

JUBILEE

A new comedy by

Kevin Kautzman

DRAFT: 8.18.18

Max Grossman
Abrams Artists Agency
275 Seventh Avenue
26th Floor
New York, NY 10001
(P) 646-461-9372
(E) mgrossman@abramsartny.com

CHARACTERS

AMY - 21, Theatre BFA

JAMES - 27, Sociology M.A.

TANYA - 30, Medieval History PhD

COACH DANIELS - 40, Offensive Coach for the Bucks

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

SETTING

College Town, USA

NOTES

/ indicates overlapping speech.

-- indicates an interruption

You shall count off seven Sabbaths of years, seven times seven years; and there shall be to you the days of seven Sabbaths of years, even forty-nine years. Then you shall sound the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month. On the Day of Atonement you shall sound the trumpet throughout all your land. You shall make the fiftieth year holy, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee to you; and each of you shall return to his own property, and each of you shall return to his family. That fiftieth year shall be a jubilee to you. In it you shall not sow, neither reap that which grows of itself, nor gather from the undressed vines. For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you. You shall eat of its increase out of the field. In this Year of Jubilee each of you shall return to his property.

- Leviticus 25:8-13

People who work together will win, whether it be against complex football defenses, or the problems of modern society.

- Vince Lombardi

The only real laughter comes from despair.

- Grouch Marx

I: O AND EIGHT

A bar in College Town, USA.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

And so the College Town Bucks fall to O and eight on the season. It's a stunning fall for this storied program. Despite their recent National Championship credentials, this rivalry game next week against the undefeated Bisons is a must-win for the beleaguered coaching staff. The offense can put up the points, but the defense and special teams are struggling mightily...

JAMES and AMY sit at a table, loaded with empty pint glasses. Jukebox music plays.

AMY

You dated for a year!

JAMES

And we're still friends.

AMY

As soon as there is contact, you know, between down there parts, any possibility of friendship is over.

JAMES

Have we not been friendly tonight?

AMY

I'd be a wreck if she dumped me.

JAMES

She didn't dump me.

AMY

She's so fascinating. Who writes a doctoral thesis on what was it/

JAMES

The word is "dissertation." It's dissertation about stillborn medieval babies and pseudo-baptisms to ensure their entrance to Heaven.

AMY

Who devotes their life to that?!

JAMES

It's about a lot more than it seems...

AMY

Why'd she dump you really?

JAMES

Women prefer older men.

AMY

It's not about age. It's about maturity. I'm only twenty-one and I know that.

TANYA enters with three shots of something brown.

TANYA

You two were talking about me. I'm a witch. I can tell.

AMY

You're not a witch.

TANYA

I'm not not a witch. Try and prove that. You can't. My nose itched at the bar. It still itches.

AMY

Here, I'll scratch it.

AMY scratches TANYA's nose. TANYA sets down the shots.

TANYA

Isn't she a sweetie?

JAMES

She's a peach.

AMY

I'm not a peach. I'm a peachy human.

JAMES

It's my birthday and I declare you a peach. Where's the chasers?

TANYA

Throwy kickyball ended. Happy hour is over. It's drink-to-forget hour.

JAMES

You can't do shots without a chaser. We can split a beer. I'll pay.

AMY

On your birthday? No no no. Sit!

AMY exits.

JAMES

She's a peach.

TANYA

There's a quality of misogyny to that word.

JAMES

It's a piece of fruit.

TANYA

It's the butt emoji.

JAMES

Anyway she clearly prefers you.

TANYA

What? No...

JAMES

That theatre geek is discovering her sexuality and you're l'objet d'amour. Das Objekt der Liebe. Heart. Kissy face. Wink wink. Heart eyes.

TANYA

You're a bad communist.

JAMES

I'm a Democratic Socialist--

TANYA

You have to take a holistic picture of the capital S
“Struggle” if anyone’s going to take you capital S
“Seriously.”

JAMES

I’m capital S “Serious” about capital S “Socialism.”
And real Communism/

JAMES & TANYA

Has never been tried.

TANYA

You can’t carry forward the machismo of 20th
century Socialism and expect anything to change.
Comrade.

JAMES

It’s jest. Ribbing. Japery.

TANYA

“Japery?”

JAMES

Japery.

TANYA

Late fourteenth century? To trick, beguile, jilt? That’s
what you’re doing?

JAMES

Speaking of jilt. Why did we stop dating?

TANYA

You want to do this now?

JAMES

Call it a birthday present.

TANYA

I’m putting the drinks on my credit card. Happy
birthday. You’re one year closer to death.

AMY returns with a pint of beer.

AMY

“Come, gentlemen, I hope we shall drink down all unkindness.” Shakespeare. Merry Wives.

JAMES

Who gets the chaser first?

TANYA

It’s your birthday.

JAMES

I’ll feel rude. Chivalry.

TANYA

Things have a way of working out. Do the shot.

AMY

“I drink to the general joy of the whole table.”
Shakespeare again. Macb--

JAMES

La la la shut up. Cheers.

THEY drink. Nobody touches the chaser.

JAMES (CONT’D)

This is what socialists mean by artificial scarcity!

TANYA chugs the chaser.

TANYA

This is what economists mean by actual scarcity.

JAMES

You’re wrong. Look around you.

TANYA

It’s his birthday, so we can’t gag him to shut him up.

JAMES

What do you see? Amy?

AMY

Umm. A College Town sports bar, and everybody’s in a bad mood because the Bucks lost throwy kickyball again.

JAMES

We are surrounded by corporate bric a brac. It's a wasteland of corporate ideology and the ugly animalistic hierarchy that comes with it.

AMY

Animalistic heirarchy?

JAMES

There's not an inch of authentic humanity in this place.

TANYA

You chose it!

JAMES

Because they have a good happy hour! Look. There's a half-eaten pile of wings. In the developing world you'd never see that.

TANYA

What's your point?

JAMES

My point is... Look at the three of us. What do we have in common?

AMY

You two dated?

JAMES

Get your head out of the gutter.

TANYA

That's not very sex positive.

JAMES

How did we bond, the three of us?

TANYA

We met at College Town State U.

ALL

Go Bucks.

JAMES

And we bonded over our debts.

TANYA

We're in the global one percent. Have perspective.

JAMES

I have a perspective: my perspective. Sure on a global scale we're privileged but does it feel that way? What choices do we have? We're not about to move to Africa and live on a dollar a day.

AMY

I'd have to get a passport...

JAMES

She doesn't have a passport. And who'd pay back the loans on her brain if she moved off the grid?

AMY

My folks would kill me...

JAMES

Consider how screwed it is we allowed the state to put mortgages on us to study theatre, sociology and medieval history!

TANYA

I'm not ashamed to add to humanity's understanding of the medieval mind. Reality-check: the post-modern mind isn't as far removed from the medieval world as people think.

JAMES

I wonder how a corporate hiring manager would value your understanding of the nuances in medieval thinking as relates to post-modernity.

TANYA

You're making my point. The oppressive student loan system is somewhat medieval. It's a kind of neo-feudalism powered by finance, the federal government and bloated university administrations. And are we surprised?

AMY

Yes?

TANYA

We shouldn't be. Aside from the Church, the universities are the most medieval institutions we have.

AMY

Is that true?

JAMES

Yes.

TANYA

So here we are: the three of us and millions of others made serfs to the universities and the hapless, or outright malicious, government that backed the loans. Feudalism stalks the land in the guise of higher education. And the new masters aren't even shy about it. They handed out those loans like they were doing us a favor, when in fact it was a Trojan Horse in support of an intergenerational class war.

JAMES

Great speech. Brava. Now what?

TANYA

Sarcasm? Really?

JAMES

Here we sit as our brains accumulate interest. Amy, what about you? You graduated. What's your real world plan?

AMY

Plan?

JAMES

A lot of people have mommy and daddy behind them financially. Not us. We gripe about how unfair it is. A psychologist would call it trauma bonding.

TANYA

You're drunk.

AMY

“Drunk? and speak parrot? and squabble? swagger? swear?” Shakepeare/

JAMES

Stop that.

AMY

Othellooooo...

TANYA

It’s a birthday party. Let’s drink. The debt will be there tomorrow. And next week.

JAMES

(standing)

I’m going to demand a round of beers on the house. They’ll listen to reason.

TANYA

What reason?

JAMES

This is America. Everyone’s entitled to something free on their birthday. The superego owes me.

JAMES exits.

AMY

He’s not an actual communist, is he?

TANYA

Democratic Socialist. It’s Communism without the gulags, in theory. That’s a joke. “Theory.” Get it?

AMY

No, I do not. But he’s right. We gripe about our loans a lot.

TANYA

Somebody has to talk about it. And Americans aren’t comfortable discussing class. But the establishment has manufactured a new class of vaguely indentured white collar workers.

(MORE)

TANYA (CONT'D)

It's tempting to hate the billionaires and the oligarchs, but we fail to see the true priests and deacons of this new system are all around us. What's worse: we're them in training, or we were supposed to be before the economy went to hell.

AMY

I don't understand.

TANYA

Look: the Universities are ground zero for this new system. They ushered it in, and they mortgaged our brains to pay for it. But by the time our generation figured out we were being screwed, it was too late for us.

And we're supposed to be the smart ones.

AMY

Yeah. I might have to move back with my folks...

TANYA

Right. Sorry. The night took a turn.

AMY

It's okay. Just not what I expected. I could save some money for a year or two and then maybe move to New York and see if I can get an internship and make my to Broadway.

TANYA

Good plan. Don't become cynical.

AMY

Things have a way of working out.

TANYA

Sure. Great. We can get a job writing greeting cards.

"I'm sorry you were born with the wrong color skin at the wrong time in the wrong place.

(MORE)

TANYA (CONT'D)

But things have a way of working out.”

“I’m sorry you’re ugly, or you stutter, or you’re not very intelligent in a way we can milk productivity from, or you have a mental health issue or a disability or just a plain old series of tragedies and not much support. But hey things have a way of working out.”

“I’m sorry your forebears croaked and left you nothing, but just relax things have a way of working out.”

AMY

Whose forebears croaked?

TANYA

Forget it. Point is, it’s not a fair game. You can’t pull yourself up by your bootstraps if they stuck a predatory loan on the laces after telling you everyone deserves and in fact needs the best laces available in order to compete with all the other suckers.

AMY

Are you okay? Tanya?

TANYA

European Christians had a practice, called jubilee. Every twenty five to fifty years. Began at the turn of the fourteenth century. Sins are forgiven. It goes back to the ancient Hebrews. A period when slaves and prisoners would be freed, debts would be forgiven and the mercies of God would be particularly manifest.

AMY

We need one of those.

TANYA

I’m a little drunk.

AMY

It’s okay.

TANYA

There was supposed to be a job at the end of this. Tenure. And then I could think about maybe starting a family... Now I don't know.

AMY

You're still young.

TANYA

Word of advice: you're gonna want to cut that phrase from your vocabulary. With the older women in your life.

AMY

Noted.

JAMES returns with three beers.

JAMES

See! People listen to reason!

TANYA

Sit down.

JAMES

I said, "It's my birthday. I will only turn twenty-seven once. I'm an alumnus of this fine institution, and I need a round of beers for myself and those beautiful ladies over there. Aren't they a couple of peaches?" And wham bam thank you Stan, three beers on the house.

TANYA

They have my credit card. They probably stuck it on that.

JAMES

There's no way that guy's going to charge us for this round. We have an understanding. Between men. We made eye contact.

TANYA

Sit before you fall.

JAMES

(sitting)

You know what I heard at the bar? Guess what the assistant throwy kickyball coach makes.

AMY

How much?

JAMES

One point four million dollars a year.

AMY

No way.

JAMES

That's as the offensive coach. All he does is coach the offense--

TANYA

Goddamn will you shut up and drink your beer!?

A moment.

JAMES

Jeeze.

TANYA

Sorry. We got to talking about money and... I mean we made these choices, but we couldn't have known... what are we supposed to do? Work corporate?

JAMES

Ugh.

AMY

Offices make me weepy. I just cry.

JAMES

We need to take the long view. History curves toward justice.

JAMES drinks.

AMY

Tanya? Really, are you okay?

TANYA chugs her beer.

TANYA

No. Sorry. I know I'm supposed to pretend I am.

AMY

Things have a way of working out.

TANYA

I can barely afford to attend conferences. Everywhere I turn, it's a dead end. My career is stillborn. Like the babies I write about. How's that for metaphor? I need a financial resurrection. We all do.

AMY taps at her phone.

JAMES

I'll pay for the drinks.

AMY

Not on your birthday.

TANYA

She's right. We aren't heathens.

AMY

Look at this.

AMY hands JAMES the phone.

AMY (CONT'D)

It's the salaries of every employee at College Town U. Including the coaches.

JAMES

How long has he held that position?

TANYA

Are we doing research? At a birthday party?

AMY

He's been with the Bucks eight years. In his current role four. Through the National Championship three years ago. Says that makes him untouchable unless they really screw up. Which they're doing this year by not winning a game.

JAMES

If they don't win next week, the coaches are all screwed. Up to Killjoy himself. That's the scuttlebutt at the bar.

TANYA

(looking at the phone)

This thick-necked, dull-eyed man is worth ten million dollars for coaching college throwy kickyball?

JAMES

Well there's taxes.

TANYA

So six, seven million. Does he have kids?

AMY

It says... two boys. And a dog named Buck. There's a picture of the dog too.

JAMES

Let me guess. Golden Retriever.

AMY

How'd you know?

TANYA

What a fella. Picture perfect.

JAMES

You know the players - the "student-athletes" - don't see a dime. If they even accept a gift, say a trip to Vegas for a "massage" or whatever, they can lose their scholarships. They get chronic brain damage playing this stupid bloodsport.

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

And the sponsors and network executives and coaches take home millions a year.

AMY

That's bonkers.

JAMES

We should kidnap him. Hold him for ransom. Wouldn't that be hilarious?

TANYA

Yeah. Sure. Why not? Before the next game. They'd have to pay and fast.

AMY

Wait, what? Kidnap the coach?

JAMES

It's a joke...

TANYA

Maybe maybe not. Think about it. We could get just enough money to pay our loans. And a year of grace so we can recover from our educations. He has the money. Call it ethical kidnapping. Vigilante justice. Direct action.

JAMES

How many beers did you have? How many beers did she have?

TANYA

Direct action, comrade.

JAMES

Well thanks for the fun birthday, you two!

TANYA

Sure. It's so much fun to groan about our poor financial choices and do nothing productive to change it.

JAMES

(hissing)

Kidnapping is not productive!

AMY

“There’s man all over for you, blaming on his boots
the faults of his feet.”

JAMES

Stop the damned Shakespeare!

AMY

That’s Beckett. Godot.

JAMES

Look, Tanya. We can’t do something like that.

TANYA

Why not?

JAMES

It’s gonna get better. Things... well...

JAMES & AMY

Things have a way of working out.

TANYA

I’ll get the check.

TANYA exits.

AMY

It’s a plan anyway.

JAMES

(sitting)

Be quiet.

AMY

(hushed)

He’s rich. We’ll take only what we need. He’ll
bounce back. He makes more in a year than we’ll
make in ten at this rate!

JAMES

It’s a felony.

AMY

Sure but we're smart. We could put our heads together and make it foolproof. It'd be dramatic. A sudden and shocking forgiveness of debts.

JAMES

Did she tell you about the "Jubilee?"

AMY

Yeah.

JAMES

Great fantasy. She needs to join us in this millennium.

AMY

She seems serious.

JAMES

Liquid courage. She can't afford to adjunct and better positions are scarce. The humanities turned out to be pretty inhumane.

AMY

That's a good line. The humanities turned out/

JAMES

And her parents are busting her chops. The numbers don't work. I'm lucky. My folks are all dead. It's a relief actually.

AMY

Oh. I didn't know...

JAMES

Capitalism will devour itself soon enough, and we'll remake society in the ruins. If not our generation, then the next.

AMY

Yeah, well my mom can't wait for me to move home. She says we're going to cook together because it'll help me find a "keeper." Ugh.

TANYA returns.

JAMES
Did they comp the last round?

TANYA
What do you think?

She sets the bill down. HE looks.

JAMES
Japery! Actual japery! On a man's birthday!

TANYA
And? What are you going to do about it?

JAMES
Write a strongly worded review.

TANYA
(signing the bill)
Let's take a walk. I've got a plan, and I'm done talking.

END SCENE

II: EARL GREY

A coffee shop in College Town, USA. Sunday morning, six days to game day.

AMY

It's really coming down out there.

COACH DANIELS

Better than snow.

AMY

I never bring an umbrella.

AMY shuffles and stares.

COACH DANIELS

Can I help you?

AMY

You're Coach Daniels.

COACH DANIELS

Yes?

AMY

That is awesome. What are you drinking?

COACH DANIELS

Tea.

AMY

That is awesome.

COACH DANIELS

You just said that.

AMY

Can I ask questions?

COACH DANIELS

Sure?

AMY

What kind of tea is that?

COACH DANIELS

Earl Grey?

AMY

Fancy. Umm. What's Coach Killjoy like?

COACH DANIELS

I'd rather not discuss Coach.

AMY

Next week's game is huge! We gotta win. That's what everyone says. It's a "must win." You have to win! Or else you're out of a job. The whole staff.

COACH DANIELS

Don't believe everything you hear.

AMY

It's not true?

COACH DANIELS

What's your name?

AMY

Samantha.

COACH DANIELS

You're a student?

AMY

Alumnus.

COACH DANIELS

Alumna. Unless you identify as?

AMY

As what?

COACH DANIELS

A man. That'd make you an alumnus. And that's cool. I don't judge.

AMY

No. Oh no. Pronouns she her. Ha ha. I never studied Latin.

COACH DANIELS

What's your major?

AMY

Theatre.

COACH DANIELS

I'm sorry.

AMY

It's fun. I make costumes. I like to make mask/

COACH DANIELS

Much work in that? In costumes?

AMY

Not in College Town.

COACH DANIELS

So you're gonna have to move then?

AMY

Probably. New York. Maybe LA.

COACH DANIELS

Expensive.

AMY

Things have a way of working out.

COACH DANIELS

I've got two boys and they're gonna study engineering. Computers. Business. Higher education is an investment.

AMY

You're one hundred percent correct, Coach

COACH DANIELS

I mean to each their own. The world needs theatre too I guess. Distraction. Spectacle. You just have to figure out how to make it work for you and your family.

AMY

I wish you were my coach!

COACH DANIELS

How fast you run the forty?

AMY

What?

A coffee appears.

COACH DANIELS

Forty yards. How fast can you run it?

AMY

I don't... run. I kind of... shimmy. I'm told you, I'm in the theatre.

COACH DANIELS

I'm messing with you. Here. This must be yours.

HE hands her the coffee.

AMY

So do you come here often?

COACH DANIELS

Every morning. I'm just waiting for my wife now. She lost her keys.

AMY

Is the tea for her?

COACH DANIELS

This is my tea. Notice I am drinking it.

AMY

Not a coffee man?

COACH DANIELS

Listen, Samantha, I'm a public figure. I can't be seen fraternizing with young women.

AMY

I understand. You probably get this all the time.

COACH DANIELS

Not from pretty young women. It's mostly drunk alums or boosters. Want to know whether we'll cover the spread.

AMY

What's the spread?

COACH DANIELS

Never mind. That's a nice scarf, Samantha. Keep that team spirit. Go Bucks.

AMY

Go Bucks.

COACH DANIELS

Hey, here's an interview I did for the Daily Buck after the last game. If you want to know how I feel about the season. And Coach Killjoy.

HE hands her the paper. JAMES enters and watches.

AMY

Thanks, Coach.

COACH DANIELS

The offense is scoring as many points as we did during our Championship season. And that's all I'm gonna say about that. It's a team sport tho. You win together, you lose together. That's what makes boys men. And that's what it's all about. The Bucks way. Championships are nice, but it ain't nothing if you don't take a winning spirit into the rest of your life.

AMY

"Cry 'Havoc!', and let slip the dogs of war."

COACH DANIELS

Okay. Sure.

AMY

Go Bucks.

COACH DANIELS

Go Bucks.

COACH DANIELS exits.

JAMES

(soggy)

I forgot my umbrella.

AMY

He's waiting for his wife. She doesn't usually come here but she forgot her keys. He drinks tea. Earl Grey. Classy.

JAMES

Okay, shut up.

AMY

Don't tell me to shut up.

JAMES

They haven't won a game all season. I'm surprised he's showing his face in public.

AMY

They won the Championship a few years ago. Look at that ring! They're national heroes. Local national heroes.

JAMES

You should record and listen back to yourself sometime. Give yourself notes.

AMY

Nobody's going to bother him.

JAMES

Bucks fans are vicious. Is he looking at us?

AMY

No. But if he comes over, remember my name's Samantha.

JAMES

This is such a stupid idea.

AMY

Don't be negative.

JAMES

Are you sure they don't have cameras in here?

AMY

It's a local shop. Not corporate. No cameras. I worked here as a sophomore.

JAMES

You know sophomore means "wise idiot."

AMY

I didn't take Latin.

JAMES

That's Greek. You are a wise idiot. Crap he's coming back. I'll see you at the, uhh, venue. Okay?

AMY

Yeah yeah shoo.

JAMES exits. COACH DANIELS returns.

COACH DANIELS

Rain stopped.

AMY

That's good.

COACH DANIELS

Wife's late. Let me give you a piece of advice. You mind? I don't want to "mansplain" or whatever.

AMY

Shoot.

COACH DANIELS

Never get married.

AMY

Why do you say that?

COACH DANIELS

Years of experience.

AMY
You're making a joke.

COACH DANIELS
Am I? Here's my card.

AMY
What's this for?

COACH DANIELS
For? When a grown man gives a young lady his
card? You didn't learn at least that much at this fine
institution of higher education?

AMY
I see.

COACH DANIELS
Whoa, Nelly. I'm not trying to make this weird, but.
I'm gonna just ask... discreetly...
(whispering)
You weren't hitting on me just then?

AMY
Oh. Maybe? I sometimes am and I don't know.

COACH DANIELS
You don't like older men?

AMY
Coach, you're married.

COACH DANIELS
Sure. Yeah yeah. And that's stopped anyone ever?
Are your folks together?

AMY
No.

COACH DANIELS
There you go.

AMY

They're still friends. I love my parents. Even if they don't love each other like they did when they... made me? Umm. Sorry, gross.

COACH DANIELS

We all got here the same way.

AMY

That is so true.

COACH DANIELS

You know why divorce is so expensive, Samantha?

AMY

Why?

COACH DANIELS

Because it's worth it.

AMY

Ha. Ha ha. Ha? That's actually very sad.

COACH DANIELS

Give me a ring. I'll get you tickets to the big game. In the alumni section. No strings attached. Alumnus to alumna. Cool?

AMY

Cool.

COACH exits. AMY blinks. Whoa, Nelly.

End Scene

III: ALL-NIGHTER

A house in College Town, USA. AMY, JAMES and TANYA are there. Sunday afternoon, six days to game day.

TANYA

It's Sunday afternoon. The big game is next Saturday. Home game. If they get him back by Friday, they'll have him for the game the next day. He's a tough guy, right?

AMY

Seems tough yeah.

TANYA

So he'll bounce right back from a little kidnapping. It's not like we're going to mutilate his genitals or something.

JAMES

Jesus...

TANYA

Worst case he might need some therapy. It'll be good for him. Get him to open up. We'll be helping him if you think about it.

JAMES

They're just gonna think it's a bad prank. Some crazy booster for the other team--

TANYA

Not after we put him on the phone to his wife and have him demand the money.

JAMES

Damn. That's cold.

TANYA

We won't threaten him explicitly. We just want the money. Simple. If we get him day after tomorrow, that's Tuesday, and let them sweat until Wednesday morning then make the demand, we can get the funds cleared through a series of crypto accounts by Thursday midnight and bam: he's back in time for kickoff noon Saturday. A hero.

JAMES

Whoa whoa crypto?

TANYA

Yes, crypto. If they don't have him on the sidelines for the game, they're going to lose. And if they lose, the entire coaching staff has to look for work.

AMY

Stakes is high.

JAMES

This is nuts. We should be padding our CVs or crowdfunding health insurance.

TANYA

We're simply entertaining an idea. We're academics. That's what we do, when we're not taking out usurious loans to study obscure medieval religious practices.

AMY

Usurious?

TANYA

Relating to the practice of usury.

JAMES

What do they actually teach you in the theatre department?

TANYA

Give me your homework.

JAMES and AMY hand TANYA an envelope apiece. SHE opens them.

AMY

Wrote by hand. Like you said.

TANYA

Okay let's crunch the numbers...

JAMES

Tanya, if this is one of those murder mystery parties and somebody's going to pop out of a closet and play dead, I swear on the corpse of Karl Marx I will mute you on social media for a month.

AMY

Ooo. A fate worse than death.

TANYA

Here. We need seven hundred eighty nine thousand dollars and eighteen cents. That's for federally backed student loans with interest for the next ten years as we'll have to pay slowly or arouse suspicion. I've included two years' at national median for us to figure out what we're really doing with our young lives.

JAMES

Two years? You said one.

TANYA

It's a felony whether we ask for half a million or three quarters. They can get us three quarters. And it's not going to matter, because we're not getting caught. Say it with me:

AMY & TANYA

We're not getting caught.

TANYA

James, say it. Attitude makes reality. We're/

ALL

We're not getting caught.

JAMES

Why not ask for two million dollars? Or ten? Really go big.

TANYA

That number's the sweet spot. He'll be able to get that before the game, either from his own accounts or from the boosters. And it gives us our financial lives back, each according to her needs--

JAMES

Do not start quoting Marx to justify this.

TANYA

That's the number.

JAMES

You're really serious.

TANYA

Between the three of us, we have sixty-five years of premium American education.

JAMES

Public schools.

TANYA

Nevertheless, we have got to be able to pull off a little kidnapping for ransom.

AMY

This is kind of fun.

JAMES

It's not fun, you flaming thespian. It's first degree kidnapping. Twenty years in the clink!

AMY

Women get lighter sentences, don't we?

TANYA

Indeed. We're more sympathetic. Less violent. Less likely to offend again. It's all statistics.

JAMES

Oh nice. You think they do much theatre in prison?

AMY

If they don't, I could start it. Guaranteed stage time. I could star and direct!

JAMES

You sure you unplugged all the household the electronics?

TANYA

Yes. Except for the microwave. And this paper shredder.

SHE shreds the paper.

TANYA (CONT'D)

I'm pretty sure it's not bugged.

JAMES

This is insane. The host could have like... a spy camera. You don't know.

TANYA

But that would violate the homesharing terms of service, James. I looked. This house is a dump at the edge of town with an absentee landlord.

JAMES

What if the host comes back unannounced?

TANYA

Do you understand the word "absentee"? They don't even live in College Town. They're homeshare slumlords. So it's ideal. I've got us here til Saturday noon. Saturday it's already booked for the big game, of course.

JAMES

I'm nauseous.

TANYA

It's nerves. Do some reading.

TANYA reveals a folder for AMY and one for JAMES.

AMY

What's this?

TANYA

That's the "historical kidnappings for ransom" folder. Lindbergh Baby. Frank Sinatra Jr.

(MORE)

TANYA (CONT'D)

That's a case we want to look at. They'd have gotten away with it if one of them hadn't gotten cold feet.

AMY

Okay...

TANYA

Make sure you look at the Virginia Piper case. Minneapolis 1972. The kidnapers got one million dollars. She was unharmed. And it's unsolved. That's the model. It can be done. You just have to be smart and not back out. It requires solidarity.

JAMES

(flipping through his book)

And this is the psychological literature?

TANYA

Yep.

JAMES

Where'd you print all this?

TANYA

It's not traceable, if that's what you're asking.

JAMES

And I'm supposed to take your word on that?

TANYA

Yes. We have to trust one another absolutely for this to work. After it's done, if one of us cracks, we all come down. Solidarity. It's a tiny revolution.

JAMES

How much is this house costing you?

TANYA

Don't worry about the house.

JAMES

And that's not going to look suspicious when they canvas the area? A local renting a house?

TANYA

I did it under a pseudonym, tied it to a fake online account. I'm not stupid. And I'm having my apartment professionally painted this week. Landlord knows.

AMY

That's genius.

JAMES

No, it's not. We haven't even discussed why this coach in particular. Why him and not somebody else?

TANYA

They need him the most. The offense is the only thing keeping that team going.

JAMES

Why not the head coach?

TANYA

Killjoy doesn't go out in public. Daniels does. As Amy discovered. Same coffee shop every day, same time. Creature of habit.

JAMES

He's got kids.

TANYA

And the kids will be fine. They'll tell them a story.

JAMES

He hasn't done anything to us.

TANYA

You're the one always talking about late capitalist oppression and the imminent Revolution.

JAMES

Yes, the prison industrial complex is part of that. They love fresh meat.

TANYA

Well this Daniels guy is a pillar of that system. A ringleader of the whole bread and circuses garbage. He's barely forty and already has more money than he and his family could ever need. So he suffers for a few days. Fine. I'm fine with that if it means the three of us can spare ourselves twenty, thirty years of toil paying interest on unjust loans.

AMY

And he's a cheater.

TANYA

What?

AMY

He gave me his card. He hit on me kinda hard.

TANYA

\We can use that against him.

JAMES

People cheat. Doesn't mean they need to get tied up in a basement.

TANYA

Locked up. Nobody's tying anything. Ties can be undone. Amy, I'm setting a rule. If and when we get him here, do not speak to him. Even with a mask. He might remember you from the coffee shop if he hears your voice.

AMY

I could kind of disguise it. Like this. Why 'ello there, luv. Fancy a cuppa? I really like me some'a that American football it's a real corker!

JAMES

What are you doing?

AMY

Ringo?

JAMES

Nope. Nope. Nope.

TANYA

Just stay mum, okay? Even with your mask on. James and I will handle him, in the basement. You probably won't even have to go down there.

AMY

Okay. So what will I be doing?

TANYA

You'll have plenty to do. We need somebody to keep watch up here, in case we have to run for it. We'll keep one of our cars in a lot, back through the woods, just in case.

JAMES

And who actually kidnaps him?

TANYA

That's what I haven't figured out.

AMY

This is where maybe a college education isn't so helpful.

JAMES

No shit.

TANYA

We know he drinks Earl Grey tea. And he cheats. And he goes to that coffee shop every day. We've got his mobile number. We can spoof a mobile phone number and send him a text.

JAMES

You know how to do that?

TANYA

I can learn. Maybe that's it. He orders his tea. We hit him with a message that sends him to his vehicle.

JAMES

Yeah, and?

TANYA

And nothing's there. So he comes back and gets his tea. Which we've dosed in the meantime.

JAMES

Dosed?

TANYA

You know how easy it is to get rufenol in a town like this?

JAMES

No? Why would I know that?

TANYA

It's easy. In College Town, USA? Please. And those baristas just leave drinks up on the counter unattended.

AMY

It's true...

TANYA

So he drinks his tea. We hit him with another message. He comes back to his car, a little dizzy. Gets into his car. One of us knocks on his window, dressed like a cop--

AMY

I can do the costume!

TANYA

Sure. License and registration/

JAMES

We're adding impersonation of a police officer to our offenses.

TANYA

We tell him he's too intoxicated to drive. Tell him we understand. He's under a lot of pressure. And hey, we're Bucks fans. We don't want a scandal before the big game. He just needs to sleep it off in the passenger's side. He does.

(MORE)

TANYA (CONT'D)

We dump his devices someplace, drive him here, move him into the basement, and drive his car back to the coffee shop with his devices. He comes to, and we've got him locked up.

JAMES

We're gonna knock out a college football coach with a date rape drug? That's what we've come up with, with our sixty-five years of public education?

TANYA

Why not? And then make the ransom the next morning. Wednesday. Just enough time to think about it. They'll liquidate some stocks in rapid order, get it into crypto, and it'll hit a series of accounts. We'll move it to ten other accounts. Untraceable. Seriously. That's what crypto is for. There's forums.

JAMES

Have you slept? Since my party?

TANYA

No. So what? I do all-nighters all the time.

JAMES

And how much Rufenol are we going to hit him with? To knock him out?

TANYA reveals a third book.

TANYA

Here's the drugs and cryptocurrency research. What would you say he weighs, Amy?

AMY

Well he's big. Two-thirty?

TANYA

And you're certain there aren't any cameras at the coffee shop?

AMY

I'm sure. Yeah. I double-checked yesterday. There aren't any wires or anything.

JAMES

This is a really fun game, but we have to agree. Unanimously. If one of us is out... or even slightly unsure...

AMY

I'm pretty sure.

JAMES

Well I'm not.

TANYA

Big tough revolutionary. You're a modern day Lenin.

JAMES

I value my future more than a couple hundred thousand bucks.

TANYA

It's a quarter of a million dollars. In a week. It's literally the definition of freedom.

AMY

I could move to New York... And get my own place right away. A little studio.

TANYA

Yeah, you could. Read the materials. This is foolproof. Worst case scenario, they don't pay the ransom, we shuttle him off to a field someplace, leave him there and never discuss it again.

JAMES

This is how people go to prison, Tanya.

TANYA

Don't be a coward.

AMY

Yeah, James. Don't be a coward.

JAMES

I'm not a coward.

TANYA

Great. So here's what's next: go do everything you normally would on a Sunday afternoon. Go to the library. Be seen. Use your phones like you would normally. Don't bring them here, of course. But just do what you'd typically do. We're going to keep a cycle when we have him: two of us here, one out in the world on shifts. Alibis for each of us. Read your materials tonight. Come back tomorrow eleven AM. We take a vote.

AMY

What about you?

TANYA

I'm going to stay here and read about cryptocurrency and how we should handle the money we get from the cheating phallic symbol we're going to kidnap day after tomorrow. We'll want to launder it somehow, slowly. We can start a company. Digital marketing or something. Something where money flows online and we can methodically slip the crypto in. Pay taxes on it. We're upright citizens after all.

AMY

This is so exciting.

JAMES

Jesus, Tanya. I had no idea you were this... this...

TANYA

What?

JAMES

Concerned about money.

TANYA

It isn't about money. It's about power. Like everything else. And I'm sick of having none and taking it lying down. In under a week we can wipe out a lifetime of debt.

JAMES

A hundred things have to go right for this to work.

TANYA

The hardest part is getting him here. After that, it's all downhill. And if my plan doesn't work, if we can't roofy him and get him to pass out in his car, then we bail and nobody's hurt.

JAMES

This is not why I went to grad school.

TANYA

And why did you go to graduate school?

JAMES

Touche'.

TANYA

Do your homework. Be here tomorrow at eleven AM sharp. And we vote.

END SCENE

IV: WHOA NELLY

The coffee shop. College Town, USA.

COACH DANIELS

(ordering toward the audience)

I'd like my usual. Large Earl Grey. Leave the bag in.
Thanks. Looking great today, umm, Susan. Is that
inappropriate? I'm not gonna get hashtagged, am I?
Ha ha ha ha ha. I don't give a damn, you look great.
Okay. See you next Saturday. Go Bucks.

HE tips big. TANYA sits with a burner phone and a laptop, wearing a wig and glasses.
SHE types, and Coach Daniels' phone rings: the Bucks' fight song.

COACH DANIELS (CONT'D)

(phone)

This is Coach Daniels? Hello?

TANYA smirks. DANIELS looks at his phone and turns it off. TANYA presses buttons
into the phone.

[NUMBER UNAVAILABLE]

Coach. I can't forget meeting you. I want to see you.
I know you're at the coffee shop. I see your car. I'll
be right here.

[DANIELS]

Who's this? This isn't Deborah, is it?

[NUMBER UNAVAILABLE]

Who's Deborah? Come on. I'm not gonna wait all
morning :-(

Daniels looks to an unseen barista.

COACH DANIELS

I'll be right back.

HE exits. The tea appears. TANYA approaches the counter.

TANYA

I'll have a coffee. Black. Thanks.

SHE tips. SHE looks round. Her coffee appears. SHE doctors the tea and takes the coffee.
SHE exits quickly with her laptop and a gym bag. COACH DANIELS returns.

COACH DANIELS

This is mine? Yeah, thanks.

HE sits. HE opens a paper and drinks his tea. HE blows on it. A beat.

[NUMBER UNAVAILABLE]

Where are you?

[COACH DANIELS]

I don't know who you are, but I don't appreciate this.

[NUMBER UNAVAILABLE]

I'm waiting by your car?

[COACH DANIELS]

I didn't see you.

[NUMBER UNAVAILABLE]

Well I'm right here.

[COACH DANIELS]

Tell me who you are and I'll come out.

[NUMBER UNAVAILABLE]

Las Vegas? You remember?

[COACH DANIELS]

I make a point of forgetting everything I do in Las Vegas, darling. And I'm there a lot.

[NUMBER UNAVAILABLE]

Come and see. It's a surprise. I want to see if you're as sexy as I remember...

COACH DANIELS closes his phone. HE sips his tea. HE stands, shaky. HE rubs his eyes. HE exits.

TANYA reappears, dressed as a police officer, effectively unrecognizable. Bizarrely she wears a medieval mask. Is this real? SHE stalks after COACH DANIELS.

END SCENE

V: PERCHANCE TO DREAM

A house in College Town, USA. Monday, five days to game day.

TANYA

And that is the whole plan. A to Z.

JAMES

I still think the problem is actually getting him here.

AMY

I kind of agree...

JAMES

I had a dream about it. Last night. You were there, Tanya.

TANYA

How'd it go?

JAMES

I think we got him, but... I don't know. It was a dream. It was more like a feeling. I saw you dressed as a cop, Tanya. You were the one who roofied him. Got him into the car. But you didn't look like yourself... It's like, you had a mask on.

AMY

Ooo maybe it's a sign. What kind of mask?

JAMES

Something medieval.

AMY

That's definitely a sign.

JAMES

Yeah, a sign we should back off.

TANYA

Presume that part of the plan works. What about when we get him here?

JAMES

That all works for me.

AMY

I brought some masks...

SHE reveals some.

JAMES

These aren't from the theatre department, are they?

AMY

Home stash. Greek. Medieval, like the dream...

JAMES

Sort of, yeah...

AMY

And... drumroll... Karl Marx for you!

SHE hands a mask of Karl Marx to James. The Greek mask SHE keeps. TANYA gets the Medieval mask of course.

AMY (CONT'D)

I started reading the Communist Manifesto. Got a copy right here.

JAMES

And what do you think of it? I'm desperately curious.

AMY

Those guys were onto something. You could make it into a great monologue for auditions! It's very dramatic.

JAMES

Auditions?! It's the single most important text of the past two hundred... You know what? Forget it. Tanya, I just need to know we can pull the plug. If something doesn't go right at the coffee shop. We need like a safe word. Something nobody would say in regular conversation...

TANYA

Oh my God what are you talking about/

JAMES

Chrysanthemum.

TANYA

Chrysanthemum?

AMY

I like it. Chrysanthemum.

JAMES

It was my mother's favorite flower.

AMY

That's sweet. You're a sweetie.

TANYA

Okay so the safe word is chrysanthemum.

JAMES

And we can use it to pull the plug. Any time.

TANYA

Any time up to getting him here. I mean, let's be reasonable. Once we do the act, we have to see it to the end or what's the point? You can't just shout "chrysanthemum" and stop the whole show.

JAMES

I still don't think we're going to get him here. It's too crazy.

TANYA

This is the vote. It has to be unanimous. I made these little figures for the occasion...

AMY

These are so cute. And witchy.

TANYA

I told you: I'm a witch.

JAMES

No, you're freaking not/

TANYA

Yes, I am. I've taken up witchcraft since we stopped seeing one another, thank you very much...

JAMES

Are you serious?

TANYA

And I'm casting a spell of success over our shared enterprise.

JAMES

Isn't that a phase girls go through in their teens or something? After horses and soccer?

TANYA

I'm a late bloomer. Here's yours. And yours. Now put it on the table if you're in.

TANYA sets hers on the table. AMY sets hers on the table. JAMES withholds his, considering.

AMY

"Be brave, then, for your captain is brave, and vows reformation."

TANYA

Listen to the theatre major. This is indeed the stuff of drama. James? You in?

JAMES

Fuck it. The Revolution won't be televised.

JAMES sets his in.

TANYA

Okay, great. No going back.

JAMES

Unless we say the magic word.

TANYA

Whatever. Hey. So, James. Can I get you to come with me quick?

JAMES

Okay?

TANYA

First let's put on the masks. We should get comfortable with them.

THEY do.

AMY

We look so cool.

TANYA

We'll be right back, Amy.

AMY

Okay...

TANYA and JAMES exit. AMY stands with her copy of the Communist Manifest and performs it like an audition.

AMY (CONT'D)

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes. In the earlier epochs of history, we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various orders, a manifold gradation of social rank. In ancient Rome we have patricians, knights, plebeians, slaves; in the Middle Ages, feudal lords, vassals, guild-masters, journeymen, apprentices, serfs; in almost all of these classes, again, subordinate gradations/

JAMES

(yelling)

Amy! Amy! Open the damned door!

AMY

Hang on...

AMY exits briefly, in her mask, and staggers back.

AMY (CONT'D)

Oh. Oh. Oh. Whoa. Whoa, Nelly...

JAMES and TANYA carry COACH DANIELS across the room.

JAMES

Chrysanthemum chrysanthemum chrysanthemum/

TANYA

I did it this morning, okay? It worked just like I said/

AMY

Whoa. Wow. Umm.

TANYA

What did I say? Don't speak when he's around.

AMY

Okay. Umm. Okay....

JAMES

Chrysanthemum chrysanthemum chrysanthemum
chrysanthemum chrysanthemum chrysanthemum/

TANYA

Shut up! Both of you! I got him here. There's no
safe word now. Come on. To the basement. Amy,
watch his car. I'll be back to move it.

AMY signals thumbs up.

JAMES

Chrysanthemum chrysanthemum chrysanthemum
chrysanthemum chrysanthemum chrysanthemum/

JAMES and TANYA exit with COACH DANIELS. AMY stands looking. A moment,
then:

AMY

Whoa, Nelly.

Ahem, where was I?

Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinct feature: it has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other — Bourgeoisie and Proletariat. From the serfs of the Middle Ages sprang the chartered burghers of the earliest towns. From these burgesses the first elements of the bourgeoisie were developed.

Goooooooooooo Bucks!

End of Act

VI: TUESDAY MORNING

The basement of the house in College Town, USA, the following morning. COACH DANIELS is chained to a thick pipe by his ankle, a neck pillow around his neck and various throw pillows beneath him. His hands are cuffed together. There is a gag in his mouth and a sleep mask covers his eyes. A radio is there, and not much else.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

... it's Tuesday, and the Bucks have four days to get their house in order before the big rivalry game against the undefeated Bison. It's amazing to think just three years ago this time, the Bucks were on their way to a one loss season, that loss coming to the Bisons, and a National Championship. But that's where we are. And you have to think Saturday's chance to play spoiler, to hand the hated Bisons a loss in this storied rivalry, is a must-win for Coach Killjoy and his staff. The Bucks know how to put points on the board - there's talk of a move to the NFL for Offensive Head Coach Daniels, despite the dismal record. They just need to get special teams and defense on track/

JAMES and TANYA enter in their respective masks, dressed in black. TANYA has a taser. JAMES has a plate of bacon. The theatre should smell like bacon. Fry some bacon between scenes or at intermission if you take one.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

I'm not saying I'd put money on the Bucks in this one, but it could happen, and I'm sure Coach Killjoy and team are drilling hard at practice all week--

TANYA turns off the radio. COACH DANIELS stirs and sits upright. HE makes muffled noises.

JAMES

Just relax.

TANYA

We're not going to hurt you.

COACH DANIELS strains against his restraints.

TANYA (CONT'D)

Hey. Calm down. Hey. You're safe.

JAMES

We brought you some bacon.

TANYA

Everybody loves bacon. Now sit still and we'll take out the gag. You want that? Nod if you want that.

COACH DANIELS nods. TANYA positions herself beside him with the taser out. SHE gestures to JAMES, who quickly undoes the ball gag and pulls it away.

COACH DANIELS

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhhhh!

TANYA

Shut up! Shut up! Hey!

JAMES

What do we do?

TANYA

I've got a taser. You want me to tase you? I'll tase you! Shut up. Stop screaming.

COACH DANIELS

What the creeping hell is this?!

TANYA

If you'd shut up we could explain/

COACH DANIELS

I have to be at practice this is bullshit who the hell are you take this mask off goddamn it what the shit/

TANYA

You need to calm down.

COACH DANIELS

Where the hell am I? We need to call my wife she's going to freak out this is not goddamned okay my neck hurts Jesus what the actual Christ is this?

JAMES

Want me to put it back in?

COACH DANIELS

I'll bite your fingers off you punkass little piece of
shit/

TANYA

You really should think about your position here, sir.

COACH DANIELS

My position is once I get outta here I'm gonna
unleash raging hell on you people. You messed with
the wrong man.

TANYA

I'm going to tase you if you don't calm down/

COACH DANIELS

Go ahead. Do it. I'm calling your bluff. Screw you.
Yeah. How you like that? You got nothin'. This is
some goddamned prank. Somebody's going to jail, I
don't care who put you up to this.

JAMES and TANYA go aside.

JAMES

How does that thing work?

TANYA

You just go up to him and zzzztttt real quick. Like
swatting a fly.

COACH DANIELS

Why does it smell like bacon?

JAMES

We brought you bacon. For breakfast.

COACH DANIELS

I'm pegan.

TANYA

Pegan?

COACH DANIELS

Paleo vegan.

JAMES

That's not a thing.

COACH DANIELS

I hate the smell of bacon. Get it out of here.

JAMES

Everybody loves bacon. Now you're bluffing.

COACH DANIELS

I'm not bluffing. I'm a vegan. It's a diet. Invented by a guy named Dr. Mark Hyman.

JAMES

Mark Hyman? That's a made-up name. I call bullshit.

COACH DANIELS

Hyman with an A. It's true, look it up.

JAMES

Oh I will, later.

COACH DANIELS

Can you get rid of the bacon? Please? At least that.

JAMES

Oh I'll get rid of the bacon all right.

JAMES eats the bacon.

TANYA

Thank you for calming down, sir.

COACH DANIELS

It's coach. Not sir. Call me coach.

TANYA

Coach.

COACH DANIELS

But you knew that.

TANYA

Maybe we did, maybe we didn't.

COACH DANIELS

Don't play games with me. What is this? What do you want?

TANYA

We'll get to that. First we want to make sure you're okay, and that you're comfortable.

COACH DANIELS

I am not okay. I am not comfortable.

TANYA

What can we do?

COACH DANIELS

I have to piss. And I'm hungry.

JAMES

Who doesn't like bacon? He's already lying to us.

COACH DANIELS

I'm pegan, you pissant. Who's the little boy? Why you letting some chick run the show?

TANYA

Chick? I'm not a chick.

COACH DANIELS

Whatever. You're obviously the boss. You some kind of fag hag? Is that it?

TANYA tases him briefly. JAMES drops the remaining bacon.

COACH DANIELS (CONT'D)

Ouch! Ouch! Goddamn! Okay. Okay.

TANYA

We don't want to hurt you.

COACH DANIELS

Damn that stings.

TANYA

But we're not going to take abuse. Verbal or otherwise. Capiche?

COACH DANIELS

Capiche? Yes I capiche. So who put you up to this?
What Bison booster shit for brains paid you?

TANYA

You just need to sit back and calm down.

COACH DANIELS

What do you want?

TANYA

I told you. I want you to be comfortable.

COACH DANIELS

So I'm hungry and I need to piss.

TANYA

What can you eat, on your pegan diet?

COACH DANIELS

I want eggs.

JAMES

Oh see, eggs. That's not vegan.

COACH DANIELS

It's pegan. I told you.

TANYA

We'll bring you eggs.

COACH DANIELS

Only farm-fresh organic. Okay? I eat six organic
eggs for breakfast.

TANYA

Okay.

COACH DANIELS

I need to urinate.

JAMES finds and deposits a bucket next to COACH DANIELS.

COACH DANIELS (CONT'D)

I'm not going to do this blindfolded.

TANYA

We'll take off the blindfold, but you have to agree no more verbal abuse.

COACH DANIELS

I'll try. I got a bad temper.

TANYA

Try isn't good enough, Coach. What would you tell one of your, ahh, student-athletes in this situation?

COACH DANIELS

Damn I don't know. I'd say: suck it up and do what they tell ya'. They're not... it's just a bad prank.

TANYA

So take your own advice.

COACH DANIELS

Okay. I'll... no more abuse.

TANYA

I'm not a "fag hag."

COACH DANIELS

Of course not, no. You're in charge. You're the boss.

TANYA

Better. Okay. Sit still.

JAMES removes the eye mask as TANYA stands there with the taser outstretched.
COACH DANIELS squints and looks at the two of them.

COACH DANIELS

What the hell are you supposed to be?

TANYA

We're admirers. We admire you.

COACH DANIELS

You're some kind of a bird? And that little punkass... he's supposed to be what? Karl Marx?

TANYA

There's the bucket.

JAMES

Here's some hand sanitizer.

TANYA

Go ahead and do your business. We'll be back with your organic eggs.

COACH DANIELS

Wait, what day is it?

TANYA

Tuesday.

COACH DANIELS

What time is it?

TANYA

About eleven.

COACH DANIELS

I'm missing practice. You know what that means? Do you have any idea?

TANYA

When's the last time you missed practice?

COACH DANIELS

I don't.

TANYA

So they'll start to worry, won't they?

COACH DANIELS

Yes, they will.

TANYA

Good.

JAMES

You want the radio on?

COACH DANIELS

What? No.

TANYA
We'll be back with breakfast.

JAMES
Just don't do anything stupid...

JAMES and TANYA exit.

COACH DANIELS
(shouting)
This is some prank, guys. This is really over the top!

COACH DANIELS tests his restraints. It's hopeless. HE goes to the bucket with the hand sanitizer and undoes his fly awkwardly with cuffed hands.

COACH DANIELS (CONT'D)
Guys! This isn't funny. Son of a bitch. What kind of kidnappers give you hand sanitizer? Guys! Come on! Shit. Come on guys. I'm missing practice. Guys? This stopped being funny when that chick tased me. I know you're listening. Guys?!

END SCENE

VII: PREMATURE ESCALATION

The living room of the house in College Town, USA. AMY sits at a table, writing. SHE wears black as the others. Her mask hangs someplace conspicuous. Continuous from the previous scene, JAMES and TANYA emerge from the basement in their masks, the plate for the bacon and the taser.

AMY

Is he okay? How'd it go?

TANYA

Fine.

JAMES

It did not go fine!

AMY

Ooo what happened?

JAMES

You're supposed to keep watch!

AMY

I'm making notes--

JAMES

About what?

AMY

I'm trying to figure out if this is a comedy or a tragedy.

JAMES

What?

AMY

This is how my brain works.

JAMES

That's not something a working brain would worry about in this situation,

AMY

It'll help me come to terms with what we're doing.

JAMES
Watch the driveway!

AMY
Okay, okay. Sheesh.

SHE stands and goes to look out. JAMES and TANYA remove their masks and hang them beside AMY's.

JAMES
We need organic eggs.

AMY
Why do we need organic eggs?

JAMES
He's on a crazy diet. Like a paleo vegan thing.

AMY
Eggs aren't vegan.

JAMES
We've been through this.

AMY
Did he eat the bacon?

JAMES
Just please watch the driveway/

AMY
Who doesn't like bacon?

JAMES
Sound the alarm when somebody comes up it.

AMY
Crow like a rooster? Right?

JAMES
Old McDonald's Farm, yes.

AMY crows like a roaster.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Perfect.

AMY does it again.

JAMES (CONT'D)

We got it.

AMY goes for a third. What to say about it?

TANYA

Okat, let's debrief this, James.

JAMES

Yes, let's, Tanya.

TANYA

I think it went well. It seems you have another opinion.

JAMES

You tased him!

TANYA

He called me a fag hag.

AMY

That's not very nice.

JAMES

It's a premature use of a taser. A premature escalation!

TANYA

I followed my gut.

JAMES

Now what do we threaten him with if he gets out of line?!

AMY

Further tasing.

JAMES

Maybe I should wield the taser.

TANYA

I wield the taser.

JAMES

Chrysanthemum.

TANYA

Stop saying that.

AMY

Are the masks okay?

TANYA

The masks are fine. You're doing fine. Everything is fine.

JAMES

Chrysanthemum.

TANYA

We agreed the safe word was only in play prior to the actual kidnapping. A grown man is chained up in the basement. We are past backing out.

JAMES

Chrysanth/

TANYA

I will tase you.

AMY

Whoa whoa whoa guys/

JAMES

You wouldn't.

TANYA

Say it one more time and find out.

JAMES

This is extortion or something.

TANYA

Extortion? Is your brain jelly? You're in this for a quarter of a million dollars.

JAMES

I'm an unwilling accomplice to a felony.

TANYA

It was your idea!

JAMES

It was a joke! We'd been drinking!

AMY

"I have very poor and unhappy brains for drinking. I could well wish courtesy would invent some other custom of entertainment." Othello--

JAMES

If you quote the Bard one more time, I'm going to turn us all in.

TANYA

Stop dictating what she can and cannot say.

JAMES

You tricked me.

TANYA

You put in your little witch doll thingy--

JAMES

Yeah, what's that all about anyway?

TANYA

I'm a witch. I keep telling you, but you won't believe me.

JAMES

So what are we your coven now?

AMY

I'd join your coven, Tanya. Call me Titania.

TANYA

I'm a solo practitioner.

JAMES

You've gone fully mental. What is it? Did our relationship break you? Was I too unbearably wonderful?

TANYA

You couldn't commit!

JAMES

I'm not even thirty! I have to keep my options open/

TANYA

Just like I knew you couldn't commit to this! You gave yourself a little exit clause. Your dumb safe word. And of course it's about your mom. Your mommy's favorite flower. You're a goddamned manchild, James. I knew I would have to handle the hard part in this. Like I handled most the hard parts of our relationship. It's called unpaid emotional labor and women have been doing it since/

JAMES

Is that what this is about? Our undeniable sexual tension?

TANYA

Ha! Double ha! Ha ha ha!

JAMES

That's it, isn't it. This Bonnie and Clyde and Titania thing? It's just some sublimated way to act out unfinished erotic business in our relationship--

TANYA

Everything is not about you!

JAMES

I have a reasonable complaint here. You hoodwinked me. The both of us. Amy, you should be upset too! She went ahead and put all of us at risk.

TANYA

Risk? You should be thanking me!

JAMES

Oh, yes, queen Tanya. Doctor Tanya. Scholar of medieval uselessness, I defer to your superior ability to kidnap a man and involve your friends against their will!

TANYA

I still didn't hear a "thank you."

AMY

Thank you, Tanya.

JAMES

Oh yes, "thank you" for involving me in this elaborate scheme you constructed. Weren't we supposed to kidnap him today, Tuesday? What's this do to your perfect plan?

TANYA

Nothing. We let them sweat it out one more night and send a message from him first thing tomorrow morning.

JAMES

The man has kids.

TANYA

Kids will believe anything. "Daddy's busy coaching young men to give other young men brain injuries. Daddy's hopped a plane to Vegas again to bang some hookers. Daddy will be back soon, don't worry."

AMY

My dad went out to buy some shingles and didn't come back for a year.

JAMES

This is cruel!

TANYA

We're past talking about the ethics of this!

AMY

You two should stop fighting.

JAMES & TANYA

We're not fighting!

AMY

You sound like my folks at the holidays.

JAMES

Yeah, well this isn't a holiday. It's much worse. We can still stop this without anybody getting hurt.

TANYA

Nobody's going to get hurt. What happened downstairs works for us. He knows we'll use force.

JAMES

The idea was to not use force.

TANYA

A little sting from a taser is fine.

JAMES

People have heart attacks from those things. Go into comas. It's not foolproof.

TANYA

I won't do it again.

JAMES

We should get some mace. As an alternative.

AMY

That's a good idea.

TANYA

Okay, we're going to start our alibi shifts. Every eight hours, go out and be seen. Amy, you first.

AMY

Okay.

TANYA

Pick up some organic eggs, Amy, and some mace.

JAMES

He's hungry now.

TANYA

And he's going to wait to eat.

JAMES

What? Why?

TANYA

You read the psychological literature. You tell me.

JAMES

I guess... so he knows who's in charge? So he stops making stupid requests for things like organic eggs?

AMY

Sometimes you just gotta the bacon that's given to you.

TANYA

You're going to make a wonderful sociologist, James. You're such a keen observer of the human condition.

JAMES

Bite me.

AMY

You two are obviously still in love with one another.

TANYA

Let's stay focused.

AMY

Okay, I'm going to town for eggs and mace.

TANYA

Yeah, and go back to your place. Use your phone like you normally would. Just do normal things. Okay?

AMY

(taking a backpack to leave)

Normal things. Sure. Normal normal normal.

TANYA

And Amy, this is a comedy.

AMY

Why?

TANYA

Because nobody's going to die at the end.

AMY

Right. Of course.

JAMES

I might still gouge my own eyes out tho.

TANYA

I'd pay to see that.

AMY

Stop fighting.

AMY exits.

JAMES

You're still in love with me, aren't you? Or you are
but you don't know it or/

TANYA

Watch the driveway.

SHE exits. JAMES stands watch over the driveway. HE considers things. HE takes his mask and places it on, and returns to his post.

END SCENE

VIII: BACHPFEIFFENGESICHT

The basement of the house in College Town, USA. The following day, Wednesday. Three days to the big game. Coach Daniels sits on the pillows in a half lotus, eyes closed. JAMES and TANYA emerge in their masks, HE with mace and SHE with her taser.

TANYA

Coach, good morning.

DANIELS doesn't twitch.

JAMES

He's messing with us.

TANYA

Coach, hello.

JAMES

We know you can hear us. Hey. Come on.

TANYA

We do need a word with you. Sir?

Nothing.

JAMES

Come here. Come here. Yes, you.

THEY go aside.

JAMES (CONT'D)

This is what I'm talking about. He's up to something. The diet. Now he's meditating?

TANYA

People have diets. People meditate.

JAMES

Not football coaches. Football coaches eat red meat and spit in yer' eye! Football coaches pray to the angry God of the gridiron and take your girl from you at prom!

TANYA

What year are you living in?

JAMES

What year are you living in? You're supposed to be a witch? Cast a spell on him then. Get him to talk.

TANYA

That's not how it works.

JAMES

Something's not right. What if he just ignores us?

TANYA

We use our leverage. He needs to eat.

JAMES

Okay. Smart. Yeah. And you know. The other end of that.

TANYA

The other end of eating?

JAMES

Think it through.

TANYA

Oh. Yeah. He's got the bucket.

JAMES

Maybe he's done it already? A number two?

Turning back, to DANIELS, JAMES approaches cautiously and takes the bucket. HE brings it back to TANYA.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Liquid.

TANYA

Great.

JAMES

This is perverse.

TANYA steps toward COACH DANIELS.

TANYA

Coach, you have to be hungry. If you ignore us, we're going to have a hard time leaving you breakfast. You hear?

JAMES

I don't bring wet wipes to people who ignore me. I bet you could use some wet wipes, huh Coach?

TANYA

Let's focus on breakfast first.

JAMES

Listen, I'm done playing around here. Coach, we know you're in there. Knock knock. We know you can hear us. Hey, Coach--

As HE speaks, JAMES approaches COACH DANIELS until HE gets a bit too close and DANIELS springs to life. JAMES stumbles back, and DANIELS comes up against his chains, snarling.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Goddamn.

COACH DANIELS

You little piece of trash. Come here. Come here! I'll show you where to stuff your wet wipes/

TANYA

You want the taser again? No! No! I didn't think so.

COACH DANIELS returns to sitting.

JAMES

I told you he's faking.

COACH DANIELS

I'm not faking anything.

JAMES

So what was that? You're meditating?

COACH DANIELS

Yeah I meditate? We teach the whole damned squad to meditate. Sports psych. Figure it's the best option I've got. No mattress. Can't sleep.

TANYA

This will all be over soon.

COACH DANIELS

Yeah? When?

TANYA

That's what we came to discuss.

COACH DANIELS

This isn't a discussion. This is kidnapping.

TANYA

We need each other.

COACH DANIELS

Here's where you make your demand. Am I right?

TANYA

Yes. We need something that you have.

COACH DANIELS

You're definitely not with the Bisons. This isn't some big prank.

TANYA

No. Of course not.

COACH DANIELS

It's not sex stuff is it?

TANYA

Sex stuff?

COACH DANIELS

Yeah like kinky sex stuff--

JAMES

Ugh. No. Jeeze/

COACH DANIELS

You've got me chained up and/

TANYA

It is not kinky sex stuff.

COACH DANIELS

Cuz' usually I pay for that by the hour.

TANYA

What you do in your sex life is your business.

COACH DANIELS

Those dungeons aren't cheap.

TANYA

I've always been kind of curious about that.

JAMES

Hey. Focus. He's messing with us/

COACH DANIELS

It's money, isn't it?

TANYA

Yes.

COACH DANIELS

How much?

TANYA

Let's slow down.

COACH DANIELS

It's always money. People without it think it changes everything. People with it don't talk about it because they know it only stands in for responsibility.

JAMES

Oh bravo, you giant-necked tool. What an original and mind-blowing insight into the machinery of capitalism!

COACH DANIELS

What's the money for?

TANYA

That's our business.

COACH DANIELS

You aren't terrorists.

JAMES

Maybe we are.

COACH DANIELS

How much?

TANYA

Seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

COACH DANIELS

Ha ha ha. You got the wrong guy, missy.

TANYA

Miss.

COACH DANIELS

What?

TANYA

Don't call me "missy." Call me miss.

COACH DANIELS

Okay. Whatever. I don't have that kind of money--

JAMES

Yes, you do.

COACH DANIELS

Who am I negotiating with? The bird or Comrade Stalin here?

JAMES

I'm Karl Marx.

COACH DANIELS

Whatever.

TANYA

We know you can get that amount of money. Before the game Saturday. Our demands are simple. Seven hundred fifty grand deposited in cryptocurrency into an account we designate. We have an exact amount we'll relay to your people.

COACH DANIELS

When's the last time you had a good stabbin'?

TANYA

Pardon me?

COACH DANIELS

Rough sex. When's the last time you had rough sex? Miss? Cuz' I know that dude's not giving you what you need.

JAMES

I resent the implication, sir.

COACH DANIELS

You're wound up like a top. I can hear it in your voice. You need some vitamin D from a real man. Not some limp-wristed lefty in a goofy mask--

TANYA

Seven hundred fifty. Crypto. By Thursday midnight. That's tomorrow. And cut the shit or we'll leave you without that bucket, or pillows, or anything.

COACH DANIELS

Are you deaf? I don't have that kind of money/

TANYA

If you don't have it personally, the boosters can come up with it. The team needs you. Am I wrong?

COACH DANIELS

No.

TANYA

We don't want to hurt you.

COACH DANIELS

So what?

TANYA

(revealing a recording device)

We need you to record a message.

COACH DANIELS

To whom?

TANYA

Whom do you want us to deliver it to?

COACH DANIELS

My wife? I suppose. Yeah. She'll know what to do in a situation like this.

TANYA

You're very close?

COACH DANIELS

Yeah. Married fifteen years.

JAMES

Why do you cheat on her then?

COACH DANIELS

Who says I cheat?

JAMES

Rumors. The grapevine.

COACH DANIELS

That's fun. I heard a rumor Karl Marx's philosophy is responsible for the deaths of some one hundred million people.

JAMES

Real Communism has never been tried.

COACH DANIELS

You're wearing a mask of a man who wanted to abolish capital in order to hide your pissant face so you can rob me of mine.

JAMES

Yeah, well at least I never cheated on my wife. Cuz' I never had one.

COACH DANIELS

Where'd you find this guy? You could do better. Even if you're a butterface. Hard to tell with the mask. I bet you're cute tho/

TANYA

We need you to make this recording.

COACH DANIELS

The Germans killed a lot of commies. They got a word. The coaches use it in the locker room. Bachpfeiffengesicht. You know it?

TANYA

No.

COACH DANIELS

It means a face that wants to be slapped. That's what you got on your hands there, with good old Karl.

JAMES

I've got mace, dude.

COACH DANIELS

Come on then. No? Course not.

TANYA

Coach. A recording. To your wife. Tell her you're okay. We aren't going to hurt you if we get the money by midnight Thursday. You'll be released within an hour of the transfer, someplace safe, and left with a phone you can use to make a call.

TANYA sets the recording device before COACH DANIELS.

COACH DANIELS

What if I refuse?

TANYA

You don't eat.

COACH DANIELS

Is that a bluff? Hey, Karl? Is she bluffing?

JAMES

She's the boss.

COACH DANIELS

Obviously. Ya big bachpfeiffengesicht--

JAMES

I'm not a backpiperwhatever.

TANYA

We talked about the verbal abuse. Coach.

COACH DANIELS

Verbal abuse? This is gentle ribbing. This is playground stuff. Y'all wouldn't make it through a single practice.

TANYA

I don't think you appreciate the gravity of your situation.

COACH DANIELS

So what, you're gonna starve me? If I don't record a message for you?

TANYA

We've got all the time in the world. You have until Saturday.

COACH DANIELS

Right. The big game.

TANYA

I'm going to turn this on. Just be natural. We'll deliver the message to your wife. She'll be fine. It's all going to be fine. You just have to get us what we need. We know you have it. You're a big shot football coach. The whole University's going to come to your rescue. Right?

COACH DANIELS

Yeah...

TANYA

And... go.

COACH DANIELS

Baby, it's me. Look I'm in a situation here. I need you to take care of Buck. Make sure he has his medication, you know the one in the cabinet. He gets real anxious without his meds. Now listen: I don't know where I am, and I don't know who has me, but I've been here since Monday and it's Wednesday now. I've missed two practices and I'm sure you're worried about me. And the boys. Tell them I'm busy at work. Look the, uhh, the people who have me here are holding me for... they want money. Seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars in some crypto thing. I guess they'll explain along with this message. They want it by midnight Thursday. If they don't get it, I won't make it to the big game. You understand? I don't want you to worry. They haven't harmed me yet, and they aren't making any serious threats. I've been fed and have water and I'm okay. I don't think they'd hurt me...

But they've got a taser and they're not afraid to use it. Midnight Thursday or I'll miss the game. I know you know what to do. I love you. Go Bucks.

TANYA turns off the recorder.

TANYA

Thanks, Coach.

COACH DANIELS

I like my farm fresh organic eggs scrambled.

JAMES cautiously sets the bucket near COACH DANIELS.

COACH DANIELS (CONT'D)

(muttering)

Bachpfeiffengesicht.

JAMES

What was that?

COACH DANIELS

(coughing)

Bachpfeiffengesicht.

JAMES

He's calling me that word again--

COACH DANIELS

Bring me some wet wipes when you come back
down. All right?

TANYA

We will. Yes.

TANYA and JAMES exit.

COACH DANIELS returns to his half lotus posture. HE smirks.

END SCENE

IX: CRYPTO

The living room of the house in College Town, USA. Thursday evening. AMY, JAMES and TANYA wait. Their masks hang on the wall.

JAMES

It's almost midnight.

TANYA

They'll come through. It's a tactic. The only leverage they have is to keep us waiting. See if we're bluffing.

JAMES

Are you sure they received it?

TANYA

Yes, for the tenth time. There's a read receipt on the message.

JAMES

And it's untraceable?

TANYA

Yes. She received the message yesterday before noon.

JAMES

How do you know it's untraceable?

TANYA

Because I used the right technology. And we're still sitting here unmolested.

JAMES

If we get paid, I'm moving mine into gold. I don't trust that crypto stuff. I've been reading. They say the bottom's going to fall out.

TANYA

If we get paid, you can do whatever you want with your money. But it's moving through crypto. That's how we're gonna wash it.

JAMES

What if it's worthless in a year?

TANYA

You're getting way ahead of things, dude.

JAMES

I'm not! We're doing this for the money. Crypto might be the latest fad. You don't know.

TANYA

We'll worry about the money when we have it!
Okay!

AMY

You two need to make out and make up.

JAMES

Yeah, Tanya. Listen to her.

TANYA

We are never, never getting back together. James.

JAMES

Hope springs eternal.

TANYA

Amy. Come here.

AMY

What?

TANYA

Come here.

AMY goes to TANYA.

TANYA (CONT'D)

Do I have your consent to kiss you?

AMY

Yes? Umm?

JAMES

Oh fuck this... Come on. Ugh. Come on.

TANYA kisses AMY in a lovely way.

TANYA

I'm never, ever dating him again. Okay?

AMY

Okay.

TANYA

And you're too young for me. But it's nice. I appreciate your affections.

AMY

I appreciate your affections too...

JAMES

This is the absolute worst.

AMY

I don't want it to be awkward.

JAMES

We're so beyond awkward.

AMY

Okay, well. Listen, I've been thinking.

JAMES

Oh good. Finally. Amy's been thinking, Tanya. Let's hear what pearls she drops.

TANYA

Let her talk.

AMY

Sorry I'm a little flustered.

TANYA

Take your time.

AMY

It's about the comedy tragedy thing. If this is a comedy, then one of us should wear one of those masks and pretend to be somebody else, or be mistaken for somebody else. That's what would happen in a comedy.

TANYA

This isn't a comedy of errors.

AMY

What is it then?

TANYA

It's more modern. Post-modern.

JAMES

Hey, how about this? Thanks to neo-liberal capitalism, comedy and tragedy have merged and you have to live with that ambiguity.

AMY

Huh.

JAMES

"Huh"? That's the best you've got? "Huh"? I just handed you a brilliant thesis for your worthless theatre studies and all I get is a "huh"?

AMY

Theatre is not worthless.

JAMES

Sure it's not. Sure.

AMY

Chekhov called his tragedies comedies. "We should show life neither as it is, nor as it should be, but as we see it in our dreams." The Seagull.

JAMES

How's that one end?

AMY

Not well.

JAMES

Tanya? Anything?

TANYA
(with a cheap phone)
Nothing. They'll text me when it hits.

JAMES
Who's they?

TANYA
The system. The general "they." Not some person.
It's anonymous. And this is a burner.

JAMES
This is so messed up.

AMY
It might take them longer than two days to get that
kind of money.

JAMES
No. Something's not right.

TANYA
Calm down.

JAMES
We need to escalate this.

TANYA
Give it a minute.

JAMES
It's past midnight. It's Friday now.

TANYA
Yeah.

JAMES
We have until Saturday noon. Then the next guests
arrive. What's the plan if they don't pay up?

TANYA
They will. They're calling our bluff.

JAMES slaps a handgun on the table.

JAMES

We have to escalate.

AMY

That's a gun.

JAMES

Yes.

TANYA

James...

JAMES

What?

TANYA

Do you care to explain?

JAMES

This is America. What?

TANYA

Is it real?

JAMES

It's a track pistol. But he won't know that.

TANYA

Okay. Okay. We can work with this.

JAMES

He needs to know we're not gonna take it.

TANYA

Right.

JAMES

Amy, you've got to come downstairs. With me.

AMY

What? I thought I'm not supposed to--

TANYA

He knows her voice. From the coffee shop. And he's seen her face.

AMY

I can do that accent/

JAMES

No! No accent. You're going to come downstairs with this gun. And you're not going to say a word. Just follow our lead and look threatening.

JAMES hands AMY the handgun.

AMY

This fires blanks?

JAMES

Yes.

AMY

Okay. Okay.

JAMES

What?

TANYA

We should think about this.

JAMES

There isn't time. If those funds don't clear by Saturday morning, what?

TANYA

We could drug and move him to another location.

JAMES

No. No way. Too much risk.

AMY

He's right.

TANYA

Okay. So what's the plan?

JAMES

You. Don't say a damned word. Look threatening with the gun. You. Bring the recorder and the taser. I've got my mace.

THEY put on their masks.

AMY

Wait wait. What if I wear Marx? And you wear the Greek mask? That'll confuse him even further. And it'll be more like a comedy.

JAMES

That's actually not a bad idea.

THEY trade masks.

AMY

See. Not worthless.

JAMES

Fair enough. Okay. Remember: it's a comedy. Say it.

AMY & TANYA

It's a comedy.

AMY

But didn't you just say comedy and tragedy have merged?

JAMES

Don't overthink it. Follow my lead, comrades.

END SCENE

X: YELLOW SUBMARINE

The basement in the house in College Town, USA. Continuous from the previous scene. COACH DANIELS sits in his meditative pose. AMY, JAMES and TANYA emerge in their masks.

JAMES

Rise and shine, coach. Rise and shine. It's Friday morning. Time to get maced.

JAMES positions himself in front of COACH DANIELS with his mace pointed.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Open your eyes...

COACH DANIELS opens his eyes.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Your people didn't come through. Hey. You're gonna have to make us another tape, now.

COACH DANIELS stands, holding the bucket.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Either your people don't care about you or they think they can wait us out/

COACH DANIELS splashes JAMES with the bucket of piss.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Ahh! Ahh! Ahh! Ahh! Gross! Ahh!

TANYA

Goddamn it.

JAMES turns and heads back upstairs.

TANYA (CONT'D)

Dude, where are you going?

JAMES

I gotta... I gotta wash this off... ahh. Ahh. Ugh. Ahh.

COACH DANIELS

Y'all have no idea who you're messing with. I've been through worse than this shit to get to where I'm at and I'm not gonna let a bunch of commie punks get the better of me. You hear? You think you're gonna change masks and confuse me, or frighten me? I'm a warrior. A leader of men! And you're just wannabe commie punks!

JAMES exits, leaving AMY and TANYA.

COACH DANIELS (CONT'D)

Now who the hell is this?

TANYA

Our enforcer.

AMY reveals the handgun, pointing it at him.

COACH DANIELS

Okay, relax.

TANYA

We'll relax when we get our money.

COACH DANIELS

Maybe I underestimated--

TANYA

Where's our money? Coach?

COACH DANIELS

I don't know. You sent the message. They should have sent it to/

AMY

Oy! Oy! You shut it!

TANYA

Ahh, I'm supposed to do the talking/

COACH DANIELS

What is that accent?

AMY

I'm not about to take any guff from this one. I got better things to do tonight than this. There's got to be punishment for what he just did to our mate.

COACH DANIELS

Is that supposed to be Ringo?

AMY

I said shut yer' gob!

COACH DANIELS

Okay. Damn. That bitch is crazy.

TANYA

Like I said, that's our enforcer. And she's very impatient.

COACH DANIELS

She sounds like a lunatic. No offense.

AMY

None taken, mate.

COACH DANIELS

I'm more of a John man myself.

AMY

You shut your slimy gob--

TANYA

Where is our money!

COACH DANIELS

You got that message to my wife?

TANYA

Yes.

COACH DANIELS

I don't know then. I don't know.

TANYA

Well now you're forcing us to get creative. So.

COACH DANIELS

This place is gonna stink of piss. You need to mop it up.

TANYA

Tit for tat.

AMY

That's right. Tit for tat.

TANYA

You give us what we need, we'll mop. And maybe you survive this.

COACH DANIELS

I don't know why they didn't pay. I have to be at that game.

TANYA

I need another recording. This time with a picture. Hey. Put that gun to his head.

COACH DANIELS

Wait, no...

TANYA

Do it!

AMY places the gun to COACH DANIELS' head.

COACH DANIELS

This isn't cool.

TANYA takes a picture with her burner phone.

TANYA

Got it.

AMY pulls the gun back and steps away from COACH DANIELS.

AMY

John was a womanizing bastard. Ringo's a sweetheart.

COACH DANIELS

John wrote all the best songs!

TANYA

Shut up! Here's the recorder. Saturday 10AM is the true deadline. Game is at noon. We get the crypto by then, you'll still make it to the game. If you're up to it.

COACH DANIELS

I've never missed a game. Not once. They need me. They'll pay.

TANYA

All right.

COACH DANIELS

I still think if you're going to do an accent, do John. Or maybe George.

TANYA places the recorder down.

COACH DANIELS (CONT'D)

Hey, hey honey this is serious. They've got a gun and one of them is pretty crazy. Doing like... like a Ringo accent. It's pretty unhinged. There's three of them and look we have to get them paid by Saturday 10AM or I'm going to miss the game. You hear me? And if I miss that game, they're definitely going to lose and you know what that means. So please, we have to get them what they're asking for. These people are serious. It's not a joke. Just tell the boys I'm at work. I love you. I know you'll do the right thing...

TANYA stops the recorder.

COACH DANIELS (CONT'D)

Get a mop. Please

AMY goes to the corner and returns with a mop. SHE mops the floor.

TANYA

Is there some reason they wouldn't pay?

COACH DANIELS

I don't know. You've got me locked up in a basement. If I could call them, maybe/

TANYA

No. No calls.

COACH DANIELS

Is that thing loaded?

TANYA

You don't want to find out.

COACH DANIELS

No. No.

AMY

Oy, if you pull another stunt like that, we're gonna take a trip on the Yellow Submarine, matey.

COACH DANIELS

What does that mean?

TANYA

Oh. You don't want to know about the Yellow Submarine.

COACH DANIELS

This is insane. Do y'all do this a lot? Take people for ransom and do accents?

AMY

Maybe we do, maybe we don't. All I know is I'm getting upset. "Thou hadst been better have been born a dog. Than answer my waked wrath!"

COACH DANIELS

Okay, okay.

TANYA

You don't want to upset her. She's off her meds.

COACH DANIELS

I believe you. Yeah. Yeah, okay.

AMY and TANYA exit, AMY with the bucket.

COACH DANIELS leans against the pipe.

COACH DANIELS (CONT'D)

Hey! Hey! The bucket! I need the bucket!

END SCENE

XI: THE BIG DAY

The living room in the house in College Town, USA. Saturday morning. AMY and TANYA are there, with a radio.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

And here we are, Saturday is college football game day and we have a humdinger of a storyline here for you, folks. The undefeated Bison are looking to stomp their way toward a National Championship, and our local heroes look to turn their comic season into tragedy for their perennial rivals. The stakes couldn't be higher for the coaching staff and the players in this storied rivalry. And if that wasn't enough, the beset Bucks are without their offensive coordinator, Coach Daniels, who has mysteriously been missing from practice this week. Rumors are spinning that the Coach has gone AWOL, but no criminal complaint has been filed, so we're left wondering. Is this a prank gone wrong, or something more nefarious? Did Coach Daniels simply get cold feet before this final major test of the season? And will the Bucks be able to triumph against all odds without their offensive mastermind. Kickoff in only fifteen minutes--

TANYA turns off the radio.

TANYA

The police haven't even been notified...

AMY

It's weird.

TANYA

The wife must be trying to handle it privately. Sometimes people do that. They think if they call the police, things will get out of hand. She must be tearing her hair out.

AMY

"The tears of the world are a constant quantity. For each one who begins to weep somewhere else another stops. The same is true of the laugh."

TANYA

What's that?

AMY

Godot.

TANYA

Right. Appropriate.

AMY

Anything?

TANYA

Not yet.

AMY

They've got to pay.

TANYA

I don't know. Something's wrong... they missed the second deadline, even after a serious threat of violence. It's not supposed to go this way.

JAMES enters.

JAMES

Who's watching the drive?

TANYA

It's fine.

JAMES

That other group could arrive any minute.

TANYA

Check in's at noon.

JAMES

People come early. You don't know. Watch the drive!

AMY stands and watches the drive.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Anything? A transfer?

TANYA

No.

JAMES

I knew it. We're hosed.

TANYA

We are not hosed. You listening to the radio?

JAMES

Yeah. There's only one explanation for all this.

TANYA

What?

JAMES

He doesn't want to be at that game.

TANYA

What?

JAMES

And his wife knows it.

AMY

Ooo. Plot twist.

JAMES

Shut up!

TANYA

Maybe. Or maybe they're calling our bluff. Maybe he got some code into his messages. Something to tell her not to take us seriously...

JAMES

The simplest explanation is usually correct. He doesn't want to be at that game for some reason.

TANYA

How do we find that out? In the next ten minutes?

JAMES

We ask him. Hey, Ringo. Give me the gun.

AMY gives JAMES the handgun.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Amy, watch the drive. Tanya, bring the bucket.

END SCENE

XII: COCKADOODLE DO

The basement in the house in College Town, USA. Continuous from the previous scene. THEY storm into the basement.

JAMES

We know you don't want to make the game!

TANYA

What we don't know is why.

COACH DANIELS

Bucket. Bucket. Bucket.

TANYA

Tell us and you get the bucket!

COACH DANIELS

I'm gonna burst. This is evil.

TANYA

Why haven't we been paid!

COACH DANIELS

If we lose, I'm gonna be head coach! Okay!

TANYA

What?!

COACH DANIELS

And they're gonna lose that game without me. Plus, I'm gonna get all kinds of sympathy after this. Okay?

JAMES

Jesus Christ--

TANYA

And your wife knows this?

COACH DANIELS

Of course my wife knows this. You think I'm married to an idiot?! Listen, you nerds have done me a giant favor. You just didn't realize it.

JAMES

Ahhhhh! You capitalist pig, I hate you. I hate you. I hate throwy kickyball. I hate this.

COACH DANIELS

Calm down. Tell him to calm down.

TANYA

Calm down.

JAMES

I am calm! I am calm within my hatred for this thick-necked douchebag who can't lose. He gets kidnapped and he wins. This is what capitalism is. To those who have everything, more is given. From those with nothing, everything is taken. I hate this.

COACH DANIELS

Don't hate the player, kid. Hate the game.

JAMES

I do. That is what I'm saying. I hate the game. I hate it so much.

COACH DANIELS

Well man up and stop being such a Bachpfeiffengesicht, then maybe chicks will want to be around you and--

JAMES

(macing COACH DANIELS)

Aaaaaaahhhhhhh!

COACH DANIELS

Ow. Goddamn. Ow. Hey. Ow. Ahhh.

JAMES

You like that!?! You like that, you jock bastard!

COACH DANIELS grabs JAMES by the leg, snarling.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Ahh, he's got me. Tase him. Tase him. Tase him.

TANYA tases DANIELS once, twice and three times. HE collapses.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Ahh. Ahh. Ahh. He's pissing himself. Ahh.

TANYA

Get the mop.

JAMES

Is he dead? Is he dead?!

TANYA

I don't know!

A rooster crows. The alarm from AMY.

JAMES

Oh no. Oh no.

TANYA

Quiet.

THEY stand still. AMY crows again.

JAMES

That's it. We're going to jail. He's dead, and the next renters are here and we're done.

TANYA

Quiet!

JAMES

And you don't love me. It's pointless. You'd rather make out with the theatre nerd. And you're a witch and look at where it's gotten us. We're going to jail. You know what they do to guys like me in jail? They're gonna knock out my front teeth and turn me into a PornHub channel.

TANYA

Quiet!

THEY wait. Ding.

JAMES

Is that the phone?

TANYA

Yeah...

SHE checks.

TANYA (CONT'D)

Holy God. Holy Jesus. Holy Jubilee.

JAMES

What? What?!

TANYA

Sweet Resurrection. Sweet relief. Goddess bless.

JAMES

Goddess bless? Stop blathering/

TANYA

They paid. It's there. It hit the account. The full amount.

JAMES

Doesn't matter cuz' we're done.

TANYA

No, no. She'll handle it. She's got this.

JAMES

Our lives are in the hands of somebody with a theatre BFA from a public American university.

TANYA

Would you shut up?

A moment of quiet.

JAMES

I wish we were still seeing each other. It's hard for me. I still have feelings.

TANYA

Look I don't not love you. I just don't love you romantically. Okay? Whatever happens, we're friends.

JAMES
I'll write you from prison.

TANYA
We're not going to prison.

JAMES
If he's dead... I won't be able to live with it...

TANYA checks his pulse.

TANYA
He's got a pulse.

JAMES
Thank Marx.

TANYA
We're going to get away with this... Say it.

JAMES
We're going to get away with this.

TANYA places a hood over COACH DANIELS' head. AMY emerges into the basement with her mask.

AMY
Oy, friends. The next guests arrived.

JAMES
Are they upstairs?

AMY
Well it's a bunch of fraternity lads here to support the Bisons at the American Football. They dropped off their luggage and turned right around. Told em' we're just leaving ourselves.

JAMES
Are they gone?

AMY
All except one.

JAMES
We have to get him out of here.

TANYA
Here, Ringo. Look. We got paid.

AMY
Wonderful! I could sing.

JAMES
Don't. You have to distract that frat boy. Lure him into a bedroom or something.

AMY
Oh. I see.

TANYA
Can you do that?

AMY
"Consent... that we may enjoy each other." As You Like It.

JAMES
That's not an answer.

AMY
Yes. I can seduce the frat boy! That's what I'm trained to do. I make believe for a living. Like everybody else.

TANYA
Go forth and seduce.

AMY
Can I actually sleep with him?

TANYA
That's up to you.

AMY
He's kind of cute...

TANYA
There you go. Hurry. We're right behind you.

END SCENE

XIII: THE NEW HEAD COACH

The bar in College Town, USA. AMY, JAMES and TANYA sit round a table with a substantial amount of pint and shot glasses.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Recapping today's earlier win, the Bucks avoid a no-win season and Head Coach Daniels puts his stamp on his first victory in the top job. An amazing feat after his recent ordeal - an almost mythic turnaround and first game in his position as head coach. And let's not forget that Coach Killjoy handled his resignation with the class of a National Champion - no shame in that, no shame at all. Bucks pride won't be tarnished by one rough season. In college football, as in life, hope springs eternal, and you have to think today's victory over a ranked opponent does something to assuage the wounded pride of this dedicated fan-base. Now we look forward to Coach Daniels' tenure and a better season next year. This is Bucks Sports Nation, signing off. See you next season, and Go Bucks!

Bark bark. Bark bark. A dog.

Jukebox music.

AMY

Can I see it again?

TANYA shows AMY something on a phone.

AMY (CONT'D)

It's real?

TANYA

It's real.

JAMES

We shouldn't talk about this here.

TANYA

He's right.

Bark bark. Bark bark.

JAMES
Is that a golden retriever?

TANYA
It appears to be...

AMY
Ahh. Cute. I want a puppy. I'm gonna get one as soon as I move to New...

TANYA
New what?

AMY
New... New...

JAMES turns to see what AMY's staring at.

JAMES
Ahh. Ahh. He's here. He's right over there.

AMY
He's seen me.

JAMES
What are we supposed to do?

TANYA
Nothing. He doesn't know. If he knew/

AMY
He's coming over. With shots.

JAMES
Act casual.

COACH DANIELS enters with four shots.

COACH DANIELS
Samantha?

AMY
Uhh.

COACH DANIELS

From the coffee shop? I gave you my card.

AMY

Yeah. Yeah sure.

COACH DANIELS

I got shots. For you and your friends. On me.

AMY

Okay. Okay coach, wow.

COACH DANIELS

You never called.

AMY

No. No. I didn't think it was... appropriate.

COACH DANIELS

Look I don't want to make it weird. I've been through a lot recently, and I'm trying to turn things around. I think I might have a sex addiction.

AMY

Oh.

COACH DANIELS

It's a real thing and... look I don't want to get caught up in some dumb scandal over past, uhh, indiscretions. Flirtations. I know I've come on pretty strong in the past. I was impulsive, but I have this position now. A big position. And I'm going to fly straight. For the good of the program. You know?

AMY

That's great. Good for you, coach.

COACH DANIELS

We're celebrating the win, the boys and me. Just want you to know: there are no hard feelings.

AMY

Okay.

COACH DANIELS

You still have my card?

AMY

Yes.

COACH DANIELS

Great. That's an open invitation to a game. Next season. Club seats. We're going all the way. I mean the team. It's a purely Platonic invitation. For you and your friends.

AMY

Okay. We don't really like throwy kickyball, but--

COACH DANIELS

Throwy kickyball?

AMY

Yeah.

COACH DANIELS

Right.

AMY

I respect that. Should we toast something?

COACH DANIELS

Are your friends usually this quiet?

AMY

It's... they're being respectful. We heard about your ordeal.

COACH DANIELS

Yeah, it was something.

AMY

I'm amazed you're out and about.

COACH DANIELS

I bounce back fast. Plus I'm now the highest paid public employee in the State. Ha ha.

(MORE)

COACH DANIELS (CONT'D)

I never thought I'd get here, but here I am: the head coach of a major college sports franchise. We just won the first game of my tenure. If it goes well, I've got a good shot at the NFL in a few years. And now I've got a subdermal device embedded in my body that tracks my location within fifty yards at all times.

AMY

Whoa.

COACH DANIELS

After what happened, I'm not taking any chances. We live in strange times.

JAMES

What did happen? If you don't mind my asking. Coach?

COACH DANIELS

Oh some idiots held me ransom. Two chicks and a guy. Total morons. I think they think they're communist revolutionaries or something.

JAMES

Gross.

COACH DANIELS

Yeah. Communism is gross. This guy's a keeper, ladies.

AMY

Yeah, he's a real peach.

COACH DANIELS

Funny thing is: the whole thing worked in my favor. I came out looking like a hero. Coach Killjoy retired after that ugly loss to the Bisons. And here we are. I'm going to make the ransom money back and more next year. I'm a made man.

AMY

Great! Let's toast... to you. Head Coach Daniels.

THEY raise their glasses. THEY drink.

AMY (CONT'D)

You think they'll catch them? The kidnappers?
Coach?

COACH DANIEL

Doubt it. I didn't get a good look at any of their faces. And they had us move the money in a way that can't be traced. They're smart on paper, and very stupid in person. Like academics! Ha ha!

AMY, TANYA & JAMES

Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha.

AMY

Coach, that's a good one.

Bark bark. Bark bark.

TANYA

Is that your dog?

COACH DANIELS

Oh. Yeah. That's Buck. After the "incident" I got him registered. He's an emotional support animal now. Get to take him everywhere. We're going to Las Vegas next week to celebrate. Anyway, like I said. No hard feelings. See you next season. Go Bucks.

HE exits.

JAMES

Is he... does he know? I mean... I can't tell.

AMY

No, he doesn't know.

TANYA

I think he's trying to make amends. For his sex addiction.

JAMES

That's not a real thing!

TANYA

It really is actually...

JAMES

What if he knows? I'm not going to be able to sleep at night.

TANYA

Drink your beer.

AMY

So. Nobody died.

TANYA

No.

AMY

Then it's a comedy.

JAMES

I might never laugh again.

TANYA reveals the little witchy figurines.

TANYA

Here. This is yours. And yours.

JAMES

What about it?

TANYA

A reminder. That we got away with it.

JAMES

Did we?

TANYA

Can you live with it? And not tell anyone?

JAMES

He could have died.

TANYA

But he didn't. And he couldn't be more pleased. Look at him. He's happy as a clam. A prince among men!

AMY

This is where usually there'd be a moral. Something we could learn and take forward. Something for the audience to ponder thoughtfully as they go home, and discuss what happened so they can look smart and maybe get laid.

JAMES

Just please don't drop another quote.

AMY

I think it's something about best intentions. You know? Maybe it's about our educations. You never know what's going to come in handy. You just have to keep going and hope for the best, because theory doesn't always equal practice. Like communism!

TANYA

Amen.

JAMES

Real communism hasn't/

TANYA

Yeah yeah yeah.

AMY

I might write a play about this someday.

JAMES

Don't you dare.

AMY

Maybe in a few years? After I'm settled down in New York? I can write it under a pseudonym--

JAMES

Hell no. Bad idea. Just do what every other unoriginal theatre geek does and adapt Chekhov.

AMY

I do like the Cherry Orchard. Hey. Look at us! We got away with it, didn't we?

TANYA

I told you we would.

AMY

A toast then/

JAMES

Oh here it comes. She's going to do it/

AMY

"I pray you,
do not fall in love with me,
For I am falser than vows made in wine."

ALL

Go Bucks.

THEY drink.

End of Play