

Rex the Horse

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Characters

Jack King	lawyer
Burt Armstrong	lawyer, his partner
Ester Weinstock	Jack's girlfriend
Chip Macunivich	law school dropout
Suzy Sanderson	lawyer employed by Jack King

Act I	Ester's home, one evening; and other times and places remembered.
Act II	several months later, the office and Ester's home; and other places as indicated.

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Act I

Ester's home, one evening; other
times and places remembered.

(door bell rings; Jack and Ester dressing in bedroom
setting raised stage #3; Burt enters stage centre)

Burt (blowing a whistle)

Panty raid, Panty raid. One foot on the floor at all times. Get those clothes on...

(noticing there is no response)

... Hey where is my supper?

Jack (off-stage)

We're not dressing for you.

Burt (menacing)

O.K., boys, take the cameras upstairs. Watch the lights. Careful with the sound boom. Hurry up. Hurry up. They know we're here now. Hurry up...

(shouting upstairs)

Don't stop, don't stop, the camera will be there in a minute.

Ester Just a sec, I'm fixing my hair.

(Jack enters wearing three piece suit)

Burt The cameramen are gone now. I was only joking. Ester, do you hear me? I was only joking. You can take your clothes off. It's o.k.

Jack You would like that, wouldn't you? Where have you been? It's seven-thirty?

Burt Where have you been? Look at the duds. You look like a lawyer. Were you working or modeling?

Jack (gesturing with mock contempt to Burt's shabby dress)

Burt I'm a lawyer. I went to a cocktail party.
Jack No, I am the lawyer. You're my manager.
So do what your manager tells you and buy a suit.

Burt (self-mocking)

Listen Mr. Manager I'm not hustling condominium depletion allowance and movie write-off rebates. My clients are ex-hippy drug dealers, punk second-story men - and women believe it or not - and down-trodden beaten starving suffering welfare mothers. I love it. My jeans are a personal statement of my allegiance to their pain and suffering.

(taking Jack mockingly by the lapels)

I'm a tough guy, see, but warm and human

(releasing him, brushing the lapels)

Nice suit. Where'd you scoff it?

Jack O.K., O.K. But you sure know shit about taxes. What was it? Condominium depletion allowances! Movie write-off rebates! I'd never sell those even to a stupid doctor.

Burt (looking around)

Nice digs you've moved into here. I didn't know Ester was loaded.

Jack (pouring Scotch)

Do you think Joanne will mind?

Burt You mean Joanne your wife?

(sitting)

Jack Yea, Stupid...

Burt (sarcastic)

On no, I don't think she'll mind. She left you three months ago didn't she?

Jack She'll want to come back.

Burt Sure, with half a dozen armed amazon harpies to cut off your balls if they can find it.

Jack You're always on her side. You blame me.

(feigning great anguish)

His best friend never told him why his wife ran away. It's not my fault she went to law school and became a bitch.

Burt She's not a bitch. She's just smarter than you.

Jack See. Always on her side.

Burt No, I am not, nor have I every been your ex-wife's lover.

Jack (with false innocence)

Did I accuse.....

Burt Not yet.

Jack (with mocking glee)

Well at least it's your fault she ran away.

Burt At least that. You're right about one thing, though. When she hears about the palace you're living in now she will want to come back.

Jack (nervously)

Don't tell her.

Don't talk about Joanne with Ester.

Burt I wouldn't dream of it.

Ester (entering quickly, puffing cushions, straighten her dress moving two ashtrays, and a chair - whatever minor stage moves to "make things perfect - quickly". Burt rises.

She spins as she does her touch up routine and lands perfectly fact-to-face with Burt, points to her cheek a kiss which he gives.)

It's all right, Burt. You can talk about it if you want. Joanne and I have no secrets. Did he give you enough Scotch? What happened to Mrs. Josephs and her babies? I made some pate. You like?

Burt Naturally.

Ester (spinning off to the kitchen)

Jack, get him some more Scotch. I tried to call you this afternoon to tell you that we don't have any more placements till next week. But obviously you didn't need us.

(Jack pours Scotch as she talks)

I made terrific lasanga for tonight. Better than meat loaf. Have some pate.

(she lands in the seat beside him pate in hand)

Where's Martha? That's your wife's name isn't it? Why didn't you bring Martha?

Burt She vowed long ago never to attend a party with more than one lawyer.

Ester Smart lady.

Burt I married her because she hates lawyers. We make love together hating all the lawyers in the whole world... except me.

Jack Are you sure?

Burt Do me a favour? Make him change into some dirty clothes. Burt feels uncomfortable.

Jack What about her?

Burt She looks lovely.

Ester Thank you Burt. Some men never notice.

Jack Chauvinist dog...

Ester Burt and I have a liberated relationship. He can compliment if he wants.

(exit Jack)

Ester So what happened to Mrs. Joseph?

Jack (off-stage) (mocking)

You two are just doing this to make me feel insecure.

Ester Yes dear.

Burt Well, after I talked to you I called Goldman House, the Y, the Sisters and Sandy Stein at the City Shelter. Everybody was full up. No room for another beaten wife and three kids under five. Two of whom were crying, pissing and puking in the front office. Jack was going crazy. He hates that. So then we decided that there was no choice but a plot. Domestic ruse 2B, subsection six. Lure Husband Out of House, Sneak In, Change Locks, Call Police... Got him out alright. But she - Mrs. Josephs - bless her heart - freaked about, going back to the house. She was terrified. I literally dragged her over there. You can't run away with three children when there's no place to go. So I called the Sargeant. He never fails me. He sent over two rookies. What they didn't know about the law of trespass! I owe the Sarge more favours than I can count. Then I had Johnny change the locks. Boy is he fast. Sure glad

he owes me a lot of money. He knows the trouble he could catch on these capers. He doesn't care. When the jerk husband came back and found the door locked, and his key didn't work, he starts shouting, and pounding the door. He went off his stick! Oh, I loved it. I'm in the house with the wife whispering through the keyhole that his prick is shrinking. Stuff like that. Then the coppers roll up just as he's about to break the window. Perfect timing. Perfect. "It's my house. It's my house." "But you're disturbing the peace, sir," say these two nineteen year old guerillas polite as can be. "She locked me out of my own house," he's screamin'.

(Burt acts out all roles)

Me and the little woman are barricading the door. Kids are laughing and screaming and crying, all at once. "Bang, bang, bang, lemme in, its my home." "Sorry , sir," say the cops, "Do you have any identification?" He's cursin' in three languages. And I'm at the key hole shouting "It's legal... It's legal... I'm a lawyer, the sargeant says it's o.k., She doesn't want him. He doesn't live here anymore."... He's out there shitting his pants, then he takes a swing at boy cop number one. Well that did it. "Only doing my job, sir, you'll have to come along with us, sir, this way, sir." They put the cuffs on him. The fuckin' cuffs. The first time I ever got one cuffed. What a trip. Wait till my shrink hears about it. He won't believe it. But was that a happy client. She loves me. She thinks I'm God.

Ester I'm sure she's not the only one.
One thing. I wish there were more like you in this
city. The hostels are full all the time. We need
more guerilla fighters out to capture the home
territory. Then there wouldn't be so many refugees.
So when did you finish this latest adventure.

Burt I just came from her place now.

Ester You must be beat.

Burt More Scotch.

Ester How can you stand it day after day?

Jack (re-enters, dressed in slacks and sweater)
What did I miss?
Burt What I told Ester you wouldn't want to hear.
Jack Who were those kids screaming around in the office
all afternoon?
Burt What I told Ester you already heard.
Jack You were out saving another damsel in distress. Weren't
you?
Burt You can't make that wrap stick, Copper. You ain't
got no proof.

Jack (doing Grade-B detective imitation)
Come on, come on, come clean, I can read it in your
eyes. Listen buddy I know your type real good. Kids
screaming in the waiting room all Friday afternoon.
Locked in your office with some dumpy blubbering
broad. Car gone at 4:30. The Sergeant calls three
times. Where's Burt? Where's Burt? Still
working but not at the office. And now... Two
Scotches, goin' on three. That smug look of
satisfaction on yer puss. Come clean, buster, were
you out on a 2B?

(Jack finishes with flourish sticking his finger in Burt's chest - and look to Ester for approval of his performance)

Jack You like it?

Ester Yes. That's fun.

(getting into the Act)

Listen here, Detective King, don't you badger my client. He doesn't have to talk.

(correcting herself)

He don't have to talk. Besides he ain't got nothing - nutten - to be ashamed of.

Burt (joining in)

I'll talk. Don't beat me. I'll talk. I wanna go straight. Honest. I really wanna. Where did I go wrong? I was always a good boy.

(aside) Jack ... that's where you went wrong.

I didn't mean to do it. I didn't mean to. I couldn't help it. This broad, see, she just comes into my office and starts cryin'. Three kids. Little ones. Real little. She starts tellin' me her husband beats her. She shows me the bruises. She says she can't go back. Just can't go back. So I start talkin' to her, see. Just talkin'. Then I started promisin' to do things...little things. Next thing you know I'm callin' the Sergeant again. Just look at me! Don't call my mom, please. What goin' happen? What are you goin' do with me?

Jack Son, if you can't drink a bottle you shouldn't drink a drop. I can't help you, you and your kind. We're going to have to castrate you.

Burt (stepping outside the game)
Isn't that a little drastic? How about...
We're going to have to make you into a social worker.
That's worse than castration.
Ester That's awful. How can you say that? What's wrong
with social workers. I'm a social worker!
Jack Oh...you're in trouble. You might have to eat in
the cupboard.
Burt It just slipped out.
Ester (to Jack)
Don't disparage all the wonderful work he does!
Jack It isn't wonderful. It isn't work.
Burt I have more women than you.
Jack (sarcastic)
I can see your office is full of them. Just knock.
Ester Don't make fun of a good person.
Jack You never turn a single one away. There are other
lawyers in town.
Burt Want a couple.
Ester She probably worships you.
Jack No thanks.
Burt Can't handle it.
Ester Nobody else would have got those kind of results.
That's a real professional accomplishment.
Jack Nobody else would stay out till seven-thirty with
that crazy hysterical lady. It's not professional.
Burt I don't mean to interrupt but your Scotch is having
deliterious effects on my bladder, by which I mean
I gotta go pee pee. Don't go way.
(rising to leave)
(exit)

Ester You're too hard on him.
Jack I'm too hard on him!
Ester There's nothing wrong with what he's doing.
Jack He's gotta grow up.
Ester He is grown up.
Jack No I mean he has to be serious.
Ester He is serious.
Jack He is not.
Ester He is too.
Jack He is not. What do you know about being a lawyer?
Ester I know enough.
Jack No, but what do you really know?
Ester I know lots of lawyers. And lots before you came along.
Jack Do you know what a lawyer is really supposed to do?
Ester What is this, an existential quiz show?
Jack A lawyer is supposed to advise his clients, not get down in the gutter with them.
Ester So what are you doing with Simon?
Jack What's Simon got to do with this?
Ester You're going to fly to Spain with Simon to buy the hotels. Aren't you?
Jack Maybe.
Ester You said you are.
Jack Well, I will.
Ester Well are you, or aren't you?
Jack What have the hotels got to do with it?
Ester It's the same thing.
Jack The same thing!
Ester Yes.
Jack But that's not the gutter. That's Spain.
Ester It's the gutter in Spain.
Jack Stop being silly. You like Simon.
Ester I'm not being silly.
Jack You are too.

Ester Why don't you admit you're wrong?
Jack Because I'm not wrong.
Ester Anyhow, I like Burt.
Jack So do I, but that's irrelevant.

(Burt re-enters)

Burt I also do marriage counselling. Want to buy a ten week course. We take off our clothes and whisper secrets into each others arm pits. The one who puts his clothes on first is the loser. Unless somebody doesn't wash...then they're the loser.
Ester What kind of counselling is that?
Burt I call it the sexual distraction method.
Jack I'll bet you do that with Mrs. Jacobs.
Ester I have to check on supper.

(exit Ester to stage #5 - kitchen)

Jack I saw that crazy Edgar Picadello in the office today. What did he want?
Burt He wanted you, but he settled for me.
Jack He wanted me! What for?
Burt He wanted money for the Festival of Alternative Culture. Told him you were into opera.
Jack I hate opera.
Burt Told him my rich partner was out of the office, and me, the poor partner, couldn't afford to contribute.
Jack Did he believe that?
Burt Sure why not?
Jack But it's not true.
Burt He believed it. Who's flying to Spain tomorrow to buy restaurants or hotels, or whatever it is? Gave him your home number. He'll be calling any second.
Jack Ass hole. My phone is unlisted.

Burt Yea. Eddie said he's been trying to get your number for days.

Jack But I don't want Eddie to get me.

Burt Well he's goin' to get you.

Jack Ass hole.

Burt Relax I gave him your old number.

Don't be bitter. These are your clients.

Jack They're not my clients.

Burt Well he's not my client! He's not suffering. He wants to make money. That means he must be your client.

Jack He'll never make any money.

Burt So who's client does that make him.

Jack Send him to Joanne.

Burt She'll like that.

He tells me they're going to do a kind of Post-Hippy Amusement Park at the Island Park. Pretty big show.

Ester (from the kitchen)

I love the Midway. Let's go Jack. It'll be fun.

Jack This isn't Coney Island. It's crazy Eddie and his hippy friends trying for the big rip off.

Burt You used to be a hippy.

Jack I did not.

Burt Where did you get all those dope-smoking clients then?

Jack I was never a hippy.

And they're your clients now.

Ester (from the kitchen)

You told me last night how much dope you used to smoke.

Jack Smoking dope doesn't make you a hippy.

Burt I've seen pictures of you with long hair.
Pictures don't lie.

Jack That was after a canoe trip.
Besides, what's long hair got to do with it.
Burt I put it to you Mr. King - You lived in a
commune and You went to Woodstock.

Ester (from the kitchen)

You never told me you went to Woodstock.
Burt You went with Harold Stetson and Sandra Percival.
Jack Oh yea, Sandra Percival. Ha, Ha! Nobody will
ever believe that. They're both in jail.
Burt And Chip Macunavitch.

Ester (from the kitchen)

I know Chip Macunavitch.

(Burt and Jack exchange startled glances)

You never told me you had friends in jail, Jack.
You never told me that.

(coming out from the kitchen)

Is Chip out of jail?

Burt Long time ago, apparently. But I haven't seen him.
Jack How do you know Chip?

Ester (mock romantic)

It's the old story.

Burt Oh, no, not the old story!

Ester He was just an innocent youth of seventeen, and I,
a buxom wench, with nothing to do.

Burt That's not the old story I know.

Jack I don't want to know the rest. You and Chip!!!
When's the last time you saw him?

Ester Oh, a long time ago. Make you nervous? I'm too old for that now. But he was a hunk.

(Ester in and out of the kitchen setting the table)

Jack Besides it wasn't a commune, it was a boarding house.

Burt Edgar and I were talking about the Island Midway at the turn of the century. He had a book with pictures.

Jack I didn't know such a thing existed.

Burt Sure. You should get Edgar to show you the pictures.

Jack That's too high a price to pay.

Ester Did you have to take a ferry boat?

Burt Yes.

Ester That would be fun. Soft summer breezes on the lake. Candy floss. Merry-go-round. You'd take me, wouldn't you Jack.

Jack Anything you say, darling. But I want to go to the freak show.

Ester I'll wait outside.

Burt They had a diving horse.

Jack A diving horse! You're full of it.

Burt No shit. A diving horse. It climbed up this ladder and dived into the lake or tub of water, I can't remember which.

Jack Horses can't climb ladders.

Burt It wasn't like a rope ladder. It was like wide stairs. Any horse can climb stairs. Quite high too.

Jack How high?

Burt I don't know. I didn't measure. What difference does it make. Two hundred feet. Six hundred feet.

Jack Two hundred feet!

Burt Six hundred feet.

(lights fade stage centre and light dimly raised
platform stage centre #3 that is Chip's bedroom.

Ester is heard at the door of Chip's room calling
"Chip, Chip" firmly but softly so as not to wake
up the neighbours. Chip stirs in his bed.)

(Jack and Burt fade into darkness)

Jack Six hundred!

Burt What difference does it make!

Ester Chip. Chip.

Chip Who is it?

Ester It's me. Who do you think.

(Chip gets up, puts on pants and opens the door)

(Ester comes in wearing beach robe, bathing suit, etc.)

Ester It's almost eleven o'clock. What are you still doing
in bed.

Chip (17 year old, somewhat shy)

Sleeping I guess.

Ester Didn't your mother wake you up. Where is your mother?

Chip They were going sailing with Uncle Albert. I think
they left early.

Ester Well it's beautiful out. Come on. Let's get out of
this smelly cabin. I'll make you some breakfast.

Chip (hunting sleepily for a shirt)

Do you see my blue jersey?

Ester Here it is. Do you know that we'll all be going home the day after to-morrow? Will you still see me?

(she approaches him - touches him on the shoulder)

Is anybody around?

Chip I'm going to college next week.

Ester Too bad you're not coming to my college.

Chip I didn't know.

Ester Could you change?

Chip Na. Not now. Besides, I've got a scholarship.

Ester I football scholarship.

Chip Screw off. I'm not dumb. I'm as smart as you.

So I play football. I keep in shape.

Ester I know you've got a great body.

Chip You seem to like it.

(mischievously grabs her, embrace)

Ester Stop it. It's morning.

Chip I'm horny in the morning. Why'd you come over anyway?

Ester I'm not your sex slave.

(she breaks away)

Doesn't it bother you? We won't see each other.

Chip Yea, well, I'll see you next summer.

(Chip starts putting on his jersey)

Ester You don't need to dress yet.

(they embrace; Chip lowers himself to the bed on top of her; lights down stage three; lights up centre stage; Jack and Burt are continuing their argument)

Jack Do you know how long six hundred feet is?

Burt It's as long as two football fields.

What difference does it make?

Ester (off-stage - entering)

Two football fields are longer than six hundred feet.

I know that. I use to be a cheerleader.

Jack It doesn't matter.

Burt We agree. It doesn't matter.

Jack (to Burt)

To you it matters.

Ester (from the kitchen - egging Burt on)

I believe Burt. I believe Burt. A diving horse. Why not?

Jack You believe him!

Ester Sure. Why not?

Burt I've seen a picture!

Jack Oh ya. A picture.

Burt Sure. A picture. There's this little book of pictures, you know, old photographs and posters and shit like that. About the early days on the Island. About the carnival. And the old midway. You know. Well, maybe you've never seen it, but I have. Can't remember the name. You know, Ester.

Ester Of course. I remember. You remember, don't you, Jack?

Jack I remember nothing.

Burt Edgar had it.

Jack (to Ester)

You believe him. You believe him. I can't believe it!

Ester Don't be rude to a guest.

Jack He's not a guest. He's my partner.

Burt (with great mock offence) Don't you start treating me like a guest. That's outrageous. What did I ever do to deserve that? Your best friend and you'd treat me like a guest!

Ester (enters living room and sits) What's wrong with being a guest. I'd like to be the guest. Guests don't have to wash dishes. Jack, it's your turn to wash the dishes to-night.

Jack I'm a guest.

Ester I have a rule. You can't be guest after two weeks.

Jack Whadda ya mean? When did you make that one up? You can't just go round making up rules whenever you don't want to wash the dishes? Where's justice?

Ester Who says I can't? It's my house.

Jack It's not your house. I won it from you last night in Monopoly.

Ester There are no witnesses. Sue me. You wash!

Jack I need a lawyer.

(to Burt) Will you act?
•
•
•

Ester Why not? It's my house.

Jack (making a game of who'll wash the dishes - like a 9 year old)

It's not your house. I won it from you last night in Monopoly.

Ester Sue me.

Jack You want to act for me.

Burt I only act for oppressed women, you know that.

Ester Don't try and weasel out of it. It's your turn to wash.

Jack I've never had to wash before. Why start now.

Ester I cooked. You wash. It's your guest.

Burt (mocking)

If I lived here I'd wash.

Jack Shut up, you jerk.

Ester Say whatever you like Burt. You're a guest here.

Burt I don't want to be a guest.

Jack Then you can wash.

Burt Pretty quick. One point. But you forget I haven't been here two weeks.

Ester If you want dinner you have to wash the dishes.

(she puts arms around Jack, cuddles, etc. sexual bribe)

Agreed?

Jack You expect me to resist this?

Ester (getting up) (fake Dietrich voice)

No one can resist me, darling.

Jack I'm going out for supper. Anyone seen my hat?

Burt He resisted you.

Ester Dishes or dinner?

Jack I'll toss you for it.

Ester Heads. No. No. No. Dishes or dinner.

Jack (tossing coin) (tosses so quickly Ester can't retract bet in time)
Sorry. Tails it is. You lose.
Ester I didn't agree to that.
Burt (mock sportscaster)
So Jack King scores his second goal of tonight's quarter final with an easy lob shot past lose Ester Weinstock. You'd have to say folks, she just wasn't looking.
Ester Shut up Burt. If you encourage him you'll end up doing the dishes.
Jack A workable compromise.
Ester No you don't.
Jack O.K., I won't. Sorry Burt, you can't wash the dishes.
Burt (mocking)
Ah, shit. I love washing dishes.
Ester You're washing the dishes Jack.
Jack We'll talk about it after dinner. O.K. After dinner the three of us, we'll talk, calm, sensible, quiet, like old friends, and we'll decide then who is most appropriate to wash the dishes. Poor Burt needs more Scotch.
Ester What do you mean appropriate?
Jack So suspicious. We're adults. We'll decide like adults. Each knows in our heart of hearts who should wash. The truth will come out.
Burt Will we vote?
Jack Voting doesn't get you anywhere. If we voted I'd have to believe horses can fly.
Burt Not fly. Jump.
Jack Six hundred feet!
Burt Who cares how high.
Ester There's nothing wrong with it.

Jack You two are deliberately being crazy. You know horses can't jump into the lake from that height.

Ester The height doesn't matter.

Burt I saw a picture.

Jack It had to be a fake.

Ester Why would Burt lie about a thing like that.

Burt Sure. Why would I lie about that when there are so many other really good lies I could tell.

Ester (whining)

Burt...I'm trying to defend you.

Jack Tell me a good lie.

Burt Not flat out cold. A good lie is the surprise lie. But I'll slip one in a little later. Stay tuned.

(like T.V. announcer)

And for the folks at home.....

When you hear the big lie call Heathcliffe - 9 - 2000, that's Heathcliffe - 9 - 2000.

Jack Give me that number again.

Ester Don't listen to him, Burt. He shouldn't call you a liar.

Burt He's always calling me names. It's O.K. I'm insensitive. But the horse is real. It is real in the picture.

(mock Nixon)

"My fellow Americans you can believe your President. I am not a liar. I have no reason to lie. There is a flying horse."

Jack Bravo, Richard. Was is purple or green.

Burt Green.

Jack Hello, operator, get me Heathcliffe - 9 - 2000.

Burt That was a joke. The number to call if you hear a joke is Dixie - 7 - 3453.

Jack A green horse that climbs rope ladders, flies from six hundred feet into a teacup of water!

Burt A teaspoon.

Ester You're being silly. I don't believe a teacup.

Jack He said a teaspoon.

Burt If you believe the tub it was a tub.

Jack What about the lake?

Burt Or the lake.

Jack It can't be both.

Burt Who cares. I saw a picture, but I can't remember.

Edgar has it. Want to call Edgar? He'll come right over.

Ester How can you be so sure, Jack? Did you see the picture?

Jack Yes, I saw the picture, and there was no horse in it.

Burt That was a different picture. I saw the one with the horse in it.

Ester You shouldn't make fun of your guest.

Jack I'm not making fun of him.

Ester You are too.

Jack He's your guest.

Burt I told you before I don't want to be a guest. I don't want to have to be polite. I makes me feel unnatural.

Ester You invited him.

Jack It's your house.

Ester (shouting - laughing)

Then you have to wash the dishes.

(sportscaster again)

Burt And Jack King takes a stinging blow to the right side of his face. I don't think he'll see much out of that eye for the rest of the night folks. But he's still on his feet.

Jack Shut up, Burt.

Ester I think I remember my uncle telling me something about a flying horse on the Island.

Jack Oh my God, now there are two of them.

Burt There was only ever one horse as much as I know.
Don't embellish the evidence.

(argument gets very fast until page 25)

Jack What does your uncle know!

Ester You've never even met him.

Jack I haven't met the horse either.

Burt Believe in the uncle, believe in the horse, that's what I always say.

Ester That's right. You have no more reason to say Burt's horse isn't real than to say my uncle doesn't exist.

Jack I didn't say your uncle doesn't exist. I've seen a picture of him.

Ester Where?

Jack In your bedroom.

 Your uncle isn't green or purple.

Burt How do you know? Is it a colour picture?

Ester The horse isn't green or purple either.

Jack What colour is it?

Ester White. (smug satisfaction)

Jack She says the horse is white! It's not white!

Burt (sly) If you say it isn't white, what colour is it?

Jack (long pause)

 (very deliberately)

 I don't say it was any colour because it doesn't exist. And it didn't exist.

Burt Was that a clever answer, folks! Here is a man who can think on his feet. He should go to law school.

Ester Just about fell into that one didn't you my little dishwasher.

Burt Your honour, I'd like to ask the witness just one more question.

Ester Certainly.

Burt Witness, if you say the horse doesn't exist why were you so vehement on the question of how high he can jump? How high can your horse jump?

Ester Definitely a contradiction. Witness, what do you say?

Jack I didn't say jump, I said fly.

Burt Well, how far can it fly.

Jack Six hundred feet.

Burt And what colour was it?

Jack Purple.

Burt How do you know?

Ester This will be rich.

Jack I dreamed it.

Ester You don't dream.

Jack I do so.

Ester You told me you never dream.

Jack The only thing I ever dream about is flying horses.

Burt What colour?

Jack Always purple.

Burt We're definitely not talking about the same horse.

 And I'm not dreaming. I saw a picture.

Ester I think you're making fun of me.

Jack Why would I make fun of you?

Ester Because we disagree about the horse.

Jack We don't disagree.

Ester What do you mean, we don't disagree? What are you arguing about?

Jack We don't disagree. He's full of shit. You're making it up. There's nothing to disagree about.

Ester My uncle isn't making it up.

Jack I agree your uncle is real.

Burt What colour is he?

Ester Shut up Burt.

Burt Sorry, look if you two are going to fight I'll go in the other room and jerk off.

Jack We're not fighting.
Ester Don't abuse yourself.
Burt Tell us about the time you almost froze to death on the ski trip, Jack. That's a good story.
Jack You like that story, don't you?
Burt You tell it well. But I don't like the ending. Don't like survivors.
Ester You never told me about that, Jack.
Jack I haven't had time to tell you everything.
Burt Oh, will there ever be enough time?
Ester It doesn't sound like a nice story. Have some more pate Burt.
Burt It has a chilling ending.
Jack I'll tell it with dessert.
Burt Are we having ice cream?
Jack See I told you he has to grow up.
Ester Just because he likes ice cream!
(to Burt)
And mommy is gonna give you two helpings.
Burt (mock childishness)
Thank you mommy.
Will daddy tell me about freezing to death?
Jack No, daddy will not tell you about freezing to death.
And if little Burtie doesn't stop daddy will get very pissed off.
Burt Just because you can't accept the reality of flying horses. I mean jumping horses.
(Ester giggles)
Jack Fuck off about the horses. You're both crazy.
Ester (taunting)
No bad language in my house.
(to Burt)
This is fun. The only other time I got him mad was when I beat him at Monopoly.

Jack What is this tag team?
Burt Let's talk about castles in Spain.
Ester You start. I have to go and toss the salad.
Burt How many lawyers does it take to buy castles
in Spain?
Jack Is this a riddle?
Burt Do I ask riddles?
You need more to drink. Scotch?
Jack Thank you.
Burt Not at all. Make yourself at home.
Jack (starting to laugh)
But this is my home.
Ester (from the kitchen)
Then you have to wash the dishes.
Burt We'll all wash.
Ester Except me.
Burt So how many hotels is Simon going to buy?
Jack Six little ones.
Burt What colour are they?
Jack (laughing)
Purple.
Burt How many lawyers does it take to buy six hotels?
Jack One.
Burt What do I need to do to practice law in Spain?
Become a fascist?
Jack They're not fascist, dumkoff. Spain is not a
bourgeois democracy.
Burt They'll never let in a pinko like you.
Jack I'm not pink...they'll never know.
Burt They can tell. They've got ways. They'll spot you
at the airport...that one...soft on crime. Excuse
me sir, would you please step this way? May we
please examine your film cannisters?
Jack It's you they'll catch not me.

Burt I'd never get in. All the borders are sealed.
Jack I'll get you in.
Burt You're too kind.
Jack I'll get you a job. Clean you up. Teach you to talk proper. No more dirty words.
Burt What a break for me.
Jack You'll have to start at the bottom of course. But I'll look after you.
Burt What will I do, great Lord?
Jack I could set you up as a bartender in one of Simon's hotels. Would you like that?
Burt (pouring himself another drink)
A bartender. Of course, a bartender.
(Burt moves around the stage depicting the things he describes...)
I've always wanted to be a bartender.
(he loses himself in the fantasy)
That's it.
Down a crooked cobblestone street by the sea. Overlooking the harbour. Freighters from Lebanon a cafe.... a terrace ... gas lamps ... sailors.... tough little French sailors from Marsailles Communists ... some great novelist living upstairs... a sultry flaminco dancer and her jealous Andulesian lover... when the bull are running they'll come in from the country... singing till dawn... guitars ... a fat waitress for rainy afternoons ... a fiery one for the dark nights ... the anarchists come and go leaving dirty brown packages for one another never speaking to the Communists ... Communists in red shirts, anarchists in black...
Jack Stop being profound.

Burt Can't you take it?
A tourist comes in one night ... a slight man ... clever eyes ... balding ... comes through the smoke to the bar ... they all look over their glasses at him and at me ... dirty looks ... get him out of here ... I motion the guitar player to start again ... he does ... I don't recognize the stranger....
(Jack is laughing)
I say ... what'll it be, mac ... the stranger is startled ... he says... Burt ... it's me ... it's Jack ... you're partner ... don't you recognize me ... one of the guys comes over ... and the flaminco dancer ... you know him they say ... I look deep into your eyes ... dark pools of the past ... I remember ... I remember ... I say ... How is Mrs. Josephs?
Ester (from the kitchen)
She's alright. She's alright.
(Jack is breaking up)
Jack (with triumph - a put down)
We'll keep the good-looking waitress and the guitar player for the afternoon shift, but the fat one has to go. Glass-top tables for the terrace. Waiters must wear jackets. The dancer sounds like trouble. Get rid of her. Hotel customers get three free drinks before six. Mrs. Josephs can work in the kitchen. And I'd like a banana dakari.
Burt (indignant)
We don't make those.
Jack You do now.
(Burt leaves apparently angry)
Ester Where did Burt go?

Jack I know he's pissed and I suspect he's pissing.
Ester You weren't rude to him, were you?
Jack Who me?

(Chip's room, Burt bursts in; Chip angry agitated,
packing suitcase)

Burt Chip, Chip, you wild man, the crowd went nuts. The fucking Secretary of State and you plowed him, you fucking plowed him. The Dean is still hemorrhaging in the hallway. You fucking plowed him.

(Chip is first sheepish then angry)

Chip What did you expect me to do? Sit there while he piles shit on turd about his fucking "just" war. I should have shot him, not punched him out. How many babies has that bastard burned. (pause)
Stop acting like I just knocked out Sugar Ray Robinson. I just kicked myself out of Law School.

(Chip starts breaking up)

I hated it anyhow.

Burt I can't help it. I couldn't of done it. I wish I did it.

Chip Do it someday. It feels real good.

(smacks a fist in his other hand)

Burt I loved it. We just read all this bullshit about justice and you just know that not three words of it matter from Adam. You can't sue to stop the war. It's so pointless. I feel so helpless. Law School is the biggest mistake I ever made. I hate it. Fucking hypocrites. And you plowed him right in the face for me. If they kick you out I'm quitting too.

Chip Just think - If the Secretary's chin was that easy to get, maybe I got a shot at the President.

(both laugh - spar)

Burt Do you think they'll lay criminal charges?
They wouldn't dare. There'd be a strike.

Chip Do you think they care about a strike? Can't have his big gun getting beat up on the platform of the nations best Law School.
How long till they come for me? How long do you think? Ten minutes. A day. Two weeks.

Burt Jesus!

Chip Listen junior, you've been studying law for two years. Those laws are there for a purpose. And I just broke one. Together with the lower mandible of the number two war criminal in the U.S. With a nice uppercut if I do say so myself. Not bad for an amateur.

Burt They'll send you to jail! I don't believe it. I don't believe it!

Chip Burt, you're too nice! Grow up. This is serious business. They're fighting a real war. They'll send the entire backfield after me.

(silence)

Burt Aren't you scared?

Chip (angry)

No. I would be scared over in Nam crawling around on my belly in the mud waiting to get killed. I'm not scared of that turkey.

We can't be scared, man. Fuck it. If I'd known I was going to get the chance I would have brought my knife and slit his fuckin' guts out. Do you know Jerry Grand was killed in battle last week, blown away by one of their own land mines. Blown away.

Burt Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.
For nothing, for nothing, Dear God. Jerry Grand.
No. No.

(crying angry)

I hate this this.

I can't believe it.

(clutching Chip)

You're not going to jail. I'll never let them.

I won't let them.

(embrace)

Chip Well, one of us is going to have to be a lawyer.
And it sure as hell isn't going to be me.

Burt It can't be me. I couldn't face those bastards
another day.

Chip I'm going to disappear. You're going to do what
you always said you would do as a lawyer. You're
gonna have to do it for both of us.

Burt Disappear. Disappear. Where the fuck you gonna go?
What do you mean disappear? You mean go underground?
Just for plowing that dumb-ass? Disappear. Jesus,
Jesus. I don't believe it. How long could you get?

(Chip packs tote bag)

Sixty days? You'll be out in a month. No. No.
You can't leave me here alone with all those assholes.

Chip Two years.

Burt Two years!

Chip Two years. I read a case like it last week. At
last these god damn books are good for something.

Burt Where you going to go? I'm gonna come.

(Chip slaps him)

Chip Sober up. You're getting hysterical. You're not
going anywhere. I know people in New York and
Chicago who are in touch with the underground.

Burt The underground!

Chip Stop staring at me like a Bambi. The fucking
underground! You've been to at least five illegal
meetings that I know about. And committed four
indictable offences.

Burt I'm sorry. I'm upset about Jerry.

Chip I'm going to war too. I'll get those bastards! It won't be easy! Shit man. What am I telling you all this for. You wrote the speech. You're the one who turned me on. I never heard of the war until I started listening to you at the 3:00 in the morning.

Burt (gathering his forces)

How much cash have you got? Here's fifty. I was just at the bank. I'll send two hundred more to Jason in New York.

(phone rings)

(hesitation - then Chip answers)

Chip Hello. Yea. Yea. Shit. When? Thanks. Yea thanks. Same to you. Stick one up his ass for me too. So long buddy.

Burt Who was that?

Chip Sammy Wisekoff. The pigs are in the Dean's office right now. I think I screwed up his Supreme Court appointment. Sure love to get a shot at the Chief. Think you could arrange it?

Burt Sure, anything you say Rocky.

Will you call?

Chip Sure, don't go unlisted on me. Stay loose.

(looking around the room for other items to take)

You can have my law books.

Burt Fuck your law books. I don't want your law books. I have a set of my own to burn.

Chip Hey, man. It's me that's disappearing. You can't talk about quitting. You can't quit. I want you here when I come back. You hear that. Be here! Or I'll beat your ass.

When I come back you're going to be tearing up the Courthouse, just like you always said. If they won't give justice take it. To quote a famous friend of

mine. Fuck 'em!

I didn't come to this intellectual shithole to train for people's justice. You did!

You screwed up my head with all this stuff about class contradictions, not Dean Dimwit. I just wanted to dress nice and make money. What a fool I was!

I'm not complaining, man. But don't you fink out on me! Promise?

Burt (choked up - but getting control)

Only if you promise to burn a few barracks for me.

Chip It's a deal.

Into the Valley of Death rode the brave lawyers!

Burt Division of labour!

Chip I wasn't scared when I hit him.

(embrace)

Burt Jesus ... make me strong.

Chip This is getting soppy.

Burt Get your ass on the road. Write when you get work.

(exit Chip; Burt reflects; lights dim; Burt returns to stage centre to Jack and Ester)

(Burt re-enters)

Burt Don't give me anything more to drink. You're making me drunk.

Jack That's my revenge for you breaking up my marriage.

Burt (mocking)

Had I known the punishment were going to be brutal I never would have touched her.

Jack (mocking)

So you did!

Burt Of course I didn't. She's not the Sabine woman you know.

Ester Dinner's almost ready

Burt So who's going to look after your practice while you're swizzling gin with these Arab potentates?

Jack What are partners for?

Burt What are they for?

Jack I trust you.

Burt I can't think of any good reason.

Jack Neither can I. But that's what partners are for.

Burt You're serious!

Jack Why not?

Burt But I don't even know which page of a mortgage you sign. Your clients never go to court. They just buy restaurants.

Jack Hotels.

Burt (self-mocking)
They never valiantly uphold the rights of working people. Or struggle heroically against the union bosses.

Jack Neither do your clients. They just smoke dope and get busted.

Burt That's not true. They beat people up. Rob dime stores. Smuggle dirty books.

Jack You like my clients. You just don't want to admit it.

Burt I didn't become a lawyer to make money for your clients.

Jack (beguiling)
But they're our friends.

Burt They're our friends as long as they don't prevent us from working...

Jack For what? Some fucking revolution that will never happen. You told me last week you were bored. So here's something new and different - greedy capitalism.

Burt It will sink its teeth in me.

Jack So I'll stay home and you go to Spain.
Burt Now you're talking.
Jack Hypocrite.
Burt Hypocrite! You're the one whose selling out.
Jack Your only reservation is that nobody's made
you a good enough offer.
Burt They'll never make a good enough offer.
Jack A trip to Spain?
Burt I was joking.
Jack We'll see.
Burt What do you mean - "We'll see."
Jack How would you like to be the Barcelona manager?
Burt You're out of your tree.
Jack Nope. We're looking. We need somebody acceptable
to the international upper crust. I'm sure
Simon would agree if I asked him.
Burt Who would look after my practice?
Jack You can't take it with you.
Ester (from the kitchen)
I think you'd be good at that, Burt. I'd come
and stay there.
Burt When did you join the international upper crust?
Jack We're making special arrangements.
Ester It would be a nice break. No more Mrs. Josephs.
Burt It's not a break. It's a sell out.
Ester (coming from the kitchen with more food)
Don't be so childish. Selling out. This isn't
1968. How old were you in 1968?
Burt Twenty-three. That's irrelevant.
Jack I can't keep this position open all evening.
Burt You haven't even bought the hotel.
Jack Got a hot prospect phoning me at ten tonight.
Think about it.

Burt That's when Edgar's phoning.
Jack I'm serious.
Ester Why not. You'd be perfect. You could bartend a little. Tell stories about Canada to princesses and sheiks.
Jack You'd have to promise not to shoot them. None of your anarchists friends could shoot them either.
Burt I can't control my staff. Anarchists sneak in. They're everywhere.
Jack You'd be perfect for the job. You could spot the assasins. Weed them out ruthlessly. We could charge double. Safety guaranteed. No Assasins.
Burt No Assasins. Bring your loved ones.
Burt My friends wouldn't want to visit.
Jack We'll get you new friends.
Burt This is bullshit. There is no hotel.
Ester Why not. It sounds terrific. If he won't take the job, Jack, I want it. I've always wanted to run a hotel.
Jack You'd be good at it.
Burt You already run a hostel.
Ester But it would be so nice if the customers could pay I didn't need to go to those grubby United Appeal meetings begging for money.
Burt This is bullshit.
Jack You could read politics on the side. If you're going to wait for the revolution might as well do it in comfort. Write a novel about a crazy lawyer.
Ester Why not, Burt?
Burt It doesn't exist.
Ester It will if you let it.
Jack Just like the horse.
Burt (silence)
Burt (angry)
Burt Well, you go to fucking Spain and bring me back a picture.

Jack Notice how he doesn't say no. You can tell he's a lawyer. So slippery. No such thing as a straight answer.

Burt (almost shouting) There's nothing to answer.

Jack Pretend there's a picture. Here, this is a picture of the new hotel in Barcelona. Nice, eh?

Ester Ohhhh, nice.

Burt You're both cruising.

Jack O.K., doubting Thomas, do you want the job, or don't you?

Ester Come on, Burt, have some fun, for once in your life.

Burt I need another drink.

Ester Booze is no escape. Booze won't help. We'll face it together.

We are your friends.

Burt Face what?

(all this time Jack is visibly laughing at Burt)

Ester This is your golden opportunity.

Burt What about Mrs. Josephs?

Ester Have you ever thought of therapy?

Burt No, but I was thinking of superman glasses so I can see the fucking hotel on this fucking piece of paper.

Ester Don't be resentful. I'm only trying to help.

Burt Have some more pate, you'll feel better.

Burt There is no hotel. There is no question. There is no answer.

Ester What if there was a hotel. Would you go?

Burt Hypothetical questions are inadmissible.

You shouldn't bully a guest like that, Miss Weinstock.

(pause)

(Jack looks on expectantly, knowing what will follow)

Ester (with mocking and a little malice)
But Burtie, dear, you're not a guest, you're a partner.

Jack (sportscaster)
And Ester Weinstock stuns her opponent with a wicked left cross. Didn't know she had it in her. The old girl may pull this one out of the fire yet.
(icily)

Burt
Ester) Shut up Jack.

Burt You know what my answer is.

Jack
Ester) No
Yes

Burt You're right.

Ester Which one.

Burt Who cares. The hotel doesn't exist.

Ester If it did exist what would the answer be?

Jack And what colour?

Burt (shouting)
Fuck off. Fuck off. Don't torment me. You're not going to Spain. It's just another one of Simon's stupid schemes. Like the coal mine. And the island. And the ski lodge. And the dope deal. You never told me about the dope deal, Jack.
Shut up about that.

Burt So you shut up about fucking hotels in Spain.

Ester What about the dope deal?

Jack Nothing. Nothing.

Burt It was nothing.

Jack You don't know anything about business shithead. Lots of deals don't make it. So what?

Burt Why are you always working on the ones that fall apart?

Jack I bill more than you do, asshole.

Burt That certainly shows where you're at.

Ester If you're going to fight I'm going to put dinner on the table.

(Ester goes back to the kitchen, puts plates out, etc.)

Ester (from the kitchen)

Why doesn't somebody put some nice Frank Sinatra records on? Have some pate?

Burt But don't shit on my politics. Six years ago you were the bomb thrower. I had to hold you back from... never mind ... you know.

Jack For which I am eternally gratefully-thankful. And in deepest appreciation I offer you the position as manager of our Barcelona establishment. Three years ago you would have jumped.

Burt Ships passing in the night.

Ester I'm glad you're in different channels. There could have been a terrible wreck.

Jack, why don't you go and open the wine.

(Jack stomps out. Exist, lights dim centre stage, and go on in Chip's room; Jack is seen to march angrily from stage centre out through kitchen and back in through centre stage rear to #1)

Jack Gladly. Gladly. Pour the wine. Up my ass.

Ester Want some more pate, Burt?

Burt Sometimes he's a real asshole.

(going to kitchen #5 with Ester; lights dim)

Ester Was there really a flying horse?

Burt It jumped. It didn't fly. And I swear to God it's true. I've seen a picture.

(Jack arrives at #1 lights up there on Chip)

(stage right #4 - lights up dimly - bare platform - Chip collar up - back to audience - Jack approaches)

Jack Chip? Chip?

(Chip turns)

Good to see you old buddy. We haven't heard from you for three years.

Can we talk here?

You're not exactly easy to find.

Chip Yea, it's alright.

Jack Hey, you're looking good. Looking good. Three years underground! Life can't be all that bad.

Where are you staying?

Chip Don't tell Burt I'm in town, ok.

Jack Sure, if you say so. Aren't you going to see him?

Chip No.

Jack (cautiously)

Alright ... So where you staying?

Chip That's getting to be a problem.

Jack What do you mean?

Chip I've had to move six times in the last eight months.

Jack Are they actually tailing you?

Chip Ya.

Jack But the war is over ... almost. Who cares about the fractured mandible of what's-his-name.

Chip It's not that.

Jack Wait...

(Jack takes out five dollars and gives it to Chip)

If you give me a five dollar retainer I will advise you regarding possible offences ... as your lawyer... with the benefit of professional privilege and absolute confidentiality.

(Chip hands him the five)

So what the fuck you been doin'?

Burt will be thrilled.

Chip I've been dealing.

Jack That's not the underground I thought you were in.
Chip You promised not to tell Burt.
Jack Well, shit, everybody has to buy and sell a little
dope now and then. What happened to the underground?
Stop the war, and all that?
Chip We stopped it.
Jack Damn good job, too.
So tell me about the girls in California.
Chip Why don't you come and check 'em out for yourself.
Jack No, no. I couldn't do that.
Chip This one chick I met on the beach...unbelievable.
Jack Ya.
Chip Your tongue is hanging out.
Jack Well, you've been away a long time.
Chip Hey, look. Now that you're my lawyer you gotta tell
me what to do.
Jack That's too depressing.
Chip My lawyer in California says I should make a deal
out there, do the time, and get it over with.
Jack What have they got on you?
Chip Depend on who squeals on who?
Jack Can you squeal first?
Chip Can I?
Jack Ya.
Chip I guess so.
Jack Do it.
Chip Me?
Jack Ya ...
The war is over. You've done your service. Why
should you do ten years when you could do three.
Chip But, man, goin' to fuckin' jail...
Jack Will they catch you?
Chip Almost ... three times.
Jack What are you looking at if they do?
Chip You got it before. Ten years.

Jack Shit. You asshole. You leave home to be a hero, and now look at you.

Chip What's Burt doing?

Jack He's fine. He's got half a dozen picket line assault cases from the Ford strike and he thinks he's William Knunstler.

Chip You won't tell him?

Jack If that makes it easier for you.

Chip I'd like him to think they caught me in a shoot-out somewhere in Wyoming.

Jack That's what I heard. And that Dean Rusk himself testified at the trial, and blamed the collapse of the whole American war effort on that single punch. Got any dope left?

Chip That's what it was like.

 You really think I should rat on my supplier?

Jack Is he the kind of guy with friends who can make trouble for you? If you get my meaning.

Chip No. He's little fish.

Jack If it's worth a few years to you do it. Nice to have company inside.

Chip Not him.

Jack You decide. You gotta live with it.

 How long do you want to go to jail? That's the question.

Chip I never thought it would be like this.

Jack You want to talk about it some more?

Chip Nope.

 (lights dim #4; lights up stage centre on Burt and Ester)

 (Jack returns)

Burt Hey Jack, Eddie Picadello phoned. Wanted to talk to you. I told him Simon would back the carnival. He's going to call him and say you said so. O.K. He'll be in to see you Monday.

Jack That's alright. Mrs. Jacobs phoned upstairs. Her husband broke in again. Murdered the two little ones in their beds. The bodies will be delivered to your house in the morning.

Burt That's alright. I'm staying here tonight. They could bring 'em here if you like.

Shall I call for delivery?

Jack What do you think Ester?

Ester I have enough dead babies for tonight.

Burt Ewwwww ... two with one blow.

Jack Let's eat.

Burt Let's eat.

Ester I don't want you boys fighting at the table.

Burt, Jack Yes Mamme.

Act II

Scene 1	Office
Scene 2	Beer Hall
Scene 3	The Plaza
Scene 4	Real Estate Closing
Scene 5	Ester's House
Scene 6	Suzy's
Scene 7	Office

(Jack in his office stage left #2; Burt in stage right #5; both working; dressed in business suits. Suzy Sanderson in #4)

Burt (interrupts a phone conversation to shout to Jack)

Are you in for Edgar Picadello?

Jack Not this week, not next week, not next month, or the month after that, or anytime after that ... or ever!

Burt (into the phone)

Eddie, he'll be there in a second. But he won't give you any money ... I understand ... Would I lie to you? ... How can you say that! ... Here's Jack ...

(shouting to Jack) ...

It's Ester on the phone, Jack. She says it's important.

(Jack picks up the phone)

Jack Hello ... Edgar! ... Yes, I sound surprised. I was expecting Ester ... Must be on the other line ... No I'm not avoiding you ... You're one of my oldest friends.

(Jack listens, covers the mouth piece and shouts to Burt)

Foul! Foul! ...

No. Go on. Go on. I'm listening to you. Sure I am ... Yea, there is somebody else here ... Suzy ... Of course she's dressed ... You hippies have dirty minds ... I said Howl. Howl ... four letters ... Ginsberg's most famous poem. Yea. She's doing a crossword ... No. No. No. Would I lie to you? Sure, Burt told me all about it ... The carnival...

(Burt and Suzy come into Jack's office and start making fun of him as he talks)

A great idea. Fantastic. You're really a genius... Great ... terrific ... you'll make a fortune ... Have you got the license? ... Well how can you have the carnival without the license? ... Don't say things like that over the phone ... I neither agree nor will I offer any assistance ... Yea, somebody's listening ... Well, I didn't ask them to ... So they didn't know it was you who was going to phone ... Fidel Castro ... Yea ... he calls all the time for Burt ... Sure, I talk to him. He's in three of my real estate syndications ... No. Na. So he's a communist. What difference does that make? ... Hey look, he's a lawyer ... No, that doesn't necessarily make him a member of the ruling class ... Not our ruling class ... So what? ... He's got to have write-offs like everybody else ... Eddie, you need an income before you can have a write-off ... Sure you get the license and call me back ... Sure, phone the Mayor ... Ask for John ... No, you can't say I told you to call ... Look I got to go ... I've got Litchtenstein on hold ... Litchtenstein ... where they keep all the gold ... I have to go ... Bye ... Bye ... Bye ... Oh, fuck off.

(hangs up)

(Chip enters stage right - unnoticed - speaks at first hesitantly, then boldly)

Chip Excuse me. Is this an office? Hello. Is this Armstrong and King?

(Burt, Jack and Suzy look up)

Burt Well, holy shit, look who's back! Welcome home. Holy shit! Holy shit! It's only been eight years!
Jack Chip you old dog! Where have you been. You were supposed to be back an hour ago!

(Burt and Jack come centre stage for enthusiastic greeting)

Chip Well, would you look at you mothers! Suits! Secretaries! Chairs on wheels! Money! On television! In the papers! Money! I've been away too long.

(touching Jack's suit)

Jack Hey, careful with the merchandise!

Burt Did you hear about Huey Newton? I'm going to Free Huey Newton! He's my client. Did you hear?

Jack (joking)

Only ten years too late.

Chip Did I hear? That's the reason I'm here!

Burt So what have you been doing? We talk about you all the time.

Suzy Hi. I'm Suzy. Suzy Sanderson. I work here. They don't introduce me, (with teasing good humour) because they think I'll steal all the clients.

Chip Well, I'm not a client, am I, Burt?

Burt Shit, I just assumed you've done something illegal.

(Chip flirts with Suzy)

Jack Suzy, I'd like you to meet Chip Macunivitch, a eunch monk of our acquaintance from law school days. And Chip, this is Suzy, a ballbreaker I hired to close real estate deals.

Chip Charmed. You work for these guys?

Suzy That's what they call it. But we have fun.. I've heard all about you. Didn't really think you were mortal.

Chip Do they treat you good? Don't be afraid to say so if they don't, mam. (Haming up cowboy rescuer) We know how to deal with their sort.

Jack How do we treat her!? Her!? How does she treat us!? That's what you ought to ask.

Chip Givin' ya any trouble Friday nights, mamme?

Burt You don't know who's got the whip.

Jack Maybe he's into whips.

Suzy You guys get back in the cage.

Burt Shit, no. We knew him first.

Chip I see you can look after yourself.

Jack Like I said, the best little ball-buster in all of New England. Vassar. Harvard Law. Phi Beta Kappa. Armstrong and King.

Suzy I'm his favourite possession.

Jack Not quite.

Burt So tell us, what have you been doing? Where have you been? We haven't heard from you since three months after you get out of jail.

(Chip embarrassed)

Burt Oh, she knows. She's heard us talk about you. You should have come back here. We were expecting you.

Jack So where have you been? The last time we heard you were in California screwing everything in a skirt.

Chip (slyly to Jack)

You got to check inside these days.

But I've been all over. All over. All over.

While you guys get yourself set up here like F. Lee Bailey and Leon Jaworski.

Burt Hey, Chip, they're not friends!

Chip Heh ... it's so good to see you man.

(embrace Burt)

(then Jack)

Burt Why didn't you come back here after you got out of jail?

Chip I tried, man. I really tried. I wanted to, so bad. But I couldn't face it. I mean you with a business and all. But I want to say right now so I don't forget, thank you for all those letters while I was inside. It's the only way I made it. They were beautiful. I used to read them to the guys. Like some of them had nobody who ever wrote to them. Hearing about the movement and all the different struggles ...against the war and that. They were great. I've still got them. Except one that got ripped off.

Jack (surprised)

You really liked those?

Chip They were great.

Burt Jack wrote them.

Jack No... Burt ... well, I helped on a lot of them, fixing up his spelling and grammar, you know.

Burt Oh, don't be so modest, Jack. I don't mind if you wrote them. They were so great.

Which one got stolen?

Chip The one about the Democrats in Chicago.

Jack I wrote that one.

Burt That was one of mine.

Suzy I hope you know not to pay too much attention to either one of them, especially both of them together ...

Chip Gee, you guys look so important. I'm really impressed.

(admiring Jack's clothes)

Jack Well, that's what it's all about. A \$20.00 tie fetches a 502 bigger retainer.

Burt From those who can afford to pay.

Chip Well, I'm sure as hell not paying you guys anything.

Jack Hey, look, I've got to run. I have three appointments.

Suzy Four. Go and see Simon, and get him to sign the releases for the closing.

Jack We'll get together later.

Chip A few ales after lunch?

Jack After dinner, man. I'm a busy working man. Work. Work. Work. Big deal closing next week. I'll tell you all about it. You'll love it, I know. Got to run. See you all later.

(exit Jack)

Burt Run, run, run. See Jack run.

Suzy Speaking of big deals. The xerox machine, Burt.

Burt (innocently)

What about the xerox machine? Is it broken?

Suzy It's busy.

Burt Everybody's busy.

Suzy It's your Newton groupies. And their pamphlets. And press releases. And timetables. Look I've got to get these agreements done for the closing or we're sunk ... You've got to tell them ...

Burt ... a few little agreements ...

Suzy It's not just a few little agreements. There's about three hours of work to do. And we can't get near the machine.

Burt Well, Huey's important.

Suzy Do you want to eat?

Burt Not right now thanks.

Suzy OK., smart-ass ... excuse me Chip, I have to break his balls for a moment ...

Chip I'm afraid to watch.

Burt Ouch! Ahhhh!..... owwwwstop...stop...no more...

Suzy So what are you going to do?

Burt Let go O.K. Let go, first. Ahhhh.....

Chip (laughing)

I don't mind helping. Why don't I take some of the xeroxing to a copy shop. I might as well be useful. Got nothing else to do this morning.

Burt You sure you really want to get mixed up fast-paced hurly-burly of an intense and dramatic law practice?

Chip Why don't I just xerox something. Then I'll come back and get you for lunch.

(to Suzy)

So where are these agreements.

Suzy Right this way, cowboy.

(they exit; lights dim)

(Chip mock marching)

(light up bright very quickly on next scene)

(Lights up; characters stage centre; beer hall; a few tables and wooden chairs; Burt and Chip are talking)

Burt So how did you hear about the Newton case?

Chip How does America hear about baseball? Shit, man, you're famous.

Burt Isn't it great. I mean we used to wear Free Huey Newton T-shirts in law school. Dean Dimwit laid turds. Who ever dreamed he'd be my client. In my jail. In my filing cabinet. He's just ten years late.

Chip You sound almost glad he was caught!

Burt You know what he was doing, eh! He was going back to California to turn himself in. He snuck into the country from Cuba. The Party thinks he can beat the wrap out there. Some new developments with the witnesses. I don't know the details about that.

Chip -I heard it.

Burt And you know the stupid cop who stopped him at the radar trap didn't even recognize who he was. Didn't know till five hours later that the black dude who didn't have a license was America's most wanted political criminal.

Chip So what happened?

Burt He forgot his wallet? Can you believe that. A fugitive for ten years travelled all over the world and he forgets his wallet in Baltimore.

Chip Will you get him out?

Burt I think so. They want to fly him back to the coast in chains. But I think we can get him out on the condition he surrenders himself in Frisco. Triumphant Return for Black Leader. West Coast Welcomes Panther Head.

Chip Free Huey Newton. Right on, baby! Who cares if it's only a traffic violation.

Burt Free is free. That's what I say.

Chip Get it any way you can.

But I want to tell you a secret. And I mean a secret.

Burt Shoot.

Chip How did you get this case?

Burt They called up from California even before the cops knew who he was, and asked me.

Chip But why did they call you?

Burt (pause)

No shit ...

I thought it was because I'm the best revolutionary lawyer in Baltimore.

Chip Well, that's why I told them to call you man.

Burt No shit.

Chip A present.

Burt My humble gratitude. It's been a lot of fun.

Chip So I came up to help you enjoy it.

Burt Don't tell Jack.

Chip What do you mean?

Burt Well, he thinks you've gone straight and serious.
 He'd be upset. Tell him you're impressed with his
 big real estate deal.

Chip I got it.

Burt Well speak of the devil ...

 (Jack enters, with Suzy)

Jack So there you are. Right where I left you ten
 years ago.

Burt That was in Boston.

Jack Looks the same to me. Arborite table tops. Smelly,
 french fries and beer.

Chip Yea. Buy me some french fries, Jack. You always
 used to buy the french fries.

Suzy How do they go with Scotch?

Jack Hey, I can still drink beer. Watch me.

Burt Here, sit down. We've got a couple of extra glasses
 just waiting for you.

Chip So Burt tells me you're living with Ester Weinstock.

Jack Yea, you know Ester.

Chip Sure. We used to be great friends when we were
 teenagers. I went with her the summer before I
 went to college. Does she talk about me?

Jack No, not too much.

Burt Not to Jack she doesn't. She misses you desperately.

Jack She does not. You should go and see her.

Burt You heard him offer, Suzy.

Chip Burt tells me you're the hottest real estate lawyer
 in town.

Jack You're not flattering me are you?

Chip Would I flatter you!

Suzy Only if you want something.

Jack Why don't you go with Suzy to the closing on Friday. Then you can see what real law is all about. I'll explain the angles we're working on. Big money being made.

Chip How big?

Jack If we close it right \$750,00.00. 10% for us.

Chip For an afternoon's work! That is big potatoes.

Where do I sign up?

Jack I could use some paid assistance on it for a couple of days. Nothing glamorous, running errands. But you could see it all close up.

Chip You mean work for you?

Jack Sure. Just for three days.

If we close in good shape I'll pay you a thousand dollars.

Burt If we free Huey, I'll give you cab fare to the airport.

Jack But I need you full time. You can't be fooling around with those hippies.

Chip But I already promised Burt I'd help some with the Newton publicity.

Jack Which will it be? Glory or money? You can't have both.

Chip Why not, you guys do?

Jack Give me some glory, Burt.

Burt Here you go. Now hand over the money.

Suzy I saw the money, but I missed the glory.

Jack So on Friday we close Morgan Hills and get rich, and free Huey Newton and get famous.

Chip All the same day. What great timing.

Suzy Pick your poison.

Chip I'll have a little of each.

Suzy No. Around here you overdose or nothing. So I want to know, did you really punch out the Secretary of State?

(macho proud)

Chip Yup.

Suzy Ruined a fine career.

Chip (joking - shadow boxing)

Yea, but only as a lawyer. I was welter-weight
champ of Los Padres State Correctional Institution.
Two years in a row. Feel that muscle kid.

Jack Easy, Rocky, this girl has to be at work at eight-
thirty tomorrow.

Suzy I'll make it.

Jack I mean to work.

Burt More drinks.

Jack Go light there for me.

Burt Oh. Come on, get drunk, hang one on for the good
old days.

Chip Still can't handle the suds, eh?

Jack (taking up the challenge)

Just as good as you.

(he chugs his beer)

(Chip stares at him intently then chugs another -
as a challenge.

Jack gamely takes another. Finishes half. Suzy takes
it from him and finishes it.)

Suzy We're a team.

Chip Well, look team, you're two behind.

(He fills their glasses. For the rest of the scene
all parties drink constantly - Burt without gesture
or emotion; Chip keeps challenging and filling
glasses; Jack valiantly with Suzy helping)

(By the end of the scene all are noticeably drunk.)

Burt Remember the look on Dean Dimwit's face the day after
Chip's parting shot? Big school meeting.

Jack You couldn't tell how blood-shot his eyes were because his nose was so red.

Burt He could hardly talk. Just kept stammering. Disgrace. Disgrace. Worst speech he ever made.

Chip You don't know how sorry I am that I missed it.

Jack After he finished his speech Burt got up and made a speech. Tit for tat. Announced that Jerry Grand had been killed. Some people hadn't heard and were very upset. Hey, like he was really popular in first year.

Burt I read from his last letter. You know the one. Where he says he's sorry he joined up. Not because of the danger but because the war was wrong. How the G.I.'s couldn't stand what they were doin' and were stoned most of the time. Remember the last line. "How can I die here, an American, knowing as I do now that we are the villains in the eyes of two-thirds of the human race, hated and despised for our limitless and rapacious greed. Stop the war, brothers."

I choked up at the end.

A lot of guys were crying.

Three-quarters of the class stood in silence. The Dean too. What could he do? After that he asked for a motion to the Secretary of State from the student body apologizing for your behaviour. We walked out. Everybody came with us. Except the ROTC turds.

Chip I wish I was there.

Jack But if you were there it wouldn't have happened!

Chip Shit, I forgot. I take it back.

Suzy Which did you guys miss the most, Chip or the war?

Jack, Burt Chip
The war.

Jack Then little Jack and Burt went off into the big bad world together and founded a mighty law firm in Baltimore struggling together for truth, justice and profit.

Burt And each night they lit a candle in the window waiting for the day their friend would come home.

Suzy This is getting a bit thick.

Burt You had to be there.

Jack They worked hard, day after day, week after week, their little band grew from two to fifteen ...

Suzy For a touch of realism why don't you add that thirteen of them were employees who want to form a union to fight maudlin sentimentality of the the founding fathers.

Burt You can't bargain about that.

Jack You wouldn't join the union would you?

Suzy We'll discuss that tomorrow.

Go on. Then one day out of the dark forest staggered a stranger seeking food and shelter. He looked familiar. Could it be? Yes, it was! There was no doubt, their friend had returned, weary and saddened by his journey. But victorious. Evil forces had been vanquished. The two friends took down the crown of jewels they had been keeping for the handsome prince and made him ruler of the land. Prosperity and happiness were their's for ever more.

(Jack and Burt burst into a chorus of Hallelujah, pounding beer mugs on the table; finish with an alto-descant finale mugs raised high)

Burt When you're out of Schlitz, you're out of beer.

Jack They bought a castle in the sky called Morgan Hills.

Burt And freed all the prisoners in all the jails.

Jack (drunken)

Hey ... wait a minute ... wadda ya mean ... letting all prisoners out of all the jail ... there are some

Jack (cont'd) bad dudes in there ... psychopaths ... you want Mr. Jacobs out on the street?

Burt We'll let out Mr. Jacobs and Simon Grinwald.

Jack He never went to jail!

Chip Who's Simon Grinwald?

Suzy He's the client with all the money. Morgan Hills.

Burt He's just lucky.

Jack Shit, no, I'm a good lawyer.

Burt (jovial, teasing)

Well, then he can stay out, as long as he promises not to rob widows and orphans.

Suzy Burt!

Jack And pay your bills.

Burt That too.

Jack You don't know who your friends are.

Burt He's my friend. I discovered him. He was in my therapy group.

Jack So you close Morgan Hills.

Burt When I get Huey out of jail he's going to whip your ass.

Jack If he pays his bill you can tie me to a tree.

Suzy Burt, shut up.

Chip Yes, why don't you guys sit down, and have another drink. Another couple of beers will mellow you out.

(they sit)

(Chip pours again)

(silence)

Jack So, you tell me, Chip, what am I goin' do with this guy? What am I going to do? I tried everything. I cut off his draw. I starve his wife and children. I put the Wall Street Journal in the waiting room. I required minimum retainers. I make a rule - no children in the waiting room. I cut off his credit at the sheriff's office. I make him charge double for hippies. I said no more free picket-line cases. And you know what he

Jack (cont'd) does? You know what he does? He lends his clients money to pay him! To pay his retainer. Just to get me!

Burt Ha! You know where I got the money? Want to know where?

Jack Yea. I do want to know where. Where?

Burt From Simon.

Jack From Simon! Simon Grinwald!

Burt Yea. From Simon.

Jack He won't give you money.

Burt He did too.

Jack I don't believe it.

Burt Well that pretty well proves its true. You never believe the truth.

Suzy Are you serious! From Simon.

Burt Sure. He's my friend! From therapy. I told him if he didn't make a big donation to the Strikers' Legal Fund I would pour acid in his files.

Jack He didn't believe that.

Burt So what. He gave me the money.

Jack That's blackmail. Those are my files.

Burt So make a donation.

Jack I already have.

Burt Make another one or I'll pour acid in your other files.

Jack What did you say Simon robs widows and orphans for?

Burt I wanted to see how drunk you were.

Chip Is it always this much fun around here.

Suzy Just on weekdays.

Burt Chip, you tell him that freeing Huey Newton is the greatest things since sliced bread.

Jack Yea, then tell him how many loaves you can buy for \$75,000.

Burt Tell him.

Jack Tell him.

Chip (pause)

Chip (cont'd) You're right.

Burt, Jack You see. (they stick their tongues out at each other)

Chip More beer!

Suzy Coward.

(Chip fills their glasses)

Burt Well, I can drink more than him!

Jack Oh, no you can't. I've got Suzy on my team.

(He hands her the beer. She looks grim, and takes a swallow. Chip takes it from her, and finishes it.)

Chip And the winner of tonights boat race ... a tie.

Jack Armstrong and Burt King in a dead heat.

Burt You got it backwards.

Jack He can't have my name.

Chip And in the wee small hours of the morning the darkness gathers around our intrepid revellers. They marshall their forces for one last chorus:

(Chip begins singing quietly; Burt and Jack join in; their old law school drinking song)

Tra-la-la-boom-de-ay, tra-la-la-boom-de-ay,
Don't break the law today, or you will have to pay,
Tra-la-la-boom-de-ay, tra-la-la-boom-de-ay,
What will Dean Dimwit say, I'll do it anyway.

(repeat a few times, maybe some other words,
Chip in the lead; lights fade, they stagger off)

(Chip takes Suzy's hand)

(lights up - Burt at #4 making speech from podium -
sounds of small crowd; other players gathered on stage to watch.)

Burt

Some of us may not remember the slogan FREE HUEY NEWTON. Ten years is a long time. But most remember. Remember a just cause. It was important to the movement then. And is important today.

Ten years ago we spoke it in solidarity with our black brothers. We spoke in unison to FREE HUEY NEWTON. We spoke in unison to end the war in Viet Nam, against racism, against the corruption of America and the crimes of her imperialism.

We need to speak in unison once again.

We won some of these battles. We lost some. We didn't finish some. We didn't finish Huey's. And we're going to do it now.

It is no surprise that this petty harassment is carried forward from decade to decade. Racism is deep and it is entrenched. Huey Newton is a man who will not be bullied. He is the symbol that defied that racism. And that is the reason why they are out to get him today.

The only surprise today is that those foolish men in high places thought we would have forgotten. We never forget. And they should know that. After today they will know that. We showed them.

They thought Huey would come back crawling.

Huey showed them.

They read in Time Magazine that the sixties were dead. Time Magazine fooled them. WE FOOLED TIME MAGAZINE.

There is only one sure thing - the will of the people to fight racism and oppression is irrevocable.

We will wage the struggle in the Court to the best of our ability. But the real struggle is in the street. It will always be in the street. Huey would like to be here with you - in the street. Because it's here that the people speak.

Burt (cont'd) They speak a language of justice that our judges will never understand. And someday, someday, we will teach them.

(crowd applauds; lights dim)

(lights up stage centre; Ester paces nervously; Chip enters rear centre)

Ester Well, look who it is, after all these years ...

(extends hand to shake)

You haven't changed a bit.

Jack said you would call.

Won't you sit down.

Can I get you something to drink?

Chip How about some milk and cookies?

Ester (relaxing somewhat -)

I'd love to serve you milk and cookies but I don't have either.

(laughing)

Oh, Chip, you haven't changed a bit.

I kept milk and cookies for six years but you never called. So I switched to Scotch.

Chip When I was seventeen I thought you were the sexiest woman I had ever seen. You're still as beautiful. And living with Jack King. What a coincidence. I can hardly believe it.

Ester According to Burt you single-handedly stopped the war.

Chip Ya. He really believes great things about me. But the war is over.

Ester I used to go on the marches. But I never got any shots off at the Secretary of State.

Chip That was fun.

Ester I always thought you were such a nice boy.

Chip Nice enough to screw ten times a week.

Ester We were young. And horny.

Chip Jack is a terrific guy. Very successful. I'm green with envy.

Ester Don't ever tell him. He wouldn't know what to say. He's loyal & protective. I can't make a move without him worrying. I'm surprised he let you come here alone.

Chip He trusts me.

Ester But not me. You should be flattered. This makes me feel so old. Seeing you. Are you a romantic. Did we even know what it was then?

Chip You sound like Rod McEwen.

Ester What a terrible thing to say.

Chip I was only teasing.

Ester You were such a tease.

Chip I want to ask you about your family ...

Ester But I don't see them anymore. And I've never been back to that lake again. Or any other.

Ester So what can I say?

Chip And I'm not interested if you ever went back there, or what you did, or who you saw.

Ester You don't leave a girl much to talk about.

Chip Why aren't you married? You could have had anybody you wanted.

Ester Where were you when they passed out women's lib?

Chip But you're not into that.

Ester I take the part I like.

Chip I'm living with Jack.

Ester Why doesn't he marry you?

Chip He probably will. When I let him. But I can't play around. He'd get jealous. He's nice. I used to like jocks best. You started me on that. But now I like intellectuals. They're easier to handle. Sometimes when I have sex I pretend it's you. Isn't that awful?

Ester What am I telling you this for? I don't even know you!

Chip I was only seventeen. Was I that good!?

Ester Who knows what really was. All I remember is great sex. You had a great body.

Chip I still keep in shape.

Ester I hope you won't think this is rude. Before you came in I was remembering you. I could remember your shoulders better than I could remember your face. I hardly recognize you.

Chip I was a teenage sex object! By Chip Macunivitch. The intimate recollections of one hot summer.

Ester I'm sure you're used to it.

Chip I keep in shape.

Ester I really like Jack. He's so sensitive. He's so good at so many things. He admires him. He likes me to do that. And I do. I like to tease him. He's so insecure. But he makes me feel secure. He gets so jealous at the least little thing. I don't mind looking after him. But he's not so hot under the covers. That's not the worst fault in the world.

Chip Look, maybe I shouldn't ask, and just say so if you want, but we could renew old memories.

Ester I wouldn't be the same.

Chip I'm the same. I'm better.

Ester What if it was the same? What would I do? I couldn't face Jack. He'd ask. He'd know.

Chip Don't make such a big thing out of it. He doesn't need to know. I'm not hanging around. I'll be splitting when the case is done.

Ester Where to?

Chip Out west. Look, I'm sorry. I didn't come over here looking to screw you. I shouldn't have said anything.

Ester Why is it the guys always go out west and the girls go to New York to be actresses?

Chip I'm sorry. I'm way out of line.

Ester Burt and Jack talk about you a lot.

Chip It'd kind of strange being around again.
Ester When are you leaving?
Chip Next week some time.

(Ester comes over to him. Kisses him.)

Ester I think it would be alright. We used to have a good time.

(Chip grabs her; a rough sensuous kiss as the lights dim and they lustfully clutch one another.)

(lights up; Jack at his desk, #2, and Burt at his #5.

- scene intended to be played very fast and efficient, quick-second legal timing which from behind the scenes looks like chaos.

- Jack is rude; Burt is a con; both obviously very much in control of the show they are staging.

- Chip is a lost child in all this.

- Jack and Burt are both on the phone; while they speak Suzy works feverishly at a table in Jack's office sorting and stacking papers. Jack initials them as he speaks.

- Chip is working in Burt's offices putting documents, exhibits, book, etc. in boxes and taking them out; he is beckoned by Suzy periodically to something that is too heavy for her.)

Jack Tell McQuire I sent you. Tell him I said to give you the Morgan Hill plans. If he gives you any trouble get the bastard on the phone to me ...

Burt Silvia, make sure press releases are ready to go by three. That's right. At City Hall ... And only when I say ...

Jack Yea ... to Erikson's office. Give them to him personally. Tell him the approvals have to be ready at noon. No later. Noon ...

Burt No. No. No. The Marshalls should wait outside the Courtroom. But don't scare the press away. Take 'em nice and gentle out to the front steps ...

Jack You wait until they're ready. And let him know you're waiting. Then get the bankruptycertificates. O.K. ... Yes ... No ... Good-bye. (immediately goes on to another line; instant change to a sweet tone) Simon ... sure we're all ready. Are you ready? ... How do you get ready to make three quarters of a million dollars? ... (laugh) I'll remember that ...

Burt Silvia, got to go. D.A.'s on the other line. Bye. ... Shelly, baby. Sleep well. (Aggressive tease) Still bound and determined to fight single-handledly against racial justice in America? ... If I hear you say "Just doin' my job" one more time I'll pee on your pot roast at the next Bar banquet ...

Jack Be ready at two-thirty to endorse the cheque ... No, really that's all you have to do ...

Burt So I can't stop the press from being interested in the case. I'm besieged with phone calls. So it's you that's holding him on a speeding ticket not me ... What other reasons? ...

Jack Can you stand the tension? ...

Burt Hey, you know all that stuff in California is constitutionally irrelevant ... Of course I want you to get re-elected ... Shit, I'll tell all my black friends to vote for you ... if you throw the case... Would I tease you? ...

Jack Got to run. Thompson's on the other line ...

Burt I'm gonna cream you in court and blast you in the press as an incompetent loser. Will that help re-election?

(Burt is laughing to himself while being serious into the phone)

No, I still want to be friends ...

Jack (curt)

Alright, two o'clock. Your office. Suzy Sanderson will close for us. And no funny business with those releases ... Screw you ... no way ... if you do that the deals off ... you'll see who hurts the most ... Don't fuck around with me ... Two o'clock ... Absolutely not ... Good-bye.

(slams down the phone)

Turkey!

Burt Got to go, Shelly. The guys just came into the office to show me how to operate this sub-machine gun. Boy, it's heavy. Would I tease you? ... You lock him up, not me ... Alright, I promise I won't shoot you. But I can't make commitments for anybody else ... Sure, I'll show them your picture, if you like, but I can't make any promises. Bye, Shelly.

(hangs up)

(Chip is staring wide-eyed at his two friends.)

(Scene shifts to centre stage. Jack rises, puts on judicial robes, pushes a large table centre stage with a scales of justice on it. And a judge-like chair behind it in which he sits.

Enter Shelly, the D.A., and Thompson the opposing real estate lawyer. Suzy approaches the table from one side to confront Shelly.

Chip stands in the middle between Suzy and Burt assisting them in turn as indicated, handing papers around out of their brief cases.)

Burt I submit that the only plausible interpretation of the statute is that it provides for detention of suspected felons on out-of-state warrants only where on felony offenses here reasonable proof is presented to this court.

Shelly That is certainly not how I read the law.

Thompson Have you got the bankruptcy certificates?

Suzy Is this what you're after?

Burt On misdemeanors these rules do not apply.

Thompson And the severance certificates?

Suzy I've got that too. Just a sec.

Burt Your honour, we have a memorandum on this. I hope you find it complete - and persuasive.

I hope the District Attorney finds it persuasive.

(Chip acting to assist Suzy and Burt hands each of them the document they refer to, and they pass it on to Thompson and the Judge and Shelly, respectively)

Thompson (reading)

... the gestapo-like behaviour of the Baltimore police. We must rally to his defence today. Free Huey Newton! ...

(icily)

Miss Sanderson, your office has mixed up its memorandum. This one is not for me!

Judge (reading)

... and thence to a point 143 degrees fourteen minutes and twenty seconds west longitude to an iron spike buried ...

(sarcastically)

It certainly is thorough!

Shelly I think that's where the weapons are buried your Honour.

(Chip snatches the documents from the readers, and gives them other presumably correct ones. They read.

Burt and Suzy grimace at him. He slinks off.
Lights dim.)

(Lights up stage centre - Ester's living room and kitchen as in Act I - Ester on centre stage)

(Ester in kitchen, stage left #5 preparing food)
(Jack enters)

Jack Anybody here yet?

Ester Do you count me? Slaving away over the hot stove getting ready for my own birthday party. Did you close your deal today, darling? Come and stir this sauce.

Jack Finally. (embraces her) I'm rich. I'm rich.
And guess who's coming to dinner?

Ester Burt.

Jack Who else?

Ester Huey Newton?

Jack No, but he's free. Burt won. Pretty good, eh?
Ester I saw Burt on television.

Jack Really.

Ester Six-thirty news. He sure looked pleased with himself.

(simultaneous knock on door and phone ringing;
Ester let's Burt in as Jack answers the phone.)

Ester Well, look who's here! Do I recognize you from television? Yes I think I do. Aren't you "Burt Armstrong, civil liberties lawyer ..."

Burt It was nothing. Nothing.

(strutting)

Just another blow for people's justice.

Ester On a parking ticket.

Burt Speeding. I told them to say "civil liberties lawyer" instead of "hippy communist lawyer". Do you think that was alright? Did I compromise myself?

Ester You neurotic. Of course you did. I'll be down in a minute. I'm just going to put on my face. Make yourself a drink.

Burt Put on your face! Is this a Lana Turner movie?

Ester Chip is coming! (exit)

Burt And then they're going to burn Atlanta.

Jack (on the phone) (excited, happy)

Yea, everything, every single penny. No sweat, Simon, no sweat. All signed. The cheque's in the bank. I love you too.

(Burt sits down)

I'm expecting Suzy any minute. We'll call you. Don't mention it. Don't mention it. You're paying the bill. And it'll be a big one. (chuckle, etc.) Got to go. Burt's here ...

(to Burt)

Hey, Burt, Simon wants to know if that black bastard is free in the streets to rape white women and steal candy from babies?

Burt Tell shylock of Barcelona that Huey's horny, free and heading for his house.

Jack No shit!

Burt No shit.

Jack (into phone)

Huey will be over to your place for drinks at seven. Lock up the candy. Tell Mary to get ready. No really ... ten inches ... ten ... better than your three ... don't talk like that ... you're a racist ... I am not ... she'll love it ... Got to go ... talk to you later, bye ... ya ... really, bye.

(to Burt)

The famed civil liberties counsel Mr. Armstrong, I presume.

Burt Ah, you must be Jack King the wizard of Wall Street. The pleasure is all mine.

Jack Drink?

Burt What a stupid question.

 (Jack pours)

 (Ester enters)

Burt Hey, I brought you a birthday present ...

Ester (shakes gift)

 Ohhh ... no rattle ... I'll open it later.

 Is Chip here?

Burt Yes.

Ester Have you seen him?

Burt Sure. He's been working on the Newton publicity all week.

Jack And Morgan Hill.

Ester No. I mean here. In my house.

 (she goes to the kitchen)

Burt (mocking)

 Ohhh ... here ... I thought you meant here ... like in town.

 (to Jack)

 Maybe the old days with Ester and Chip were hotter than we thought.

Jack Chip never told me about Ester.

Burt So, did he tell you about every carnal act he ever committed? I'm sure you asked him. Maybe he didn't remember her. It's possible you know. You don't know! Never mind. Let's have another drink. And another.

 How about another drink?

Jack Help yourself.

 (Burt does - door bell rings - Jack answers it)

 (enter Chip and Suzy)

Chip Sorry we're late.

Jack Better late than never.

Burt It's okay. It's okay. But now there's no gin left.

Chip Hey, congratulations on Huey!

Suzy Ya, that's terrific. You're famous.

Jack (pouring drinks - Burt and Suzy point to what they want)

Burt Simon has promised to change the name from Morgan Hills to Huey Newton Luxury Condominiums.

Jack Hey, no. It's the Jack King Goldmine-in-the-sky Condominium Project Inc.

Chip A toast to class contradiction.

Jack Long may they prosper.

Burt To Newton Hills Condominiums.

Burt From Huey Morgan.

(laugh - toast)

Suzy How come you never brought Huey round to the office. I want to meet this guy. After all we've done for him.

Burt He was in the jail. How come you didn't go to the jail. Besides he's a paying customer. He doesn't owe you anything.

Suzy He better.

(enter Ester stage right; does a round of hugs, kisses and handshakes with aplomb)

Ester Suzy. Chip. Twice in one week. How lucky can a girl get. Burt, you've been here before... already today ... no kisses for you.

Burt Rank favouritism!

Suzy, Chip Happy birthday!

Ester Thank you. Thank you. But it's you folks who should get the congratulations today. You were all successful and famous. I just got older.

Burt Gracefully. Gracefully.

Ester Thank you, dear. You're invited again.
Does everybody have a drink? Jack, dear, did you
bring in the hors d'oeuvres?

Jack Certainly, Madame. And what would Madame have?

Ester It's in the kitchen from before. I'll get it.

(Ester leaves and returns with her drink; while
she is gone Burt gets going on a routine)

Burt A drink from before. Before what? Before the last
drink. What a great life!

Ester You were funnier, dear, when you were on dope.

Chip Well I should propose a toast to Armstrong and
King on their most successful day.

Jack And to the return of Chip, the long-lost musketeer.

(they drink)

Ester I can see the three of them together at law school.
Short pants. Mouseketeer hats, wooden swords.
Have a sausage roll everyone.

Burt I just want to tell everybody what a terrific guy
Huey Newton is. He gave me a copy of one of his
books of poetry. Autographed. He's really smart.
His evidence was terrific. Read the Judge just
perfect. Read the D.A. perfect. Poor Shelley.
Gave a perfect press conference. He's perfect.

Suzy You sure he didn't zap that little hooker out on
the coast? Maybe you freed a guilty man.

Burt Would he go back if he were guilty?

Jack Would he run away if he were guilty?

Burt There's no way. He's a real gentleman. Isn't that
right Chip. You're out there, you know.

Chip So they say.

Ester Well, if he beats the rap he's a gentleman, if he
loses he's a bum.

Suzy That's deep.

Jack I think the real hero of the day is Suzy. She closed the deal. Blasted Henderson right out of the water. You know what she did, Ester. A cold bluff. Threatened to walk away from the whole deal if he wouldn't take Simon's undertaking on the bankruptcy certificate. He could have packed up right then. We would have lost a million. Except he didn't know. She's got ice water in her veins. What a killer.

Chip She just grinned at him real cut and he fell over dead.

Ester Isn't that homicide?

Burt No, this is business.

Suzy (cute) You make me sound so terrible. I just did what you told me, Jack.

Jack And there's a fat bonus for you too, sweetheart.

Burt So I want to hear what Chip did after his heroic years as a prisoner of the military-industrial complex?

Chip Aw, there's not much to tell.

Burt Don't be bashful.

Jack He was working for the Bank of America.

Chip No I wasn't.

Burt (to Jack) Why would you say he was working for the Bank of America?

Jack Maybe he worked for the Bank of America.

Burt You know he wouldn't work for the Bank of America.

Chip (weakly - is ignored) I didn't work for the Bank of America.

Burt Are you making fun of Chip?

Jack So maybe if he worked there I'd put my money in his bank.

Burt What a stupid thing to say. One of the guys who stopped the war! You said so yourself. It's not

Burt (cont'd) even imaginable that he would work for the Bank of America.

Ester Have a spinach pastie everybody. I made them myself.

Jack So the war is over. Maybe you didn't notice. Chip is a sensible guy. The Bank wants a few anti-war heroes in its junior executive ranks. They're a sensible bank. They're in business. So they recruit Chip here.

Burt Oh, yea, they come round to the state prison to interview the cons. You're full of shit.

Jack I didn't say he did work for the Bank of America. I just said it's plausible. Hey, I mean the war is over.

Burt Your war is certainly over.

Jack Hey, relax. Have a good time. You won your case today, didn't you? Enjoy winning. You might get used to it.

Chip Look, so the record is straight. I did not work for the Bank of America.

Jack But would you? That's the question. Suppose they offered you a job? Would you take it?

Suzy Yea, Chip, would you take it?

Ester This is a game Chip. Called Hypothetical Question. The object is to ask a question for which there is no right answer. Jack and Burt invented it.

Burt That's a stupid question. They'd never offer Chip a job. Not after what he's done.

Chip Why not?

Burt Well, would they?

Ester (mischievously)

Burt wouldn't take the job in Barcelona. I admired his spirit, except it was a foolish decision.

Suzy What job?

Jack That's another story.
So they come up to you and they say we'd be pleased
if you'd accept a position with our bank.
What do you say?

Chip Well I have to say yes.

Burt Yes! Why do you have to say yes?

Chip I'd be crazy not to.

Jack Of course you would.

Burt They'll never offer you a job. Not after what
you've done.

Jack Have a sausage roll Burt.
(mockingly pushes it to his mouth)

Ester Let's open Burt's birthday present.
Yes, that would be nice.
(sits; unwraps)
I can't imagine. It's a poster tube.
(takes out the poster)
(holds it up; poster projected on overhead screen for
audience; picture of horse jumping off a tower into the
lake, at the scene of carnival or midway.)

Chip A flying horse!

Burt A jumping horse. There's a poem.

Suzy Is this a joke I don't get?

Burt Invariably.

Chip I don't get it.

Ester The last time Burt was here for dinner we had a discussion
about this horse that jumped off a tower at the Centre
Island Midway at the turn of the century.

Jack Flew.

Burt Jumped.

Ester Yes, and Jack said it didn't exist, and Burt said it did.
He read about it in a book. So here is a poster. For
the living room to prove it.

Jack If that goes up I go out.

Ester Don't take chances.

Burt Read the poem. Read the poem.

Ester Rex the Horse

There once was a ploughhorse, young, eager but plain,
Who felt life in the country was too much the same,
Work dawn to dusk, alone, without rest,
Sought bright lights and kinkier sex.

Perhaps he was selfish, a horse without pity,
But he slipped from his stall and ran 'way to the city.
Rex was a bit lucky and being stronger than most
Found a job, though not one of which he could boast,

Pulling a milktruck by the dawns early lights -
Not much - but the bright lights were in sight.
On weekends he spruced up, went to the midway and freakshow,
Oogling fillies and spending his dough.

Burt Umm, that doesn't seem right.

Ester It's okay.

Being plain, from the country ... well its simply a hex.
The truth of the matter - he was no closer to sex.
He envied the seals who did tricks on the midway,
Climbed a tower, honked a horn, and dived into the bay.

After the show at the foot of the tower,
Dames crowded around - this tower - it was power.
He applied to the owner one day in flash,
"Those seals aren't too bad - but I'm a much bigger splash."

What a stuntman, a trickster, an instant success,
For the years of oblivion an instant redress.
The money was good so he quit the milk grind,
Took a suite near the tower, the best he could find,
Did the afternoon show, then drank gin until six,
Napped, dined on oats, then did evening tricks.
Hired an agent, a groom and press flack,

Ester (cont'd) Made it clear to farmer he'd never go back.
Success worked its magic on magnificent Rex,
To his great satisfaction no shortage of sex.
He bought out the owner and raised the tower higher.
"This horse's not a jumper ...this horse is a flyer."

Don't ask me how high, 'cause horses can't count.
What's jumping is flying in the higher amounts.
You say there's a difference! It can't possibly be.
It's only the difference between you and me.
Did you write that?
Burt Um.
Ester That's cute. Thank you. Did you really write that?
Jack That's disgusting.
Chip I like it.
Suzy I don't get it.
Ester Everybody have some sausage rolls.
Jack Now I see why your such a good lawyer. When you're right you're a saint. When you're wrong it doesn't matter.
Burt Don't be so childish. It's a joke.
Jack Well I don't think it's cute. I don't like being called a horse.
Ester Nobody's calling you a horse.
Suzy Oh, I got that part. Rex is latin for King.
Burt Jesus Christ. You're paranoid. Rex is the only word that rhymes with sex. That's all. That's all.
Jack Don't try and con me with that innocent act.
Ester You're just mad because Burt proved his story. You didn't believe him.
Jack He hasn't proved anything. That's no six hundred foot tower.
Burt Six hundred feet, bullshit. I never said six hundred feet.
Jack Yes, you did.
Ester Have a sausage roll, Jack dear.

Jack I can't believe it. You're taking his side.
Ester I always believed in the horse. I just didn't know his name.
Jack You didn't believe that crap. You told me!
Chip Suzy, how do you feel about the weather in Mongolia?
Bad year for winter wheat.
Jack (to Burt)
What are you trying to do? Break up my marriage!
Burt Blow it out your ass. You're just mad because I sprung Huey Newton and got on television.
Suzy You were just on the news, not Johnny Carson.
Burt Some days you're an old-fashioned class enemy.
You've been on my back for two weeks about Newton paying. Huey isn't free. Nobody is free. Well, he's free now. We made enough today to free ten Huey Newton's!
Jack What do you mean "we", white man.
Chip Hey, Huey'll pay if he said he'd pay. Why not!
Besides, that's why I came. I made a lot of money for you riding all over town with those brown envelopes.
Suzy We could have used a taxi driver.
Burt I'll call one for you next time.
Chip Hey, come on!
Ester Have a sausage roll everybody.
Jack (patronizing)
Sure, Chip, we couldn't have done it without you!
Burt When Huey's cheque comes (to Jack) I'm going to make you eat it!
Suzy I'd cash it first.
Ester Oh, Suzy, don't be so hard on poor Burt. He's had a big day.
Jack What about me? What about me?
Suzy And me?
Burt Don't interrupt her. She was just going to say something nice to me.

Jack We should all line up.
Burt I want to propose a toast ... a toast to Chip. He's the real hero. Because he's home. That's more important than anything we've done today.
Jack I'll drink to that.
Ester Can the ladies join in?
Chip I wouldn't have it any other way!
Jack I know you wouldn't, you dog!
To Chip ...
All To Chip!
Chip What can I say?
Jack Just say anything you want.
Burt Anything.
Chip Oh, I wouldn't try to make a speech to masters of bullshit like you guys.
Ester You've got it.
Chip But I do want to say ...
Jack Just a minute. (drunken, joking)
Just a minute. What do you mean "masters"?
You mean the master of bullshit. (pointing to Burt)
I am but a poor humble paperclip in the circular files of justice.
Suzy }
Burt }
Ester } Groan
Jack It's my friend over here who is the pretty mouth calling out with those trenchant tones for freedom, truth and mercy.
Burt Thank you, Jack. My heart soars like a hawk.
Chip Hey, that's just what I was going to say.
Ester Think of something else, Chip dear. If I hear that again I'll have to go and fix dinner.
Burt Tell us about California.
Ester Did you ever go to Esalen.
Jack Would Chip go to Esalen. Come on. That's ridiculous.
Ester It's not ridiculous. What do you mean ridiculous?

Burt (slyly)
Remember the Bank.
Jack Bunch of hippy perverts feeling each other up in the dark.
Chip I didn't go to Esalen.
Ester That's got nothing to do with it.
Listen, loverboy, I notice you're all thumbs when the lights go out. If you were a hippy you sure didn't learn anything.
Jack They invented flying horses.
Burt The hippies didn't do that. I did that.
I mean I don't mean that I invented it. I just passed on the good news.
Ester Don't apologize, Burt. He's just jealous that somebody has more fun than he does in California.
Jack I know Chip has more fun. But he wouldn't go to Esalen.
Ester You're just afraid you just might learn something ...
Jack Crawling around in a sauna bath groping tits you can't see and telling total strangers your best secrets. That's not tenderness. No way. Is this what you do all day?
(to Ester and Burt)
Touchy-feelies with mixed-up housewives? Chip does not go to Esalen.
Burt (mock act)
No. Let me. Not at all. I'd enjoy it. Thank you.
(rising)
Well, tell me, witness, if you were offered the job as assistant director of the Esalen Institute, I said if, these are always hypothetical questions, would you take that job? You may have 15 seconds to consider your answer.
Chip How much does it pay?

Jack You'd do that for money!

Chip Sure, why not? I'd work for the Bank of America.

Burt Those of you in the home viewing audience who want to help Jack explain why that's the wrong answer about Esalen and the right answer about the Bank of America can write to him care of this station. Please include a stamped self-addressed airline barfing bag with your answer.

Chip Hey, what do you expect? I need the job don't I?

Burt Why not, Jack? The war is over.

Jack I'm shocked, Chip. I'm really shocked. All those demented closet faggots and touchy-feelie Marxists.

Burt Usually known as Communist perverts.

Ester Relax, Chip, he's not serious. He's never serious.

Jack I'm always serious.

Ester See.

Jack It's like being a prostitute.

Suzy A job is a job. Maybe he'd like the work.

Jack That's disgusting.

Ester Oh, come on Jack. You're talking like you're sixty years old.

Jack This is our Chip. Our Chip. A hero from the anti-war. And you people would send him off to some Big Sur whorehouse to ...

Burt It's really important to help veterans get a job.

Jack You wouldn't really take that job, would you, Chip?

Ester (mock coaching to Chip)

Its a hypothetical question. Any answer that any person thinks is right ... and Jack goes to the showers.

Chip Shit ...

(silence ... as they all wait for Chip to speak)

Can I say something?

Ester Of course, Chip dear. The boys were interrupting you.

Jack Blast away, kid. The floor is yours.

Suzy Don't look at me. I never interrupt their interruptions.

Chip Well ... I just want to say that you guys talk three times as fast as you did when I left. I can't even listen fast enough, let alone talk.

Burt Don't worry about that. We talk faster than we listen. If you listen, Chip, you're the only one.

Jack What?

Ester Shut up you two.

Chip I don't want to make a speech. I don't have anything to say.

Just that I'm really green with envy at all the great things you guys are doing. It's really exciting. I really wish I were here with you. The way we always planned.

Jack Hell, you just hit the high point.

Mostly its dullsville around here.

Chip You don't know anything about dull.

Burt Shit, I'd trade places with you any day. This is just a game. Drives you nuts. Look at Jack. You got in one real shot at the Secretary of State. I'd give anything to have landed that punch.

Chip You don't know what you're saying. You know what?

It wasn't worth it.

Burt Of course it was worth it. You did more to stop the war than me or Jack. That was worth it.

Chip I want to stay here and work for you guys. Maybe I can get a pardon and get back into law school ...

Jack I wouldn't wish this life on a guy like you. You'd hate it.

Chip You seem to like it.

Jack I hate it.

Burt He hates it.

Chip (to Burt)

But you like it.

Burt Yes, but it's not for you.

Burt (cont'd) I mean it's all vicarious. I don't do anything. Just, you know, mess around on the phone. I never hit anybody.

Suzy Well I think you're cute. I think you should stay. Can we keep him Jack?

Burt Jesus Christ, when did you get out?!

Ester Sorry, sweetheart, if he'd going to stay he's going to stay with me. I had him first.

Jack See what you've done, Chip. You've got the women fighting over you. Now we'll never get any dinner.

Chip You guys don't even know where I'm coming from, where I'm at. How can you say this is the shits. What do you know?

Jack It doesn't matter. I know this isn't for you.

Burt A guy like you doesn't want to hang around here.

Suzy I just developed a splitting head-ache. I want to go home. Chip, can you take me home? Chip would you take me home?

Ester (heated) Chip wants to stay here for my birthday, don't you dear.

Burt (mocking Ester) Or do you want to go home with that legal tart.

Jack Shut up.

Burt Did I say that?

Chip Hey, what's going on? This is a party.

Burt Are you having enough fun?

Suzy (demanding to Chip) Chip. I really have to go.

Chip Maybe I should take Suzy home.

Ester You'll come back, darling, won't you?

Chip Maybe I better stay with Suzy if she's not feeling well.

Ester What for?

Burt You know what for. Remember high school hygiene.

(Ester looks stunned)

Ester Well, I wouldn't want to get in the way of true love.

Jack You're certainly giving it a good shot.

Suzy Chip.

Chip Look, Ester, I better take Suzy home. She's not feeling well. I'll talk to you later.

Jack About what?

Ester We could give her some aspirin and put her to bed here. Or would that bother your conscience?

Chip Get off.

Suzy You sound like you're after a piece of the action? That wouldn't be it, would it Ester, dear?

Ester Shut up.

Jack Ester. You ...

(to Chip)

You bastard.

Burt And now ... for \$64,000 ... can you tell me which one is the real slut.

Suzy God, you're a jerk.

Burt If he takes that literally you'll roast in hell. And I'll laugh.

Jack (to Chip)

You told me you didn't.

Chip Ya, well, shit, I did. But it doesn't mean anything.

Ester What do you mean it doesn't mean anything?

Chip It doesn't mean anything. You've slept with lots of guys. You don't make a scene like this every time.

Jack Why did you do it. She was mine. You can have any woman you want. She was mine.

Burt What's the matter with you two. A little recreational sex never hurt anybody.

Jack But she's not your wife.

Ester I'm not your wife. I'm not your property.

Suzy Will you listen to who's just caught woman's lib.
Ester I can sleep with who I want.
Jack Not when you promise.
Burt And she snaps him into a reverse double standard.
Ester, Shut up, Burt. Keep out of it.
Jack We don't need your two bits.
Chip I have to catch a train.
Jack After all I've done for you. You're always the same.
Some big fucking grandstand show, always better than
the last, then off you go. Disappear. Chasing skirts.
Chip Hey, hey, hey, listen, old friend, I don't owe you
any favours. Don't get moral.
(righteous)
I went to jail!
Jack (going slightly berserk)
Favours. Favours. You don't owe me any favours!
You went to jail! Who's been looking after your
addle-brained little political mutant here (indicating
Burt) for five years. You think I like working in
the back office of a public meeting hall. Every week
a new movement. I can't count them all. Same people
different placards. Sometimes it's the same placards.
They'll protest anything that moves. I stopped jerking
off five years ago.
Burt When you met Ester.
Jack You never did. (to Chip) You're his hero. He'd
grow up if it weren't for you.
Burt Oh, no I won't. You can't make me!
Jack (to Chip)
You don't have to live with it. So why don't you
stop it? While you're off fucking you're way across
America I'm stuck here in this zoo with these Bambis
playing protest parade. He still thinks you're some
kind of Messiah from the underground.
Burt Then God gave unto them a Saviour ...

Jack Why he doesn't even know ...

Burt (Burt jumps on this with suspicious quickness)
He doesn't know what? Know what?

Jack (continues shouting at Chip)
Why don't you tell him why you went to jail?
Tell him the charges. Tell him what you did then.
Tell me three communist writers after Rosa Luxenburg. You're a flying fucking fake!

Ester Who's Rosa Luxenburg?

Burt What are you talking about?

Chip Look, Burt ...

Jack Tell him. Tell him. And get those filthy hippies out of my office.

Chip Jack, you're an asshole.

Burt He's speaking objectively, Jack, so don't take it too personal.

Jack Don't take it too personal. This guy never went to jail for punching out the Secretary of State.
He went to jail for dealing acid.
He's just a bum with a big cock.

(lengthy silence)

Burt Jack, are you trying to tell me that you lied to me for all these years about Chip.

Jack Yes, I lied to you.

Burt You told me they caught him in a hideout in Wyoming.
And he got four years for punching out Dean Rusk.
And that Dean Rusk himself testified at the trial.

Ester That's what you told me.

Jack That's what I said. It's a lie. So get off you're high horse.

Chip Look, Burt ...

Burt No, it's alright, Chip. It's alright. I don't blame you. But Jack, I've known this for eight years.

(silence)

Jack So why didn't you tell me?

Burt I didn't want to hurt you.

Jack Hurt me!

Burt I didn't know you didn't know.

Jack (angry but ironic)

All these years I've been lying to you for nothing.

Burt Don't look at it that way. It kept your spirits up. I mean the war was over. You didn't want to think Chip went to jail for nothing.

Jack It didn't keep my spirits up.

Burt It didn't keep my spirits up.

Jack You're the one who worshipped Chip.

Burt Maybe it kept your spirits up thinking that it kept my spirits up.

Jack But it didn't.

Burt Does that matter?

Jack Chip, you bastard. You made me do this. I was looking after him for you.

Burt (mocking)

I knew Chip would protect me. Damn fine job, Jack.

Jack I don't believe you knew.

Burt How will you ever know?

Jack Does that matter?

Ester Why don't you two guys go in the kitchen and put each other's heads in the oven. Suzy and I can have a sensible quarrel over Chip. Blood red lust.

Jack That's not funny.

Ester Well, anyhow, now that we've got acquainted let's have dinner. Burt, you eat Jack. Suzy and I will start on Chip.

Jack That's not funny either.
Ester You have no sense of humour.
Chip What about me?
Suzy You have nothing to do with it.
Chip Who are they talking about?
Burt, Jack You.
Burt So I still want to know where you've been hanging out since you got out of jail. You've been with pretty heavy cats. Shit we don't care why you went to jail. Half my clients go to jail for the wrong reason.
Suzy The other half don't go to jail for the wrong reason.
Burt Thank you, sweetheart. Am I a great lawyer or what?
So tell us, Chip, did you really screw Jane Fonda three times in one night in Malibu?
Jack Did you tell him that?
Chip I ...
Burt We didn't tell you Jack, for fear you'd have a nervous breakdown.
Ester That's right.
Suzy How was she?
Burt Tired.
Jack Did you tell them that?
Chip (angry)
No, God damn it.
Jack I knew it.
Burt You just forgot. You can tell Jack later. Quite a story. You won't believe it, Jack. She's too much. Even for Chip.
Chip (angry)
Fuck off, you guys.
Jack It's not possible. Not Jane Fonda.
Chip Why don't you decide?

Suzy You're butting into things that don't concern you again.
 (pulls him back from conversation)

Burt You know what, Jack.

Jack What?

Chip I ...

Burt Chip and I have kept this a secret from you for two years. Brace yourself. Jane is a guy.
 (all laugh)

You don't have to believe me if you don't want to.
But I've seen a picture!

(all laugh - except Chip)

Jack Well, shit, you can't argue with a picture.

Burt Chip is real tight with the Panthers. That's what he's been doing since he got out. Right Chip?

Chip Sure, I know some.

Jack Oh, come one. He's not a Panther. Just look at him.
He's all white.

Burt I just said he was tight with the. "Black and white are one, unite ..."
You remember, Jack.

Jack Yea, but the ...
Ester war is over.

Jack Chip wouldn't hang around with them.

Burt Sure he did.

Jack He did not.

Burt How do you think I got the Newton case?

Jack Because you're the crazies lawyer in town. I don't know.

Burt Chip sent the Panthers to me.

Jack Bullshit.

Burt Ask him.

Jack Did you tell him that?

Chip Jack ...

Jack Did you tell him that?
Chip Jack ...
Burt Go ahead. Tell him. Tell him. I don't care if he doesn't believe you. Tell him.
Jack Did you tell him that?
Chip Yes I said that.
Jack Well, tell him it isn't true.
Burt Why would he do that?
Jack Because it isn't.
Burt How do you know?
Jack Chip wouldn't be bothered. Tell him it isn't true. Tell him there's no underground. Tell him you don't care anymore. Tell him you're a deckhand on a coastal freighter or whatever it is. You tell him. Or I will.
Burt I'll never believe you're a deck hand on a coastal freighter. You're around the office too much. Besides, if you have another job you have to give me half the money.
Jack (to Chip)
See all the trouble you cause. Tell him.
Burt Chip can tell me anything he wants. He doesn't have to say what you want.
Jack Have you no respect for the truth?
Burt What do you know about that commodity?
Jack Look, don't you hear what he's saying. He gave up fooling around with politics years ago.
Burt (shouting)
So what! I didn't ...
And that's not what he said.
Chip (shouting)
Fuck off ... Fuck off ...
(he grabs Burt and roughly throws him back into the sofa. Burt spills his drink.
Goes to take a swing at Jack who has moved out of harms

Chip
(cont'd)

way. Chip checks himself)

You don't even care what I say. I could tell you I bombed Hanoi or sucked dick for Ronald Ragan and it wouldn't make any difference. You're just making me up. I'm an inconvenient interruption to your mutual mindfucking. I thought I should get some credit for your success. I mean who launched this operation. I was supposed to be part of the act, man. A thousand fucking dollars for running errands. Blow it out your ass. Burn it. I don't want it. I don't want any part of it. You guys have been picking my bones for eight years. Well, it's your fucking soup, I'm not in it. I should never have come here. You don't even want me here. I embarrass you. Get a veteran a job! Shit.

Burt

Hey, Chip, don't take it so personal.

Jack

There's no reason to feel bad. You're a fun guy.

Chip

Ah, man ... all these years I lived dreaming about you guys being great lawyers. Chip's in the underground. Chip's in jail. What the fuck do you know about that? What do you really care? You don't even care what the truth is. You know where the underground is now? It's underground, man. Ten feet under. Dead and buried. Sure I was in it. When they were filling in the grave, man. It was no fun. I had a shot at the title when I smashed that sucker at law school. And that was it. What else did I do? It doesn't mean fuck all! Fuck all! You assholes want to keep me there. Then you can fight about whether I sold out. What do you know about selling out? Who cares why I went to jail. I went to jail. I used to wake up screaming in the night, Dean Fuckface snearing at me. And you know what I'd tell myself. I got better friends than you, you old turd. I'm glad I didn't know then what I know today.

Burt Look, Chip, I'm sorry. You shouldn't take us so seriously.

Chip Oh ya. Well, how should I take you? You heroic little worm. What a ripoff you turned out to be. I don't want to be anything you've made me into. I've been your fucking prisoner for eight years.

Ester Chip ...

Chip Screw you, baby. You wanted it. You both wanted it. Well eat it.

I mean who am I? Am I this big dildo from California that you hide in the blankets on the top shelf of the cupboard? Am I that berserk boxer from the good old days at law school who did what you all dreamed of? - but thank God he ran away wouldn't he be embarrassing today. Chip who?

Am I Che Guevera in the belly of America fighting your secret wars?

I mean I even believed all this horseshit until I came here and actually watched the beast plopping those mighty turds to the ground. I though I was real. And I had failed. Now I see. You always knew it wasn't real so failure could never happen. You know what I am now? You know what I do?

Burt I don't like hearing you so bitter.

Chip You don't like hearing me at all.

I am a gardener. Rich man's fancy house. By the ocean. Screwing his wife in the afternoon and his daughter at night.

Jack Sounds terrific.

Chip That's only for me to decide. Because you know from nothing.

I'm getting out of here. This is not my movie.

(exits; slams door.)

Burt Jack, you jerk, see what you did.
Jack I did! I did!
Burt It doesn't matter why he went to jail.
Jack There's one thing I didn't tell you. When he went in
 he gave state's evidence on everybody he knew.
Burt But that was just a bunch of pushers.
Ester He wouldn't do that.
Jack He did it. He did it.
Burt That's what you'd do. You're so fucking pragmatic.
 I don't have to believe it. Chip is gone.
Jack You don't believe anything.
Burt That's because I talk to you all the time.
 I've got to go. Marth's expecting me.
Jack To do what?
Burt (as he leaves) (shouting)
 Fuck her.
 (exits quickly - slams the door)
Suzy Well, I better go too.
Ester If you hurry you can catch your piece of ass.
Suzy I'll rip off a piece for you, honey.
 (exits quickly - slams the door)
 (Jack and Ester stare at each other for a while.
 Jack picks up his coat and leaves closing the door
 quietly.
 Ester left seated alone on stage eating sausage rolls
 as lights dim)

(lights up; dimly on #3, from a bedside light;
and on #1 where Suzy and Chip are sitting and
talking) (as the conversation progresses they
move to #3)
(Chip is morose)
Chip Can I stay here for a while?
Suzy How long does that mean?

Chip Shit, I don't know. I have to be back at work on Wednesday. I just don't like leaving when everybody is mad at me.

Suzy So, what do you think you can do about it? Screw Ester again and make it better?

Chip Hey, come on!

Suzy You're a great stud but you don't know shit about office politics. That was the dumbest thing - the second dumbest thing - you ever did, telling Jack about you and Ester.

Chip He always wants to know who I'm screwing.

Suzy But not his lady.

Chip I guess I really blew it for you and Ester.

Suzy I have worse enemies in the world. Besides you're not the first man we've fought over.

Chip Really. Who else?

Suzy Jack, you dummy!

Chip I'll bet he hates me.

Suzy Hates you! He loves you. Now he's got something on both of us.

Chip (shocked disbelief)

 No ...

Suzy We play hardball here at Armstrong and King.

Chip Is he that cynical?

Suzy Not consciously.

 Now let's go to bed. Everything will be alright in the morning.

Chip Maybe for you. But not for me.

Suzy Since when did the big brave adventurer start feeling sorry for himself?

Chip I don't understand who ... who's this guy Chip they keep talking about? Is it me?

Suzy Do you care?

Chip Yea. Sort of.

Suzy It's all done with mirrors.
Let's go to bed.

Chip Is that all you think of.

Suzy That's a good line. But I'm sure I'm not the first woman you've used it on.

Chip Fuck ... fuck ... fuck ... fuck ...

Suzy Hey, look, I'm a working girl. I have to get it during strictly limited off-hours.

Chip (angry, shouting)

Fuck.

Suzy Hey, keep it down. I have neighbours.
Don't pretend you don't like it.

(taking him by the hand to the bed)

You're making me feel like a nymphomaniac. Stop resisting.

(tugging him)

The greatest swordsman of his generation. That's what Jack used to call you.

You weren't so reluctant last week when you fucked me for two hours of xerox time.

Passive resistance won't work, loverboy.

(she takes off his shirt)

Hey, come on, cheer up. They'll all get over it.
They'll make up. They like to fight. It's no skin off your nose. You're moving on anyhow.

Since when did the ladies have to drag you to bed.

(with her vigorous prompting he starts undressing.
She is quickly out of her clothes)

Chip What can I ever say to Jack?

Suzy Tell him what a great lay I am. That's what he wants to hear.

Let's not take all night with this.

(Chip sitting and Suzy standing at the bed, lights slowly dim leaving them as profiles. She comforts him, then attempts to arouse him. He responds only very slowly.)

(Chip looks up at her in the dim lights)

Chip What happens next?

Suzy After life there is only death.

Chip You don't give a guy much to look forward to.

(lights dim)

(lights rise #5)

(Jack comes into Burt's office, stage 5, ensuing conversation in the most juvenile/joyous spirit tease and repartee between them as if nothing had happened)

Jack Mrs. Josephs is here.

Burt As soon as we get her husband back from the cleaners we'll want to buy a condominium ... Mrs. Josephs and I.

Jack You and Mrs. Josephs, eh.

Burt Why don't you talk to her today. I have a new one coming at two-thirty. Mrs. Henderson. Freshly bruised. Crippled child. Husband's a banker. I can't concentrate. Does my hair look alright. What do you think?

Jack I won't see Mrs. Josephs. She's your client.

Burt I see lots of your clients.

Jack Only when they can't pay.

Burt Look at this! Look at this! Huey's cheque. Huey's cheque ... eh ... eh ... eh!

Jack You don't say!

Burt What'll you give me for it ... No ... no ... hands off ... what's it worth ...

Jack I'll see Mrs. Josephs. I'll see Mrs. Josephs.

Burt And you'll like her.

Jack I'll like her. I'll like her. Now give me the cheque.

Burt There ... see what a sport I am.

You may even want to change your line of work.

Jack I do. I have. I've taken a job in Barcelona.

Burt The bar?

Jack The bar.

Burt With or without the Andulesian boyfriend.

Jack I've decided to keep him.

Burt That's a mistake. He's a known terrorist.

Jack You should have told me.

Burt You didn't give me a chance.

Jack I did too.

Burt Besides, you wouldn't have believed me.

Jack What about Chip?

Burt Chip the revolutionary?

Jack Chip the swordsman.

Burt (with great intensity, and ceremony as if he were telling a great secret)

He swallowed it.

Jack What?

Burt You know.

Jack I don't believe you.

Burt You never do.

Jack It would choke a horse.

Burt A horse. What colour of a horse?

Jack The usual colour.

Burt Low I have given unto you this - the truth. If ye doubt then when the word is thus spoken feed yourself with the dreams of fools.

Jack Who said that? I recognize it.

Burt I made it up.

Jack Then I should believe it.

Burt He left this morning. I talked to him on the phone.

Jack How did he sound?

Burt Like all great revolutionaries.
Jack How's that?
Burt You know ... brave, incisive, eager. Says he'll
 write from the barricades.
Jack Did he say that?
Burt Ya. What a great guy.
 (lights out)