary herself, I swear. That's when I decided to become a Social Worker. So I could rescue people. And I swore off men, too. The sisters persuaded me of that. They cloud your professional judgement.

Mind you, I still kept hoping he'd come back. I thought he must of got lost, or something. He was soooo handsome! Oh my, wasn't I mixed up! It was my first time! So anyhow, after I had the baby I gave it to the sisters for adoption. She was such an adorable little thing. Oh, it broke my heart! But what was a girl to do.

Turning to Grand.

Grand

I knew you'd understand, Dixon. I knew you would.

Phyllis

Wait a minute! What do you mean "she"? Who's "she"? I thought it was a "him". (pointing to Griff)

Burns

Oh, God, no! Wouldn't that be awful! Not "him"! He's not mine! Not "of the flesh". It's professional. Nothing personal believe me!

Phyllis

But you told me that Mr. President was the boy's real father.

Grand

He is!

(defensively) Of course, there's a sense in which the President seems to be the father to every red-blooded American boy. It's the office, you know.

Phyllis Oh no, it wasn't that!

Corona Trying to distract further revelations he interjects quickly.

So what happened to the girl, Phyllis? What happened to the girl?

Miki How could you abandon a girl?

Phyllis Yes, abortion is much easier, isn't it, "Miss Skelton"? Miki blushes.

Griff She's got files on everything, serve you right.

Phyllis Why she became an engineer and went to Harvard. Miki looks stunned.

Then she went to work for Ralph Nader. Pause; all stare at Miki.

Phyllis Surprise, dearest. Grand and Phyllis converge on Mike and embrace her

Miki Good grief!

Griff (Throwing off the covers) Holy shit, you mean she's my sister!

Phyllis Got you last, Griff, darling!

Griff Triple Shit!

Grand My Miki!

Miki (She ^{is} smothered by parental hugs) I'm ruined with the National Committee!

Corona (to Miki) Flow with it. Phyllis reaches out from the huddle of hugs, takes Griff's hand and pulls him into the group.

Griff This is forgiveness!

The group form a little circle locking hands behind their backs so each one can lean outward and be supported by their neighbours. In the following sequence they circle slowly hugging and kissing each other.

Burns paces madly around the outside of the circle asking questions. Corona also circles the outside of the circle but calmly. Burns is still the dumb lawyer, but Corona has become a therapy coach, urging the family on to greater and deeper reconciliation. When the characters speak to Burns they lean back and out of the circle supported by their neighbours.

Burns But what about the beatnick? You said Mr. President was his father!

Phyllis He was! He is!

Burns Both of them.

Corona Relax. Be calm.

Miki Daddy was ^{so} handsome!

Burns What about Franklin Prendergast and Henrietta Westlake?

Phyllis (cuddling Griff) Well, they did get married.

Griff (leaning out, to Bruns) See, I'm not a bastard!

Corona Let there be no guilt, no fear of guilt and no guilt ^{by fear.} What you have no fear?

Grand I have so much to be grateful for.

Phyllis But he wasn't Franklin's boy, that's why they turned him in - to me. (Hugging Griff)

Grand (to Phyllis) I don't remember any Henrietta!

Corona Dig deeper, deeper. All that is deep and hurtful, dig it out and fling it away.

Miki Oh, daddy, you were such a rogue.

Burns He was a drifter, remember.

Phyllis (to Burns) No, by that time he was a Senator

Burns Mr. President, when did you meet Henrietta Westlake?

Grand There were so many women on the trains.

Corona Your neighbour is holding you. Feel it. Love it.

Miki Some women did that as a hobby, even then.

Burns Where did you meet Miss Westlake?

Grand Ah ... ah ...

Phyllis She called herself Boobs. Boobs O'Connor from Brooklyn.

Corona Hold tight. He's ...

Grand Boobsie!

Corona Flying.

Grand Boobsie!

Griff No wonder I'm so loopy, mother was a groupie!

Phyllis She is gone now Griffith, but I will never let you go.
Grand To-gether at last.
Phyllis Never, never to be parted again.

The four come to-gether cheek-to-cheek and kiss
raising their arms in the air in triumph, then sink
slowly to a seated position on the floor chanting.
Burns hugs Corona as they watch, exultant, the effects
of their therapy.

Burns They're really into it!
Group O-o-o-o-o-o-m-m-m-m-m-m-m-m-m-m-mmm
Corona A good session!
Burns Do you think they'll really live happily ever after, Dr.
Corona. Corona.
Corona If they're open and flowing, but there'll always be pain...
Burns Gee.
Corona and they'll never be apart ... no matter how hard they try.
Burns Isn't that neat!

The group stops the chant, gets up, shake themselves,
exchanging hugs.

Phyllis Oh, Dickie, it's been so long.
Grand A very personal kind of greatness.
Miki (hugging Griff) Judgement was terrific. It really worked.
Griff I'm a believer! Right on!

Parents turn and hug the children.

Griff Dad. Mom.
Phyllis My children. Still my children.
Miki Fabulous!
Grand Finally. Finally.

The four characters turn to Burns and Corona standing
arm-in-arm.

Grand We want to thank you.
Phyllis This has been magnificent.
Miki I'm impressed.
Griff And that's hard to do!
Phyllis We'll come back, I promise.

Miki Let's take the session at the spa.

Grand Whatever the bill, I'll gladly pay. Whatever it is.

Stage smoke starts seeping from under the centre doors.

We will now celebrate. Dinner is on me.

Griff Yea. A Big Whooper! (to Miki) Come with me my little Burger Princess.

Grand and Phyllis come forward and shake hands with Burns and Corona. They start to leave.

Grand Oh, thank you, thank you. It has been wonderful.

Phyllis Come children.

We hear a loud clap of thunder. Burns and Corona exchange knowing glances. Their demeanour changes dramatically.

Burns Excuse me, mamme, you can't leave now. That was the finale. It wasn't the ending.

Phyllis You were perfect, but we do have to get home. It's ten thirty.

Corona Accounts must be taken.

Burns We have to go inside.

Griff (Hugging Grand) This is my dad. He loves me, don't you, pop? In spite of everything, right.

Corona The Heavenly Father is waiting.

Grand I love every boy who serves his country.

Griff breaks away. He looks ~~dis~~parately at the centre doors.

Phyllis But we are finished! We're whole! We are going home.

Stage smoke pours from under the centre doors.

Corona I'm sorry, you ... ah ... can't leave.

Burns There's still judgement, mamme. The rules are the rules!

Miki This is what I came for!

Miki breaks away, leaving Grand and Phyllis arm-in-arm. Phyllis looks at Grand then pulls away. Now all four characters are standing separately.

(Aside to Griff) I thought you had a premature climax.

Griff Better than none at all.

Phyllis (to Burns) I thought you were ending it so nicely.
Burns We have to go inside any moment.
Grand Aren't we finished? Wasn't this enough?
Corona I hate to raise the subject, but we still don't have an agreement for one of you to take a plea. Or do you want to have a family unit trial. Go in on a team basis.
Phyllis Oh, don't start that again. We're better. We're whole and strong. I think we should come back in a month. How much is that? Dickie will pay.
Burns Sorry ma'am, one out of four, or we'll have to start the trials.
Gong rings and door creaks open, Jason comes out and closes door behind him.
Jason Phyllis Marshall, Dixon Grand, Michelle Skinner, Griffith Grayburn Court is in session.
Characters look at each other stunned; Jason exits leaving door slightly ajar; stage smoke pours out through the open crack; Faintly we hear a jumble of discordant sounds, angelic choirs, thunder, peal of church bells and the moaning of the damned. The continues growing louder to a crescendo at the end of the play.
Burns Last chance to draw lots. Great odds, today, folks. Three out of four. Three out of four.
A further stunned silence.
Burns takes out a pack of (trick) cards and shuffles them like a card shark.
Burns Ah come on, pick a card, any card. Better than a trial any day.
Miki This isn't real justice!
Corona What's that? How about the Family Unit Trial then. Match the moving average and you can fly into eternity to-gether. The decisions of judge is final. If that's the way you want it.
Griff The Family that dies together fries together!

Griff goes over to the doors, and pries them open a little wider. He peers inside. More smoke. He sniffs. Sandlewood. And traces of sulphur. That's for you Dickie.

Miki (to Corona) I don't think we're really that close.

She crosses to the other corner of the stage standing defiantly.

I can make it on my own.

Phyllis and Grand look at each other. Hatred bristles.

Grand I am proud of my accomplishments.

Phyllis I have given, and I will receive.

Griff shouts into the smoke as if into an echo chamber.

Griff Hello in there Asshole (returns to the group) Hey, it's o.k! He's cool! I know the guy! I used to drive him out to Yonkers every Saturday. He played the ponies. He's o.k!

They all stare at him coldly.

Hey I'm not takin' the rap! ^{And} I'm a believer, just in case!

Grand I'm not an ordinary man. Doesn't anybody recognize the importance of what I've done!

Phyllis I've been a helper! Selfless.

Miki I'm Summa Cum Landa!

Griff And I wrote poetry!

Another sudden loud clap of thunder. Burns and Corona shrug with resignation; Jason enters through Courtroom door; Jason then rolls or pulls open not just the little centre Courtroom door through which he has been passing, but a whole central panel of the set of which the door is a small part. It makes an enormous rumbling sound as it opens. A fierce light burns from within, flashing red and white. The opening is hung with strands of glitter which intensify the light; puffs of smoke come from the entrance. The jumble of sounds grows loud so characters have to shout their last lines over the roar.

Jason takes out a roll to read the names. Instinctively Phyllis and Grand clutch each other in fear and just as quickly push away from each other in disgust. .

Jason Oyez, Oyez, Oyez. All persons having anything to do before His Lord High Almighty on this the Day of Final Judgement please take your place in the body of the Court and you shall be heard. Phyllis Marshall

 she doesn't move; Corona takes her hand; she stands stiffly

Phyllis They always need another social worker.

 Clients line up stage centre.

Jason Michelle Skinner

 She comes haughtily.

Miki This is arbitrary, unprofessional, unscientific and disorganized.

Jason Mr. President

 Grand becomes suddenly fearful then straightens his tie; he turns to Corona.

Grand (speaks defiantly) History is my judge! (then sheepishly) Does he like the Cowboys or the Bears? (as he takes his place beside the others)

Jason Griffith Grayburn

Griff (Griff is standing far off to one side) I'm busy. Loose joints. Nickel bags. Cocaine.

 Lawyers drag him over to stage centre beside the others; they handcuff him to person in front; music grows in volume; stagelights dim except that coming through the door.

Jason Now is your time. Prepare to answer when your name is called. Come with me.

 Jason takes Phyllis by the hand; Corona and Burns enter into the chain so all characters have linked hands. Jason leads the procession once past the opened passageway as silhouettes and then through the passageway where they disappear into the light. Phyllis walks head bowed but resolutely; Grand panicking then straightening his tie again; Miki kicking her heels angrily; and Griff being dragged; music reaches a crescendo then rapidly fades.

T H E E N D