

# **Jesus**

## **Retains Counsel**

(Draft)

Charles Campbell

- #40 - (saved as JRC Act I and II No 20)

**Cast**

#1 **Jay** - formally, 'Jason', House of David

#2 **V Jack** – Announcer (2/3)

#3 **Mrs. Virgin** - Jays' mother

#4 **Cameraman** (2/3)  
**Frank** – Wise Man (2/1)

#5 **James / Nathan** - Jay's younger brother,

#6 **Mags** - Jay's girlfriend, off book anesthesiology  
(also: Make-up (1/1)  
Resident (2/2)

#7 **Pompous Pilot** - The Emperor's Man in Jerusalem  
(also: Courier (1/1)  
Photographer (1/2)  
Ralph (2/3)

#8 **Omar** - Jason's childhood playmate  
**Murr** - Wise Man (II/1)

#9 **Ronald McDougall** - the lawyer  
(also: Costumes/Props, (1/4)  
**Farid**, the Shepherd (2/1)  
Resident (2/3)

#10 Mourner (1/1) / **Patsy Pilot** (1/2) / Hair (1/3) / Samir - Shepherd (2/1) /  
**V Holly** - Announcer (2/3)

#11 Mourner (1/1) / Nails (1/2) / **Betty** - (2/3)

#12 **Centurion** (1/1) / Samir - Shepherd (2/1) / Resident (2/3)

#13 **NARR** Narrator

**Act One**

Scene One	He Was There Before Breakfast	Cemetery
Scene Two	An Inside Job	Pilot's Breakfast Terrace
Scene Three	Honk If You Know Omar	Jerusalem Main Drag
Scene Four	What Will I Wear?	Mrs. V's Dressing Room
Scene Five	Leave Granted	Lawyer's Office
Scene Six	A Bit of a Situation	Pilot's Driveway
Scene Seven	I Can Hear Him	Mag's Bed Sitter

**Act Two**

Scene One	Say Cheese	Mrs. V.'s Garden
Scene Two	All Stand For the Court Room Scene	Courtroom
Scene Three	Armageddon	The Tower of The Elect, Valley of Kidron - Condo Function Room

## Mission Statement

Is there method in this madness?

This script contains a lot of intense scripted babble / blather / banter / argument. Is it stream of consciousness? Yes. Is it 'word salad'? Yes. Is it proper drama with solid continuity and linear logic? Definitely not. It is hoped some people will find the satire in poor taste but laugh so hard they can't remember why and the rest will listen so intently so not miss a word and they may never laugh. My heroes are David Mamet, early Tom Stoppard, (*Rosenkrantz, The Real Inspector Hound*, etc. and the early George Walker, (especially *Zatrozzi*, Canada's best play, ever, so good you'd never guess it was Canadian) the Firesign Theatre and of course Monty Python. Visually the benchmark would be / should be is - Charles Ludlam and his Ridiculous Theatre Company.

This is fourth play of this sort. They hang on a familiar myth / meta-story. (e.g. Hamlet, Judgment Day, nursery tales, the trial of Jesus etc.) Something 'deeper' is being mocked. The well understood story is part of the play.

Nothing wrong, according to my theory, that this com off like farce or sometimes stand-up comedy – as long as the totality is more than a set of one liners. I want the audience to dig. But will they? To be discussed.

If I need to declare a 'deep intention' here, it is to make fun of any all arguments that 'God gave me this land' – or that has done anything good for anybody except fuck us all – all round the block.

## Narrator

For purposes of a reading I have created the 'part' of **NARRATOR** who describes the scene and the action in order to give an idea of what the audience might see. There are sound effects and sound tracks required, not too elaborate, I hope. Use your imagination. Sets are intended to be cheap and comic, as are the costumes.

### Synopsis

The first plot is one the one you already know from Sunday School (with footnotes). In the second plot is the one you always suspected.

Jason of Nazareth, first son of Mrs. Virgin - and dispossessed, unrecognized King of the Jews is a drug-addled, goof off - attempting to escape the curse of high office and his ambitious mother. Mags, his girlfriend, is an off-book Anesthesiologist who fakes his fakes his death with her wonder drugs, Serro-Floxy-Moxy-Hydro-Carbon. The game plan was to sign over the West Bank and East Jerusalem – in his capacity as King of the Jews – to his boyhood friend Omar and take off for a Aruba with Mags. So far so good.

In Scene One she and Omar are waiting in the crypt for 'Jay' to come out of the trance and Jay's lawyer, Ronald McDougall, waits outside with the unsigned deeds. A bike courier delivers the passports and tickets. The Centurion is sent for pizza. Ronald informs the gang a dead person can't sign a deed, or even a will. Mrs. Virgin and chorus of admirers approach to adore the body. Mags and Omar flee with the body, now twitching, on gurney. Ronald pretends he is the gardener. It's pretty much downhill from here.

Mrs. Virgin, unaware of the pending miracle of the undead, dresses for the Memorial service. Jay remembers Jay, none too fondly. Will she where blue or black? Hood or no hood? Frankenstein and Murr and the shepherds are expected. Iconic pictures are planned.

Jay's brother James, the new unrecognized King of the Jews catches Mags and Omar wheeling the twitching body of you-know-who through the traffic and worries of the consequences.

In far off Rome Emperor Tiberius has learned of Mag's wonder drugs and sees its true Imperial purpose. He calls his local man – Pompous Pilot, whose wife, Patsy, just happens to play bridge with Mrs. Virgin and mandate them to obtain the gift of everlasting life for the Empire's Franchise Network.

Wanting to finalize the deeds to Omar the recovered Jay reports to his counsel's office only to be informed that he can't sign the deeds now because he is dead. But, but, the ever resourceful, Ronald launches a post mortem appeal against the conviction and crucifixion to bring Jay back to life to sign the deeds and marry the girl and move to

Aruba and to get away from his mother, who, it turns out is moving to Rome anyhow. Who knew?

In Scene Seven James tracks Jay and Mags to her bit-sitter. Confrontation and connivance ensue. Jay tells James he can be King of the Jews, he's only come back to life in order to sign over the West Bank to Omar. James is concerned because the family has already sold the West Bank for condos. It is obvious a guy named James can't be King of the Jews and Mrs. V changes his name to Nathan.

In Act II, Scene One, Mrs. Virgin hosts the Memorial Service. Iconic photos are taken.

The appeal is argued, fiercely, in Scene Two. The findings are as follows: Pilot was a procedural fuck-up and Jay is brought back to life but then banished. God, it turns out, was a duplicitous mother-fucker in the land distribution department.

And in the final Scene, years later, Armageddon happens, pretty much bringing things to an abrupt ending, which, of course, is televised.

## Main Characters

Mrs. V	Mary Virgin, fast-talking, shrewd, fastidious dresser.
Ronald	the lawyer. Is he a bumbling nerd or a genius or a victim?
Pompous	unctuous, ass kisser, Roman toady and judicial fuck-up
Jay	tall, blond, scruffy goof / survivor, Mrs. V.'s troublesome first son
James / Nathan	his brother – the next King of the Jews
Mags	Magdalena, Jay's girl friend and off-book Egyptian pharmacologist
Omar	Jay's childhood buddy from the wrong side of the tracks
Ralph and Betty	Armageddon tourists

## Act I

Scene One

He was There Before Breakfast

**NARR.** A rural cemetery.

*A CENTURION, in formal dress, stands to one side of the big rock in front of the tomb. RONALD, the lawyer, in a business suit, sits on a bench on the other side, with his briefcase on his lap. From inside the crypt we hear trippy music/Gregorian chants etc. ... and muffled fragments of an argument.*

OMAR

....He does not look good! He does not look good! He needs to sign. He does not look good!

MAGS

... You are such a worrywart. With me, breathe ....

OMAR

Shouldn't he be moving by now?

MAGS / OMAR

ohmmmm (they chant) ....

MAGS

He'll be fine. Just leave him alone.

**NARR** *A bike COURIER arrives and rings the bell. The Rock slides to one side. OMAR comes out, signs for the delivery, a fat envelope, ignores RONALD, takes it inside and closes the rock half way. COURIER leaves. RONALD (and audience) can now hear clearly the words from inside.*

MAGS

(relieved) ....The passports!

OMAR

Ohmmmm ....

He hasn't moved for two hours.

MAGS

(worried) Where are the tickets?

(to OMAR) Relax!

*RONALD gets impatient. He paces. He listens at the rock.*

OMAR

.... He's not ...

MAGS

(chant) Ohmmmm .... Say it! Ohmmmm ....

OMAR

Ohmmmmmm...

MAGS

(searching, finding, relieved) We have .... tickets! Rome, Miami ... Caracas! .... Aruba!

**NARR RONALD rings the bell twice but no response. The music stops. He rings persistently. Finally the rock opens fully. MAGS comes out in a nurse outfit.**

MAGS

(surprised, sweet) It's you! Why didn't you knock?

RONALD

I ... (gesturing weekly to the doorbell.)

MAGS

Knock! Knock! (She knock on the rock, it sounds like wood.)

Remember ... the next time!

RONALD

The next ... time?

**NARR MAGS goes to the CENTURION, gropes and kisses him, takes some bills from her bosom and stuffs in his breastplate.**

MAGS

... one egg salad on sesame, one cream cheese on plain ...

**NARR Centurion turns to leave, walks a few steps then turns back and points his spear at RONALD – who freezes. The spear squirts blood from the tip. RONALD dodges it. CENTURION laughs.**

MAGS

(to CENTURION) Leave him alone!  
Or ...two egg salad if there's no cream cheese.

CENTURION exits.

(to RONALD) Have you got the deeds?

*NARR RONALD nods 'yes' and fumbles to get the scroll out of his briefcase. Scrolls spill across the ground.*

*OMAR backs out of the crypt backwards pulling a hospital gurney behind him with a covered body on it, feet first. He gets it half out, feet first and stops.*

*RONALD scrambles to pick up the scroll, gets it half re-rolled and offers it to MAGS and OMAR. And gets out another scroll.*

OMAR

(urgently to MAGS) He just moved! This better work!

(noticing RONALD) .... Where have you been?

MAGS

(exasperated to OMAR, holds up the deed.) There, you see, he brought the Deed! I told you he would. The Deed! You wanted a Deed? And ... these other ... He brought a deed.

OMAR

These were supposed to be done last week! For him to sign ... before ... before ...

*NARR OMAR pulls the gurney and body fully out of the cave*

MAGS

Well, it doesn't matter. He can still sign.

RONALD

They were done last week. They were done! ... (He is waving around several scrolls) There's a deed, a Renunciation *nunc pro tunc*, a Title search. It's not just a deed All ... all ... ready for the royal John Henry.

*RONALD pulls more scrolls out of brief case, drops some, they unravel, .etc.*

OMAR

(looking forlorn at the inert body, sarcastic to MAGS) Any time now, right? Any time!

RONALD

You were supposed to .... to bring him ... him .... to my office to sign. Which is necessary ... for a Deed. To make it legal. Now what!

MAGS

He'll be up and around by noon. You'll see. (*she holds up a little pill bottle.*) Three of these.

*RONALD looks at OMAR. OMAR shrugs.*

RONALD

(*looking at the inert body*) What do you mean, he can sign it *tomorrow*! How ...  
(*gesturing to the body*)

OMAR

Yeah! You were supposed to be at the trial! Isn't that what lawyers do! Go to trials! Where were you?

MAGS

He'll be ready to sign – whatever you want – *whatever* – ... tomorrow.

RONALD

It appears ... to me ... that he is dead. Not to mention ... in the eyes of the law, that official. As of Friday.

OMAR

(*rising anger*) All this could have been avoided if you had *been there* for the trial. You know ... 'oh yeah, oh yeah, all rise... My client is innocent! ...' and all that shit! Which is the probable reason the King of Jews is *technically* dead!

RONALD

I was there! I was there!

MAGS

You were? What happened?

RONALD

I couldn't get in. I couldn't get in! My security pass, was expired. I couldn't get through security. Then they locked the door. I couldn't get in! (*almost crying*) ... I had written submissions. I had case law. I had ... I had .... Everything.

OMAR

The *lawyer* ... couldn't ... get in ... to the court room!

MAGS

(*to Omar*) Well ... they did lock the door, Omar. They did.

(*to Ronald*) Can they do that?

RONALD

'Can'? ... Can? 'Can' is a complicated word.

**NARR** MAGS is looks the Deeds and Title documents and hands them one by one to OMAR.

RONALD

(looking at the body)

(Annoyed, to OMAR) Pure gold! Fourteen per cent of the arable West Bank, including prime seashore, and two ...

MAGS

.... Six. .... And the Temple.

RONALD

Six ... downtown blocks in *East Jerusalem*! Root of title back to ... God. ... (reading) ..... 'I Jason, of Nazareth, King of the Jews ... son of ... of .... Abraham, Isaac ... and .. David ... of sound mind and body, hereby wishing to settle unto my friend Omar (point to Omar) his heirs and assigns, the lands aforesaid .... give, devise and bequeath....

(looking sadly at the Deed and the gurney) These were ... hard work! .... Are you related to

(looking at the deed) the 'Omar Farid' who was the owner in .... 193...3?

OMAR

That's my grandfather. Lost it in a crap game.

MAGS

(to OMAR) Jay wants you to have it back. He'll sign.

OMAR

Earth to Maggie. Earth to Maggie. Even if and when he rises from the dead, it's not *official*. Even if he signs we got nadda. I mean legally.

*OMAR and MAGS fuss with the body as RONALD talks to himself.*

RONALD

(in two voices, mocking them for ignoring his efforts as he rolls up the scrolls and puts them back in briefcase.)

A Deed to the best acreage in all of Palestine. Root of title back to God! Why, you must have been in the Registry office for a month! The research involved here is astonishing.

Why thank you.

The Palestinian people thank you. This is extraordinary! Inspired.

All in the cause.

The family is truly grateful. Why this is meticulous!  
 It was nothing, actually  
 This Deed! It was his wish. Where would we be without you! Thank you, again.

MAGS

Poor baby. I'll sign for you.

RONALD

Alas .... I have to attest his signature in triplicate, 'signed in my presence by ...' *(reading)* "Jason of Nazareth, the King of the Jews".  
 Oh ... and the account is .... *(searching, finding, presenting)* ... substantial, alas. But you can pay in cash, if you like.

MAGS

I know it was a lot of work. We appreciate it. I'll put a cheque in in the mail ... this afternoon.

RONALD

*(to OMAR)* That is root of title going all the way back to ... before Abraham .... *(reading, proudly)* ... "David begat Simon and Simon begat ..."

OMAR

Those guys aren't from my village!

RONALD

*(hesitant, then a moment of inspiration)* Bingo! I've got it. We'll appeal. We'll appeal. We win an appeal – wrongful execution – and he springs back to life and then he can sign everything!

***NARR On the gurney, the body stirs slightly. They all get excited. Then the body goes still. They are downcast.***

OMAR

He can sign! He can sign!

Maybe?

***NARR Off stage we hear mournful chanting. OMAR and MAGS exchange glances and panic!***

MAGS

But not at this particular moment! We must ... depart hence in haste. We'll bring him round to your office tomorrow after lunch.

*Chanting gets closer. MAGS rushes off stage, right.*

RONALD

(shouting after her) With a cheque! Cash! ... I need the money, pleasssse. My mother has ... has ...cancer ... cataracts ... colitis ... cankers ...

(calling after them) What should I do with .... the appeal?

*NARR OMAR rolls the gurney off Stage Left.*

*RONALD sits on the bench and composes himself.*

*Three women enter Stage Right, MRS. V in front. She is immaculately dressed white/blue robes. MRS. V. enters the open crypt and comes out. MAGS, catching up from behind, composes herself and joins the mourners. She looks suspiciously to MAGS. MAGS shrugs, seems bewildered.*

*MRS. V looks to RONALD. He is about to speak, MAGS gestures, behind her back - 'no'. He doesn't know what to say.*

MRS. V

(to RONALD) Are you the one who got the silver? Aren't you an angel to bring it back.

RONALD

(uncertain) No, actually, that was ... another, another guy. I haven't got any money. Yet. So far. .... I'm the gardener?

MRS. V

(dismissive) No money?!

The gardener? Well, where's the body? Where is my lambie-pie?

*RONALD (taking his cue from MAGS) looks in the cave and comes out, astonished.*

RONALD

He was there before breakfast.

*NARR MRS. V exits, Stage Right.*

*MAGS waits till she's gone, points to RONALD and 'sssshhh' and then rushes Stage Left.*

*RONALD takes his seat again by the open crypt, faking calm but totally mystified.*

*The CENTURION returns with the breakfast order and looks around, sees the open crypt, becomes annoyed and then alarmed. RONALD points in the opposite direction to where OMAR and the body have gone.*

*CENTURION hands the breakfast order on RONALD and gets out his cell phone, impatiently makes a call and exits, following the gurney.  
Off-stage a chorus is heard singing -*

CHORUS

*'Christ the Lord is risen today,  
hahaaaalllluuuuuoooyaaaa ... yay ya ya.'*

*NARR Chorus fades.*

*RONALD opens and eats the bagel.*

*Lights.*

*End Scene*

## Scene Two

## An Inside Job?

**NARR** *POMPOUS and PATSY PILOT, in togas are having their morning coffee and pouring over the newspapers. A cell phone on the table rings. He ignores it, she answers, gets a blast from the caller and gestures urgently that he should take the phone.*

PILOT

I'm *not* in! No calls!

PATSY

*Tiberius, sooo good to talk to you. .... How is Lavonia? and things in ... He's waiting for your call.*

*PILOT composes himself (to kiss ass) and takes the phone.*

PILOT

Emperor! You're up early. What a pleasant surprise. To what do I owe the honor? How goes the great ship of state? ... uh un ... Really! Well, I hadn't heard that. Not yet. I'll put somebody on it right away. ... Right at the moment, you know as much as .... more .... exactly ... more .... always more ... as it should be, Emperor. ... and as it always will be. .... Exactly. Why you get the big bucks. ... and ... richly deserved. Richly. Exactly.

.... uh un ...

Well, bodies have disappeared before. It's not *such* a big thing. Trust me, nothing will come of it, nothing! It'll be forgotten in a week! A week!

....

I told them the biggest rock they could carry ... move ... yes ... *extremely* heavy. ... Six of them. .... About 8 feet, maybe ten feet ... Well, maybe round was a mistake. ... It is a bit odd. ... More than odd. Exactly.

...

Well I doubt very much it was an inside job .... I mean, supposing, just supposing, he, you know, woke up, I'm sure, I'm sure, he couldn't move it himself .... he'd be very weak ... We beat him pretty good. .... *very well*. .... exactly according to the Regulations. .... Absolutely. Stabbed him too, of course.

... Maybe he just didn't die. Shit happens. ... I don't know ... well, maybe one of the Centurions ... I didn't say that ... I am not accusing ... My life depends on them .... on you, Emperor, exactly. Well, yes, anything is possible, possible ... maybe their God came down from ... or one of ours? ... got into the cave through a crack and ... pushed. You know Gods, completely unpredictable! ... Joking, joking! Certainly not you!

....

I am not arguing ... *I am not!* Of course, it plausible ... possible ... more than ... yes, well ... perhaps it is obvious, that he rose from the dead. .... The only possible explanation. Of course.

Maybe it was something he ate. ... Kale? Blueberries. I hear they're good. Some weird drug the kids .... Mushrooms!

....

Get you some? You're not seriously thinking you might die! You're the Emperor! You're a God.

... I get your point .... Just in case .... Thinking ahead ..... Which is why you get the ....

... Now that is a great idea. Fabulous. Find out what it was and franchise it. A huge market. Huge.

We could ask. We could ask. Absolutely. His mother is ... a virgin and Virgin Dowager Queen of the Jews ... plays bridge with my Patsy, ... every Tuesday ... That right, he would be the King of ~~the~~ Jews, if we let him! Ha! .... Oh, actually extremely attractive, dresses well, a bit chatty for my taste ... I'm sure if there is anything available she'd love to share it with you ...

(to Patsy, pained by the Emperor's idiocy and trying to sound serious) Patsy, the Emperor is wondering ...

(to phone/Emperor) Patsy says 'Hi'.

(to Patsy) You know the mother of that chap we ... the other day ... The Emperor says he's got out of the cave ... risen from the dead we're fairly certain .... from that cave .... the Emperor is wondering if you could ask his mother for some of what he took ...

**NARR** *He passes the phone to Patsy*

**PATSY**

(to phone) Me again. .... Absolutely, she is a dear. If she knows it's you who is asking, I'm sure ... for the Emperor. ... Tiberius, you are not too old! I know Mary Virgin. She would love to have drinks, lunch ... dinner .. with the Emperor. Personal delivery.

**NARR** *Patsy passes the phone back.*

**PILOT**

Hear that! We're on it! Your Team in the East!

... No ... the son is a total nut bar ... well, if I see him again ... by any chance ... not likely ... yes, yes, but possible ... not ruling it out .... I'll give him your number.

Nice chatting. Love to Lavonia.

Bye.

**NARR** *He throws the phone off stage.*

Fuck!

I don't know which one is <sup>the</sup> bigger fruitcake, the Emperor or Mary's ding-brat!

**PATSY**

She's perfect for him – the fifty-five year virgin mother of four.

**PILOT**

We need to send him *something*!

**PATSY**

I'll get Cook to make up some oregano paste and liverwurst. Wrap it in grape leaves. He'll never know if it didn't work. Rub it on your nipples.

Don't you go and be Emperor, dear. I like you the way you are.

PILOT

How is that?

PATSY

When the time comes, dearest, I want you to stay dead.

*End Scene*

## Scene Three

## Who's Under the Sheet?

**NARR** *A noisy street in Jerusalem. OMAR and MAGS are wheeling the gurney across stage as they weave through the traffic.*

OMAR

Where are we going?

MAGS

My place is three blocks. We'll let him sleep it off there. You'll see.

OMAR

Are you sure?

MAGS

Courage. Courage.

We're not done with this white boy yet.

**NARR** *JAMES drives by in his election truck. It has a sign "Support [Jason-crossed out] JAMES – King of the Jews". Truck slows then stops and JAMES rolls down the window. More honking.*

JAMES

Where are you two ... losers ... doing What is that? Who is ... under that sheet?

**NARR** *JAMES gets out of the truck. He is in Biblical dress.*

MAGS

*(dissembling)* Oh, James, what a surprise! Good to see you. How are you feeling?

... Who ... ? Oh ... that! ... It's Jason ... We're taking ... your dear, dear, departed brother ... such a terrible thing ... for ... a little clean up. He is ... was ... such a mess after the ... that ... You know how fussy Jason is ... was ... about his clothes.

JAMES

You've got him mixed up with his mother!

**NARR** *MAGS holds up Jay's very dirty Crucifixion robe – the Shroud of Turin – with a clear and dramatic profile*

MAGS

I don't know how I'll ever get this clean! What'll I do with it? Do you think I should keep it?

*(to Omar, sarcastic)* James Hello, Omar. Haven't seen you since high school. Heard you were back from ... prison?

OMAR

Why don't you go back to Egypt! Babylon!

**NARR** *The body stirs slightly. JAMES is shocked and OMAR excited. Cars honk.*

OMAR

We're on our way to get the deed signed.

JAMES

The what?

OMAR

*(triumphant)* The Deed! Sheep included.

JAMES

What deed?

OMAR

Three thousand hectares ... serviced, West Bank. And six blocks in East Jerusalem! Including a temple!

JAMES

Whadda you need with another temple for. You got two already!

MAGS

Jason wanted Omar to have a little something. God told him ... good to share.

JAMES

*(outraged)* A little something!! A little something! A temple! The West Bank.

*He can't sign ... I'm King of the Jews now!*

*(to OMAR)* Like *the dead guy* is going to sign off on ... his ... my ... real estate!

MAGS

Dead is a relative detail.

JAMES

Well, he's *my* dead relative. Where did he find a ding bat like you? Where!

**NARR** *The body stirs again.*

OMAR

You're not king yet! Hold the sub-division.

JAMES

*(pleading)* Take it – him – back to the crypt, *please!* This will ~~is~~ going to cause a lot of problems. A lot! What will people think!

MAGS

Oh, and by the way, James ... I'm pregnant. *(Gesturing to her belly)* Meet the next King of the Jews.

JAMES

Really, really! .... How would *you* know who the father is?

MAGS

When has *that* ever been a problem in your family?

**NARR MAGS, and OMAR exit pushing the gurney. Cars honk.**

JAMES

Come back here, you .... *(Wild honking)* Come ....back! .... Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!

**NARR JAMES makes a cell phone call. Cars honking frantically.**

*Lights.*

## Scene Four

## What Will I Wear?

**NARR** - *MRS V is in her dressing room getting prepared by her staff. HAIR, NAILS and MAKE-UP fuss over her. WARDROBE and PHOTO – are preparing for shots of her and a doll-baby. They show her various combinations of gowns and babies, gowns in black or blue and white and babies in pink, brown and black. In the following rant she speaks first to one and then another and then to all and on her cell phone in a torrent.*

## MRS V

It's for my eldest, I told you about him before, I'm sure, the one who ran away ... for eighteen years ... Didn't I tell you! .... Everybody was talking about it ... The one who was (*embarrassed, quietly*) crucified. ... How embarrassing. What can you do? You suffer in silence.

So anyhow, we're having a little something ... for the extended family ... and ... and well ... you never know who will show at these things ... I mean, he was King of the Jews. God knows he never dressed the part. We have to do *something*. (*looking at a gown*) King used to count for a lot more .. before the Romans. And of course they are fabulous. But still ... someday, Kings will be back 'in'. I hear the Emperor is very nice. Now there's a king!

(to HAIR) ... I think a little darker .... with the blue. But the curls! What is the point – (*WARDROB* *is holding up a blue gown with a hood*) with a hood! *looking at her hair*) Why a hood! I hate hoods. With this hair! Why hide it. (*HAIR and WARDROBE nod*)

(to all and to PHOTO ) Well, I had the food all organized and I went to look for some pictures ... you know, to put around ... like you do ... and ... of course ... of course ... could I find any! Not one! Even a little one, to put by the guest book. Can you believe it! Just *like* his father! You take out a camera ... and he disappears! Mind you he was gone eighteen years! Eighteen! But still, you'd think we'd have something!

So now I need pictures. Baby pictures. Everything. What will people think!

Eighteen years! He didn't write! Didn't phone! How I suffered. My poor baby ... who knows where, with whom! I have my suspicions. A mother can tell! A mother must suffer in silence. ... But not in a hood! Get that thing away from me! But still, you need some pictures. He didn't bring back a single one.

(to the team) It was such a scene on Friday! I'm glad you didn't come! Don't take it the wrong way. It was sooo embarrassing. Those other two! I can't image they were friends. But what I don't know! (archly) And the women ... and girls ...the sort I do not know! Never did. Never will. Not that I was surprised. They followed him everywhere! One, especially ... The problem is, was ...he was so good-looking ... too good looking for his own good, is what his cousin said. Now personally I think he was a bit ... thin, not that he was scrawny, but not a football player, if you know what I mean, more, Norwegian, blond, not King of the Jew-ish looking – not that matters ... but still ... I often wondered who his father was.

(to #1 Hair) What do you think about a little blue rinse, just a hint. With a blue dress.

**NARR WARDROBE** *Guy holds up a baby and a dress combo. She ponders.*

(To NAILS) He denies it but I think, I know, well I don't 'know' but I'll just bet she was with him the whole time ... eighteen years ... and he never told me .... he knew it would upset me ... an Egyptian! He was thoughtful about that sort thing. Never told me anything .... Just like his father.

*She speaks to WARDROBE regarding the doll baby)*

That one is nice, but aren't they smaller? At the beginning. (To all) I thought .... since the Wise Men are coming ... they haven't seen him ages ... we might as well do some baby pictures .... I still have the crib .... Bring me a tiny one. The shepherds are invited! They're embarrassing but ... what the hell! You never know who might want a little souvenir.

(to NAILS) I don't mind telling you if that Egyptian *witch* .... shows up! I can't imagine she'd have the nerve. She got him into this.

The thing about him was that he radiated. Positively glowed. Extraordinary. My sister-in-law thinks he was working in the nuclear dump site out in Sinai. My poor lamby-kins.

(to WARDROBE, holding up a blue and black outfit) Have you ever been in the desert? We need black for the funeral shots, and blue for the baby pictures. This is not easy.

(to NAILS) A little sharper, darling, I am going to scratch her eyes out! Nobody heard that.

(to MAKE-UP) Of course *some day* I knew he would get married – I mean the king has to marry – but to an Egyptian? What if they had children! The next king wouldn't even be Jewish! An Egyptian mother – imagine! The country would totally fall apart. Would he listen! Suffer in silence!

**NARR** *WARDROBE and PHOTO GUY are very tentatively holding up a black doll and a blue gown and a black gown and a white baby.*

Darling, I think not. The more I think about it ... and I think we have no choice ... we have to go with the black. As much as I love the blue, it has to be black. I mean he just died! And a white baby! Very striking, don't you think? Have you got one ... more Danish?

**NARR** *Her cell rings.*

*(to phone) James, darling, where are you? I can't hear you.*

**NARR** *JAMES appears in the rear of the theatre with a silly looking, high tech device for tracking cell phones strapped to his back, antenna protruding, lights flashing. He is also conversing on his cell phone with Mrs. V. but we can't hear him. He moves toward the stage.*

That's better.

... *(shocked) Be serious. ... Alive! ... Alive! He can't be! He can't be! Well, what do I know about anything!*

....

Maybe her vitamins were better than I thought. ... Oh, youuuu .... What drugs? Really?! For the crucifixion!? ... Really? ... Do they make you hungry? Well, I'm just asking!

....

Maybe we *should* invite her! Just in case.

*(to Team, loud stage whisper) He's alive! ... Always the last to know! We'll go with the blue! That one!*

....

*(to phone, urgently) James, James, listen, he'll need some clean clothes! ... Stop by his apartment. .... I know all that, James ... I know darling, it isn't fair. .... Life isn't fair. .... But I do like him better than you! ... Well, it's true! ... This is not the time! ... A clean white robe. .... I know it may hard to find. Just do it! .... This is huge! .... And find him. Have him call me.*

**NARR** *JAMES is now on the far side of the stage and we can hear him.*

JAMES

I can't! I tried. *(frustrated) They took off.*

MRS V

Took off! That makes no sense. He can't fly! Can he fly!  
Well, find her! Track her down.

**NARR** *JAMES turns on the tracking device and it starts flashing.*

JAMES

I'm trying. If you call her on your phone and keep her talking I can track her. And him! Just keep her talking.

NARR *Covertly MRS V takes out her cell phone and dials. It rings. JAMES' device flashes and he moves off stage tracking the signal.*

MRS V

(*Frist to her cell phone, sternly*) James, I think you may be right. There's more to this than vitamins. Darling be *nice* to her. Very. Jason may need *more* of that medicine of hers. And tell him to call me, without fail. We need to talk.

...

(*to the Team*) Wouldn't you know it! He's alive. That boy! And wouldn't you know it. He can fly. Who knew?!

...

(*to cell / James*) James, we need a King to sign off on the condo sales next week. You or him, sweetie. We are closing the West Bank Condos on Wednesday. Without fail! ... What do you mean – he's giving the West Bank to Omar! You have that boy call me, without fail! Bye!

*MRS. V clicks off. Another calls rings immediately. She picks up.*

NARR **RING**

(*sharply*) I told you ...

(*sweetly*) Patsy! How good of you to call. .... Well I just heard! .... And he can fly, too!

... Well, what can you do? What can you do? ... I never thought of drugs! Do you think!

... His girlfriend ... yes ... Totally charming and really quite clever. ... Really. (*impressed*) The Emperor! ... Of course he can ... from the very next batch. ... It's a very delicate manufacture, very delicate ... but look at the results! ... And terribly underfunded. .... Well, of course I'd love to meet him.

*End scene.*

*Lights.*

## Scene Five

## Leave Granted!

**NARR** - *The Lawyer's Office, a cheap desk, client chairs and huge mess of files and books and boxes piled up like an igloo with the entrance facing audience. A pile of Scrolls sits prominently on the desk.*

*TRIXIE, RONALD's assistant, enters. She approached the igloo, annoyed.*

TRIXIE

Hello!

There are people in the waiting room. ...

RONALD

*(Muffled from inside) I am lost in thought.*

TRIXIE

There are clients in reception. Hard to believe. Your type. Penniless. Seeking justice. I am bringing them into your office. I am! ... Counting! Ten ...nine ... eight .... *(She gets no reaction)* The bank is calling about the overdraft. *(Nothing)* The lottery office called. Should I pick up the money or do you want to go?

RONALD

You go.

TRIXIE

*(scolding) You are not lost in thought. You are lost up your own ass hole. You are hiding from reality in a pile of boxes shaped like an igloo filled with illegible record of your useless phone conversations .... Are you listening .... which you keep in the vain hope someone will pay you for talking to them.*

Hello...

....

RONALD

*(Muffled from inside) Ask them for money. Some crackers. Any thing to eat.*

## TRIXIE

Why would anybody give you any money? You don't give *me* any money. *You* make them give you money. Then I'll count it ... After yoga ... seven ... and give you a *little* bit ... I'm going to yoga ... eight, five, three ... as an advance on what you owe me.

**NARR MAGS, OMAR and JAY, struggling in a walker, ENTER stage right.**

The clients are in your office, *now* ... Two clients ... two *and half* ... Six ... five ... (to MAGS and OMAR) He is immersed in the detailed history of your case. Absorbing every little scrap ... every nuance. Buried in it. Totally unique ... the way he researches. Then ... he'll emerges ....

**NARR - RONALD stands up and the igloo falls apart.**

... with ideas *no one* has ever thought of before. Nor ever will.

RONALD

We'll appeal!

(stares amazed at JAY) Is this ... is this ...?

**NARR JAY sits gingerly in a chair.**

JAY

Yo ... dude ... don't mind me. (gesturing to his feet) My feet! One nail is a bitch.

MAGS

(triumphant) You have something for Jay to sign?

Oh, and ... before I forget, some guy gave this to me.

*MAGS hands him a scroll. He takes it and reads.*

RONALD

Some guy?

MAGS

Yea. Some guy ... looked official. I haven't read it. What is it? If it's another malpractice suit! Is it probably from his mother. She hates me.

RONALD

(reading) It's an Interim Injunction ... 'to return the body'.

'Theft of body' is serious.

JAY

I told you, babe, she won't give me up without a fight!

MAGS

Ohhhh ... that's just James. We saw him on the way over. Such a shit.

RONALD

And ... and ...

MAGS

I told him we're taking Jay for some clean clothes. He said *she* wants the body. If she get the body ...

OMAR

... she'll have it stuffed and mounted ...

MAGS

... and god knows where she'll hang it!

JAY

Everywhere!

RONALD

... (*reading more*) .... It says the donkey was stolen!<sup>i</sup> Where did you get the donkey?

MAGS

(teasing) From the *Book of Daniel*. It's part of ... the ... story. He *takes* a donkey and rides into the city. ... Come on! It was a rental.

RONALD

You could return him.

MAGS

The donkey?

RONALD

No ... him! To *the crypt*!

(worried) They saw me there!

JAY

Oh no you won't.

So, let's get this show on the road. I have physio at five. Where do I sign?

(mock pompous) I, Jason of Nazareth, King of the Jews ... according to my mother at least, ... being of sound mind and body .... like, *risen from the dead* ... which we are keeping a secret, right, so we can get out of town ... "hereby give to Omar, (*tearing up a bit*) my life-long and good and faithful bud ....

(to RONALD) Then me and Mags and the little dude are splitting. Aruuuubaaa!

OMAR

You still got those Deeds and Proclamations?

RONALD

Do I look like a guy who throws anything away!

(Holding up some scrolls) Right here.

But ... ah ..., Mr. King ...

JAY

Call me, Jay.

RONALD

Maybe you didn't hear me the other day, right, you didn't, signing won't do much for these ... I ... given that you are, I mean, notwithstanding the miracle I see before me .... you are ...

(Jay is flexing and exercising his fingers, ready to sign)

JAY

What are you trying to say, dude?

RONALD

... you are dead. As of Friday.

JAY

Well, that's a kick in the butt! After all I went through all that ... and now I'm dead!

RONALD

It's a nice thought but you can't sign away ... (waving around the scrolls) the West Bank ...

OMAR

(defensively) Only the part with the olive groves!

JAY

Why not? I'm dead? Really. Mags, did you know about this? God told me to give it to Omar.

Why not! I'm the King! Ask my mother!

RONALD

This is not easy, my friend.

JAY

I thought you had the deeds and all that all done up before I ... died?

Let's do it!

RONALD

Right! Well, if you are sure, there's only one way. We'll have to appeal.

OMAR

Appeal?

RONALD

Yes, we'll appeal the crucifixion.

OMAR

Isn't it a little late? He's already dead.

JAY

I am not! ??? I am?

TRIXIE

I told you. Things no one has ever thought of ... ever!

JAY

I don't want to appeal. I want to get to Aruba!

OMAR

How exactly ... not that a slob like me could begin to understand ... can you ...

RONALD

A *Retroactive Stay of Execution*, pending full argument .... bail pending the full Appeal. So we can gather the evidence.

OMAR

(sarcastic) Oh, a *retroactive* ... stay of execution, now I get it.

*TRIXIE is nodding 'I told you so'.*

RONALD

We'll post-date the Deeds ... for Thursday, when I fully expect you'll be legally ...  temporarily ... alive. Perfect! You can sign now ...

*NARR - RONALD rolls out some scroll and hands Jay a pen.*

RONALD

Here ... and here .... and here ...

OMAR

Are you sure this alright?

*NARR As they sign RONALD takes up the Appeal docs from the desk*

RONALD

And I witness here ... and here ... and here. All done!

*(thinking out loud)* .... Arbitrary arrest! Want of jurisdiction! ... denial of counsel! ... failure to enter a plea! ... denial of right to remain silent! .... Inadmissible hearsay evidence! .... *(excited)* jury tampering! *(to TRIXIE)* Put in Arbitrary Exclusion of Lawyer

*(proudly)* This will be historic! *(They look incredulous)*

*(to himself)* Why thank you.

*(to JAY, re signing)* Oh, and here ... and here. Perfect. All done!

.... We'll file Thursday morning. They'll never know what hit them! Pow! Pow!

OMAR

*(to JAY)* Good news, bud. You're not dead. It was an error of law.

JAY

*(chanting)* I'm not dead. I'm not dead. I'm not ...

MAGS

Hush. Your mother will hear you.

JAY

Ssssshhh ... *(thinking)* Don't I want to be dead? ... and hide out in Aruba? Omar, you can pick those f-g olives. You want 'em!

RONALD

He has to come with me. Thursday. The Appellant has to appear in person for the terms of interim release to be set.

OMAR

How can he do that? I mean, isn't he dead?

MAGS

They don't know he's alive. Won't they be pissed?

RONALD

Pissed! They'll be hysterical! He is ... *supposed* ... to be ... dead. Not being dead is punishable by death. So we just *have* to win the appeal. It all depends on me.

MAGS

I'm beginning to get it.

TRIXIE

Now you know how he got where he is today. You're very lucky he's your lawyer. He might have been a judge.

RONALD

*(triumphant)* The merits are very strong. Very strong.

... 'Does my client *look* like the King of the Jews, Your Honor? No! He is a Norwegian Massage Therapist on a temporary work permit. This is all a terrible mistake!'

*RONALD laughs/cackles with delight, hint of the mad scientist.*

MAGS

But ... he *is* ... really ... the king of ...

RONALD

Who says? Prove it!

OMAR

*(holding up the Deed)* What about the Deed ... from 'the King of Jews'?

RONALD

Well ... they can't prove ... he didn't ... can't .... hasn't .... They'll never know. *(looking at the deeds just signed, grabs it and sticks it under his toga)*

OMAR

Then how do I get our land back?

TRIXIE

Just a thought ... what happens if .... He appears on the Leave application ...alive ... and you tell the Court .... it will off ... out ... you could say ... thirty days .... Get an interim order that he retroactively alive ... to allow time for the argument ... who could object to that .... Can you handle that, Mr. Lawyer?... The signed deed is good .... Title passes ... and Omar gets the West Bank ... Jay and Mags take off ... for Aruba, wherever ... Leaves a note ... I shall return. If they know you're coming back ... as King of the Jews ... they won't fuck with Omar!

You have a better idea?

*Light*

*End Scene*

**Scene Six****A Bit of a Situation**

**NARR** *Pilot is pacing, talking on his cell phone.*

PILOT

I'm holding! No .. no ... I'm holdin... ...

Emperor, Emperor .... It's me again/ I'm so sorry. No. Yes.

Well ... ah ... we have a bit of situation here. ....

Well, I've received an appeal application ... It's a bit unusual ....

..... Exactly ....Under section 41.6 ... exactly ... He has to appear in person.

... Un hun ... uh hun ...

*End Scene*

## Scene Seven

## I Can Hear Him

*NARR The scene is MAG's basement bed-sitter, very down scale, a platform bed, stage left, and, stage right, an old door on milk crates for a table, mismatched, wobbly chairs and a dump counter with a hot plate etc.*

*Lights up on MAGS under a sheet, head showing and JAY under the sheet, carrying on.*

MAGS

*(teasing, loving) And how are you today, your majesty?*

JAY

Left arm, check, ... right arm .... check. Horny, check!

*Making a move on MAGS, she evades and he ends up listening to her belly.*

I can hear him.

MAGS

You cannot! It's too early. Well, what's he saying?

JAY

*(as if spelling it out or translating) He's saying .... 'Hey, Pops! ... Let's catch some rays.'*

MAGS

You .... You are *never* serious!

*They wrestle under the sheet in a tangled embrace.*

JAY

You want to get stoned? You know you qualify. The corruption of the Messiah by an Egyptian *witch doctor* is definitely .... Ummmm .... Stoneable.

MAGS

*(serious, professional) How are the hands? Let's see the hands.*

*JAY appears from under the sheet. Finger flex. MAGS inspects.*

JAY

*(serious) You are a genius, babe!*

(clowning) Serro-Floxy-Moxy-Hydro-Carbon works great! And it is mild. Taken In combination With COMA 86% of patients report full recovery from daytime crucifixions, with minor residual dizziness. Talk to your doctor if you experience headaches or flatulence. Not for children under four or amputees.

**NARR** *Cell phone rings. MAGS scrambles to find it. JAY holds her and listening to her belly, pretending it is in her belly. She wrestles to get to the phone.*

*Lights up on MRS V with two cell phones, in one rear corner of the theatre and JAMES with his tracking device in the other.*

MAGS

(cell) Hello.

MRS. V

(cell) Hello.

**NARR** *The tracking device light up and starts to click as MAGS speaks.*

JAMES

(cell, to MRS V.) Keep her talking!

MAGS

(cell) Hello. (Surprised. She stands.)

MRS V

(cell) Is that you, Magdalena? How are you feeling, darling? Did I catch you at a bad time?

MAGS

(aside, frantic, to JAY) It's your mother!

**NARR** *MAGS tries to hand him the cell phone. He gestures, 'No. No. ...' mocks death.) She is annoyed, insists. He refuses.*

(cell) Oh ... I am ... surviving. How is James bearing up? ... And yourself?

*MRS V is being directed by JAMES – via cell #2 - to keep talking.*

MRS V

(on cell, sounding totally sincere) I mean if it's a bad time for you. I'm only thinking of you. Whatever works for you, my darling. We never talked often enough. Is this a good time?

**NARR** *JAY starts listening in on the call.*

*JAMES and the Geiger counter get louder. He directs MRS. V. She approaches the Stage from the right.*

*JAY hides under the sheet, then starts clowning, sex gestures.*

MAGS

(to cell, puzzled) So good of you to call.

MRS. V

(to cell) I just felt I needed to say, darling, whatever our differences I know you were trying your best to look after him ... with those marvelous medicines. What are their names?

MAGS

(to cell, surprised and somewhat alarmed, evasive) You mean the vitamins?

MRS V

(to cell) Not the vitamins, darling! ... The other ...

He was so ... You never knew what he would do next. Did you find that? Just like his father. But so adorable!

I miss him so much. The picnics were such fun.

James said ... you have him ... the body.

MAGS

(to cell) Ah ... yes ... I'm going to get him some fresh clothes. To look his best.

*NARR MRS V is following JAMES' tracking instructions on cell #2. He moves closer to the stage and motions she goes up on the stage and she slowly approaches behind the bed.*

MRS V

(cell) A woman after my own heart! I would really, really appreciate that. He had a lovely longish toga in off-white, I bought in Turin, that would be fabulous. See if you can find it.

*MRS. V continues with a visible hint of malice, teasing MAGS as she approaches the bed.)*

..... Such a waste ... in the prime of life ... so firm, so energetic ...

We had the idea ... my new Joseph ... of Arimathea ... of course you didn't know the old one either ...what am I saying? ... My new Joseph he has agreed to pay for ... preservation services.

It's very expensive ... he has a splendid very, very experienced Egyptian taxidermist, Maybe you know him. He is for the ages.

MAGS

(aside to JAY) She does! She wants to have you stuffed!

MRS V

And we were thinking of some miniatures ... something affordable.

MAGS

(cell, now she's annoyed with her mother-in-law) Holy Madonna ... I'm not sure Jay is ready for that. Hello ... hello ... Maybe we should have told you earlier ... .... We were... were going to be married!

*JAY is annoyed MAGS has told her this. MAGS is frightened. Gets back in bed with JAY. They hug and listen on the phone together. MAGS puts it on Voice.*

MRS V

(cell) I did know that, Magdalena. Mothers have ears. But ... alas darling, he's dead, and you can't marry a dead person, can you. Or do they allow that in Egypt?

MAGS

You knew!

MRS V

Yes, and move ... far away. Far is good, darling. How far were you thinking? Do you need money for tickets? ... I know how we can get some money. Lots.

I'll come for the wedding, I wouldn't miss it, but I can't stay. Tell Jay I'm thinking of moving to Rome. It's complicated.

I'll miss him. But ... we can't have two Kings of the Jews running around.

*MAGS and JAY look at each other, stunned.*

MAGS

(to cell) Hello! Hello? (now, mad) How did you know it was ... is a boy?

*JAY is really annoyed MAGS has told her this.*

MRS. V

(looking down on them and speaking directly) Well, if you get married at least he won't be a bastard. The last thing this family needs is another bastard.

Magdalena, may I speak to Jay, if you don't mind? *Right now.*

*NARR MAGS and JAY look up. Lights out*

*Lights up. The four are gathered at the breakfast table.*

*JAMES is jumpy. MRS. V can't stop touching and trying to fondle her 'darling' JAY though he dodges her and makes a big show of hugging MAGS. MRS V is cool (and calculating) as she copes with the 'sibling rivalry' and her new dynastic problems, and trying to get her hands on*

*the drug bonanza ... and trying to keep her skirt from touching the dirty floor. MAGS pours coffee from an old pot.*

MAGS

James, are you hungry? We have a lot of fish in the freezer. A lot! More coffee? What's your pleasure?

MRS V

(to MAGS) Just a top up, sweetheart.

Jay looks fantastic! (*she inspects his hands and face*) What did you use? Is it something you invented? It is! How did you do it? James, isn't this marvelous! I always said she is so clever. What a lucky boy!

JAMES

(to MAGS) No thanks.

(To Jay, jumping up) You ... you know if they find you, they'll crucify you! ... How did you ... ??? Where's Omar! I smell Omar in all this.

JAY

Pretty neat, hey! (*showing a small vial like a T.V. pitchman*) COMA III. Fantastic!

**NARR JAY jumps up and down on his feet, aping tennis serves, golf swing, fucking, grinning. Pointing to his hands. JAMES inspects the palms, amazed. Then JAY points to MAGS.**

And Serro-Floxy-Moxy-Hydro-Carbon. Rub a little in before bed ...

She's a fucking brainiac! And a great butt! (*which he tries to slap but she dodges deftly*)

Relax. We're leaving for Aruba right after the Appeal. You're king for sure, bro. Totally, the King!

MRS. V

(to MAGS) (*pondering*) Would it work under the eyes? This could be worth ... Not that you would ever think of it for the money!... Of course when you're away, I could look after things at this end. Promotion, marketing. Just a thought.

So ... you don't look too far along. Thank God! People will talk.

MAGS

Four or five months ... I think.

MRS V

Plenty of time to disappear. People will never know.

(mischievously) When are we leaving?

JAY

We?

MRS V

*(teasing JAY)* To be married. *You and me.* Oh, lambie-pie, you didn't think I'd let you marry *her*. She's much too beautiful. And smart! And taking you away from me! Oh, relax .... I'm just coming for the pictures.

You two go *far away* and have yourself a great time. We'll tell everybody you're dead. Won't we, James. And never coming back. And ... you have a fabulous time.

JAY

Mom, I'm dead. And I'm going away ... and not coming back.

JAMES

Fuckin' right, bro!

MRS. V

Of course, darling. And you'll need money. Where should we send it?

JAY

I really, really don't want to be King of the Jews. James can be King. I quit.

MRS. V

But if you win that appeal, darling, you'll still be king of the Jews.

Why are doing that, darling? It'll be in all the papers.

James would be a good King for the Jews. Except, we'll have to change his name. James is not quite right. Nathan. How about Nathan?

JAY

As soon as the appeal is done .... we're out of here. The deed is signed!

MRS V

*(faux naivety)* What's a Deed, darling?

JAY

I'm giving West Bank and East Jerusalem to Omar.

MRS V

You're what?

JAY

I'm giving it to Omar ...

MRS V

That's what I thought you said.

JAMES

How do you think you can do that if you're dead?

JAY

I'm appealing. I'm not dead. Well, I won't be dead. By Thursday. Undead.

MRS. V

What are you now, lambie-kins?

JAY

About to be ... I've come back from the ... (To MAGS) You explain.

MAGS

(holding up pill bottle) COMA Three. Induces coma and trance state with imperceptible heartbeat for up to three days. FDA approval pending. Plus the Serro-Floxy-Moxy-Hydro-Carbon on the flesh wounds.

MRS. V

That's how ... well, I knew it was something clever. But darling if this gets out .... won't the Emperor be upset?

MAGS

Is that our problem?

MRS V

I had no idea you were so clever. Where did he find you?

(to MAGS) This is worth serious money. What do you call it ... COMA II? I have another idea. I could ... I know someone ... who knows someone ... very big in Rome ... very big in Rome ... who would pay ... I could look after marketing for ...

Just a thought. Love to help out. We could forward ... money in plain brown envelopes ... so you could be happy ... I want my lambie-kins to be happy ... in Aruba.

(to Jay) Oh my darling, you are so generous and loyal about Omar. ... But a lawyer would cost money. Such a waste.

Darling, when you went away ... eighteen years ... you didn't write, you didn't phone. That's a problem for your mother. When you were away ... for eighteen years ... and presumed dead, *presumed*, darling, just presumed ... So I sold the land to my other Joseph. For condos. We got perfectly good price, darling. We needed the money. Nobody lives there, darling.

JAY

Omar lives there.

JAMES / NATHAN

That's what he says.

MRS. V

And we're 'closing' ... is that what they call it? ... on the West Bank condos ... next week. And you'll need some money in Aruba.

JAMES

To stay dead.

JAY

I didn't say I would always be dead.

MRS V

Let's compromise. Until the end of time.

(to MAGS) Why not a little sample, for my friend's friend in Rome. Just smidgen.

JAY

You can't sell the land! I'm the King of the ... I own it! God gave it to me! And I'm giving it Omar!

MRS V

Oh, *God!* Why didn't you say! Darling, of course he gave it to you. He gives away tons of stuff. But when you went away ... for such a long time ... I had to give it away again! You don't want your old mum to starve!

(suddenly annoyed) ... Oh, really. You owned it because Joe's uncle won it at poker. From Omar's great-grandfather. Who was drunk. And keep that under your hat, or there'll be war, darling.

No appeal, pleaseeee!

JAMES

You can't sign any deed. You're dead.

JAY

Not if I win the appeal!

MRS V

But if you win then Nathan can't be king and he'll have to be James. You don't want to spoil things for your brother. Do you?

Alright. Who's the lawyer?

MAGS

Ronald McDermott.

MRS V

(laughing) Oh, well, problem solved! You'll lose for sure.

Let me look after things quietly. Trust me. I know people.

Well, be that way.

Oh, and just so you know ... I am planned a little something for the family, to ...remember you ... as dead .... not maybe ... nothing fancy.

JAY

Will my dad be there?

MRS V

Quite possibly.

JAY

I want to come.

MRS V

That would spoil the theme, lambie.

... But why not come as a shepherd! And keep this appeal under your hat. We don't want anyone to know you didn't die, for goodness sake. Not yet!

Look at the time! I must run. The photographer is coming at five. We'll talk later.

**NARR** *MRS. V exits. JAMES chases after her.*

*Lights*

*End Act I*

## Act II

## Scene One Say Cheese

**NARR** - *MRS. V., dressed in black, is on stage is receiving guests. Somber flute music. ATTENDANTS, in black, serve canapés. MAGS is one of the ATTENDANTS.*

*Two WISE MEN – garishly dressed – are speaking to MRS V and JAMES/ NATHAN in the receiving line. Behind them are two SHEPHERDS – fresh from the field - and JAY, dressed as a shepherd. They are whispering and giggling to one another.*

**PHOTGRAPHER** taking pictures.

*There is a crèche sits centre stage left.*

MRS V

*(grieving, shaking hands, air kissing) So good of you come. A sad day. A sad day. He lives on. He lives on. We will miss him ... but we will not miss him. Ohhhh, Frankenstein ... and Murr .... Oh, you came! How kind.*

FRANK - WISE MAN

A thousands beg-ings of forgiveness from Pasha Gold who just could not be here today.

MRS. V

Oh ... Gold! Gold. How I miss Gold.

FRANK

A terrible tragedy. Terrible. A tanker ran aground ... and is sinking. Ten million barrels.

MRS V

How awful for him.

*(introducing) My second son, Jam ... Nathan. (shaking) Next in line.*

*Nathan, meet ... ~~than~~, you weren't born ... Frankenstein and (air kiss) Murr ... !*

*It's been a long time. Love your robe. Is it the same one you wore ... it is ... I loved it then and I love it now.*

*Did you bring a little something? (MURR presents a little jeweled box) You did. How sweet. It's awful ... that Gold couldn't come ....*

**NARR** *The PHOTOGRAPHER takes picture.*

MURR

(to NATHAN, aside) King of the Jews! Are you nuts! I wouldn't wish that job on my worst uncle!

MRS. V

(to MURR) Let me give you my Fed Ex delivery address.

Oh and (gushing) here are the *shepherds*. Do you remember them? ... Farid and Samir! So long. So long.

We need a picture of everyone, altogether. Farid, bring your friend. (Seeming not recognize JAY) Good of you to come. I don't remember him but we are all family. Three shepherds is better than two.

*NARR MRS. Virgin groups the WISEMEN and the SHEPHERDS around the crèche. JAY takes the doll baby out of the crèche and cuddles it. It coos and laughs. MRS V grabs the doll baby from JAY and holds it aloft, Madonna style. It starts to wail. Iconic photos are taken. MRS V dumps the baby back in the crib. SHEPHERD picks it up, holds it up, next to JAY. JAY mugs a shot. Baby laughs and coos.*

SHEPHERD

(to Jay) Looks like you.

*NARR CENTURION enters in full dress and PATSY PILOT, in snappy black cocktail dress and smart purse.*

JAY

Uh Oh! ... the fuzz!

MRS V.

Patsy. Patsy. Patsy.

PATSY

Pompous is so sorry he can't be here. And he has to get ready for Court tomorrow. A very difficult case.

MRS. V

Patsy, Patsy ...

JAY

To Patsy) What's it about?

CENTURION

(to JAY) Say, don't I know you?

JAY

Who me? Me? Why would you know me?

*PHOTOGRAPHER snaps the two of them together, standing stiff and formal.*

CENTURION

You look familiar. You hang around the Temple?

JAY

*JAY shakes 'no' – guiltily.*

Temple? What Temple? Me! You mean the big Temple! With goats and chickens? Never go there.

MRS V

That's a lovely shot.

MURR

(looking around, to JAY) Where is your dad? Is he here? I'd like to shake his hand.

JAY

Me too. That's what I was wondering? Mom, where's dad?

FRANK

He was a great guy.

JAY

He was? He was!

FARID

Definitely. The greatest. He used to drop down out to the fields ... when we were tending the flocks by night. Tell jokes.

SAMIR

Remember the one about the virgin and the traveling salesman!

NARR *FARID kicks him. They break up giggling and wander off.*

MRS V

Attention everybody, attention. It's time to go in, everybody. Inside.

We have a little glass of blood for you drink and an itsy bitsy tiny weeny crust of dried up epidermis for you to eat and then we'll pass the collection plate.

Follow me. Chant .. if you want. In your own key.

**NARR** *Exit all.*

*Lights*

## Scene Two - All Rise for the Courtroom Scene

**NARR** *POMPOUS PILOT, as the JUDGE, sits on a simple chair on a raised dias, centre rear, dressed in a toga, with a barrister's wig. There is a basin for hand washing close by. There are simple benches for the lawyers and participants to each side of the stage. As the parties argue they come centre stage to address the Judge. There are more benches for observers. MRS. V., PATSY PILOT and MAGS sit together. The atmosphere is low-grade Mexican wrestling, fans hooting, cheering on their champ etc.*

**JAY** *is immaculately cleaned up, hair trimmed and dressed in a suit.*

*Lights up on RONALD. He is center stage, trying to persuade ...*

JUDGE

*(annoyed) Are you telling me ... are you telling me ... that if you had been present last Friday morning ... at six am ... as I was, Counsel .... that this man would have given better answers? Or no answer? Is that the proposition you're putting before the Court?*

RONALD

Your Honor ... my proposition is that possibly ... just possibly ...

JUDGE

Many things are *possible*, counselor.

RONALD

Exactly ... on a balance of probabilities ... yes ... possibly ... he might have ... *(correcting himself)* ... *would have* ... yes. Better answers. The appearance of justice.

JUDGE

Because, you would have *told* him what to say?

RONALD

*Not the actual words, Your Lordship! Perhaps the ... rough contour of the argument, an overview, some perspective on presentation, inflection, demeanor, we might discuss demeanor. How to look like you're telling the truth. Some 'advice' ... on ... the selection of which facts to stress ... from the many, many no doubt available, which ones are best suit the argument. Which is entirely different than telling the witness what to say!*

JUDGE

Entirely.

The real problem, counselor, is that you were late.

RONALD

Exactly.

JUDGE

Your client did a good job of saying pretty well nothing useful and obstructing justice all by himself. Is it your argument, Counselor, that if you had been here you could have improved on that?

Madame Reporter, find what he actually said in the Record.

REPORTER

(searching, reading) Pilate .... "Art thou the King of Jews?" Answer: "Thou sayest it. Did others tell you this about me?"<sup>ii</sup>

JUDGE

Sounds like your kind of smart mouth, Counselor.

RONALD

Exactly. Who is ... who said ... this dreadful rumour ... King of the Jews ... preposterous. Look at him! Danish! Might even be Finnish!

Only because I am *obliged* to speak on behalf of this ... my wretched lot in life, my professional obligation, to stand beside him, and share ... to bear his shame. My duty, to humbly, humbly disagree ... with whatever you say. But rest assured, Your Grandness, I would never have the likes of him in my home, Finnish or not!

JUDGE

Are you Finnish?

RONALD

The law provides ... that the Court, *you*, should not even have asked him whether he was or wasn't. Think of the utter confusion, facing the full majesty of the law, all alone, because his lawyer was late, the fear, the confusion .... The inner terror! Imagine, imagine, if someone asked you, 'Art thou the Judge?' Would you have *any idea* what to say? Exactly.

JUDGE

You just make up all that shit up so you can collect money from the guilty.

RONALD

And what terrible custodians of God's riches they are. We do everything we can to help.

JUDGE

If these people don't *talk* how will I know who to crucify?

RONALD

All alone ... they might ... they would ... talk so much ... too much ... at such length, in wandering exegesis of who knows what ... unguided in their careless and ill-considered excuses ... they might blunder into ....stumble ...

JUDGE

... into the truth?

RONALD

Exactly! The truth! How could that possibly help the Court?

JUDGE

Are you done?

RONALD

... That these poor, poor dumb creatures sent hence without the advice of a lawyer, schooled in the intricacies of ... *procedure* .... and ...

JUDGE

Ah ... your concern is that the Emperor's galleys might become over-crowded. And the food supply overburdened?

I take your point.

Are you saying *you* don't have to answer when I ask *you* a question?

RONALD

Me? Him! Not me. No. Yes. Well, no, *he* doesn't and, yes, I do. Depending, of course, on the context and circumstances.

JUDGE

Counselor, I didn't and I still don't, know whether he even thinks he is King of Jews. He is a master of Socratic evasion.

RONALD

There was, is, no evidence, Your Lordship ... no evidence, at any point in that transcript, of thinking, whatsoever.

Except of course where you yourself speak.

JUDGE

Exactly. And I said .... and I said ... Counselor ... what did I say, Madame Reporter?

REPORTER

... "I find no fault in this man". <sup>iii</sup>

JUDGE

What's the problem, Counselor? Doesn't seem like he needed you at all! Give him back his money.

RONALD

Alas, Dominus, Your Worship, the problem is ... is ... with the *disposition*.

JUDGE

He *wasn't* convicted, Counselor. He was ... *chosen*. And not by me!

(*looking at the charge sheet*) He was ... was ... 'brought here' as a 'malefactor'. <sup>iv</sup>

RONALD

(*indignant*) "Malefactor"! What kind of an offence is that? Anybody could be a "malefactor"! I could be a malefactor!

JUDGE

And how do you plead?

RONALD

You didn't even ask him to plead, whether he was guilty or not ... of being a 'malefactor'!

JUDGE

What are you talking about! How could I know what the charge would be until I knew what we could get him to confess to.

RONALD

The question is, Your Highness, who said he was a 'malefactor' in the first place!

JUDGE

Counselor, I think you should take this up with the local authorities, who brought him to me ... very early in the morning, might I remind you! Very early.

RONALD

Ah ... the ones who arrested him.

JUDGE

They had a Preliminary Hearing.

RONALD

That is my point, Ultimus Maximus, *they* didn't have any evidence either! Could the Reporter read that part, please. From the Preliminary Inquiry.

REPORTER

"... We heard him say I will destroy the Temple that is made with hands, and within three days build another that is built without hands. But neither so did their witness agree." ... But he held his peace and answered nothing. <sup>v</sup>

RONALD

Your Magnificence, there ... *there* ... their witnesses did not agree! There was no evidence to proceed with the charges! The arrest was unlawful! The committal for trial improper. And the conviction ... therefore ... therefore ...

JUDGE

Read it! ... Read it again! It doesn't say 'no evidence', Counselor. It says *contradictory* evidence. There is some evidence. Some evidence is enough to proceed to trial. ... To "destroy the temple ... with his hands ... and rebuild in three days"!!! There it is! He might be ... a terrorist! Are you soft on terrorists, Counselor?!

RONALD

My client couldn't loosen a bathroom tile in three days!

REPORTER

(continuing to read) "Art thou the Christ, the son of God ... son of the Blessed ... son of Man ...

JUDGE

And he said ... ?

REPORTER

"... You say so. ... Ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them ..." <sup>vi</sup>

JUDGE

I'm sure he went to law school!

REPORTER

"You shall see the son of man sitting on the right hand of power coming in the clouds." <sup>vii</sup>

JUDGE

"In the clouds?" Who would hang a guy for that babble?

RONALD

You did, your Glorious Wonder.

JUDGE

I did not. That *non-evidence* wasn't before me.<sup>viii</sup> It was at the Prelim. I Never heard a word of it!

RONALD

But that was the basis of the charge! That's why they sent him to you for trial!

JUDGE

Nobody told me that. They brought him for trial because ... he was annoying them. And you're annoying me! We got messiahs coming out our ying yang! Four a week!

RONALD

You put him to death!

JUDGE

I did not! The Jury did it. *Not me.* (*washing his hands*) Why don't you blame them!

RONALD

We could do that.

(*aside, stage whisper*) you gutless birdbrain.

JUDGE

I missed that.

RONALD

Yes we could. We will. Blame the Jury.

Why blame anybody the guy in charge. Absurd!

That brings up another point Your Wondrous Goodness, about the .... about the Jury!

JUDGE

What now! The jury! You will never be satisfied! The Jury were the ones who brought the charges on him in the first place. What's the problem!

RONALD

Doesn't that make them biased? And then they locked the door ... so they never heard ...

JUDGE

No! It makes them efficient!

(*exasperated*) I gave them a choice. This one is guilty or that one! What was his name?

REPORTER

Barabbas.

JUDGE

What's the problem? We had to crucify somebody.

RONALD

What if they were both innocent?

JUDGE

Preposterous! How could they both be innocent? They got me up at 5am!

RONALD

I hesitate to say it, and do so only out of my undying loyalty to the purity of Emperor's justice ...  
the door was locked and the Jury was *stacked*, Your Honor.

*it's*  
1

JUDGE

Stacked! Stacked!

Well, perhaps they were ... a little raucous. Shouting, but that's all! Just a little free speech!  
Can't you handle a little free speech, counselor?

*The Judge is beginning to be won over.*

RONALD

More than a little raucous, Your Honour. ... Biased.

JUDGE

They're entitled to their opinions. Loudly expressed, I admit.

Are you saying ... are you suggesting .... that that influenced my decision, influenced the result?  
That something somebody said to me influenced my thinking!

RONALD

My submission is only, *only*, that it might seem that way, to some, who do not know you the way I do .... know and respect your ruthlessness disregard from *anything* that *anybody* else says, or does or thinks.

(RONALD momentarily loses it and snarls sarcastically) You're the decider, shit face. Stop trying to blame it on the Jews!

(then quickly back to ass kissing) And I only say this because it my duty to express those thought which others might fear ...! The appearance of justice ... oh Greatness ... the *appearance* ....

What would a Martian think if he happened to drop in and witness this! Imagine!

JUDGE

Probably, he would say ...the first thing we do is kill all the lawyers.

So where were *his* supporters? They could have shouted. (*answering his own question*) They were locked outside!

(*mussing*) We could have a re-trial.

(RONALD shakes 'no')

Are you saying he should *go free*? Just because there was a false arrest, no line up, no plea, no offence specified, no evidence and no finding of guilt, he was denied counsel and I pandered to the Jury which was hopeless biased! Are you saying I  *fucked up the trial!* ... so badly .... that a retrial could never be fair, a retrial is Impossible! He should be resurrected and *go free*!

Like I intended in the first place! (*melting*) When I said 'I find no fault'. Are you saying that I fucked up the trial? Is that what you are saying?

RONALD

Not in so many words.

Your insight is ... is so wisely put ... I am ... struck dumb, Your Worshipful Goodness.

JUDGE

Let's stick with 'struck dumb'.

What about the new charge?

Tell you what –

(*Aside to Reporter*) Madame Reporter, would go and lock the door. (*she does*)

↓  
↓

RONALD

What new charge?

JUDGE

Rising from the dead.

It's not allowed -- after crucifixion. I must put him away for a long time. It's essential, for the appearance of justice.

RONALD

Nobody needs to know.

We could ... we would ... agree to an indefinite term of deportation ...

JAY

(*loud whisper to RONALD*) In Aruba.

RONALD

(*aide to Jay*) Shut up!

RONALD

There's a facility in a very hot country, very ... your Horror, in Aruba ... very strict ... that would be good, Your Merciful Greatness. I took the liberty of inquiring ... and just happen to have a letter of acceptance and tickets.

JUDGE

Hmmmm ...

*(leaning over, confidential)* What I want to know is how exactly did he do it? Drugs? Rising from the dead! I heard it was drugs. You know counselor, if this get around it will completely undermine the administration of justice! In the wrong hands the Empire ...

RONALD

And in the right hands the Empire will live forever!

I believe I can get ... can give some assurances ... that this will never happen again.

*NARR RONALD turns to MAGS and nods. MAGS slips MRS. V a small package and MRS V gives it to PATSY who nods to the JUDGE. Who nods to RONALD.*

JAY

Never.

MRS. V

Never.

JUDGE

*(pompous, the verdict)* Indefinite deportation!

Next.

Next case!

*NARR JAY's crew are happy, except MAGS.*

*Next case: OMAR is lead in in an orange prison jump suit.*

*Sudden silence as JAY notices. MRS A tried to drag him a way, He resists.* 

REPORTER

Omar Mohamed v West Bank Condos, Your Honour.

NATHAN

Good morning Your Honour.

JUDGE

Who are you?

NATHAN

Nathan, initial N. I represent the corporation.

JAY

Omar! Omar! What's going on!

JUDGE

Order in the Court! Order in the Court!

REPORTER

Take your seat! Take your seat!

JAY

That's Nathan, my evil step-brother.

JUDGE

*(looking at the charge sheet, to Omar)*

You are charged here with destruction of property, to whit, a condominium sales office ... overturning the signing table ... how do you plead?  
And before you say anything (*sarcastic to RONALD*) I just want you to know, that you don't need to say anything at all. Nothing. Zippo. If that's the way you want to be about it. And that man - over there - will do your talking!

RONALD

Me?

JUDGE

You. I just appointed you Friend of The Court.

OMAR

He's selling my land. He's selling my land!

NATHAN

He's a crazy man, Your great Magnificence. The Corporation is the lawful owner.

JUDGE

*(to Omar)* Did you turn over the signing table? Frighten his customers?

RONALD

Don't answer that.

OMAR

Why not! I have a Deed!

RONALD

Perhaps we could have a brief adjournment Your Honorable Greatness?

OMAR

(to RONALD) You wrote it. Tell him.

RONALD

(*supercilious*) Writing a document is not the same as being responsible for its contents and consequence when you are being paid.

JUDGE

Exactly.

(to NATHAN) If *he* (pointing to OMAR) has a Deed how can *you* sell the property?

NATHAN

He doesn't have a valid Deed ...

JUDGE

And you do?

RONALD

Perhaps if we could discuss this *outside* for a moment, Supreme Magnificence?

OMAR

Jay signed it. He's King of the Jews. He gave it to me.

JUDGE

Is he, now?

Show me this Deed. When did he sign it?

RONALD

Your Grandness ...

JUDGE

Show me the Deed!

**NARR - OMAR produces the Deed.**

*[From here to the end of the scene the discussion degenerates into a shouting match and fist fight.]*

OMAR

Yesterday.

*The JUDGE reads it.*

JUDGE

It's signed 'Jason of Nazareth, King of the Jews'.

Do you see that person in the Courtroom?

RONALD

*(aside to Jay)* Keep your mouth shut!

OMAR

It's him. *(pointing to Jay)* He's the one!

JUDGE

Is that the guy?

OMAR

He's my buddy.

JUDGE

You mean that guy sitting over there beside the lawyer telling him to keep trap shut who just escaped re-crucifixion because there was no evidence that he ever claimed to be King of Jews?

OMAR

*(silence)*

NATHAN

But he couldn't sign it, Your Grandness, because he was dead yesterday. That deed is ... *nothing*.

JUDGE

Who drafted the Deed ... for 'the King of the Jews'?

OMAR

The lawyer. The guy who brought the deeds to crypt. A stand-up guy, your Honor!

JUDGE

You mean the lawyer sitting over there beside the guy who wants to go to tennis camp in Aruba, the one who signed the Deed saying he was King of Jews giving you title to half of East Jerusalem - who was dead when he signed it. Beside that lawyer who I appointed as your lawyer and a friend of the Court?

OMAR

It's where we played tag when we were little.

**NARR OMAR starts to break down. Jay rushes up and puts his arm around OMAR, who gets it together but then turns to menaces NATHAN.**

JUDGE

(to RONALD) How many of your clients sign their Deeds after they're dead, Mr. Ronald? What's your humble answer? Or do you wish to remain silent?

RONALD

(pause) Maybe it could be a Will, Your Grandness? A *post mortem* will.

JUDGE

Maybe you'd like to reconsider remaining silent.

How many of your clients sign their Wills after they're dead!?

NATHAN

I call Jason of Nazareth, Son of the Virgin.

*JAY comes to the witness box.*

JUDGE

Exhibit One - A Deed to 3000 hectares in Palestine and six blocks in East Jerusalem.

NATHAN

.... Signed, "Jason of Nazareth, King of the Jews".

*Hands it to the Reporter.*

JUDGE

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

JAY

You mean ... the truth!

(long pause) Your Honour, like wow, I mean like, that's huge, philosophically speaking. Not to mention the translation issues.

RONALD

My client takes the 5<sup>th</sup>.

JAY

What's that mean?

JUDGE

A good idea, Counselor.

RONALD

It means ... keep your shut mouthed.

NATHAN

(reading the Deed) "Abraham begat Isaac...David ... Asa, Jehoshaphat.... Zadok, Mathen, Jacob ... Joseph!

Did you sign right there – 'King of Jews'. *th*

*Long silence in the Court. JUDGE menaces RONALD to sit down.*

OMAR

He did.

JUDGE

(to Ronald) After he died? Counselor?

RONALD

But ... but ... your worshipful Goodness Graciousness .... His death is, was, is ... in effect void, *ab initio*, legally speaking ... after your ruling in the last case ... the Appeal ... he sprung back into being, so to speak, assumed *corporality* ... for purposes of ... signing ... so to speak ... the Deed.

JUDGE

'Sprung back'? did he. And then 'disappears into the clouds' ... to fulfill the terms of his suspended sentence? *4th*

RONALD

For the purposes of the Deed he has ... new life! And ... as a policy matter, as a precedent, Your Lord of Wisdom, think of all the benefits of ... of ... a brief legal afterlife. Who could be opposed?

He is – becomes – undead ... retroactively .... by reason of Court Order ... and ... and he ... he just .... signed the Deed ... and ... and ... becomes dead .... again! On a balance of probabilities.

JAY

And leaves for Aruba. Very hot.

JUDGE

What about this deed, Counselor? Where did he get the right to sign off on this chunk of Palestine?

RONALD

Because he's King of the Jews.

JUDGE

Which you denied ten minutes ago.

(shouting off stage) Guard! Guard! Are the stones ready!

RONALD

I didn't deny it. I just said it was an allegation that wasn't proved. Or even that he believed it. Or even that anyone said it!

MRS V

(jumping up) I did it. I told him, Your Honor-ness.

JUDGE-*Ahu*

So he is guilty! King of Jews! How much trouble can one guy make!

(to MRS V) Thank you Mrs. Virgin. I'm sure you didn't mean it.

(to NATHAN) If he is dead, if, and you are ... the evil step brother, does that make you the *evil* King of Jews?

*Nathan* NATHAN

I thought I was just next in line. But I can do evil. (*grimaces*)

JUDGE

Next in line to get ... (*shouting, off stage*) Guard!

OFF STAGE

Stones ready.

JUDGE

Where do either of you get the title?

JAY

Adam begat Seth and Seth begat ...

*JAY and JAMES and OMAR get into a heated argument.*

NATHAN

No ... Abraham begat Isaac ...

OMAR

After Ishmail!

NATHAN

Who left the country!

Isaac begat Jacob ....

JAY

Yeah ... but Salomon begat Rehoboam and he moved to Ireland!

MRS V

(correcting) Germany and then England, dear. Near Reading. They have a tea shop.

NATHAN

It doesn't matter because ...

JUDGE

Order! Order! Sit down! Sit down!

Counselor, have you got your title search? Oh, here it is. (*he reads and looks up*). Where did God sign? Show me!

And you (*to OMAR*) Where's your root of title. (*Omar smugly produces an old parchment*) Where? Show me? Here? Who signed that? It's an 'X'.

**NARR JAY / OMAR / NATHAN / RONALD fumble with the two deeds, passing them back and forth and to the JUDGE**

NATHAN

Well ... so is theirs.

JUDGE

An 'X'?

MRS V

I can assure you ... he was illiterate. Utterly. Completely.

RONALD

It's the same slanting up to left ...

OMAR

With that little hook ...

JAY

Same ink, dudes.

JUDGE

Both deeds, to the same property are signed by ... the same ... illiterate ... person.

ALL

The motherfucker! The same ...

OMAR

(*leaps to his feet.*) Our God gave it to our people who live have lived there from before the beginning. Before these aliens came along .... (*They all look at him like he's nuts*) with their God. Ours is better, because he gave the land to us! Before their before!

*OMAR and JAMES start pushing each other, then shaking fists.*

JUDGE

Order! Order! Who's lived there the longest? ...

OMAR / NATHAN

We did! / We did! / You moved. / You left. / You weren't there when we came back. / God gave it to us! ...

*OMAR and NATHAN start fighting. The JUDGE washes his hands of the feud.*

NATHAN

We've already sold the condos ...

JUDGE

*(to Jay) If I let you go to Aruba, will you ever come back?*

JAY

Not a chance!

MRS. V

I'll make sure.

*NARR OMAR and NATHAN fight. JUDGE flees left. JAY and MAGS exit right. MRS V chases after them.*

*Lights*

## Scene Three

## Valley of Kidron

**NARR** *The scene is the rooftop 'party' room of the Tower of the Elect, exclusive Jerusalem condo.*

*A large window and balcony overlooking the Kidron Valley. (The idyllic view out the panoramic window and from the balcony of the picturesque valley scene is a rear projection on a scrim, stage rear.) The room is well decorated, comfy chairs etc. Large flat screen T.V. There is a table to one side with documents on it ready for signing.*

*Two (or more) RESIDENTS sit watching the T.V. which shows a static shot of the same pretty valley. They have a remote control and they flick impatiently from channel to channel but nothing changes.*

*Two large network T.V. camera set ups, Stage Rear left, are focused out the window on the valley. CAMERAMEN with headsets sit slouched, or pacing, waiting for Armageddon.*

*NATHAN enters, Stage Right, with RALPH and BETTY, primly dressed tourists and real estate clients. Nathan is showing them the room, the view, etc.*

NATHAN

(to RALPH and BETTY) I'm so glad you're enjoying your tour. Sea of Galilee is fabulous, isn't it?

BETTY

I loved the fishermen! So authentic.

I had the mackerel in mint tabouli. Very good ... but ... they ran out. There were so many of us.

NATHAN

Where he walked and talked.

RALPH

And raised the dead!

NATHAN

And will come again, someday.

BETTY

Not *there*, Nathan. Right here.

NATHAN

Absolutely. Right here! The Valley of Kidron.

And ... you ... lucky folk ... have the opportunity to buy just about the last available box seat ... here in The Tower of the Elect. This Common Function Room we're in ... available for condo owners ... by reservation .... For your private events, family gatherings ...

RALPH

*(confidential aside to NATHAN)* Sure you wouldn't prefer our Jay as your personal savior?  
Take him into your heart! You could bacon!

NATHAN

Actually, we've got our own, thanks.

BETTY

But does he saving power? Wash away your sins. Bacon is delicious.

NATHAN

Now *this* ... isn't *this* spectacular!!! The Valley of Kidron. Just look ... Feast your eyes. We have  
*(checking his notes)* five penthouse~~s~~<sup>5</sup>. seven ... units left, here in 'The Tower of the Elect'. Of course, If you qualify.

RALPH

*(supremely confident)* Trust me, son, we qualify.  
You sure this is place?

NATHAN

Location. Location. Location. The experts ... and hey, I admit they are only experts, they say ... the Trumpet will sound from .... there ..... Four Horsemen will come from .... there ... and the forces <sup>4</sup>darkness ...will rise up from ... come from ... *(waving his arm)* ... about there ....

*CAMERAMAN corrects him, and he waves in the other direction.*

Which way is Iran? ... Right .... There.

Our enemies are your enemies, right! Absolutely.

There are five of the finest condo developments here at the Valley. All overlooking ... I know you can hardly wait ... but wait you must ... and who's to say when ... who's to say ... except ... it might be soon .... The Tower of the Elect, The Reckoning, both are all self-contained units – The Armageddon, Final Judgment and Golden Mansions have homecare and nursing services available. Golden Mansions is sold out, At least that's what I hear. We're not handling it.

BETTY

We've had a place at Golden Mansions forever.

RALPH

Unit 1114.

I'd invite you up ... but Jew aren't allowed .... Unless of course ... you could reconsider and take the Lord Jesus ...

NATHAN

(To the CAMERAMEN) Hi, guys. Any sign of action. (CAMERAMEN shrug.) Any day now. Any day.

RALPH

Our Messiah is going to kick ass. Nathan, you really should get on side.

NATHAN

(to the CLIENTS, confidential) ... The signs are everywhere! Our enemies are your enemies. And we will stand together. And fight, fight, fight. Besides, we've got our own Messiah.

RALPH

Well ... only up to a point. Don't get me wrong, your enemies are pretty bad. But ... at the end of time ... Nathan ... that is a whole new box of apples.

BETTY

I didn't know you have Messiah. Do you have a picture?

NATHAN

(evading the religious argument) And, as I said, this is not for everyone! No, Just ... 'the elect', 'The Chosen Few!' Those with foresight ... insight, rectitude ... and the down payment ... everyone who believes that great day of reckoning is upon us, almost .... We have the seven units left, five, three bedroom and five two bedroom and den, and then ... in the Judgment Towers (sadly) there are only six units on the lower floors. Otherwise it's completely sold out. There is no telling when or whether there will be another chance to own ... before that great day is upon us, you.

BETTY

NATHAN

(shaken, trying to get back to his sales pitch) Now as much as modern television (*nod to CAMERAMEN*) can bring – does bring – the very best in terror and cataclysm from all over the world right into your own living room – nothing can touch ... nothing .... what you might ... will ... enjoy .... here in The Tower of The Elect. Not 'live action'! Not 'real time'. Not '3 Dimension. But the real thing! See it first. Be in it! To see it live! Be there – Ground Zero! Do you think plywood will, I mean, set the right tone.

RALPH

You got a firmed up date for your messiah? Just asking.

NATHAN

(to RESIDENTS) Try Channel forty-nine. (*They flip the channel and look intently.*) (to RALPH/BETTY) Now you may be asking yourself, how can we afford a place like this? This is not time share. This is real time. And this is a fair question. A good question. Because these fabulous residences – your home – your box seats. Box seats! For that final showdown – these seats are not cheap. Not cheap.

RALPH

We just came to have a look.

It would have to be a *very* short term rental. If the price is right.

NATHAN

Ralph, it won't be like that.

Our Messiah ... any moment ... any second ...

BETTY

You don't even have a picture. What if he's a negro!

RALPH

Or has a brush cut. I think, I know, you're gonna get your ass kicked.

NATHAN

I thought we were friends.

(suddenly pissed off) We're not gonna get *our* ass kicked! We got it covered! Settlers on every square inch!

RALPH

We were friends, son. But we're moving on. No hard feelings.  
 But this here is gonna be a nuclear dust bowl.  
 Think about it.

**NARR** *The T.V. screen suddenly flips. We see – and hear – a marching band - in red, white and blue – playing a cheery tune. CAMERAMEN jump up to re-adjust their cameras. RESIDENTS come alive. Then the TV shows scenes of military hardware on parade. Then the same scene appears on the scrim.*

**VOICE ANNOUNCER #1 – JACK ('V JACK')**

Ohhhh, ... here they come now. Wow, oh wow! The Forces of Righteousness marching in formation, row on row, Is this an inspiration for the viewers, or what! The sinners will pee-ing in the nappies! What do you think, Holly?

**VOICE ANNOUNCER #2 ('V HOLLY')**

I think what you think, Jack.

V - JACK

Absolutely.

H... Oh, oh...do I see ... do I see .... the nuc-tacs coming? I do. I do! Look at those little cuties. How 'bout that! Holly! How 'bout those?

*NATHAN does a double take. Shocked.*

**VOICE ANNOUNCER #2 – HOLLY (V- HOLLY)**

Tactical, half meg, two-to-six-k throw radius off the back of a pick-up truck. Bye-bye Bethlehem.

V – Jack

And Syracuse.

V – HOLLY

And I say Amen to that! Sinners everyone!

V – JACK

Amen! Amen!

And (*triumphant*) here come the strategics! Just love the big boys! Look at the size of those ....

V - HOLLY

30 megs, easy. And a pair of forties !

The counters, what are the counter tops?

NATHAN

What does the booklet say? Believe in the book, sister, believe in the book!

RALPH

(*checking the booklet*) It says ... granite.

NATHAN

Praise the Lord for granite.

BETTY

Praise the Lord. But, Nathan, actually, to be truthful, we think ... granite is a little ...

RALPH

.... extravagant, Nathan. Extravagant. Plywood is fine. In the circumstances.

BETTY

We won't be here all *that* long.

NATHAN

Plywood! Plywood, Really not the best ... when considered from a re-sale point of view. And ... I'll say it ... what will your friends think! On the Day of Reckoning. Everyone gathers. A joyous celebration. The return of Kingdom of David! To a plywood kitchen!

RALPH

On the Day of Reckoning, Nathan, we'll be here, alright, and the Final Battle will be real close. Right there. Valley of Kidron.

And this will all be pretty much incinerated, Nathan. Granite would be a waste.

NATHAN

Inciner .... Ralph, you are a funny guy! Funnnnn-y!

BETTY

Normally, I'd prefer granite. But this will be all burned up in the battle, Nathan. That's the point. I hope you don't live around here. We're just looking to rent for the ... afternoon?

RALPH

When things get hot, Nathan, we'll be in the sky. Our place in the Golden Mansions.

I'd invite for a drink, son, but Jews can't come. Nothing personal. Unless, of course,,, I have a pledge card, right here.

When it's time to clean house ... the righteous do it right. That's all you have to say!

V – JACK

And ... Boom! Boom! Boom!

NATHAN

(to RESIDENTS) Do you mind if we ...

*NARR - NATHAN spots some headsets, he gestures to the residents and they put them on and turn off the T.V. sound. All smile in relief. Then the roar of a low overhead jet hits them from behind the scrim. They all duck, except the RESIDENTS. NATHAN alarmed, looks out to see what's happening. It passes.*

(To CLIENTS) I don't want to ... to seem ... to pressure or rush you ... but ... we better hurry ... let me speak to my manager about that rental idea ... We have (*taking them to the signing tables*) Agreements, Pledges of Support, blank cheques ... ready to sign ...

*NARR Wild sounds from behind the scrim, squawking bagpipes then distant Wagner - Flight of the Valkyrie- interspersed with the marching band. Some distant flashes on the scrim, faint explosion noises. CAMERAMEN are frantically recording. The Residents are jumping and shouting (without sound) like mad football fans!*

RALPH

(looking out to Kidron battlefield) Hey! There he is! The angel of the Lord! Come in all his glory. He's so beautiful.

BETTY

He does have wings. I told you. Didn't I tell you.

(to NATHAN) Just for the afternoon. That's all we need.

RALPH

(To NATHAN) It's not too late to sign.

NATHAN

I ... I ... what's going on out there?

(to CAMERAMEN, aside) This isn't really happening. My people are out there ...

(to CLIENTS) Folks, it's fairly urgent ... we need to get your cheque cleared before the close of ...

*NARR NATHAN'S cell phone rings. More jet roars. He can't hear his phone. He (silently) shouts, 'I can't hear'. He goes to one side. The noise quiets.*

## NATHAN

Mother! Where are you? Where? What do you mean ... he's 'returned in a blaze of glory'? Come on! He promised, promised, to stay in Aruba! ... Well, I don't consider myself a sinner! .... This is not good! ... No ... we have no insurance for that!

**NARR** *The cacophony of noise, now with bombs and machine guns, overwhelms the phone call. NATHAN puts his phone away. Scrim erupts with bomb flashes, rockets etc.*

*JACK and HOLLY, holding interview mikes, enter Stage Left. They are dressed to kill and brushing dust from their three piece suits and \$200 hair-dos. They interview each other, holding their mikes in each other's face, they talk but we can't hear them for the roar. They go to balcony, point and comment.*

*CAMERAMEN point to them. They speak to their T.V. audience describing the battle. We still can't hear. They appear on the T.V. monitor. The RESIDENTS can hear and cheer wildly – on opposite sides. Then they start to fight. But the theatre audience doesn't know what is being said.*

*OMAR appears on screen with a survey tripod, doing a survey, laying out a sub-division as the scrim flashes wildly with the battle. NATHAN rushes off stage and appears in scrim scene, arguing with OMAR, then a tug of war over the tripod. Noise and flashing gets crazy as they fight.*

*Battle music / noise then fades a bit and Lone Ranger theme intrudes a bit into the soundtrack, then a Hallelujah chorus, although both are faint compared to the battle music.*

*JAY enters Stage Right - into the party room. He is dressed in dirty battle fatigues and wears tattered angel wings.*

*JACK and HOLLY rush over and push mikes in his face. CAMERAMEN follow them. CLIENTS and RESIDENTS fall to their knees. (If there are enough RESIDENTS on stage one or two could flee in fear.)*

*JAY takes out a pistol and fires two shots into the scrim. OMAR and NATHAN fall over, swinging at each other to the last, dead in a heap. The tripod falls on top of them. The profile of this heap remains on the scrim.*

*The battle noise fades and scrim scene evolves to one of total nuclear desolation.*

*RALPH and BETTY cheer.*

*JAY looks at them in horror. Then he shoots them.*

*JACK and HOLLY and the CAMERAMEN are pressing JAY for comments.*

## V - HOLLY

You must feel some ... how do you feel ....

V – JACK

Who will be coaching next season, do you think?

**NARR** *JAY looks at the news team in disbelief. JAY shots them all.*

*Scrim scene and T.V. screen go blank. Other RESIDENTS/FANS are furious. JAY shoots them.*

*JAY rips off his angel wings and throws them to the ground.  
He weeps.*

*As lights fade to black - BANG - JAY shoots himself.*

*End Play*

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#### Footnotes

##### Act Two, Scene Two

- <sup>ii</sup> Mathew, 27.12, Mark, 15.3 Luke, 23.4 and John 18.33 - 35
- <sup>iii</sup> Luke, 23.4
- <sup>iv</sup> John 18:30
- <sup>v</sup> Mark, 14.57-59
- <sup>vi</sup> Mathew, 26.64, Luke, 22.70; John, 18.21. But note Mark 14.61-2 .... "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? A - I am.
- <sup>vii</sup> Mathew, 26.64; Mark, 14.62; Luke, 22.68
- <sup>viii</sup> No reference in any of the accounts of the trial before Pilate of a charge of blasphemy, only in the hearing before the High Priests.