

## **But You Knew That**

or

**Jesus Does Stand-Up - The Come Back Tour**

or

**after 'the thing' in Jerusalem**

or

**The Virgin Betty**

Charles Campbell

### *Synopsis*

*After eight thousand years on the stand-up circuit, delivering 'the message' – rise from the dead, lake of fire etc. - Jesus finally catches a 10 day break at the end of December and heads back to Nazareth, unannounced, and for Christmas dinner. It does not go well.*

*Virgin Mom is still mad he fucked up King of Jew. Joseph wants an Annulment. Heckie of the Wise Men races camels and smuggles perfume.*

*Who has a family more fucked up than Jesus?*

*And from the top of the mountain comes an offer of salvation with no strings.*

### *Characters*

This is written for a skilled monologist who can handle several voices. The second performer is 'Control', a combo of sound effects, canned laughter, and thunder/drums, which/who argue with Jesus, as the partially intelligible voice of God. From the context and the sound we should have a decent idea what the thunder/drums are 'saying'. Sometimes the intended words are in brackets.

The monologist evolves from an stressed-out, stand-up Jesus to a neurotic schizoid at war with the family demons.

## Scene One - The Come Back Tour

*Blank stage except for a table with a bottle of water and a solitary mic – standard 'stand-up' set.  
Spotlight comes on and searches the stage for 'the star'. Some applause.*

**[Control]**  
**Voice - Announcer**

Ladies and Gentlemen ...  
Heeeee's back! ... he's here, he's here *now*, for your everlasting enjoyment, your *last chance* to laugh, the Armageddon of haw-haw ... let's welcome to our stage, the one, the only, the ineffable, God's gift to comedy, the funniest man *ever* – put your hands together – let's give a big welcome to him ... to *The Come Back Tour* .... to Mr. Funny Man, the Laughing Stock Himself – The King – Misssssterrrrr Jesus!!!

**[Control]** *Canned, sustained loud cheers, whistles - obviously louder than the actual audience present could possibly make.*

*Jesus enters.*  
*He looks like a hippy variant of a Sunday School Jesus – long dirty whitish robe, tall, blond, messy hair, etc.*  
*He acknowledges - and directs/leads - the applause, paces, takes the mic from the 'pole', paces more, he gestures for the volume of applause to be turned up, up, then down, down*

**Jesus** *(Repeatedly interrupted by cheers and laughter)* Thank you. Thank you. It's really great to be here. I want to tell you ... thank you ... thank you ... Tucson ....

**[Control]** *Boos.*

**Jesus** *(Checks his notes ....)* Toronto! .... one of my favorite cities. An unforgettable place ... Toronto! Love it here! Love it. You folks really make me feel at home.

I was walking over here from my hotel this afternoon, for a lightning check ... I was in my outfit ... isn't it great ... isn't this costume great! ... Let's give it up for the costume lady!!!

**[Control]** *(... canned applause ...)*

**Jesus** *(handling the robe)* not too clean, not too dirty ... *(smells)* Fish!

Perfect. ... And the sandals ... Who could *not* know who I am! ... Who?

....  
I'm crossing the street .... and this lovely lady says to me ... 'Don't tell me, don't tell me .... you're Brad Pitt!'

Brad Pitt! ... (*gently mocking*) I get it. I really get it. Brad, Brad does look, sort of, a bit like me. Sort of. Tall - *ish*. ... A bit ... skinny, ... nice cheek bones.

And in Salt Lake City, just last week ... check this out ... I'm in my costume, this very same ... the sandals ... Same everything! And this stoner comes up. ... Thought I was Kevin Hart!

You'd think ... you'd think ... the visual clues are rock solid, man! ... (*gesturing to his costume*) I mean, seriously, Kevin Hart! He's ... so short!

And who can touch me in name recognition! Who? I mean ... other than Madonna.

Now there is a great franchise! She's been around forever. And she sings!

Jesus *does not sing*! Ever hear Jesus sing? I tried it in Vegas. *What a Friend you have in Jesus*. Not a Vegas kind of tune.

Madonna. .... I know her personally. ... But you know that! ...

Got to be honest ... her and me ... she and I ... we had issues. One in particular. Who I'm not naming.

**[Control]** (*angry thunder*)

**Jesus** (*shouting to Control*) They know! They know already!  
Everybody knows! Grow up.

(*aside to the audience*) He's nuts about her! Nuts.

(*Loud, demonstrative, for Control*) I love Madonna. (*but shaking his head 'no'*)

Let's give a big shout out for ... the Madonna!

Make the big Guy happy, folks.

**[Control]** (*Applause, then happy thunder*)

**Jesus** (*to audience*) ... .... What the fuck!? Eight thousand years ... nothing ... nothing ... Why now? Just when you think he's not watching, then POW!

You probably think ... I shouldn't whine. Right? Count your blessings, Right? ... Touring would be great. Famous! Famous is good!? After 'the thing' in Jerusalem famous is easy! See the world. Right?

You think?  
 'Hey, look, it's Kevin Hart'.  
 'Hey, look ... it's Mel Gibson'!  
 Yes! Mel Gibson!  
 Let's hear it for Mel. Let's hear it for Mel? (*no applause*)  
 ... No? ...  
 Fuck ... Mel Gibson!!!

...  
 You know we have to pay him royalties. No shit!  
 Let me say ... it's hard work, keeping this franchise going! ... Just to  
 keep the name alive. Tucson, Toronto, Toledo ... we're doing the T's  
 this month ... Really folks, touring ... is *not fun!*... Don't get me wrong  
 ... (*checking notes*) *Toronto* is great.

**[Control]** *applause, whistles*

**Jesus** This is my fourth tour. But my first time in Toronto. We're doing  
 three shows here in ... Toronto. That means I get to spend five nights  
 in a row in the same hotel. Five!  
 Which is great. Five!  
 That makes Toronto Room Service just about my closest friend ...  
 ever.

My first tour ... maybe you heard of it ... was huge back home, before  
 ... before 'the thing'. It was fun, sort of ... *All the Fish You Can Eat*.  
 'Strictly local produce'. Thousands and thousands of people. A fan  
 base Madonna couldn't touch. People matter ... Thing is ... thing is ...  
 they were fans of *free fish*. Logistics were a huge issue.  
 Then *The Miracle Tour*. Great concept! Going fantastic for a while. But,  
 you know, once you start raising the dead, no one comes out any  
 more for free fish. There's no going back. Then we got killed .... Killed!  
 Not by the critics. Penicillin! And Laser surgery Fucking doctors!.

And big mistake, booking us into into Jerusalem on Passover  
 Weekend! Huge Mistake. ... (*to the sky*) Not fun for me! If my feelings  
 count for anything!

**[Control]** (*rebuking thunder*)

**Jesus** I survived but you knew that. Changed *everything*!  
 ... Now ... now ... I mean the bar is so high .... So high ...  
 Raise the dead or go home! Not just one or three or seven but  
 everybody!

**[Control]** *laughing thunder*

**Jesus** Next tour ... after ... 'the thing'. We opened in Vegas - 'No Drinking, No Smoking, no Gambling, No Titties'.  
 Maybe you saw it? But I don't think so. Six nights. Over! Disaster. Mom liked it.  
 Not my idea. I'm not like that *at all*. Not a great concept for Vegas. The less said the better.  
 The same guy who put me f-g Jerusalem ... Passover weekend. What was he thinking!  
 And, now, voila - *The Come Back Tour*. Permanent road show. His idea. Totally.

**[Control]** *Applause, whistles. Happy thunder.*

*Jesus waves to Control.*

**Jesus** It's not just the packing and the unpacking, which is a drag - I have people to do that. I do! True fact! Jesus has roadies. How did a guy from Palestine get roadies named Peter and James and Thomas? Never mind.

...  
 One little shit hole town after another ... Ludlow, Fresno, Bakersville, Port Sydney. Ever been to Fresno ... It's all a blur.

I've been on the road my whole life! My *whole* life! Nazareth, Bethlehem, Egypt .... Galilee, Sinai, India, all over Galilee, Palestine, before the Wall ... Jerusalem, for ... *the thing* ... After ... wow ... everywhere! This touring is out of control, if you want my personal opinion ... out of *my* control.

I did not volunteer.  
 Anyhow, here I am!  
 And Jesus loves you! And you! And you!

It's not that every town is the same as every other town ... it's that *I am the same!* I don't know. I don't know. I feel, I feel ... I've peaked. I have no room to grow. I mean – after you rise from the dead and promise to throw everyone in a fiery pit ... where, where ... can you go? As an artist.

**[Control]** *short, sharp menacing thunder*

**Jesus** I've been on the rod since way before *Free Fish*.  
 Started out in Bethlehem. Very small. But you know that.  
 You've heard, 'What happens in Bethlehem stays in Bethlehem!' ... Famous saying.  
 Well ... iiiitttt'ssss .... not true! ... Not for me! ....  
 ... (*shouting*) Love Madonna! Love Her! ... She gave me my start!

**Control** *(approving thunder)*

**Jesus** Jerusalem kicked things up ... way up!  
Nobody back in B-town would have ever, ever, have guessed ... 'little Jesus' ... would, would ... like raise the dead! Little Jesus! Un-fucking believable!  
I showed them!  
They thought I was the sane one in the family.

**Control** *(approving drum role)*

**[Control]**  
- Voice *(heckler)* - Loser! Boo!

**Jesus** Somebody get that dude's name!  
Buddy ... I'm not vindictive or petty or shitty or judgmental, or *anything* like that, and I'm not saying ... not threatening ... or anything like that ... but ... I 'know' people! And *you* are going to roast in hell ... before next Tuesday. *(makes a note in his notebook)* ...

**[Control]** *(Thunder)*

**Jesus** *(to the rest of the audience)* Stick with me folks. What a friend you have in Jesus! The ending will knock your socks off.

**[Control]** *(Approving thunder)*

**Jesus** What happened was, I got busted in Jerusalem that weekend. Well, alright, not just busted ... But you knew that!  
*(Suddenly upset)* I hate talking about it. A lot of pain there.  
How would you feel if your dad ... I mean ... this wasn't just missing a little league. ... A dad like that! How would you feel?  
*A moment of sadness then recovers*  
It's a dark cave. You just roll the rock, and do it!

**[Control]** *(Approving thunder)*

*(Jesus calms himself and 'changes the topic')*

**Jesus** So there we were ... me and twelve smelly roadies ... and not a room to be booked within five miles ... Five miles ! No buses .. no taxis ... everything shuts down on Passover. The Jews are crazy like that. Why? Why shut down on Passover? No elevators. No driving, no ... Why? God says so! ... Guess what? He doesn't really care. *I know!*

**[Control]** *(Wild angry, scolding, thunder)*

**Jesus** *(to the thunder)* Ohhhh! „, Right! Now You care! Now!  
*(to the audience)* Two hundred paying customers and now he's  
 watching, ... his cut!

**[Control]** *(Angry thunder. {‘So, that’s the deal’})*  
*Jesus scoffs but continues.*

**Jesus** It's expensive to run a tour. Very, very.  
 He gets a percentage of the gross, off the top before .... before I pay the  
*all* the costs. All! *Off the top* he takes. *Before* expenses.  
 What's fair about that? I pay for the trucks, the roadies, ... first aid,  
 security, local attorneys, sales taxes, rehearsal halls, ... union  
 electricians!  
 Do you know what He says?

**[Control]** *(Thunder – laughing)*

**Jesus** “Blessed are the poor ....”  
 What'd he put up for this show? What? What? How much?  
 Costumes? Costumes! How much! *(looking at his crummy robe)* How  
 much!  
 What chance did I have for King of Jews ... dressed like this!

He doesn't care! He just doesn't care!

I got a guy just to handle the cash aspect.

He was one taking your contribution at the door. He's good with  
 money, I'll give him that. *(to audience)* ‘Trust me’. Is what he said. ‘I've  
 got your back!’ Where are you Judas? Stand up for the people.  
*Judas doesn't stand.*  
 Hey Jude! Don't be afraid.

**Control** *Spot lights searches. Still no Judas.*

**Jesus** Judas! Stick around for the last act, bud. You'll get yours.

*Pause. Jesus gathers his thoughts.*

So ... so ... where was I?

Me and the guys, we'd go down for Passover Week, almost every year.

*Mother... did ... not approve! Not! Mother! Oi!*

Blowing off, a little. Get ready for summer. Great week. We could usually sell enough weed to see us through July, maybe even August. (*confidentially*) On that particular time, I had this new shipment ... from my people in India. It was *special*. Soaked with this incredible oil from my people in Morocco. Fantastic. A couple of tokes and you are like *dead*. Four tokes and you're stone cold, out ten hours; five gets you fifteen hours of bliss; six gets you twenty.

(*confidential*) There was this guy, Lazarus, friend of my cousin. We'd usually pick 'im up on the way south, down to Jerusalem. This one year, when it all started, his sister was getting married, we got, we got him so zonked before the wedding on the new stuff, he'd go like dead, totally still, go cold, heart beat so slow you couldn't feel it, get all white and clammy, stink of piss. Perfect. So we wrap him up in a sheet and call in his family and friends for a, you know, 'send off'. '

'Good old Lazie! So young! ... prime of life!'

Told 'em to bring stuff to eat ... and drink Eh! Lots and lots to drink! ... What the fuck!

So, we got Lazie timed to come out, after two days, twenty-six hours, to be precise, everybody's stoned and drunk, and I say, I say, 'Lazarus, Lazarus ...' and put my hand on his forehead ... and he, like, wiggles his feet and the stoners start shouting ... and I say 'Lazarus!' ... and I touch his lips ... and he, like, sits up .... and the crowd go fuckin' nuts!

Screaming and dancing. And we give him some Rosemary to snort and he on his feet. He's dancing.

And ... and ... he's *collecting money*! Not just a little bit!! Fuckin' hell! Way better than the loaves and fishes! Way, way better!

So the next day, I'm riding this donkey down into Jerusalem ... which you know ... not everything they told you in Sunday School was a pile of crap! ... I was! A donkey! The crowds are following me, singing and dancing, shouting 'hit me up, dude ... Touch me, touch *me*!' Not the plan but, what the hell! I was cooking!

It was crazy. The people are pushing and ... the money changers are screaming! ... it was bad ... got very bad ... which is when shit happens ... the 'powers' were not happy!

**[Control]** (*Thunder*)

**Jesus** (*speaking to the thunder*) Not my fault! Not!!! Bugger off! Shit happens. I was not happy.

**[Control]** (*Angry thunder. Spotlight goes out, mic sputters*).

**Jesus** (*waving his fist*) The *Come Back Tour* is on you, dude. You booked it. Suck it up.

*Jesus, paces, as the thunder roars, impatient to get on with it. Jesus finally orders it to stop and it does. Somewhat reluctantly. Jesus comes centre stage, lights up on center stage, mic and a stool. He resumes.*

Now here's a question I have for you. Do you have an Agent? Everybody in my business has an Agent. You don't exist in Hollywood without an Agent. Forget talent. Forget good looks. You're *born* when he remembers your name. You die when he forgets. Mine's a He. Some people don't think so. But trust me. He's a guy! Only a guy could be such a jerk.

...

He calls me up.

*[Voices, on phone]*

**Agent** Hey, Mel, I might have something for you.  
Can you come in tomorrow?  
**Jesus** I'm Jesus.  
**Agent** Right.  
Oh, the one doing the Free Fish Thing? How's that going? This is a sequel.  
Come in tomorrow. Something happening in Jerusalem. Brad just passed. Might have your name on it. You take your shirt off, right?  
**Jesus** Well, maybe..  
**Agent** Low budget, kind of si fi, horror, with a thing at the end. For you, could be good.  
(shouting to another) Mildred, Mildred, where's the script! Mildred? (to Jesus) We'll get you a copy, I promise.  
Or should I call ... you know ... ah ... Kevin?

*A thing at the end!*

You wouldn't last three weeks without your Agent. And they get all the gigs. If I, personally, phoned up and pitched my act ... Let's say ... 'The Miracle Tour'.

*Voices on phone*

**Jesus** Yes Sir, I've performed this piece at church picnics all over Wyoming..  
People love it.  
'Bring me your sick and your huddled masses' ...  
**Voice** Hey, that's good.  
Whadda you say your name was?  
Yee Gust?  
Speak slower!  
Is that with a Y or a G?

But they've heard of my Agent! With a G!!!!  
 Who does - *actually* - nothing! Just talk on the phone.

**[Control]** *(Angry clap of thunder)*

**Jesus** *Nothing!* Can't sing, can't dance. Couldn't put a band aid on a piece of plywood. The blind .... stay blind! If you get my meaning.

**[Control]** *(Very angry thunder)*

*Jesus gives Control the finger.*

**Jesus** I take that back. He's *great* with concepts. Details, not so much. Takes *my* great ideas ... and blows them all out of proportion ... way way ... 'Lazarus - Rise from the dead! Up boy! Up!' Great idea! Great! Fabulous! But *everybody!* *Everybody!* Over the top! Way too much of a good thing. Very bad! Does he even think! I mean, where are they *all* going to ... eat ... sleep ... shit... And everybody, all at once, for Final Judgment? Think of the line-up!

**[Control]** *clap of thunder.*

**Jesus** Who am I to argue?  
 What he does, is ... he makes phone calls. A master! A genius!

*(as Agent)* 'Sidney, I've got this young kid, Fabulous. Fabulous. I'm booking a southern tour. I've got a slot. I could let you have him for three nights. You'll love him. The People love him. ... Jesus. ...

...  
 You remember him. Wasn't that terrific. I loved it and you loved it too, right! This is a sequel. Fantastic! Knock your socks off!

...'*The Come back Tour*'!

...  
 A *sequel*. To *The Miracle Tour*.

...  
 Dead! Not dead! Dead, not Dead!  
 Get it! Fabulous. Unique!  
 No.  
 Dead, *not* dead! *NOT* - dead!

...  
Sydney, stop being obtuse! What do doctors know!

...  
Sydney!

...  
Sydney, ... his mother is *the Madonna*.  
Just mentioning. ... M - A - D - O - N ...  
.... No, Sydney, the other Madonna!

...  
*Yes, really.*

...  
Ya, I know her pretty well. Why?

...  
Sydney! She's not like that! I don't care what  
you've heard.

...  
They're still together. Look, I know them personally.

...  
Sydney. If ... if *that* happened ... and I'm not saying it did  
or if it didn't ... if ... that was a very, very unique  
situation. And very long ago.

...  
Sydney, that is so cynical. Why would somebody make  
up something like that?

...  
Alright! Alright! I'll ask. ... Unbelievable! Sidney,  
you'll owe me!

...  
Passover! Three night! Passover! Are you nuts! Sydney!

...  
Alright! Alright! If you book three nights, I will *ask*. I'm  
only promising to ask. ....Who knows. She's nuts about  
the kid! Who knows what she'll say. I guarantee  
nothing! .... But you'll have to shower.

...  
Why? Why! Don't ask. Just do it!

O.K. kid, I got you Passover in Jerusalem. Don't fuck up.  
Stay on message.

**Jesus** Stay on message! Like I'm selling detergent! Message! Fuck!

**[Control]** (*Strange thunder*)

**Jesus** Get that?  
... No? ... I'll translate.

**[Control]** *Thunder message is repeated slowly and continues through Jesus's snide asides.*

**Jesus** *(Jesus translates)* Yea and verily ... Blessed be my children ...

... *(aside)* ... 'My children'! *My*. Well, exactly, approximately, how many are there? Careful what say, dude? Your answer can and will be used against you.

... on the Day of Reckoning, the graves will open and everyone will come back to life. Rise from the dead! With the same eyes and skin and toes and everything. Like Jesus. No one dies forever.

*(to the audience)* You think that's good? Want my advice? Pass on it. Eight thousand years and I still got the scars.

*Jesus shows his hands.*

**[Control]** *Rebuking thunder, then more 'message' to translate.*

**Jesus** *(translating, again)* And after you all come back to life ... I will pick the ones I like ... And all the rest, the ones I hate, will be tortured *forever* in a fiery lake. After water boarding. Among other things.

*(aside, sarcastic)* 'Hate' isn't exactly right. Maybe not 'hate' so much as ... 'I can't remember your name' or ... 'lost your file, sorry'.

.... 'The ones I *like*' ... will be locked up forever in a Presbyterian Sunday School for eleven year olds, called Heaven.

**[Control]** *happy laughing thunder*

**Jesus** *(hesitant, to the audience)* I said to him ... not that he listens to a word out my mouth ... I said ... I don't want to be the guy who breaks the news!  
Why don't you do a Press Release. Or a Tweet. ... Do the flood, again. Drown 'em all *for good*!  
More humane than the Presbyterian Sunday School.  
Or an asteroid!  
Don't bring 'em back to life! That's cruel!

**[Control]** *short sharp, angry thunder*

**Jesus** Alright! Alright!  
There you have it, folks.

You thought dying was the end! ... Hoping, even? ... Well ... It's not! You're looking at the Fiery Pit. Waterboarding, if you're lucky. Better be good!

[Control] Boo.

Jesus I'm just saying, what he's saying. Don't shoot the messenger.  
*He'll pick the ones he likes!*  
 Bit of a crap shoot, the picking! Not pretty.  
 I mean ... when he thinks I'm ... Mel! .... Fuckin' Mel! Mel!  
*(confidential to audience)* Bring your photo ID ... if you get my meaning.  
*... (Jesus looks up, worried. No thunder.)*  
 Oh, man, oh man ... *(looking up to see if Thunder noticed. confidentially)*  
 I shouldn't have told you that. But you are a great, great audience.  
 Give it up ... for YOU.

[Control] *Cheers, whistles, applause.*

Jesus You are different. I can feel it. Jesus knows what's in your heart! I feel ... I feel .... *Questions!*  
 Questions!  
 ....  
 The man over here.  
 .... *(Jesus listens to the question)*  
 He wants to know ... 'what is it *like* to rise from the dead?'  
 Great question!!  
 Physically, right? Not ... not ... like ... 'oh fuck ... Why did you wake me!'  
 What he means, folks, is, 'how does the body *feel*?' After being dead for eight thousand years. Itchy? Stiff? What?  
*(answering)* Definitely stiff. Really need to pee.  
 Hungry?  
*(answering)* Not usually. More like bloated ... bad gas.  
 Horny?  
*(answering)* Depends.  
 ...  
 Woman in the second row.

...

Louder ...  
*(starting to repeat)* She wants to know if ...  
*(shocked)* What! What! None of your business!  
*(He hears 'Why' from the audience.)*  
 Why! Why? Unbelievable! You get famous and people think they own you!  
 Because I know people, alright. The right hand! *(pointing to himself)*

Enough with the questions. Bad idea. I hate Improv.  
(pause) You all come here to laugh at Jesus. Or with!

**[Control]** *(hoots, whistles, cheers, he waits it out, very patient)*

**Jesus** *Jesus Does Stand-Up! ... What you paid for!*  
Believe in Jesus and ... he'll make you laugh.

**[Control]** *(Hoots, whistles, cheers)*

*Jesus waits it out, very patient, getting serious.*

**Jesus** Jesus loves you. Yes he does. Jesus loves you. He spends hours thinking up stupid shit to make you laugh. ... Days. Weeks. Years. Personally, I just want you to be happy ... laughing ... when ... when ... I mean, given all the other shit that comin' at you. ... None of which is my fault. Because I am just the messenger ... as you know.

**[Control]** *(Thunder)*

**Jesus** *(gesturing to Control - struggling, arguing with an inner voice)*  
You tell them! You tell them!  
I don't like the message!

**[Control]** *Angry, disciplinary thunder*

**Jesus** *(pause, resigned, to audience, despairing, apologetic)* O.K. Folks. Here it is. Here is message. Me. Messenger.  
Here it is. Go.  
Dying is temporary.  
*Regretful, apologetic to audience* ... Fuck ... fuck ... fuck ... I know .... That's not funny!  
*(Jesus remembers the Question asked. He struggles to get control and speaks again to audience, bitterly)*  
'What it's like to be dead?' What good question, sir.  
I mean, who would ever care! Except that ... dead is 'temporary'!  
You'll see what's it feels like, eventually ... not being dead! I mean ... after being dead.  
Advice. Don't get cremated. Bad for the skin.  
*(to Control)* Motherfucker!  
*(to audience)* But that's not the hard part. The hard part is - you get - undead - and then .... Judgment! ... And, most likely .... he kills you again! I mean - what the fuck!  
Anyhow ... I'm feeling ... I'm crashing ... feeling ... not funny ...

I know I shouldn't get personal ... not what you paid for ... sad ass Jesus ... Sorry for this! If you want your money back, see Judas, at the back door. (*scarcastic*) He's got lots of cash.

*(Jesus comes apart)*

I'm sorry for sharing. No, I'm not. I'm not! Jesus loves you. You gotta love him back! Don't fuck up on that! Please!

Excuse me.

*Jesus starts crying and leaves the stage. Lights.*

*End scene.*

## Scene Two - I'll Be Home for Christmas

**Voice** Ladies and Gentlemen, please welcome back to our stage ... the Comeback Tour. The Comeback King! Mr. Jesus.

*Jesus comes back on stage, no lighting or fanfare. He's dressed in scruffy street clothes, jeans, tee shirt, etc. He carries a backpack.*

**[Control]** *Some brief applause, a solitary whistle, a few claps.*

*Jesus raises his arms to quiet the crowd.  
He takes the mic.*

**Jesus** How many people like Christmas? Love Christmas?

**[Control]** *Loud applause, whistles.*

**Jesus** Sleigh bells. Wise Men. Santa. Turkey! Presents! Rudolph!

**[Control]** *Louder applause, whistles.*  
*(canned) 'I'll be home for Christmas ... '*

**Jesus** *(turning sarcastic) Not me.*  
*Home for Christmas! With Mary and Joseph! Are you nuts!*  
*But ... but ... what the fuck! Live life on the edge.*  
*Last year ... we were playing Cairo in December and the guys ... they wanted to go home for Christmas.*  
*Insisted! Fuckin' union! You'd think after eight thousand years they'd forget about it!*  
*Anyhow, I was shut down for two weeks, stuck in Cairo ... and ... and the other guys were doin' it ... It's not *that* far ... and ... peer pressure ... It's true, Jesus gave in to peer pressure.*  
*What the fuck, what the fuck ... what am I afraid of? What?*  
*Maybe, after eight thousand and sixteen years ... people change, right?*  
*We're all adults, right? Maybe.*  
*So .... So ...*

**[Control]** *(Applause, whistles)*

**Jesus** So I took the ferryboat to Tel Aviv with the guys, and the bus to Nazareth. Nobody knew I was coming. I had to walk from the station.  
*(He gets his Jesus robe out of the back pack and puts it on as he talks, fumbling and stumbling as he walks)*

I put on the Jesus costume - it's a one piece thing, easy to pack - in bushes behind the bus station. I always have it with me. So people will recognize me, I hope. Most of the village never seen me ... in it. Except Mom. She had skin in the game. Followed me around back in the day. Bit of a stalker. Mom!

I'm walkin' down road, thinking, what to say. How to break the ice. I'm nervous. Very. I mean it's been eight thousand years. I'm blessing the lampposts!

'Hey there. Been a while.'

Mom! ... 'This stuffing is *sooo good*' .... 'What did you do to these turnips?'

I was nervous. All the time. Back then. Hearing things you don't.

**[Control]** *faint thunder*

**Jesus** Nervous. I gotta right!

*(Jesus shakes his head to get rid of the voices)*

I'm there. I open the door. Nobody's in the courtyard, except a guy ... just sitting there, on the bench wearing a Steelers' jersey. I just knew this was my long-lost, step-brother Cranston!

Now this was surprising to me, because, I had never actually *seen* him in the flesh when I was little. ... See, he was always away at football camp or boarding school, or college. And, the second reason it surprised me was that he was killed in a motorcycle accident when I ran away to India.

It's all in *The Book of Cranston*, which wasn't discovered when they put the old Bible together. It's there now, in the new Bible. Mathew, Mark, Luke and Cranston. You can get it on Kindle.

So I said:

*(doing both voices)*

**Jesus** You must be Cranston. We finally meet. Good to see you, bro. After all these years. How's tricks? But I heard you were dead!"

**Cran** Not now. Was dead ... for a bit. Not any more. But I heard you were dead!

**Jesus** I was dead, dude. What you see is what you get.' ... On 'special assignments' these days.

**Cran** Looking good, dude. Except for the dress. How was it for you? Being dead?

*Jesus*      Stiff. A lot of sinus congestion.  
                  You?

*Cran*      Ahhh .... well ... you know. ... Glad it's over.  
                  Hey, Lazarus'll be here for supper. He goes to his in-laws for turkey and then he comes here for pie.

I'm thinking, this won't be so bad. Lazzie is awesome.  
Three un-deads for Christmas dinner. That's something for a T.V. show.

Then out comes Joe. Now, Joe and me – never good. And right just then I wasn't feeling very prodigal son-ish, if you know what I mean.

I talk ... alright, I *complain* .... to my therapist about the situation at home back in the day.

She says I'm a 'whiner'. I think I have cause. 'Which', she says, 'doesn't count, after eight thousand years'. She says 'Grow up!' I say, '*Eight thousand years makes it worse!*'

I got a right to be nervous! I know, there's are lots of guys, lots, with two dads ... but ... where one is a vindictive, genocidal ghost with an invisible fleet of gossamer-winged drone bombers and the other is a autistic, passive-aggressive, schizoid ectomorph with a grandiose persecution delusion and a brain like a bag of hammers?

I mean ... how fucked up is that! I think I have a case.

Joe looks me up and down. Like he used to. Not saying anything. Just like when I was seven, and three and eleven and five. Just ... *looking* ... like I'm a bed bug or a spider or a pile of sheep shit or ... he's ... I don't know ... like he's sad ... he didn't kill me in the stable like the shepherds said.

Then he looks at Cranston and smiles. Big smile. So, who's his favorite? Not that I'm sensitive or anything.

I'm thinking, maybe I should of got really drunk on the ferryboat.

Thing is, I don't look like Joseph. Not too much. Not at all! I look more Norwegian. Or Swedish. When I was little I didn't know why this bugged him. After eight thousand years ... I figured it out.

Well, actually, Heckie told me. I'll get to that in a minute.

*Control*      (*modest thunder*)

*Jesus*      Fuck off!

I remember, when I was little, him and Mom would have these arguments which I didn't understand. Mom would say (*as Mary*) "A puff of wind, Joe ... a puff of wind! Nothing I could do!" "He called me, 'Little Puff'. He'd say, "North wind, was it, then?" Joe wasn't buying it.

Finally he says, "Thought you might be showing up some time soon. There's a guy out back asking for you. Your Mom will be thrilled. But why did ya bring him?"

**Jesus** And I said, 'What!?"

And Joe says, 'Says he's your 'Real Dad'. Out back. So don't pretend he didn't come with you.'

**Control** *modest thunder {ha, ha. Gotta ya!}*

**Jesus** (*to Joseph*) Out back.'!!! Well, He did not come with me!

**Control** *loud thunder {'Oh yes I did'}*

**Jesus** (*to audience*) Who was I to say, no he never. I mean, he's been following me around for centuries. And there's not a fuck of a lot I can do about it.  
And ... how would Joe even know he's out back. Real Dad isn't exactly the chatty type.

**Control** *Drum roll*

**Jesus** (*annoyed*) Oh, really. Alright! Except on Christmas.  
I'm thinking ... I thinking ... Joe, why don't *you* go talk to him. Maybe he came to talk to you. Apologize. Maybe. You two got the issue! And she's in the kitchen. I'm the consequence, not the cause. Hey, I'd like to listen, what he says to *you*!

**[Control]** *Confused mad thunder*

*Jesus gives him the finger.*

**Jesus** Lots of luck, Joe!

*Trying to get himself together, cool his anger, he start again.*

I do this thing ... when I'm very nervous. ... other than the voices. ... I lie. White ones. To be nice. My therapist says it is *not* endearing. But I do it! She says it's self-destructive ... death wish ... But I do it, alright! I do it! You don't live in my skin! It makes feel good.

So I said to Joe... 'You were always so good to me.'  
 Bit of a stretch. But what the hell! If Jesus can't lie to be nice, who can?  
 Felt good.  
 'You're the guy I came to see. You are ... Mom said ... you were the best  
 thing that ever happened to me!'  
 That was a whooper!  
*Jesus doubles over, laughing to himself at this giant whooper.*

**[Control]** *Wild, angry, prolonged temper tantrum of a thunderstorm.*

*Jesus shouts back but cannot be heard. He has a temper tantrum,  
 waving his fist at the thunder. Thunder shouts back. This carries on at  
 comic length and then slowly peters out as both parties become  
 exhausted. Good they are not in the same room or there would be  
 fistfight. Finally Jesus can be heard and speaks. First just a few words.  
 He fight to be heard over the weaken thunder, which fades.*

**Jesus** Mother-puffer! Ever think about the consequences!  
 Dump me down here ... eight thousand years! Eight f-g thousand ...!  
 Look at me! Look at me! Don't look away! Rags! Rags!  
 Who's looking after who!  
 Raise the dead! Then kill them all over again! Ass hole! Leave them  
 alone!  
 You should be on your knees begging ... begging !! Joe, Joe ... Who fed  
 me? Who! He should sue your ass!

*(calming, slightly, to audience)*

I'm sorry you had to hear that. Some times he doesn't think! He never  
 thinks! Whatever he wants. Now! Do what I say, now! ... Do what I'm  
 thinking .... Now! Or I'll kill everybody in the whole world! Then bring  
 them to life and kill them again!

*(Jesus paces, crazy, then stops, turns to audience)*

That's my 'real dad'.

Wanta trade!

And you haven't even met my Mom!

**Control** *Wild angry rebuke from the thunder.*  
*Jesus stomps off stage.*  
*Lights*

## Scene Three

## Who's Your Daddy

*Lights up, Jesus is flat on the stage and starts talking, deliberate, flat, pensive. Eventually he sits up, then gets up, paces and gets animated as his soliloquy evolves.*

**Jesus**

When I was really little I thought, assumed, Joseph was my daddy. A man living in the same house ... was, *the daddy*. Everybody in Day Care had one. I thought I was normal. I wanted to be normal. When I was four I started to notice things. Mom never called Joe 'my dad'. And he hardly ever talked to me. When he did, he called me, 'Mr. Puff'. He hardly ever talked to her. He never took me to hockey or baseball. He worked late all the time.

He said he made bookshelves. I went there once. I saw lots of bookshelves. He made book shelves.

I don't remember when I first heard about Cranston. I think I was six or seven. Joe told me He was going away for the weekend, which he did a lot. But now he said ... to Cranston's school to see a football game with Cranston in it. I wanted to go but he said it was private. A couple of more times. Lots of times, he went to see Cranston. But Cranston never came to see us. By the time I was nine Cranston was the quarterback. Nobody told me that. I just knew. He was everything I needed in my life. Joe said he might come home one weekend but he didn't.

*(Sitting up)*

I suddenly got this fear Cranston was in a juvie jail or something. I was afraid to ask Joseph. So I got up my courage to ask Mom.

She said ... she adored Cranston. Adored! But she'd never actually seen him either.

I thought - I asked - 'Well, how did he get born?' I asked. 'Shepherds, again?'

She looked troubled.

Now, the fact is, and this may not surprise you, given ... everything ... I knew more about sex than Mom ever did. From Alt.sex on my Android. And the shepherds. But you knew that.

'Well', she said, 'I didn't do it'.

I couldn't restrain myself. 'So who's the Mom?'

'Joseph told me it was the Holy Mother. A ghost.' Who was to argue.

So Joseph had a hook-up down at the carpentry shop with a lady ghost?

'What's a hook-up?' she said. 'But it was at Football Camp. That I know!'

*(standing up)*

Now, like I said, I knew more about sex at that point, from my various sources, than Mom ... but ... 'What's hook-up?' Mom!!!

It occurred to me, but I didn't say it, if she wasn't Cranston's Mom, then maybe Joe wasn't his dad. The Lord works in mysterious ways. And sometimes it's better not to know. Mom didn't know up from west, or wasn't telling. I was ... more than curious ... too weak a word ... freaked out.

By the time I was thirteen Cranston was playing college ball somewhere in Nebraska, according to Joseph. And I was getting straight A's in Homiletics and Leviticus Theory. And Mom was calling me 'King of Jews'. And Joseph was drinking a lot.

When I told my therapist two years ago that when I was little I had a older step-brother who was star quarterback and had dozens of girl friends and was probably an astronaut and never came home from football camp ... she said, 'I was lucky. Think how fucked up you'd be if he did come home'. Then I told her about the Christmas dinner when both him and 'Real Dad' showed up and both liked dark meat and cranberry jelly and she said, 'you really *are* fucked up'. Which I think was unprofessional.

...

I began to feel ... to really *feel* ... that Mary and Joe were only staying together for the sake of the children. And I felt guilty. Then afraid. What if Joseph left ... and left me alone with Mom! What if Mary took off ... with her Norwegian Sugar Daddy ... and I was left with Joe! What if ...

That's what I felt when I was little. It's hard to sort out what you feel now ... when I know the truth ... from what I felt then. I get *now* and *then* confused. Lots of guys do.

I mean, now I know ... because Heckie told me ... that when I was really little, before I could remember anything ... Joseph sued Mary for an annulment. To get a declaration they were never married, so he could marry this Betty, from another village, with whom he had this thing going on. Heckie said that Joe said that Mary refused to consummate the marriage – which means ... but you know what ... because she was The Virgin and virgins never fuck and ... and ... I wasn't his kid. This was before, you know, DNA and blood tests. And Mary counter-sued him for child support. Said he was the 'man of house'. And she wanted an order of non-molestation. Because she the 'Virgin'.

'Who else could it be?' the judge said.

**Control** *(laughing thunder)*

**Jesus** So there was no annulment. And Joe had to suck it up. He wasn't happy. Married to Virgin with a Norwegian kid he had to support. But, like lots of marriages, they suffered together, settled into it. And, like I said, Joe just didn't talk to me.

Anyhow, that what I know now, about then. And, *now*, shit ... you have to have at least a little sympathy for Joe, *then*.

**Control** *violent thunder*

**Jesus** Alright, alright. You don't *have to*.  
But you ought to! Normal guys do.  
Never mind. Back then ... I was seriously fucked up about my home life.  
And I had this idea back then, that Betty could move in and be Mom's servant and Joe could fuck her instead of Mom, just like Abraham and Sarah and Hagar ... You knew that. No you didn't. Look it up. ... and Mom could adopt Cranston and when he got bigger she could marry him instead of me. Which would take a load off my mind. Added attraction, looking back on it, that Cranston could be crucified, instead of me! He's way better'n me with his shirt off. Woulda changed history.

I proposed this to Mom. Behind Joe's back, which was ... never mind. But she said no. She already had a husband and it was me.

*(now pacing nervously)*

And then it came to me one night when I was jerking off – Cranston doesn't exist! He's like Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer ... and .... Maybe even Santa himself! Joseph made him up! There is no Holy Mother conceiving football players at Football Camp. Only me, getting A's in stuff Joe didn't understand. There was no football team in Nebraska.

And he got no sex from Mom! Who was married to me. Only book shelves and more book shelves and more book shelves. No wonder he was – well - bitter. And a good thing, he didn't talk. And the really bad thing for me was the guilt! I was the reason keeping Joe and Betty apart.

This realization made me mad. Because, until then I believed in Cranston. Because as long as there *was* a Cranston, I didn't need to play football or hockey or baseball or anything like that. And now, I felt ... now I had to ... get serious about life.

All I could think about was 'getting serious'. It was that time of life. But, the timing of this revelation was bad. I mean, I was just on the verge of breaking the ice with Joe about ... about ... Mom sure didn't know ... the Rabbi wasn't talking ... the most serious thing then I knew ... fucking. I mean, I needed details, ... how do you start, how hard to you push ... how long .... All that stuff ... It's important when you're thirteen ... but ... but ...

*(getting a bit wild)* Joe was a fruitcake! With a make-believe mistress. Or not. Who knew?

You didn't. No you didn't.

And a made-up son, a ghost! – who was way better 'n me ... which was easy for him because he didn't exist ... who ... never left football camp and flew up into space whenever he wanted. Who ... who ...

Then I got hit by another flash. An insight so blinding my boner collapsed! Not a downer but a ray of hope! Maybe Joseph *wasn't* my fuck dad! I mean, he was real enough. But ... big clue ... not Norwegian, at all. Like me! ... It was actually kind of a relief! I mean it would explain a lot. The drinking. The depression. The fact he wouldn't talk to me. I started feeling sorry for him. And that was a mind fuck. And ... and ... I still felt guilt, because I was still keeping him getting together with Betty.

And then, and then ... you know where this is going because you know how smart I am ... not ...

... if ... Joseph *wasn't* ... who ... and if Cranston *wasn't* ... and if Mom didn't ... how ... and if .... then ... I mean ... who *was* my 'real Dad'! I

mean, was Real Dad, really my Dad?! And if all that was true ... was I even real? And what about Cranston! And Betty?

**Control** *(laughing thunder)*

**Jesus** Eventually, eventually, by process of elimination I figured it out. And, so, I ran away.

**Lights**

**Scene Four****Mom**

*Lights up. Jesus resumes.*

**Jesus**

So, like I said. Joe and me are standing there, staring, *(sarcastic)* exchanging pleasantries ... 'real dad' is out back' ... and Mom come out.

*(Jesus does an about-face and continues as Mom/Madonna)*

I thought I heard a familiar voice.

Well, look at you! Just look at you! Where have you been!

You staying for supper! Don't argue. Always, you argue. So skinny. Look at you! The robe, darling, too peasant. You look like Mel Gibson! Did you sleep in it? It smells. Leave it in the hamper, darling. I think I can you find something nice that'll fit. What, it's been eight thousand years ... plus. ... what ... fifteen? I wasn't expecting you till Armageddon. Your real dad said you were on tour. How's that going for you?

Joseph, don't look at me like that! That's what he said. Jesus is staying for supper. Go get another chair from the garage. One of the good ones. Put it next to me. Don't argue.

You look a little puffy under the eyes. They're still fabulous eyes. Aren't you sleeping? Is that girl keeping you up late? I warned you! ... Didn't you tell her! You're married to me!

Look at you! ... I'm so surprised to see you. You never write, you never phone. And ... poof ... here you are! Little Poof! You were so cute.

... I can't remember, you like dark meat or light? It's good to see you.

It's been a long time. That was so terrible in Jerusalem. Let me see your hands. They are ... almost, all better. It wasn't so bad. I mean weighed against what you've got going now. So famous! Maybe King of Jews would have been better, but what's past is past.

I won't say I wasn't disappointed, back then. I had high hopes. You could have been King of the Jews. It's a pretty good job. Most days. Where's the nice suit I bought for you! History is history. I'll only say it once, but ... but ... you could have apologized. To Caesar. You could have! It didn't have end so badly. I would have apologized. If it were me. Make peace with Rome. Take it from me, there are advantages. And stop with that raising the dead. Nothing but trouble.

My little Jesus could have been King of Jews.

It was that lawyer. Wasn't it?! They're all the same.

'Don't talk. Right to remain silent. Say nothing.'

They think they should talk and everybody should listen ... to them! That's what wrong with the world, the biggest thing, talking lawyers.

Anyhow, darling, where did you go? I was looking for you ... after 'the thing'? In the garden. It was that girl, I'll bet. I never trusted her!

But there's a bright side to everything. You're sitting pretty now! Joseph, don't you think ... Joseph! ... don't you think he's sitting pretty. Us too. My son, a God. Who knew. Me, the mother of the son of God which makes me - mother of God - I think - don't argue. Anyhow, it was a different God. For the goyem. But still. And Joseph! Well, what does that make you! Aren't you glad - now - that annulment didn't go through.

You're still adorable, in a Scandinavian sort of way. Joseph, don't pout. Look at him! I got lucky. That'll all. Cranston is nice, dear, but a bit too beefy for my taste.

And so sensitive. Because he listened to his mother.

Well, I better go and fix the turnips. You talk to Joseph. Joseph, talk to him. Tell him, tell him ... his Real Dad is out back.

Play your cards right, Joseph. We're sitting pretty now! You want to be a carpenter *forever!*

**[Control]**

*Thunder and applause for Mary.*

*Jesus does another about-face and resumes as Jesus and exits left - to Christmas dinner.*

**Jesus**

So, we assembled for Christmas dinner.

Joseph, Mary.

And the Three Wise Men. Nice guys. Heckie, Herman and Hershel. They lived across the lane. Ran a delivery company. Like Fed-Ex, but with camels. Local and long distances. Smart guys. They always came over for Christmas dinner ... since ... since, at least when I was born Brought Mom perfume. Every Christmas.

And Herman's girlfriend, Miriam, often showed.

Lazarus, for pie.

And Cranston.

And, believe it or not, Real Dad. Although you can't really ever tell with him. But he was there! I know. And he was hungry. And you want to know, whether Betty comes for supper? Don't you? Perverts. Something you don't know.

*Jesus walks calmly off stage, to Christmas dinner.*

*Lights*

## Scene Five Jesus Runs Away

*Lights up.*

*Jesus comes on stage in jeans, carrying a backpack.*

*(Jesus speaks totally calmly here. Evolving to sweet and sentimental).*

**Jesus** The first time I ran away I was four. Every Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1 until 5 I ran away and stayed with the Three Wise Men, across the back lane. Usually it was Herman because he worked nights and was home in the afternoon. Most days he went to his girlfriend's for supper and so I was back home by five-fifteen just as Mom got home from her shift at the bakery.

The Wise Men had six camels and ten donkeys, big and little, for their delivery business. I could ride the donkeys side saddle from when I was seven. Herman taught me. But you knew that.

They had two racing camels, which weren't much good for deliveries, but Herman's younger brother, Heckie, raced them on the weekends. If they had really long distance pickups, Heckie would go on one of the racers. Sometimes he'd be gone for weeks. One time he had to go all the way to Petra and pickup three little packages and take them to Bethlehem. Made a shit load of money.

More or less I was living over there till I was ten. I'd go to the camel races a lot with Heckie. Learned win, place and show by the time I was five. I was making serious money by the time I was ten. Had my own stash, by the time I was nine. Heckie's girl friend Miriam kept it for me. She was really nice. And ... built. I loved Miriam when I was ten. Not like that. But she did kiss on the lips once.

I never told Mom I went to the camel races. Told her I was at Synagogue. I was, sort of, because the Rabbi came to camel races most Sunday afternoons. I taught him how to bet daily doubles and he'd tell Mom I was at Synagogue discussing Deuteronomy.

In the winter we'd take the racers, and the older delivery camels, who needed a break, and we'd run away to Heckie's cousins, who were shepherds up in the mountains. It was a nice set up. Mostly sheep. Now, they are stupid animals! The cousins boarded lots of city camels, and donkeys on the side. And us.

Lots of times Heckie and me and Miriam and Miriam's little brother, Petey, who was my age, would go up there and end up sleeping in the

Knows more now for us will  
knows more now for us will

stable, I told Mom about it once. She shit. But it was nice. When the big house was full. Herman would bring us a heavy blanket from the big house to put on the hay bales. Hershel brought out some soup. We'd have a little party. The baby lambs would lie down with you. Baa. Baa. Put you to sleep.

Don't get the wrong idea about Mom. She has a soft spot. And a sense of humor. She came around.

'My boy, Oi Vey! Slept in a barn!'

There was branch of Heckie's family with ranch just outside Bethlehem. There was a lot of back and forth trading their best racing

camels.

Joseph was actually a cousin of the Bethlehem branch of the family. He never told me. The shepherds did. Years later.

Football in Nebraska, my ass. He used to ride with them to Bethlehem to 'pay his taxes'. And visit Betty. I know -you did not know about Betty. Until today.

**Control**

(Thunder)

**Jesus**

In the summer I'd run away up in the high pasture with the shepherds to rescue little lost lambs, who had gone astray and stay overnight and cook marshmallows and sleep by the fire. I loved that.

**Control**

whistles hoots

**Jesus**

The marsh mellow, not the lambs. You pervert.

One time way up in the mountains I was hunting for lambs and I got lost and I met this guy, sort of a shepherd, from another tribe, maybe, ... and he helped me hunt and we climbed higher and higher. His name was Louie ...

**Control**

Wild, smashing, extended, angry, thunder, drums

**Jesus**

(He waits him out, staring up, annoyed, ('What a jerk!')  
Then to the audience)

He knows Louie. They have issues.

**Control**

more angry thunder

**Jesus**

Louie spoke the language. More than I can say for you!

**Control**

(grumpy thunder.)

**Jesus** Louie and me climbed right up to the top. Where no lamb could ever go. Now it's me that's lost. Except for ... Lucifer. Louie's real name. But you knew that.

**Control** *More angry thunder*

**Jesus** The wind was strong but I was warm 'cause Louie held me, and the stars were so clear. You could see forever. You could see so far you couldn't see anything. You could see everything. It was awesome.

And Louie said ...  
*(to audience as a question)* You know this? You think?

He says ...'All this I give to you.' .... No 'fall down and worship me'. No 'drink my blood'. No nothing. *No strings*. An unconditional transfer of title. Mine!

**Control** *Wild, smashing, extended, angry, thunder, drums.*

*Jesus waits him out.*

**Jesus** I'm just saying what he was saying.  
 I turn around and he's gone.  
 No nothing. Just all those stars. All that everything. And it was mine.  
 No strings. No, 'wake up calls, no judgment, no fiery pit, no *nothing!*'  
*(pause)*  
 Never saw Louie again.

**Control** *Timid beaten thunder, drums*

**Jesus** *(continuing, matter of fact, as if this last exchange never happened)*  
 I'd take the shepherds bets on the camel races down to the track and bring them money if they won, less a little something.

They had a patch of Mary Jane up in the hills. Then the next year I took over their distribution in town and we split 60 – 40. So they could expand the grow.  
 And we'd get stoned and look at the stars.

I expanded the distribution. They guys I fished with from the village, not high wattage guys, mostly kicked out of shul. But salt of the earth. They did the local distribution for me. And ... and ... my roadies ... to this day. But you knew that.

I delivered, personally, to the Rabbi. He'd told Mom that, for my age, I was an astonishing expert on Leviticus.

Life was sweet.

When I was nineteen, I put the distribution business in Petey's hands, a guy I could trust, and bought a camel from Heckie and followed a star he showed me in the eastern sky, until I got to India, where I learned Yoga and met Buddha.

When I got back, Mom told me they were looking all over for the King of Jews and I missed it. She was pissed.

Me? *(Shrug)* Eh.

*End Scene – Lights*

**Scene Six****Christmas Dinner**

*Lights up. Jesus with mic.*

**Jesus** So, Christmas dinner.  
*(pause)*  
 In walks Petey. Unexpected. Except by me.  
 He'd had a few. More than a few.  
 Said his house was a pile of dust and his Mom and Dad were totally  
 gone.

And Joe says, 'Whadda expect after eight thousand years!'

**[Control]** *laughing thunder*

**Jesus** Which was a bit harsh even if he was drunk. He was crying pretty bad.  
 Joe and Petey were fishing buddies, back in the day. And  
 second cousins. I mean maybe it was good that silent Joe was  
 expressing himself but ... it was still mean.

Everybody wanted Petey to stop crying and stay for supper.  
 Except Mom. Who always thought he was, like, 'trailer trash' and  
 blamed him for leading me astray from being king of the Jews.  
 She didn't say that right out. The way she put it, she said, 'there  
 wasn't enough 'white meat'.

**[Control]** *(thunder)*

**Jesus** Right.  
*(translating)* Real Dad said he'd 'share' with Petey!  
*(to Audience)* Yes, I did say, 'share'.  
 You did not know *that*.  
 A first. It was Christmas.

And we were just getting Petey settled down when Lazie arrived.  
 Too early for pie. We gave him some pickles and crackers. ... 'Came  
 for pie, stayed for thigh.' He's a character.  
 Lazie and Petey knew each other - and Heckie and Herman - from  
 Shepherd Camp. And Cranston, too. I didn't know Cran up there but  
 we knew a lot of the same people. Cranston said he knew Louie.

**Control** *(angry, thunder)*

**Jesus** Suck it up, dude. Shit happens.  
 Anyhow, the party was going good.

Thunder Dad is asking Cran about the new coach in Nebraska. I'm translating. Him and Joe are taking seven to three for Oklahoma over Nebraska for next day, like normal guys. Until Thunder Dad shouts, Nebraska's *gonna 'die'* tomorrow. *Die!*

**Control** *(Thunder)*

**Jesus** Everybody's laughing. Even Petey's laughing.  
Except me. I'm not laughing.

**Control** *thunder*

**Jesus** *(to Control)* You liked that, don't you. Fuckin' with their heads.  
You prick!

We go in to the dining room.

*A long table set for Christmas Dinner is rolled on stage, including chairs.*

*Jesus moves from place to place as he speaks for, or of, the different characters.*

**Jesus** Mary, here, at the head.  
The Three Wise Men. Heckie, Herman and Hershel. Here.  
And Herman's girlfriend, Miriam, here.  
Cranston. I think.  
And Thunder Dad. Although you can't really ever tell with him. But he was there! I know. And he was hungry.

Joe says to Thunder Dad 'You sit here, at the head of the table'.  
Which I thought was ... a smart move. Tactical.

**[Control]** *(thunder, nasty)*

**Jesus** *(translating)* He said ... 'Joe, tomorrow I'm gonna raise you from the dead, take your wife and then throw you into the fiery pit. You can sit there. One last time.'

**[Control]** *a triumphant thunder flourish*

**Jesus** Which I translated ... 'Joe, you're a fine man. It's your house. I'm a humble guest. You sit where you always sit.'

**[Control]** *angry thunder*

**Jesus** *(to Control)* Come on! Be nice. It's Christmas!

*(to audience)* I'm used to him. Not going to make the others suffer. I suffer for everybody.

Anyhow, things are still going along alright, through the carrots and celery. Considering.

I'm sitting between Mom and Heckie and Cranston is across the table. Thunder Dad is sitting beside Mom. They're chatting away. He's trying to be nice ... 'How's the weather been this winter', sort of thing. I'm translating. It's a bit awkward, 'cause she's comin' on to him pretty strong. And I'm thinking, this is pretty mean to Joe, after all they put him through, even though I hate him and can hardly wait till we throw him into the fiery, pit ... fuck, no ... the lake of snakes and the pig shit! Still. There's a time and a place ...

*(aside)* Did you catch that 'we'? *We.*

Thunder Dad is tellin' Mom his work is very demanding, a lot of traveling ... which I know is total bull shit ....

**[Control]** *angry thunder*

**Jesus** ... but I don't say it ... Don't ... did not ...

**[Control]** *quiet thunder (aside) {you better not'}*

**Jesus** ... and how's he's getting it organized to kill everybody so he can settle down. Mom is at him about a condo she'd like in Sarasota. And Joe says, 'I can't afford that.' And she says 'I wasn't talking to you.'

Thunder Dad tells her the turkey is the best he *ever* ate and ... and ... he got something even better than Sarasota.

**Control** *Jolly Thunder*

**Jesus** *(Aside to audience)* So, I said to Joe ... I don't know why ... well, I do know why... it's like my lying ... I said ... 'maybe *now's* a good time to ask for an annulment. Give it a shot.'

*(aside, musing, apologetic)* You know ... I know ... I'm impulsive. Talk, don't think. It's like the lying. Not my best feature. Suffering is my best feature. But ... want to be helpful ... make people happy ... before the fiery pit and the lake of snakes.

So then I said ... 'Look, everybody would be happier if Joe married Betty and Mom could ....

**Control** *(thunder, drums)*

**Jesus** *(listening, puzzled, questions, the thunder repeats, then he translates)*  
 The Virgin Betty!  
 The Virgin Betty!  
 Ohhhh .... Shit!  
 And Cran says ... 'Mom is a virgin?! How'd she do that?'  
 Joe, bless his heart, Joe screams, 'No she's not!'

**Control** *(thunder, drums go crazy)*

**Jesus** *(waits, shrugs, Him and Cranston exchange puzzled looks)*  
 And Mom said ... 'You two-timing ... ' I won't repeat the rest!  
 And I said ... 'I thought I was the only begotten son!'

**Control** *(Quick thunder, drums)*

**Jesus** *(long pause, then translating)*  
 Oh.  
 The only *forgotten* son.

**Control** *(Quick thunder, drums) {'Right - forgotten'}*

**Jesus** 'Forgotten'! Forgotten.  
 And Mom says, 'Well, I didn't forget you, hon.' But I still want to move to Sarasota'.  
 And Joe is screaming and shouting ... which good for him ... to express himself .... Except he's turning purple ... and ... saying 'How many other ....?'

**Control** *Quick, thunder*

**Jesus** Which I will not translate or you'll freak out.  
 Thunder Dad is screaming at Cranston and he screaming back ...  
 'What the fuck are you talking about?'  
 Which is football talk, for 'I'm in deep shit'.  
 And ... Mom takes a swipe at Thunder Dad with the carving knife.  
 ... and ... he's going crazy ...

**Control** *Wild, smashing, extended, angry, thunder, drums, Jesus shouting into the thunder, It slowly dies down.*

**Jesus** *(very calmly to the audience)* Remember when I said I *lied* from time to time. Well ... I do. It's actually my best feature. Better than the suffering. Way better.  
 Remember when I said never saw Louie again.

Well, I lied.  
But maybe you knew that.  
But here is the truth.  
I got up from the table, I walked out the door, I quit the tour, climbed  
up the highest mountain, with Louie ... higher than that ... and I  
jumped ... into the everywhere and the nothing and the no where,  
passed the furthest star ... where everything is me.

*Sweet flute music.  
Lights fade slowly, sunset like.  
Jesus sits lotus position.*

*The End*