

An American soldier, ZENOBIO REMEDIOS, 44, is isolated in light. He stands at attention as a Count Basie song plays (*Taxi War Dance* or *One O'Clock Jump*). After a few bars, he begins to change out of his Army uniform into a quasi-medical uniform. He has a noticeable limp. The music becomes more distant, and HISAYE YAMAMOTO, 26, appears isolated in light.

HISAYE

Los Angeles Tribune, February 25, 1948, Small Talk, by Hisaye Yamamoto. The history of race discrimination in Los Angeles pales in comparison with the peculiar institutions of the American South. But restrictive housing covenants and exclusive public facilities are as common here as lynchings in Mississippi. Discrimination by the ofay segments of the population turns people of all colors against each other. When I was over in Poston, Arizona during the war, I once saw a small Japanese boy taunt a Negro nurse, calling her "kurombo," a word as bad to us as "Jap." It was a punch to my stomach. Now, three years after VJ Day, this all-American war is not over, with skirmishes daily in Los Angeles, most recently in the now infamous incident of Bimini Baths.

BAYARD RUSTIN, 36, isolated in light. Clipped accent, almost British.

BAYARD

Dear Friend AJ: Please know that I have the deepest love and respect for you and the other leaders of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. I understand your concern that the target of our Los Angeles integration campaign is a public bathing facility and respect your suggestion that I find a local surrogate so my actions cannot be tainted or perceived as such. I humbly submit that there is no time for alliance-building; I must return to New York shortly. I am, however, familiar with public hygiene establishments, and know how to avoid any appearance of impropriety, conducting myself in a manner that will not violate your trust.

I pray that my actions will increase God's power in me and overcome any personal weakness. Love to all, Bayard Rustin.

EVERETT MAXWELL, 64, isolated in light.

EVERETT

Fade in: Interior Los Angeles County Museum of History, Science and Art. A marble-walled gallery hung with pastel portraits by Max Wieczorek. Everett Maxwell gazes at the artwork. Still handsome in late middle age, Maxwell is crisply attired, dignified, with an intelligent and thoughtful face, his eyes shadowed by the sadness of a secret.

ZENOBIO has almost finished changing clothes.

ZENOBIO

February 17, 1948, Bimini Baths and Natural Hot Spring Resort daily log, Admissions Division. Reported by Zenobio Remedios, Assistant Medical Deputy. First day back at Bimini after honorable discharge from the 42nd Rainbow Division of the United States Army. Today's temporary re-assignment to Admissions is due to a telephone inquiry about the Resort's exclusivity policy. It was felt an Army veteran of Spanish background could best respond to any trouble. I am grateful for management's confidence in me as I return to civilian life. Should a problem occur, I'll figure it out. It'll be a piece of cake compared to the Nazis.

(Grins, nervously)

Lights out on all but BAYARD.

BAYARD

February 17, 1948. Cool and slightly rainy in Los Angeles today, perfect for a relaxing dip--

(consults a brochure)

--In "a gushing fountain of mineral water with a natural and constant flow of 100 gallons per minute at 104 degrees Fahrenheit." Bimini Bath complex impressive, a large central building with gables and skylights across the street from the Bimini Inn. Had to take a taxi as streetcar service on the Heliotrope line was abandoned in August. Entered through a portico off Bimini Place and immediately noticed--

Lights up on ZENOBIO seated at the Admissions desk. BAYARD almost does a double take; he finds ZENOBIO hot. ZENOBIO changes posture, stiffening for the challenge he's been expecting.

BAYARD

--A Mexican of rather more than usual attractiveness. This will be either easier or more complicated than expected.

(to ZENOBIO)

Good afternoon.

ZENOBIO

Good afternoon, sir.

BAYARD

My name is Bayard Rustin. Yours?

ZENOBIO

Zenobio Remedios. How may I help you, Mr. Rustin?

BAYARD

I'd like admission to your plunge, perhaps a therapeutic treatment or two. I'm just visiting Los Angeles, but everyone tells me Bimini is the best in town.

ZENOBIO

I'm sorry, sir. Today is not the day.

BAYARD

Is the plunge not functioning? Are treatments not scheduled?

(out)

Feigned ignorance of discriminatory practice is the first phase of direct action technique.

ZENOBIO

We're on our regular schedule today, sir.

BAYARD

What treatment do you recommend?

(consults brochure)

Do you have hot pelvic packs today?

ZENOBIO

We are renowned for our naturally heated treatments, sir.

BAYARD

I see you have a Turkish bath, plain enema--what's the difference between a high enema and a colonic flush?

ZENOBIO

The high enema is more...deeply cleansing.

BAYARD

(out)

Say! I believe he flirted with me!

(reading)

Oh, saline friction with alcoholic rub. I think I accidentally had one of those last night.

ZENOBIO

All our treatments were developed by physicians and thoroughly professional, but--

BAYARD

(reading)

Salt rub and manipulations!

ZENOBIO

No treatments are available for you today, Mr. Rustin.

BAYARD

(indicating brochure)

But it says so right here.

ZENOBIO

If you come back next Thursday--

BAYARD

Next Thursday? I'm here now, you're open--

ZENOBIO

Not...entirely open, sir.

BAYARD

Open, but not open to me.

ZENOBIO

Open to you next Thursday.

BAYARD

(out)

Here it comes.

(to ZENOBIO)

What's so special about next Thursday?

ZENOBIO

It's Mexican Day.

BAYARD

Isn't Mexican Independence Day in September? And it's not Cinco de Mayo....

ZENOBIO

Mexican Day is when people of Spanish origin may use the plunge.

BAYARD

But I'm not Spanish.

ZENOBIO

Spanish and others.

BAYARD

(out)

I will appeal to his sense of solidarity.

(to ZENOBIO)

Are you Spanish, Mr. Remedios?

ZENOBIO

My father was born in Oaxaca.

BAYARD

So Mexican Day is sort of a celebration of you. Is that when you're allowed to use the pool?

ZENOBIO

Employees are permitted on that day, yes, sir. Please come join us then.

BAYARD

Are there other Spanish employees?

ZENOBIO

A few.

BAYARD

And Negroes? Orientals?

ZENOBIO

I believe so, yes.

BAYARD

All cavorting together in the plunge on Mexican Day.

(out)

I turned up the heat.

ZENOBIO

We do not cavort. We have behavior standards.

BAYARD

(out)

And dropped a hairpin.

(to ZENOBIO)

Do you know of any other public bathing facilities in Los Angeles where I might cavort or even frolic without waiting for Spanish Ethiopian Cambodian Day?

ZENOBIO

There are lesser facilities in town, sir, I am sure, but I am not personally familiar with them.

BAYARD

(out)

But he knew what I was talking about. I changed tack.

(to ZENOBIO)

You were in the war.

ZENOBIO

(shifting his leg)

How did you know, Mr. Rustin?

BAYARD

Your posture. Straight as a ramrod.

ZENOBIO

Yes, sir. That's how we're trained. Very straight.

BAYARD

(out)

Perhaps I was too subtle.

(to ZENOBIO)

Navy?

ZENOBIO

Army.

BAYARD

I would have thought Navy. Or at least Marines. Where did you see action?

ZENOBIO

Mr. Rustin, I will not be intimidated by your insinuations--

BAYARD

Insinuations?

ZENOBIO

Into permitting you to enter this establishment on a day you are not allowed.

ZENOBIO

You are welcome to return next Thursday--no, not welcome, but unprohibited.

BAYARD

(out)

Apparently I touched a nerve. Progress!

(to ZENOBIO)

I shall return, but *not* on Mexican Day, the day before the plunge is drained and cleaned, the day of dirtiest water. Now that your establishment's discriminatory policy is clearly articulated--

ZENOBIO

It's perfectly legal--!

BAYARD

I am amazed, Señor Remedios, that you would defend a policy that discriminates against your very self.

ZENOBIO

(standing)

Take a powder.

BAYARD

If you call the police, it will only publicize Bimini's fault.

ZENOBIO

I'll throw you out myself!

BAYARD

And which of us do you think would enjoy that more?

Lights out on ZENOBIO.

BAYARD

Perhaps AJ is right. I need reinforcements. And relief. Usually one can find some at an art museum.

Lights up on EVERETT gazing at portraits. BAYARD joins him.

EVERETT

Iris in, Interior: Gallery. A tall youngish Negro joins Maxwell. They appear absorbed in an image of the head of Christ.

(to BAYARD but without  
looking at him)

There have been many conceptions of the Christ character. A few approach an artistic satisfaction. Very few create a healthy religious atmosphere.

BAYARD

Is this one healthy or unhealthy?

EVERETT

Mr. Wieczorek interprets the Man of Sorrows as a vital, yet tender intellectualist of the highest order of his race. A strong, high forehead, firm mouth and determined jaw, sensitive nostrils, and deep, wide-set eyes--eyes that look far--yet deep with sadness and disappointment.

BAYARD

He does look...sensitive.

EVERETT

Close shot: Maxwell gives the Negro a stern look and moves on to the next portrait. The Negro follows.

BAYARD looks at the portrait, then at EVERETT, then back at the portrait again.



After one more look at the portrait, BAYARD leans forward to read the inscription on the portrait. He turns to EVERETT.

BAYARD

A privilege to make your acquaintance, Everett C. Maxwell.

EVERETT

I'm astonished you can perceive the resemblance. Max drew me decades ago.

BAYARD

He's captured you for all time. Very recognizable, still.

EVERETT

Kind of you to say...?

BAYARD

Bayard Rustin.

EVERETT

They shake hands, warmly.

(they do)

What brings you to the County Museum, Mr. Rustin?

BAYARD

I had a rather disappointing day at Bimini Baths and came here in search of--

EVERETT

Rustin gestures toward the portrait.

BAYARD

--Inspiration.

EVERETT

Bimini Baths? Were you able to enter?

BAYARD

I must wait until Mexican Day. Hence my disappointment. What's it like inside?

EVERETT

Oh, I wouldn't know.

BAYARD

You've never been?

EVERETT

Years ago. Around the time of this portrait. I'm sure it's considerably changed since then.

BAYARD

It's been suggested I enlist an ally in storming the Bastille. Is there a Negro newspaper in Los Angeles?

EVERETT

I believe the Los Angeles Tribune is run by Negroes.

BAYARD

I will look them up. Is there anywhere else I might refresh myself today?

EVERETT

Refreshment of the spirit, through art. There is also a science wing and a history wing. I was the art curator here once upon a time.

BAYARD

I've only just arrived from New York. My body is in need of refreshment even more than my spirit.

EVERETT

Maxwell gives Rustin a stern look. They move back to the Head of Christ.

(to BAYARD)

This Christ sees humanity centuries ahead. What a tragic vision to a man whose one desire was to leave with us the secret of redemption. Are you a religious man, Mr. Rustin? Do you believe in redemption?

(out)

To Maxwell's astonishment, the Negro begins to sing, full throttle, in the middle of the art gallery.

BAYARD

(sings)

*En una noche oscura* [On a dark night]

EVERETT

His voice is a rich tenor, beautiful in tone and timbre.

(to BAYARD)

That's--that's--! I recognize it--

BAYARD

*Con ansias en amores inflamada* [Fevered with love in love's anxiety]

EVERETT

It's sixteenth century! *The Dark Night of the Soul* by St. John of the Cross!

BAYARD

*Oh dichosa ventura!* [O hapless-happy plight!]

EVERETT

Maxwell joins in the song, his voice a mellow baritone.

BAYARD AND EVERETT

*Sali sin ser notada* [I went, none seeing me]

*Estando ya mi casa sosegada* [Forth from my house where all things be]

Lights out on them and up on  
HISAYE.

HISAYE

Dear reader, my own involvement in the Bimini incident began awkwardly, almost against my will, a premonition of what was to come. I was proofing an article on the restrictive covenants of Compton, when--

BAYARD joins her, looks puzzled,  
steps out, then comes back in.

BAYARD

Are these the offices of the Los Angeles Tribune?

HISAYE

A Model of Journalism.

BAYARD

Pardon?

HISAYE

Our motto.

BAYARD

I was told the Tribune was a Negro paper--

HISAYE

Hisaye Yamamoto, Nisei Correspondent.

They shake hands.

BAYARD

Bayard Rustin--

HISAYE

Oh, Mr. Rustin, pardon me! I didn't mean to be flippant. Some of us are great admirers of your work with the Fellowship of Reconciliation--I covered your speech to the Japanese American Citizen's League--

BAYARD

Thank you, Miss Yamamoto--

HISAYE

Please call me Si. How can I help? Are you in Los Angeles to organize...anything?

BAYARD

Possibly. Is there someone...?

HISAYE

Someone Negro?

BAYARD

Well...someone in charge?

HISAYE

Someone male?

BAYARD

The editor--

HISAYE

Almena Davis. She's not male, but she is Negro. Unfortunately, Almena's out this afternoon.

So is everyone else. For the moment, I am the foremost Negro newspaper in the West.

BAYARD

Could you let Miss Davis know I'm inquiring about a newspaper campaign against discrimination at Bimini Baths?

HISAYE

I wouldn't wait for Almena if I were you. She wasn't exactly fanatical about Mr. Gandhi.

BAYARD

If you take no action, nothing changes.

HISAYE

The paper does its part by simply reporting the truth.

BAYARD

To Negroes.

HISAYE

We are...advised not to become the story, not get too involved. Last year a Negro man named Short came to us after his family moved into a white neighborhood in Fontana. Nasty words scrawled on their house, broken windows--

BAYARD

How did the paper help?

HISAYE

Not even an article until too late. A few weeks later there was an arson fire. The whole family...

BAYARD

I'm sorry. That must be very frustrating.

HISAYE

We're a Negro paper and we let a Negro family die in order to maintain--what?--our journalistic integrity?

BAYARD

There are many kinds of integrity.

HISAYE

So I'm sorry, but you won't find official support for your newspaper campaign here.

BAYARD

Perhaps there's someone at the paper who might feel morally bound--?

HISAYE

Me.

BAYARD

But I'm looking for--

HISAYE

I've always been curious what Bimini Baths looks like inside. My white friends tell me it's killer diller.

BAYARD

Direct action? You'd be disobeying the newspaper's policy.

HISAYE

I'm tired of obeying.

BAYARD

Miss Yamamoto--

HISAYE

Si. You really should call me Si if we're going to be disobedient together.

Lights out on them and up on  
ZENOBIO.

ZENOBIO

February 18, 1948. Admissions log, Zenobio Remedios reporting. Many requests for the Thermo Therapeutic Oven due to the cool weather, but nothing unusual until--

HISAYE approaches ZENOBIO.

HISAYE

Good evening.

ZENOBIO

Miss.

HISAYE

What are your rates?

ZENOBIO

Here's our brochure, Miss. Everything on this side is available a week from tomorrow.

HISAYE

I'd like a treatment today.

ZENOBIO

I'm sorry, Miss, but Bimini Hot Spring and Resort is an exclusive establishment.

HISAYE

I only want the best.

ZENOBIO

Then we look forward to welcoming you next week.

HISAYE

I want the best today.

ZENOBIO

Look, Miss, don't play dumb.

HISAYE

Pardon me, Mister--?

ZENOBIO

You know I can't let you in today. Please don't make a stink.

HISAYE

I'm here to cleanse myself of any stink, Mister--?

ZENOBIO

Remedios. Zenobio Remedios. Ask for me by name and I'll give you a discount...if you come back next Thursday.

HISAYE

I should hope I'd get a discount with the water so dirty.

ZENOBIO

Our one hundred percent naturally heated spring water is--

HISAYE

Filthy at the end of the month and full of Mexicans.

(he just stares at her,  
astonished)

Isn't it? On Mexican Day?

ZENOBIO

I've been perfectly polite with you, Miss--

HISAYE

Hisaye Yamamoto. But you can call me Si because we're going to become very good friends.

ZENOBIO

No, Miss, I don't think--

HISAYE

I will be ubiquitous until you admit me.

ZENOBIO

Thursday next.

HISAYE

I'll just settle into your vestibule and we can chat. Every day. For hours.

ZENOBIO

Miss Yamamoto--

HISAYE

Si!

ZENOBIO

I'm sorry, protocol requires us to address our patrons by last name.

HISAYE

Well, that's progress. At least now I'm a patron.

ZENOBIO AND HISAYE

Thursday next.

HISAYE

Mr. Remedios--



ZENOBIO

Zeno.

HISAYE

I was abiding by your sacred protocol, Mr. Remedios.

ZENOBIO

Staff may be addressed by first name.

HISAYE

Very well, Zeno. What time does your shift end?

ZENOBIO

You'll have no better luck with the fellow on the next shift.

HISAYE

Oh, for seven hakes! I'm asking if you'd like to meet me after work for an unofficial discussion.

ZENOBIO

You mean...a date? You're asking me out on a date?

HISAYE

Of course not a date.

ZENOBIO

I can't take you on a date!

HISAYE

But away from your place of employment--

ZENOBIO

It's against policy for employees to--

HISAYE

--You could drop that white mask you're wearing and tell me what it's like to work where you're not permitted to play!

BAYARD

(appearing)

Miss, is this man annoying you?

ZENOBIO

You again!

HISAYE

A little bit. Zeno is very stubborn--

ZENOBIO

I know what this is--!

HISAYE  
--That's his nickname, by the way--he said I can call him Zeno--

ZENOBIO  
This is deliberate--!

BAYARD  
This young lady would like to enter your establishment--

ZENOBIO  
You're double-teaming me!

HISAYE  
And he's asked me out on a date.

BAYARD  
A date! He can't do that!

ZENOBIO  
I have not!

BAYARD  
You're my date!

ZENOBIO  
No, I can't!

BAYARD  
Get your paws off my girl!

ZENOBIO  
What?

HISAYE  
After he gets off work tonight.

ZENOBIO  
That's not so!

BAYARD  
I'll show him!

ZENOBIO  
She asked me! And I said no!

BAYARD grabs HISAYE and kisses her.  
She seems surprised for half a moment, but then returns the kiss.  
ZENOBIO stares, confused. Lights out on BAYARD and HISAYE.

ZENOBIO  
Swell! How do I put *that* in a report?

Lights out on ZENOBIO and up on BAYARD.

BAYARD  
Si and I reconnoitered back at the Tribune.

Lights up on HISAYE.

HISAYE

I presume you're Uranian.

BAYARD

(laughs)

Uranian!?

HISAYE

I was trying to find a polite word.

BAYARD

There is no polite word.

HISAYE

Homosexual?

BAYARD gestures "of course."

HISAYE

Poor Zeno! He must be so confused.

BAYARD

If he's a jealous man, one or the other of us is about to get that date.

HISAYE

He's a little old for me.

BAYARD

But handsome, yes?

HISAYE shrugs, "yes, he's handsome."

HISAYE

This is the most radical direct action ever. I'm familiar with sit-ins, but whoever heard of a kiss-in before?

BAYARD

You weren't making any genuine progress, so I improvised.

HISAYE

So much for not being the story. Almena would kill me.

BAYARD

Put it in your column! Imagine a hundred Negroes and Japanese camped out in front of Bimini Baths--

HISAYE

Kissing!

BAYARD

And don't be vain--you're not the story.

HISAYE

You are? Talk about vain!

BAYARD

Zeno is.

HISAYE

He didn't tell you to call him Zeno.

BAYARD

He will.

HISAYE

Why's he the story?

BAYARD

He's a Mexican forced to defend racist policy in order to keep his job. He's a vet! Who hasn't come home to a hero's welcome but to be a house nigger.

HISAYE

Please don't use that ugly word. It revolts my stomach.

BAYARD

That's why I used it. You can write his story, break everyone's heart, like yours was broken by that fire in Fontana. Redeem yourself.

HISAYE

I can't write from his point of view, especially without his permission, which he would never grant.

BAYARD

Why not?

HISAYE

I'm a Japanese woman, not a Mexican man.

BAYARD

You'll see through his eyes, understand him better.

HISAYE

You're amusingly idealistic.

BAYARD

And the better you know him, the easier it will be to write from his point of view.

(winks)

HISAYE

Wow! Did you just wink at me? Stop winking at me!

Lights out on them and up on  
ZENOBIO.

ZENOBIO

In order to outflank Miss Yamamoto by preventing her threatened occupation of our vestibule, I agreed to meet her for a drink at Shepp's Playhouse in Little Tokyo.

Music. Lights up on HISAYE in the middle of an awesome Bette Davis impression.

HISAYE

Every time you kiss me, I have to wipe my mouth! Wipe my mouth!

(ZENOBIO laughs)

What's your favorite movie?

ZENOBIO

I like Westerns.

HISAYE

Such as?

ZENOBIO

*The Old Code, The Eyes of the Totem.*

HISAYE

Those are twenty years old. Anything recent?

ZENOBIO

They're very well written.

HISAYE

This is Hollywood. The writer's not important.

ZENOBIO

Nothing is real until written.

HISAYE

How long have you been working at Bimini?

ZENOBIO

I just started back after my discharge, but altogether almost ten years.

HISAYE

Is it fulfilling work?

ZENOBIO

It's not perfect, but kind of a home. It's where I learned to swim when I was a kid. I got a lotta history.

HISAYE

Guarding the door against colored people?

ZENOBIO

Normally I work in medical, doing treatments.

HISAYE

But is that what you want to do with your life?

ZENOBIO

Is this a job interview?

HISAYE

Just a drink.

ZENOBIO

Before the war I was saving up for college. I wanted to study paleontology at Yale.

HISAYE

Do you still?

ZENOBIO  
I'm forty-four years old.

HISAYE  
GI Bill.

ZENOBIO  
You go to college?

HISAYE  
Compton Junior College. Why paleontology?

ZENOBIO  
I cleaned fossils from the Tar Pits when I was thirteen.  
(produces a small brown bone)

HISAYE  
Is that a fossil?

ZENOBIO  
It's a dire wolf baculum.

HISAYE  
What's a baculum?

ZENOBIO  
A...uh...penis bone.

HISAYE  
Well.

ZENOBIO  
Sorry.  
(puts bone away)

HISAYE  
Did you use gasoline?

ZENOBIO  
Kerosene.

HISAYE  
We lived in an oil field for a while and my brother Jemo fell  
in a sump hole when he was three. My parents siphoned gas  
from the car to clean the tar baby off.

ZENOBIO

I cleaned a guy like that once at Bimini.

HISAYE

A grown man?

ZENOBIO

He got drunk and fell in La Brea, stained so dark no white hospital would take him. This crazy Negro named Amen helped me turn a white man white again!

HISAYE

I never heard about that! When was it?

ZENOBIO

1939. Soon after, Amen died in the Port Chicago explosion. He might not've gotten drafted so fast if he listened to me and kept his head down.

HISAYE

How sad. Were you friendly?

ZENOBIO

OK friendly. He was a funny guy.

HISAYE

But what an intriguing story! Have you written it down?

ZENOBIO

I'm still figuring it all out.

HISAYE

Aren't we all?

ZENOBIO

The tar, the war. I'm trying to apply science.

HISAYE

To the human condition?

ZENOBIO

Hate. Love. There's even math in there somewhere.

(pause)

Who's that Negro came with you to Bimini? Your boyfriend?



HISAYE

Mr. Rustin is very famous. He went to prison as a conscientious objector. He agitates.

ZENOBIO

I can see that. But is he your boyfriend?

HISAYE

My, you're insistent. Now you're interviewing me.

ZENOBIO

Never mind. None of my beeswax.

HISAYE

Why do you want to know?

ZENOBIO

He kiss you like that in public all the time?

HISAYE

I don't believe I'm ready to answer that quite yet. Maybe after another drink.

Lights out on them and up on  
EVERETT and BAYARD, also having a  
drink.

EVERETT

Interior: Bar. The Finale Club is one of those fly-by-night establishments of Bronzeville, closing every few weeks and opening up somewhere slightly less posh. A place where a Negro and a Caucasian can drink in peace. Rustin may have had a bit too much sauce. Maxwell maintains his dignity.

BAYARD

Why not?

EVERETT

It's not my fight. I don't fight. I observe.

BAYARD

It is too your fight.

EVERETT

(out)

Maxwell is irritated.

(to BAYARD)

In case you haven't noticed, Mr. Rustin, I'm a white man.

BAYARD

Still handsome in late middle age.

EVERETT

Thank you, but--

BAYARD

I'm vividly aware of your whiteness. It's extreme. You may be the whitest man I ever met.

EVERETT

White people are your dilemma, isn't that so?

BAYARD

Not the people--

EVERETT

The Negro is not the dilemma.

BAYARD

I agree--it's the white man's burden.

EVERETT

(out)

Maxwell ignores that remark.

(to BAYARD)

You mustn't expect Caucasians to solve the dilemma. The Negro must come up with the solution. You're motivated.

BAYARD

We can't do it alone.

EVERETT

Nor can you sit around waiting for white people--

BAYARD

I don't sit around. Occasionally I loiter, but with intent.

EVERETT

(out)

Maxwell ignores that remark, too.

BAYARD

The problem will not be solved until *everybody* does what they can do.

EVERETT

They say Bimini's not what it used to be. A bit run down.

BAYARD

Come see for yourself.

EVERETT

I'm not reluctant. Nor stubborn. I admire your ambition. I simply cannot go into Bimini Baths.

BAYARD

Yes, you can. Any day of the week.

EVERETT

Mr. Rustin, we are only recently acquainted, so I'm not comfortable giving you the details, but I'm banned from Bimini.

BAYARD

Banned?

EVERETT

For life.

BAYARD

What did you do?

EVERETT

An indiscretion--

BAYARD

I've been arrested more times than I can count--

EVERETT

A serious indiscretion.

BAYARD

How long ago?

EVERETT

Nineteen sixteen.

BAYARD

Whatever you did--and I won't insist you tell me, despite my immense curiosity--you did it thirty-two years ago! The staff of Bimini, the attendants, the dashing wounded Mexican veteran barring the door won't remember your sin--he would have been a child at the time.

EVERETT

I was drummed out of society, not just Bimini Baths. Dismissed from the Museum. My humiliation was quite public.

BAYARD

But you can't tell me.

EVERETT

Let's not taint our fresh acquaintance with too much truth.

BAYARD

(out)

Mr. Maxwell appears to be one of those. Self-loathing.

(to EVERETT)

I respect your privacy and withdraw my request.

EVERETT

For thirty-two years I've cautiously crabwalked back into the world, behind pen names, pseudonyms, daring after ten years to sign my initials, only after twenty my full name! My more steadfast friends did their best for me--Max Wiczorek was thoughtful, generous, invited me to write the preface to his *catalogue raisonne*. But many turned their backs. You have no idea what it's like to be so ostracized--

(BAYARD just stares at him)

Well. Yes, you do. I apologize. But. I can't. You understand.

BAYARD

Of course.

EVERETT

(out)

Medium shot. They sit in silence. Each contemplating his sins.

BAYARD

(out)

I realize he's a different generation--

EVERETT

(out)

Close-up: Rustin.

BAYARD

(out)

--Grew up in a different world--

EVERETT

(out)

His noble dark face focused inward, his calm eyes half-lidded as he wonders whether he could have done what Maxwell has done, what he imagines Maxwell's hideous transgression to be.

BAYARD

(out)

--A sensibility forged before the War to End All Wars, his Edwardian innocence, his privileged prudishness gassed in Flanders fields. He knows what is right, but fears himself.

EVERETT

(out)

Close-up: Maxwell.

EVERETT

He flushes to the roots of his hair, embarrassed to have revealed so little yet said too much. His shame buried in newspaper archives and sealed court records, in prison rolls and pleading letters, in cold parole reports.

BAYARD

I realize I must live in the present, or better yet the future. I have to imagine what can be, not what is. The Second World War cracked everything open, destroyed so much, and now we can go back to a better time, way back--

EVERETT

But maybe--

BAYARD

A better time that--

BAYARD AND EVERETT

No one remembers!

EVERETT

And isn't that worse?

Lights out on them and up on HISAYE and ZENOBIO. From their posture, it's clear they've had that second drink.

ZENOBIO

I maintained good control of the Yamamoto situation until we'd almost finished the second round.

HISAYE

Everyone in Poston went a little mad. Freud would have had a field day with us! Respectable people coping with the unpredictable, the unimaginable. Some of us better than others.

ZENOBIO

You seem okay.

HISAYE

Trust me, I'm not. Just wait. I'm becoming a very disobedient girl. I could end up like Miss Sakiyama.

ZENOBIO

What happened to her?

HISAYE

She had delicate sensibilities, the camp turned her, or maybe just revealed her, her madness, when the rest of us kept it hidden.

ZENOBIO

What'd she do?

HISAYE

She got khaki wacky. One of the boys woke up in the middle of the night to find her sitting at the foot of his bed watching him. Yum, yum, eat 'em up. Everybody talked about her. It was quite shocking to me as a proper young girl. Could that happen to me one day?

ZENOBIO

Maybe she was always like that, like you said.

HISAYE

Possibly, but the concentration camp brought it out.

ZENOBIO

Concentration camp? We didn't have those here!

HISAYE

Internment camp, concentration camp, what's the difference?

ZENOBIO

We're not Nazis! You weren't starved, gassed, shoved in ovens!

HISAYE

No, the war ended. But what if?

ZENOBIO

Not the same thing.

HISAYE

You weren't there.

ZENOBIO

You weren't at Dachau.

HISAYE

You were?

ZENOBIO

We liberated the camp.

HISAYE

So you're a hero.

ZENOBIO

Hardly.

HISAYE

Which division?

ZENOBIO

Forty-second Rainbow. Don't believe me, do you?

HISAYE

There were Mexican units in Europe--?

ZENOBIO

We were classified white--

HISAYE

My brother was in a Nisei unit--

ZENOBIO

The 522nd Field Artillery Battalion? They were the only Japanese near Dachau--

HISAYE

No, he was--

ZENOBIO

--At Kaufering and Landsberg--

ZENOBIO

So your brother didn't see Dachau--

HISAYE

No, he didn't--

ZENOBIO

Didn't smell it!

HISAYE

You're right, he was in Italy- Didn't get it under his skin!

-

ZENOBIO

Before we got there, the officers warned us not to go near the prisoners--

HISAYE

I know it was a bad business-- --Lice, diseases--but no one told the prisoners.

ZENOBIO

ZENOBIO

When they saw us they swarmed, hugging us with their dirty, bony arms, sweeping us into their joy, their disbelief at being saved. Then one leftover SS tried to escape, made a break for the ditch by the fence.

Surreptitiously, HISAYE scribbles in an old but elegant leather-bound notebook.

ZENOBIO

The prisoners made a horrible sound, a groan, a hiss--and chased the German guard, taking us with them, making us part of their filthy mob. The SS bastard almost made it, but slipped and fell in the ditch, a moat, really, some water but not very deep. The prisoners followed, piled in on top of him in the ditch, dragging me along, and stood on him, holding him down with our collective weight.



You could hear his screams at first, but couldn't see him. He shut up when someone stood his head, holding it under the muddy water. Maybe it was me. All I could think was that Kraut under my boots had documented or dumped the decaying human meat we saw all over the camp. Madder than your Miss Sacajawea, I stood my ground till I couldn't feel him moving, till I was as wet and filthy as the prisoners, as guilty as the SS man, till there was no SS man.

HISAYE starts crying.

ZENOBIO

I never got court-martialed, chewed out in any way. But my boots didn't protect me. When I crushed him under the water, something broke in my foot, too. Never been the same. But at the time I didn't feel it at all.

HISAYE

That's...a terrible story. You must feel--

ZENOBIO

Like I was covered with tar. No way to get clean.

HISAYE

I'm sorry--I--

HISAYE pulls herself together.

ZENOBIO

So, no, I'm not a hero...like your brother.

HISAYE

He wasn't--

ZENOBIO

We saw different things: me, you, your brother.

HISAYE

My brother didn't see what you saw cause he never saw 1945. He was killed in Italy in 1944.

ZENOBIO

Condolences.

HISAYE

Johnny was my favorite.

ZENOBIO

He did what he had to, like all of us.

HISAYE

He didn't have to! Johnny died for the country that imprisoned his family. You're defending a policy that imprisons you.

ZENOBIO

Aw, we were having a nice time!

HISAYE

I know you're just back from Europe and all--

ZENOBIO

Weren't we having a nice time? Getting along?

HISAYE

But it's different here now. We're a different country from before.

ZENOBIO

We're a country where a Japanese girl--

(snatches her notebook)

-Writes for a colored paper.

(out)

I'd made inquiries.

HISAYE

I have that privilege, yes.

ZENOBIO

You didn't tell me.

He flips through her notebook.

HISAYE

The paper doesn't even support--it's Bayard who wants me to write about it, be the civil rights Lois Lane--!

ZENOBIO

You talk about me with him?

HISAYE

You and I talk about him.

ZENOBIO

You never did say if he was your boyfriend.

HISAYE

He's not. It is in fact none of your beeswax, but he's definitely not.

ZENOBIO just looks at her.

HISAYE

He's queer! And I know for a fact he'd have no objection to me telling you.

ZENOBIO

I don't care about that.

HISAYE

And yet you interrogate me about him.

ZENOBIO

The interrogation's mutual, ain't it?

HISAYE

I'm just doing--

ZENOBIO

Your job.

HISAYE

My moral duty.

ZENOBIO

So I'm the means to an end? A good story?

HISAYE

No! Not just--you're many things--more than I thought: a vet, a paleontologist, a man with a penis bone and guilty--foot--

ZENOBIO

And all that's going into your column? *Small Talk*? Everything I just told you? All that crummy personal--shit--?

HISAYE

If I write it, I'll write from your point of view--

ZENOBIO

This hits the paper, even a colored paper, I'll lose my job--

HISAYE

Maybe you should! It's a lackey job! What they're making you do is immoral.

ZENOBIO

It's my lackey job! You got no right to my morals. No right to my story, Rois Rane!

HISAYE

(after a moment)

I see why you're classified white.

ZENOBIO

You're a cold-blooded little number.

HISAYE

But they can't help talking like that. They're white.

ZENOBIO

You're not me.

(throws notebook at her)

You can't write--me.

HISAYE

I'm a young Japanese woman. Does that mean I can't write about anybody old? About men? Mexicans? May I only write about myself?!

Lights out on HISAYE.

ZENOBIO

It was not easy. But I did. My job.

Lights out on ZENOBIO and up on  
BAYARD.

BAYARD

(out)

Dear Friend AJ: I have followed your advice and sought an ally, Miss Hisaye Yamamoto, Nisei Correspondent for the Los Angeles Tribune. She is a remarkable and resilient woman, a survivor like myself of the so-called American justice system. Unfortunately, her best efforts have compromised our direct action with personal complications. I may have to stay in Los Angeles longer than expected.

HISAYE

There's nothing personal about it.

BAYARD

You had a drink with him, Miss Able Grable.

HISAYE

At your urging! You winked at me!

BAYARD

If everyone did my bidding when I winked at them, everything would be copasetic. Should I wink at Señor Remedios?

HISAYE

I care not. He thinks love is science! Math!

BAYARD

Love is patient and kind.

HISAYE

Don't quote First Corinthians  
to me!

BAYARD

Love doesn't envy or boast,  
isn't arrogant or rude.

BAYARD

Love doesn't insist on its own way--

HISAYE

Love doesn't sit on its ass!

Shocked silence for a moment, then  
both laugh.

BAYARD

We've both struck out. We need a pinch hitter.

HISAYE

No one else from the paper--

BAYARD

Someone from the ofay segment of the population.

HISAYE

Don't quote me to me. It puts me in a bad humor.

BAYARD

On the Journey of Reconciliation and at other sit-ins and direct actions, we do best side-by-side with sympathetic Caucasians. Have you heard of Everett C. Maxwell?

HISAYE

Who's that?

BAYARD

An art critic and screenwriter.

HISAYE

(shakes head)

We need someone of unimpeachable character.

BAYARD

We need a white person.

HISAYE

I resent looking to white people to be our heroes.

BAYARD

But sometimes they come in handy.

HISAYE

And he's agreed to help us?

BAYARD

Absolutely!

Lights up on EVERETT.

EVERETT

Absolutely not!

BAYARD

I merely need to advise him of the details.

Lights out on BAYARD and HISAYE.

EVERETT

Interior: bar. Clifton's Pacific Seas Tiki Bar is a Polynesian nightmare. Maxwell quietly nurses a Mai Tai. The paper umbrella reminds him of *ukiyo-e* prints from the Edo Period.

He contemplates Japanese art and the bargains available these days, with servicemen returning to California from Tokyo.  
War booty.

(twirls the umbrella)

War booty.

He's obviously had more than one  
cocktail.

EVERETT

Maxwell remembers purchasing Edo Period prints for the Museum. Before the First World War. Before everything degenerated. Before...

Lights up on ZENOBIO.

ZENOBIO

Staff is prepared for Miss Yamamoto to return to Bimini Baths. I anticipate reinforcements since she was not able to infiltrate by herself.

Lights up on HISAYE.

HISAYE

Mr. Rustin's brainchild was doomed. Our Caucasian collaborator was not the type of gentleman given to direct action. A fuddy duddy of wealth and privilege, as Rustin described him. I am becoming impatient with passive resistance. You have to do something or nothing changes! Get off your ass and jump! Otherwise what are we here for?

BAYARD joins EVERETT in the bar.

BAYARD

How many of those manly little tropiccocktails have you had?

EVERETT

Just this one!

(out)

Maxwell gestures. Rustin sits.

BAYARD

You look like you've been island hopping.

EVERETT

Ask the bartender!

BAYARD

You've certainly been bar hopping. I've traced your Journey of Inebriation through four increasingly down-low establishments.

EVERETT

I've no idea what you're talking about.

BAYARD

I need your help tomorrow.

EVERETT

Tomorrow?!

BAYARD

So sober up.

EVERETT

I told you I can't.

BAYARD

They post the same gimpy vet at the door every day. Zenobio Remedios is certainly too young to remember whatever it is you did at Bimini in 1916.

EVERETT

Zenobio Remedios?

BAYARD

If you get to know him well enough, I hear he lets you call him Zeno. A good little soldier who needs very badly to get fucked.

EVERETT

*Ay, dios mio!*

BAYARD

I assume he speaks Spanish.

EVERETT

Maxwell is stunned.

BAYARD

But he didn't start working there until almost twenty years after your last visit.



EVERETT  
Rustin stands.

BAYARD  
Why are you narrating?

EVERETT  
(out)  
Maxwell is startled.  
(to BAYARD)  
What?

BAYARD  
Man, you're soused. You're talking to people who aren't there.

EVERETT  
(gestures toward audience)  
Take a gander.

BAYARD looks into the audience,  
doesn't seem to see them.

BAYARD  
Jeepers.

EVERETT  
They come to observe. To be entertained. To escape.

BAYARD  
No more Mai Tais for you.

EVERETT  
They see you. They hear you. They know you. Your desperate need to be...tolerated.

BAYARD  
I don't want to be tolerated! I want to be loved!

EVERETT  
(to audience)  
Could you love him?

EVERETT, very drunk, takes careful steps toward the audience as BAYARD watches with alarm.

ZENOBIO

It is my professional duty to report that this may not be an appropriate assignment--for me. I have violated policy by meeting with one of the agitators privately, and my actions may have compromised--

BAYARD

Everett, what are you doing?

ZENOBIO

I may be compromised.

HISAYE

This is my column, I can say what I want, but I promised never to lie to you, dear reader, so--

ZENOBIO

Personally compromised.

EVERETT

(to an audience member)

He's a persuasive Negro, isn't he?

HISAYE

--I confess that I may be jeopardizing my journalistic integrity--

BAYARD

(going to EVERETT in the audience)

Don't--that isn't going to help--

HISAYE

I think I may have let myself become the story.

ZENOBIO

But I am prepared.

EVERETT

He commands attention, don't you think!

BAYARD

(to audience member)

I'm sorry--he's been drinking--

HISAYE

They say put your heart in your work, but I've bungled it. Could I go extravagantly mad like Miss Sakiyama? Sexually insane?

ZENOBIO

When they come, we have a plan.

EVERETT

He wants me to do something simple.

BAYARD

(trying to pull EVERETT away)

Goodness, this is awkward.

HISAYE

(going into the audience)

Dear reader, I'm torn. This is a story everybody needs to know, but--

ZENOBIO

Management has a plan. It's very simple.

Their dialogue overlaps, runs together, as everyone but ZENOBIO infiltrates the audience.

EVERETT

Very simple. Just bathe myself. Be baptized! Cleansed!

BAYARD

Tell him he can do it. Maybe he'll listen to you.

HISAYE

--I don't want to betray his trust. Nor yours. You trust me, don't you?

ZENOBIO

It's all perfectly legal.

EVERETT

He doesn't know the truth. I can't tell him. But let me tell you. It's terrible.

BAYARD

He just needs to go with us to the Baths. Stand with us.

HISAYE

You trust me to tell the whole story, even the unlovely parts. The parts I didn't know--

All except ZENOBIO may reach out to audience members, touch them. It's uncomfortable and freaky.

ZENOBIO

It's my job.

EVERETT

Terrible. The worst thing!

BAYARD

I've been arrested dozens of times. It couldn't be worse than that. What could be worse than prison?

EVERETT

Worse! Beyond redemption!

BAYARD

Tell him.

HISAYE

I didn't know. How could I know?

ZENOBIO

My duty.

EVERETT

I could die of it. Drown in the cleansing waters!

BAYARD

Please tell him. He has to help.

HISAYE

And I've fallen in love with him! With my story! His broken foot broke my heart.

BAYARD

Tell him why what we do tomorrow will change the world forever! Tell him!

EVERETT

He can't baptize me.

ZENOBIO

Duty. That's more important than she is, isn't it?

HISAYE

How inexplicably stupid! Love!

BAYARD

Who are you talking about, Everett?

ZENOBIO

Just follow orders.

EVERETT

I can't see him!

HISAYE

He trusts me. He said call  
him--

BAYARD

Can't see who?

EVERETT AND HISAYE

Zeno!

BAYARD

Zeno?

ZENOBIO

I'm figuring out the science, doing the math. Hate. That's the cause of all the trouble in the world: cruel words, lynchings, wars. How many individuals do you personally hate? Count 'em. Not many, is it? Now how many do you love? Your parents, your sister, your brother, your wife, your husband, children, boyfriend, girlfriend. All those people you love--

(weighs with hands)

--And maybe a handful you hate. Love should outweigh hate, outnumber it. Science. Math. Love. A simple calculation.

(sees the others staring at  
him)

Isn't it?

End of Act One

Four lights isolate the following objects on stage: a mandolin, HISAYE'S notebook, the baculum, and a strip of cloth. HISAYE approaches an audience member.

HISAYE

(confidentially)

Let me tell you a story.

EVERETT approaches an audience member. He is no longer drunk.

EVERETT

May I read you my screenplay?

BAYARD approaches an audience member.

BAYARD

I can tell you this with a clear conscience.

ZENOBIO approaches an audience member.

ZENOBIO

You're keen to be in the know, aren't you?

Their confiding conversations with audience members segue slowly back onto the stage.

HISAYE

Are you familiar with the Indian epic, *The Mahabharata*? It's the Hindu history of India: the gods, goddesses, and mortals. There's a narrative thread, a grand theme, but along the way, many stories. Passed down over generations through oral tradition, the epic grow'd like Topsy, with new stories, new points of view nestling themselves inside until it was more than just the history of India.

(reaches the stage, picks up the notebook)

It was the story of everything.

BAYARD

I've been arrested, thrown in jail, spent months in prison, endured crude insults and animal names, been threatened, beat up, interrogated, and publicly humiliated. I fought for civil rights all my life, fought for justice, fought for peace. *Fought* for peace! But I never worked so hard in manifold ways against so many obstacles as I did for our direct action at Bimini Baths.

(reaches stage, picks up  
mandolin)

And one of those obstacles was me.

BAYARD strums mandolin under.

EVERETT

Interior: Vestibule. Rustin strums a mandolin. A young Japanese woman makes notes in an elegant, leather-bound notebook. It's early morning. The entrance to Bimini Baths is quiet.

(reaches stage, picks up  
cloth, worries it)

For now. Cut to:

ZENOBIO

February 19, 1948. Bimini Baths daily admissions log.

EVERETT

Close up: Zenobio Remedios. Forty-four years of age, war-weary, jaw tightened for his onerous task.

ZENOBIO

As expected, protestors Mr. Rustin and Miss Yamamoto appeared and requested entry to the facility.

HISAYE

I would like admission to the  
plunge, a scalp massage and  
facial treatment, please--

BAYARD

May I have the course of  
twenty-one Bimini Treatments  
with time limit--?

ZENOBIO reaches the stage, picks up  
the bone, slapping it nervously  
again his palm.

HISAYE AND BAYARD

Mr. Remedios?

EVERETT

Medium shot. Remedios slaps an object against his palm.  
What is it?

ZENOBIO

May I see your health certificates?  
(slips bone in his pocket)

BAYARD

Our what certificates?

ZENOBIO

Health certificates.

HISAYE

Is that a new requirement?

ZENOBIO

In an effort to prevent the spread of poliomyelitis and to protect its patrons, Bimini Baths and Natural Hot Spring Resort has instituted an admissions policy requiring certificates issued by the County Health Department.

HISAYE

That's completely arbitrary!

ZENOBIO

Not arbitrary--*sanitary*.

BAYARD

This is the same old business. Your policy didn't exist until we requested admittance.

ZENOBIO

We must be strict about our policy. It protects everyone from polio. You wouldn't want to end up in an iron lung.

HISAYE

Zeno!

BAYARD

Si, let Mr. Remedios make a chucklehead of himself trying to justify his absurd and instantly fabricated policy--

ZENOBIO

It's not mine!



HISAYE  
Of course it isn't--!

BAYARD  
Do you stand behind it or  
not?

EVERETT  
Remedios is silent for a moment.

ZENOBIO  
(after a moment)  
Do you have your certificates?

HISAYE  
Of course not, don't be silly.

BAYARD  
Would we need certificates if we came back on Mexican Day?

EVERETT  
Remedios is silent.

HISAYE  
The health of Mexicans is not a concern?

ZENOBIO  
I'm not authorized to debate our policy with you, Miss  
Yamamoto.

HISAYE  
Very well.

HISAYE AND BAYARD  
(out)  
We had no choice.

EVERETT  
They sit. Maxwell observes from a distance, unseen by  
Remedios.

HISAYE and BAYARD situate  
themselves elegantly upon the  
floor.

ZENOBIO  
The police have been summoned.

BAYARD

And the press? Will you also summon the press so you can explain to a crush of reporters your racial policy?

HISAYE

The press--

EVERETT

Yamamoto pulls out her notebook.

HISAYE

--Is already here.

EVERETT

Wait...that notebook...

BAYARD

Would you like an interview?

HISAYE

Eventually. But we have plenty of time.

EVERETT

How'd she get that notebook?

ZENOBIO

Officers will be here pronto.

EVERETT

It was sealed!

ZENOBIO

Hang it up. You're obstructing our business and for that you can go to jail.

EVERETT

I can't--stay--!

HISAYE

What's jail like, Mr. Rustin?

EVERETT

(out)

Maxwell--leaves!

He does.

BAYARD

As many times as I've been the guest of government hospitality, I can say with some authority I do not recommend it.

HISAYE

(making notes)

And why is that?

BAYARD

I'm afraid our country's local jails and even state penitentiaries are a law unto themselves. A man like me or sadly, even a woman like you, is unprotected, at the mercy of often merciless men. I once saw a Negro woman hanged in her cell. They claimed she did it herself.

HISAYE

I'm familiar with government hospitality--

BAYARD

That's right! The American Dachau!

ZENOBIO

Dachau!

HISAYE

(nervous)

Not Dachau exactly, but--

ZENOBIO

What'd you tell him?

HISAYE

No details--just--

BAYARD

You liberated Dachau. You're a hero.

ZENOBIO

That was personal!

HISAYE

Did you have to say--?

ZENOBIO

I told you in confidence!

BAYARD

Mr. Remedios, she is the press. Nothing's in confidence.  
Everything is written down.

(after a moment)

Don't go into a decline.

HISAYE

You're flirting with him at my expense. Not everyone's an  
invert.

BAYARD

They are after I get through with them.

HISAYE

Shhhh!

BAYARD

(looks around, to HISAYE)

Where's Everett?

HISAYE

(to BAYARD)

We can't do much till he comes.

ZENOBIO

It's rude to whisper.

BAYARD

We'd be more than happy to engage you in conversation, Mr.  
Remedios--

HISAYE

Flirting!

BAYARD

Miss Yamamoto is writing all of this down.

HISAYE

Not all of it...

BAYARD

I've been doing a little writing myself.

(strums mandolin)

Do you enjoy Renaissance music?

ZENOBIO

*Ay, dios mio.*

HISAYE

I'm more of a Romantic girl.

BAYARD

Perhaps you already know *The Ballad of Bimini Baths*.

HISAYE

Yes, but it never loses its charm.

ZENOBIO

You eager beavers ever give up?

HISAYE AND BAYARD

Nope!

BAYARD

(strums mandolin and sings)

At Bimini the springs are hot  
A pure and natural flow  
The mineral waters purge and clean  
The guests as white as snow

ZENOBIO

Roll up your flaps! You'll provoke the patrons.

BAYARD

(sings)

Not everyone is welcome there  
So check before you go  
Are you the kind who mingles with

HISAYE AND BAYARD

(singing)

The guests as white as snow?

EVERETT appears with a change of costume playing CARLYLE. EVERETT AS CARLYLE glances at HISAYE and BAYARD then proceeds to ZENOBIO.

EVERETT AS CARLYLE

(New York accent)

Morning, Xavier.

ZENOBIO

Good morning, Mr. Carlyle.

EVERETT AS CARLYLE

Why you working the door, Xavier? Anything to do with--?  
(jerks his head toward BAYARD  
and HISAYE)

HISAYE

His name is Zenobio.

ZENOBIO

(quickly, overlapping)

The usual treatments, sir?

EVERETT AS CARLYLE

Not so good for the reputation, Hooverville at your door.

ZENOBIO

The police are on the way. We have a new Hamamelis Rub, if  
you'd be interested--

EVERETT AS CARLYLE

Not Hooverville--*Bronzeville!*

ZENOBIO

Your usual treatments plus general admission is seventy-five  
cents.

EVERETT AS CARLYLE

(giving ZENOBIO the money)

Hope you put the kibosh on that by the time I'm done. Not  
something you wanna see more than once, if you know what I  
mean.

ZENOBIO

I do, Mr. Carlyle.

EVERETT AS CARLYLE

Good boy, Xavier.

HISAYE AND BAYARD

Zenobio!

EVERETT AS CARLYLE disappears  
inside Bimini Baths.

ZENOBIO

You're gonna cost us business!

BAYARD

Good people will indeed turn away when made aware of your policies.

HISAYE

How many times has he been here and he can't remember your name?

ZENOBIO

What he's gonna remember is the snafu in the vestibule!

BAYARD

(sings)

Señor Remedios was brave  
And valiant in the war  
But found his biggest battle yet  
The guardpost at the door

ZENOBIO

Quit beating your gums!

HISAYE

He'll stop if you let us in.

ZENOBIO

You're making it sound like it's me!

HISAYE

Exactly, Zeno--it's not you--

EVERETT appears as TRUDY, a  
fashionable matron with a Southern  
accent.

EVERETT AS TRUDY

Oh!

ZENOBIO

Good afternoon, Mrs. Henderson.

HISAYE and BAYARD stare her down,  
but after a moment she goes to  
ZENOBIO.

EVERETT AS TRUDY

Zeno, have I made a terrible mistake?

ZENOBIO

No, ma'am. What do you mean?

EVERETT AS TRUDY

It's not Mexican Day, is it?

ZENOBIO

No, ma'am, it's a regular day.

EVERETT AS TRUDY

I come here to relax, to feel clean.

ZENOBIO

We won't permit them to enter.

EVERETT AS TRUDY

I should hope not. That wouldn't be safe. Could I have the electric cabinet bath plus shampoo and scalp massage?

ZENOBIO

Of course. That'll be three dollars and twenty-five cents.

EVERETT AS TRUDY

(giving him the money)

They can't really afford to enter anyway, can they? Poverty is a problem in our country, but in this case--

(quick glance at HISAYE and BAYARD)

--It's a mercy!

EVERETT AS TRUDY disappears into the Baths.

ZENOBIO

You see? You're not gaining any sympathizers.

HISAYE

And yet we're still here.

ZENOBIO

It's almost closing. Aren't you running out of gas?



BAYARD

(sings)

The first day dragged from dawn to dusk  
 But neither side gave in  
 A protest song played pleasantly  
 Upon a mandolin

EVERETT appears as OFFICER OLSON.  
 He studies BAYARD and HISAYE for a  
 moment, then proceeds to ZENOBIO.

EVERETT AS OFFICER OLSON

(Scandinavian accent)

Did you call in the complaint?

ZENOBIO

Yes, sir.

EVERETT AS OFFICER OLSON

Any damage to the property?

ZENOBIO

No, but obstruction as you see--

EVERETT AS OFFICER OLSON

They giving your customers flak or inconveniencing them in  
 any way?

ZENOBIO

Several patrons have made mention.

EVERETT AS OFFICER OLSON

I can't arrest them on a mention.

ZENOBIO

They're scaring people away. Hurting our trade!

EVERETT AS OFFICER OLSON turns to  
 look at BAYARD and HISAYE. They  
 smile sweetly.

EVERETT AS OFFICER OLSON

They don't look so intimidating.

ZENOBIO

But--!

BAYARD gives a quick strum to the mandolin.

EVERETT AS OFFICER OLSON  
And you get free live music.

ZENOBIO  
I could lose my job!

EVERETT AS OFFICER OLSON  
Don't call unless there's a real beef.

EVERETT AS OFFICER OLSON saunters out. As BAYARD sings, the lights go out on HISAYE and ZENOBIO.

BAYARD  
(sings)  
At Bimini the springs are pure  
Protected by Jim Crow  
But what can wash your conscience clean  
With guests as white as snow?

(speaking)  
February 20, 1948. On the fourth day of our direct action, the admission desk was manned by Mr. J.J. Warrick, the owner of Bimini Baths.

Lighting change reveals EVERETT AS WARRICK where ZENOBIO had been previously.

BAYARD  
Do you not trust Mr. Remedios to keep us out?

EVERETT AS WARRICK  
White people won't come if we let you in. Simple as that. My own personal feelings don't enter into it. Come back on Mexican Day and you're welcome to it! Only twenty-five cents!

HISAYE appears as YASUNARI, dressed in the quasi-medical uniform of Bimini Baths (different from ZENOBIO'S).

EVERETT AS WARRICK  
Yasunari, what're you doing here?

HISAYE AS YASUNARI  
Good morning Mr. Warrick. I came to see--  
(gestures to BAYARD)

EVERETT AS WARRICK  
You never seen a Negro before?

HISAYE AS YASUNARI  
Not here in our vestibule.  
(to BAYARD)  
You're ruining our business. Please go home.

EVERETT AS WARRICK  
Now, Yasunari, cool down.

HISAYE AS YASUNARI  
I said please.

EVERETT AS WARRICK  
He'll get bored soon enough.

HISAYE AS YASUNARI  
You're making trouble for all of us. There are plenty of  
places around town for you.

EVERETT AS WARRICK  
Or come back next Thursday! Two Roosevelts and a Jefferson!

HISAYE AS YASUNARI  
Listen to the boss man! The colored staff doesn't want you  
here!

BAYARD  
I understand. You need the work. You can't protest your own  
job.

HISAYE AS YASUNARI  
I don't want to protest!

BAYARD  
I'm doing it for you.

HISAYE AS YASUNARI

Kurombo!

EVERETT AS WARRICK

It's hunky dory, Yasunari. Come inside and get to work.

HISAYE AS YASUNARI

Sorry, Mr. Warrick.

(starts to enter)

EVERETT AS WARRICK

Staff entrance.

HISAYE AS YASUNARI

Sorry, sir, staff entrance.

HISAYE AS YASUNARI leaves the way  
he came in. ZENOBIO enters as  
SANTOS, also dressed in the Bimini  
staff uniform. He sees BAYARD.

ZENOBIO AS SANTOS

*Ay, chingado.* [Ay, fucker]

BAYARD

*Buenos dias.* [Good day]

EVERETT AS WARRICK

Ignore him, Santos.

ZENOBIO AS SANTOS

Who are you?

BAYARD

(standing, shaking hands)

Bayard Rustin. Your name is Santos?

ZENOBIO AS SANTOS

Francisco Maximilian Castro de Santos.

BAYARD

*Mucho gusto.* [Nice to meet you]

EVERETT AS WARRICK

Santos!

ZENOBIO

Should I remove him, Mr. Warrick? Rough him up?

BAYARD

I wouldn't mind that.

EVERETT AS WARRICK

No!

BAYARD

Are you related to Zenobio Remedios?

ZENOBIO AS SANTOS

We all look alike.

BAYARD

Exactly alike. *Muy guapo.* [Very handsome]

ZENOBIO AS SANTOS

*Y tu.* [You, too]

BAYARD

*Tu entiendes.* [You understand]

ZENOBIO AS SANTOS

*Si, entiendo.* [Yes, I understand]

EVERETT AS WARRICK

Santos!

With a smile at BAYARD, ZENOBIO AS SANTOS disappears.

EVERETT AS WARRICK

Don't talk to my staff or I'll have you arrested for indecency.

BAYARD

*Habla Espanol?*

EVERETT AS WARRICK

No, but I'm not blind. Goddamn Communist.

HISAYE appears as herself.

HISAYE

Good afternoon, Bayard. Ready for a shift change?

BAYARD

Si, darling!

HISAYE

Dearest!

BAYARD plants one on her. EVERETT  
AS WARRICK looks confused.

EVERETT AS WARRICK

Hey!

HISAYE

(quietly)

What was that about?

BAYARD

I'm fucking with Mr. Warrick, here.

HISAYE

And with me! I feel like everything's getting all mixed up.  
I don't know who's who any more.

BAYARD

Exciting, isn't it?

(hands her the mandolin)

Keep confusing him.

HISAYE

Enjoy your evening.

BAYARD

Good night.

BAYARD leaves.

EVERETT AS WARRICK

That your boyfriend?

ZENOBIO arrives.

HISAYE

Everyone's always asking me that! No!

ZENOBIO

Hello.

HISAYE

Hello.

EVERETT AS WARRICK

Zeno, take over the door.

ZENOBIO

Of course, Mr. Warrick.

EVERETT AS WARRICK

I know this is hard on you, Zeno, and I appreciate you going the extra mile.

ZENOBIO

Thank you, sir.

EVERETT AS WARRICK

They don't make it easy.

EVERETT AS WARRICK leaves. HISAYE and ZENOBIO look at each other then don't. After a bit, HISAYE strums the mandolin, not as expert as BAYARD. BAYARD appears as NATRICK, also in the Bimini uniform.

BAYARD AS NATRICK

(Jamaican accent)

Coo yah!

ZENOBIO

Leave her alone, Natrick.

BAYARD AS NATRICK

Ease up on yourself. I'm not doing nothing.

ZENOBIO

Your shift is starting.

BAYARD AS NATRICK

But this here lady blocking my way.

HISAYE

I don't mean to block you, Mr. Natrick. But I am happy my presence does not go unnoticed.

BAYARD AS NATRICK

What are you trying to do?

HISAYE

Have a dip in the plunge and a treatment or two.

(refers to brochure)

What's a Nauheim bath?

BAYARD AS NATRICK

That's the Hydrotherapy Department. I'm in Electro Therapy.

HISAYE

May I interview you for the Los Angeles Tribune? It's a Negro paper.

ZENOBIO

No!

HISAYE

Mr. Remedios, I'm sure Mr. Natrick can make up his own mind about speaking to the press.

BAYARD AS NATRICK

She ready.

ZENOBIO

Warrick would fire you, Natrick, so fast.

BAYARD AS NATRICK

(after a moment)

She eat under sheet?

HISAYE

What?

ZENOBIO

Natricks, one more word and you're reported.

BAYARD AS NATRICK signs something  
nasty and leaves.

HISAYE

He was willing!

ZENOBIO

He has a reputation for disrespect. Charming and professional to the white ladies, but...



HISAYE

I see. Thank you.

EVERETT appears.

HISAYE

There you are!

EVERETT

Where'd you get that notebook, if I may ask?

HISAYE

My uncle found it in the trash where he works.

EVERETT

Where's that?

HISAYE

The County Courthouse.

EVERETT

It looks old.

HISAYE

I'm sure it's not a rare book or anything valuable like that. The first owner used it as a diary, so I tore those pages out.

EVERETT

Did you read them?

HISAYE

After the first few lines I realized it was very private so I put it in a box and forgot about it. I'm not a journalist all the time!

ZENOBIO

May I help you, sir?

EVERETT

Um...

HISAYE

Go ahead!

EVERETT

(goes to ZENOBIO)

I'd like to purchase admission to the plunge for one.

ZENOBIO

Certainly, sir. If you'll give me your name we can set up an account to keep track of your treatments and payments.

EVERETT

Just one visit.

ZENOBIO

We have to be very strict these days for the health and safety of our patrons. Name?

EVERETT

(after a moment)

Maxwell.

ZENOBIO

(writing)

First name, Mr. Maxwell?

EVERETT

Everett.

ZENOBIO stops writing and looks at  
EVERETT as if seeing him clearly  
for the first time.

ZENOBIO

Mr. Maxwell.

EVERETT

That's correct. May I enter?

ZENOBIO

Everett Maxwell.

EVERETT

Yes.

ZENOBIO

Who's the best artist in the world?

EVERETT

I beg your pardon?

ZENOBIO puts his wrists together  
above his head as if bound.

ZENOBIO

Who am I?

EVERETT

I'm sorry--I'm sorry--

(stumbles away from ZENOBIO)

I can't--

ZENOBIO

You know! I'm a martyr!

EVERETT

(passes by HISAYE)

Miss, tell Bayard I can't--I have to--

HISAYE

Everett, what's wrong?

ZENOBIO

A saint--!

HISAYE

I'm so confused. You know Zeno?

EVERETT

No--no--I thought I could,  
but--I can't--

ZENOBIO

You're all in cahoots!

EVERETT runs out.

HISAYE

(after a moment)

Now you won't even let white people in?

ZENOBIO

I didn't turn him away. He ran off.

HISAYE

And you know him?

ZENOBIO

I can't tell you anything. You write it all down.

HISAYE

My shift ends at ten. Yours?

ZENOBIO

You know Mr. Maxwell?

HISAYE

Bayard does.

ZENOBIO

Does he have his telephone number?

HISAYE

Come get a drink after work.

ZENOBIO

No, I have to find Mr. Maxwell. Your friend is--?

HISAYE

Bayard Rustin. And you want his number.

Lights out on ZENOBIO.

HISAYE

When I was in high school, one of our farm workers contrived to follow me to the outhouse. I'm sure I gave him some secret message, a hesitation, a glance back, that told him I might welcome his pursuit. And I did welcome it for a moment, let him into the dank darkness of the biffy, but his soft lips and rough cheek and hard fingers shocked me so much I stumbled quickly away, back to the house before my parents even noticed I was gone. I never let him in again. That encounter, that collision in the privy, affected me beyond the frantic fumbling in the dark, left me with an--awkwardness--around men, an aggressive ambivalence that's always confused them, and me. I'm finally ready once again to let someone in, and he turns me down to pursue a homosexual who keeps kissing me, an even larger perplexity. You think you've figured someone out, then they do something that doesn't fit.

Lights out on HISAYE and up on  
ZENOBIO.

ZENOBIO

February 21, 1948. At the beginning of my shift Mr. Warrick gave me a pep talk.

BAYARD appears as WARRICK, with the same costume piece and mannerisms as when EVERETT played WARRICK.

BAYARD AS WARRICK

Zeno, I'm proud of you. Seeing you at the admissions desk, an American soldier doing his job, his duty, it inspires me. Cause that's what we do here in America, our jobs. Nothing's more important than that, meeting our obligations, doing what we say we'll do. And when you took this job--

ZENOBIO

I'm only in admissions on a temporary basis, Mr. Warrick.

BAYARD AS WARRICK

But you take your responsibilities seriously, accept them, no second guessing, no false loyalties, just doing your job.

ZENOBIO

False loyalties?

BAYARD AS WARRICK

Well, for instance, one might think--I never would, but some--some might think those protesters would see you as one of them. But you're one of us, and that's why I put you at the door.

ZENOBIO

I do my job, sir. I've always been like that.

BAYARD AS WARRICK

American through and through. I was sad to see you shipped off to Europe but proud as if you were my own son.

ZENOBIO

Thank you, Mr. Warrick.

BAYARD AS WARRICK

If we beat the whole Imperial Fleet in the Pacific, we can handle one little geisha in our foyer.

ZENOBIO

She's American as me.

BAYARD AS WARRICK

Zeno, don't say that! You may be Mexican on the outside, but inside you're the 42nd Rainbow Division of the United States Army!

ZENOBIO

Thank you, sir.

BAYARD AS WARRICK

You're on the right side of this. Come back next Thursday and have a dip on me:

(hands ZENOBIO some coins)

Two Roosevelts and a Jefferson!

Lighting shift. BAYARD turns back into himself, putting both BAYARD and ZENOBIO in a night club, drinks in hand. ZENOBIO is keyed up, BAYARD energized and excited.

ZENOBIO

I'm not on your side.

BAYARD

What side is that?

ZENOBIO

The--you know--the colored side.

BAYARD

The Mexican side? The side that can use the plunge this coming Thursday? I'm looking forward to it, but I guess you can't join us in the frolic.

ZENOBIO

You're kind of an asshole.

BAYARD

You're kind of drunk.

ZENOBIO

Not as drunk as you'd like.

BAYARD

I'm a patient man.

ZENOBIO

How do you know Everett Maxwell?

BAYARD

I met him at the museum.

ZENOBIO

Me, too.

BAYARD

He used to work there.

ZENOBIO

Do you have his telephone number?

BAYARD

Wouldn't give it to me. Very hush-hush. Said he might visit me at my hotel.

ZENOBIO

I wanna show him something.

BAYARD

And I thought you wanted to have a drink with me. I'm as confused as Si.

ZENOBIO

She snapped her cap cause I asked for your number.

BAYARD

You dragged me to the Cobra Club just to brown her off?

ZENOBIO

You remind me of a cat I used to work with.

BAYARD

At the Baths?

ZENOBIO

Yeah.

BAYARD

Negro?

ZENOBIO  
Yeah. A real joker.

BAYARD  
Where's he now?

ZENOBIO  
The war.

BAYARD  
You miss him?

ZENOBIO shrugs.

BAYARD  
You miss him.

BAYARD touches ZENOBIO, who doesn't react at all. Lights out on them and up on EVERETT.

EVERETT  
Cut to: Exterior. Dunbar Hotel on Central Avenue. Laughter and jazz spill out onto the street. Maxwell stands in a pool of blinking neon, his skin a canvas alternately green then blue then green.

Lights up on HISAYE.

HISAYE  
Almena Davis, Editor-in-Chief (and I do mean In Chief) of the Los Angeles Tribune, gives me free rein in this column most of the time. But:

ZENOBIO appears as ALMENA DAVIS.

ZENOBIO AS ALMENA  
Miss Yamamoto.

HISAYE  
Miss Davis.

ZENOBIO AS ALMENA  
I understand Bayard Rustin was here the other day.



HISAYE

I had the privilege of making his acquaintance.

ZENOBIO AS ALMENA

Did he say what he's in town for?

HISAYE

To ask our help with a nonviolent direct action at Bimini Baths.

ZENOBIO AS ALMENA

I see. Are we helping?

HISAYE

I haven't been of much help yet, but I'm hopeful we'll prevail.

ZENOBIO AS ALMENA

That's not our role. We are journalists.

HISAYE

I want to write about it in *Small Talk*.

ZENOBIO AS ALMENA

I always give you complete freedom--

HISAYE

I know, and I'm most grateful--

ZENOBIO AS ALMENA

You're becoming the story. I won't be accused of creating news.

HISAYE

I can't stand by like we did when Mr. Short asked for our help.

ZENOBIO AS ALMENA

You made that decision.

HISAYE

Based on the Tribune's guidelines!

ZENOBIO AS ALMENA

Objectivity gives journalism its authority!

HISAYE

Journalistic objectivity supports authority, reinforces the status quo. Objectivity let a Negro family burn to death in Fontana!

ZENOBIO AS ALMENA

Miss Yamamoto, I know you enjoy writing your column--

HISAYE

(gritted teeth)

Yes, I enjoy it!

ZENOBIO AS ALMENA

And I want you to enjoy it for years to come, but you're willfully disobeying our policy--

HISAYE

Disobeying?!

ZENOBIO AS ALMENA

I'm sorry, that sounds harsh, but--

HISAYE

I quit!

ZENOBIO AS ALMENA

What?

HISAYE

(gathering her things)

My own journalistic integrity is to tell the truth, even if the truth is me. I love writing for the Tribune, but you're saying I can't take action, I can only document. I do not wish to observe the pain of innocent people while doing nothing.

ZENOBIO AS ALMENA

Writing is not nothing!

HISAYE

It's worse than nothing if the words don't turn into deeds. It's immoral to document a death when you could save a life.

ZENOBIO AS ALMENA

Where are you going?

HISAYE

To Bimini Baths! I'd invite you to join me, but I guess you won't come until Mexican Day!

Lights out on HISAYE and ZENOBIO AS  
ALMENA.

EVERETT

Close-up: Maxwell's blue/green face as he decides to go into the hotel. Will Rustin let him in?

BAYARD appears in a robe. They are  
in his hotel room.

BAYARD

The Pageant of the Masters?

EVERETT

I believe you'd enjoy it very much. *Tableaux vivantes* at the beach.

BAYARD

*Tableaux* of what?

EVERETT

(strikes a crucifixion pose)

Great works of art.

BAYARD

Which beach?

EVERETT

Laguna.

BAYARD

They let Negroes go down there?

EVERETT

Has that ever stopped you?

BAYARD

Si said you ran away. Why?

EVERETT

You wouldn't understand.

BAYARD  
Would you like a drink?

EVERETT  
Yes, actually!

BAYARD  
Take a load off.

EVERETT  
Maxwell sits, trembling. He needs that drink.

BAYARD  
(fixing drinks)  
This horrid secret--

EVERETT  
Rustin pours drinks.

BAYARD  
(hands EVERETT a drink)  
--Have you ever told anyone?

EVERETT  
Someone I shouldn't have trusted.

BAYARD  
Who?

EVERETT  
A psychiatrist.

BAYARD  
Me, too.

EVERETT  
You went to a head-shrinker?

BAYARD  
He came to me. In prison.

EVERETT  
Me, too.

BAYARD  
To psychiatrists. And prison.

They toast and drink. Lights out  
on them and up on HISAYE.

HISAYE

Just as my confusion was becoming intolerable--

ZENOBIO appears.

HISAYE

He came to my apartment.

ZENOBIO

It's too late, isn't it?

HISAYE

And I let him in.

HISAYE fixes drinks.

ZENOBIO

I figured it out.  $E=ML$  squared.

HISAYE

M L squared?

ZENOBIO

Energy equals the mass of people times the love you feel for  
them squared. By that formula, there should be more love in  
the world than hate.

HISAYE

That's a facile metaphor.

ZENOBIO

It's not a metaphor, it's math. You love more people than  
you hate, don't you?

HISAYE

Bayard was right. You're flirtatious after all.

ZENOBIO

I didn't mean--

HISAYE

Your theory doesn't hold up, Einstein. Some people hate folks they never met, thousands, millions. They hate Negroes, Mexicans, Japs, Jews.

ZENOBIO

I want to get clean! Don't you want to get clean?

HISAYE

Nobody in this dirty world has figured it out. But we have to try.

Lights up on EVERETT and BAYARD.

EVERETT

The music turns lush.

Languorous, sexy dance music plays.  
EVERETT strikes a pose.

BAYARD

Michelangelo's *David*.

HISAYE gives ZENOBIO a drink. She sits. He moves to another part of the room but remains standing awkwardly. Lighting on ZENOBIO and HISAYE shifts. BAYARD strikes a pose.

EVERETT

*Discobolus*.

BAYARD

See? Who needs to go all the way to Laguna for *tableaux vivantes*?

They laugh and toast.

HISAYE

He stood awkwardly and quizzed me on old movies by a particular screenwriter.

ZENOBIO

*The Old Code?*

HISAYE shakes her head. EVERETT strikes a pose balancing on one foot.

BAYARD

I have no idea.

ZENOBIO

*Eyes of the Totem?*

HISAYE shakes her head.

EVERETT

I'm dancing.

BAYARD

Degas?

ZENOBIO

*The Heart of the Yukon?*

EVERETT AND HISAYE

No!

HISAYE

I hate westerns.

EVERETT

Didn't you say you've been invited to India?

BAYARD

Oh, wait a minute--

ZENOBIO

He also writes about art, not just movies.

BAYARD

Krishna?

HISAYE

EVERETT

What kind of art?

Close!

BAYARD

Shiva?

ZENOBIO

All kinds.

EVERETT

Yes! Shiva--

EVERETT AND BAYARD

--As Lord of the Dance!

ZENOBIO

There's even a picture of him in the County Museum.

EVERETT

One more, but I'll need your help.

EVERETT hands BAYARD the strip of  
cloth.

HISAYE

He sounds very accomplished.

BAYARD

Oh, no thanks.

HISAYE

Why is he afraid of you?

EVERETT

Not for you, for me.

ZENOBIO

He...taught me to swim at Bimini Baths.

BAYARD

I object to bondage on principle.

HISAYE

How old were you?

EVERETT

Just for the tableau.

EVERETT crosses his wrists above  
his head.



ZENOBIO

Underage.

BAYARD

Just for the tableau.

BAYARD binds EVERETT'S wrists.

HISAYE

Sixteen? Fifteen?

ZENOBIO gestures lower.

HISAYE

Fourteen?

ZENOBIO

Thirteen.

HISAYE

I see.

ZENOBIO

He was sent to San Quentin.

HISAYE

Oh, Zeno. Thirteen!

HISAYE goes to him and holds him.  
 BAYARD steps back to observe  
 EVERETT, who rolls his eyes  
 heavenward.

BAYARD

Some martyr.

EVERETT

Redemption through suffering...

HISAYE and ZENOBIO start swaying to  
 the music.

BAYARD

A saint.

EVERETT

Oscar Wilde's favorite.

BAYARD

Oh. St. Sebastian. Everyone knows that.

EVERETT

Not everyone.

HISAYE and ZENOBIO slow dance, sad and tender. BAYARD reaches for the cloth binding.

EVERETT

Leave it.

BAYARD

It makes me deeply uncomfortable.

EVERETT

Please.

HISAYE kisses ZENOBIO. BAYARD kisses EVERETT.

BAYARD

Does it hurt?

EVERETT

Close up: Maxwell's pale face. No one has touched him like this in 32 years.

BAYARD AND HISAYE

You're crying.

EVERETT

Iris out.

BAYARD kisses EVERETT again as the light on them fades. ZENOBIO suddenly pushes away from HISAYE.

HISAYE

I'm sorry!

ZENOBIO

No, I'm sorry! I can't...dance. My foot.

HISAYE

Oh, I forgot. My apologies.

They stand there awkwardly.

ZENOBIO

It just...hurts a lot all of a sudden.

HISAYE

I understand. I think.

ZENOBIO

You're a very patient person. Kind.

HISAYE

Patient! I wish I could just jump!

ZENOBIO

I wish I could dance. It's not fair to you.

HISAYE

Zeno, I know you haven't written anything down--your story--

ZENOBIO

I can't--

HISAYE

But I would like to. Let me.

ZENOBIO

What?

HISAYE

Let me write it, Zeno. Let me in.

ZENOBIO

Let you in?

HISAYE

Let me in. Please.

ZENOBIO

No! I'm--sorry--!

ZENOBIO rushes out.

HISAYE

And once again my aggressive ambivalence scotched my chance.

Lights out on HISAYE and up on  
BAYARD.

BAYARD

Dear Friend AJ: The remarkable and persistent Miss Yamamoto has proven a complicated ally in our direct action, so I have enlisted another: the prominent art journalist and screenwriter, Everett Maxwell. He is highly intelligent and committed to our cause at great personal cost. He is also Caucasian, an advantage we will use as a flying wedge to gain admittance to the Baths.

HISAYE appears as AJ MUSTE.

HISAYE AS AJ

Dear Bayard: I was deeply distressed to learn that you've allied yourself with Mr. Everett C. Maxwell. I am trying to convince myself that you're unaware of his reprehensible criminal record. But I'm quite certain you know his moral failings and suspect that is one of the reasons you enrolled him. Bayard, Bayard, you are as a son to me, a great joy and a painful sorrow. Has the psychiatric counseling we paid for come to nothing? I urge you to step away from Bimini Baths before you damage not only your own already compromised reputation but also the civil rights movement as a whole. Let Los Angeles clean itself and do not dirty yourself on its behalf.

HISAYE becomes herself.

BAYARD AND HISAYE

He's homosexual.

(a take)

I know.

HISAYE

BAYARD

Wait.

What?

BAYARD AND HISAYE

Who are we talking about?

HISAYE BAYARD  
Zeno. Everett.

HISAYE BAYARD  
Oh, I know that, too. How do you know?

HISAYE  
He told me.

BAYARD  
Everett?

HISAYE  
Zeno.

BAYARD  
Zeno told you Everett's homosexual?

HISAYE  
No. Yes. That, too.

BAYARD  
I knew that. In fact--wait--what about Zeno?

HISAYE  
He's homosexual.

BAYARD  
Zeno said so?

HISAYE  
Not in so many words.

BAYARD  
But a woman knows.

HISAYE  
When she kisses a man and he runs away, yes.

BAYARD  
Everett didn't run away.

HISAYE  
Don't brag. He's sixty years old.

BAYARD

Zeno told me he knew Everett from the Museum.

HISAYE

He knew him. Thirty-two years ago.

BAYARD

When Zeno was--

HISAYE

Thirteen.

BAYARD

He *knew* Everett? The same way I knew him last night?

HISAYE

I don't know. I wasn't there. Either time. But that's why he ran away.

BAYARD

Zeno.

HISAYE

Everett. He ran away when he saw Zeno at Bimini.

BAYARD

Everett went to prison thirty-two years ago. Because of Zeno?

HISAYE

(overlapping)

Because of Zeno.

BAYARD AND HISAYE

Now it all makes sense.

Lights out on HISAYE and up on  
EVERETT.

BAYARD

How long were you in San Quentin?

EVERETT

A year.

BAYARD

I spent two years in Lewisburg Federal Penitentiary for draft resistance.

EVERETT

One year destroyed me.

BAYARD

I can't judge. That wasn't my only time in prison. And sex is my great weakness...

EVERETT

But.

BAYARD

A child.

EVERETT

Children.

BAYARD

More than one? Gracious!

EVERETT

So when I saw him at Bimini--

BAYARD

What did you do to them?

EVERETT

What you and I did.

BAYARD

*Tableaux vivantes?*

EVERETT

I raped them, Bayard!

BAYARD

It was statutory--

EVERETT

It was rape. I raped children. That's what I did. I will always be that monster who 30 years ago raped innocent boys.

When you were threatened, imprisoned, beaten, you always knew you didn't deserve it. You always knew you were in the right. I know I was wrong.

BAYARD

Then come make it right.

EVERETT

Nothing can wash away that sin. My presence will only curse your efforts, doom them!

(pause)

Rustin is silent.

(pause)

I'm right. On this at least. You know I am.

Lights out on EVERETT and up on  
HISAYE.

BAYARD

If we...align ourselves only with the morally pure--

HISAYE

He's beyond impure--!

BAYARD

--We walk alone.

HISAYE

I'm with you.

BAYARD

Si, we've failed. Together, but we've failed.

HISAYE

Surely you let him off the hook, told him not to come.

BAYARD

So what do we do?

HISAYE

We sit.

BAYARD

On our asses.



HISAYE

Just a little longer than they can stand.

They sit. Lights up on ZENOBIO at the admissions desk of Bimini Baths. ZENOBIO ignores them, does paperwork. BAYARD quietly strums the mandolin. EVERETT appears. HISAYE and BAYARD react but say nothing. EVERETT doesn't look at them. ZENOBIO sees him but goes quickly back to his paperwork. EVERETT approaches ZENOBIO.

ZENOBIO

Good evening, Mr. Maxwell.

EVERETT

Good evening, Zeno.

ZENOBIO

How may I help you?

EVERETT

I'd like admission. To the plunge.

ZENOBIO

Any treatments? A cabinet vapor bath, a purge?

EVERETT

Just...the plunge.

ZENOBIO

Very well, that will be twenty-five--

EVERETT

Zeno, I'm sorry.

ZENOBIO

Mr. Maxwell, I'm working--

EVERETT

I don't expect you to speak to me except in the minimum professional capacity, but--

ZENOBIO  
Come in.

EVERETT  
What?

ZENOBIO  
Come in, now! We can talk, but not in the foyer.

EVERETT  
You're letting me in?

ZENOBIO  
Yes, but hurry. I have something to show you.

EVERETT  
What about my friends?

ZENOBIO  
They can't come in.

EVERETT  
They have--

ZENOBIO  
No one can come in. We're closed.

EVERETT  
What?

ZENOBIO  
We're closed, right now. Except to you. Come in quickly.

EVERETT glances back at BAYARD and  
HISAYE quizzically, then disappears  
into the baths.

ZENOBIO  
We're closed!

BAYARD  
But what about--?

HISAYE  
You let him in without--!

BAYARD  
We have our health certificates.

ZENOBIO

What?

HISAYE

(producing certificate)

Our certificates from the County Health Department.

BAYARD

(producing certificate)

We're polio-free.

HISAYE

If you let Mr. Maxwell in without a certificate, surely you must let us in if we have them.

ZENOBIO

(after a moment)

Bimini Baths is closed. You can sit here forever if you want, but right now we're closed!

ZENOBIO slams closed a window or places a CLOSED sign then disappears after EVERETT. Lights out on BAYARD and HISAYE and up on EVERETT and ZENOBIO inside Bimini Baths.

ZENOBIO

Speak quickly. I can get away with staying closed for five minutes. Any longer and I'm kaput.

EVERETT

Let them in, Zeno. It's not right. They--and you--have every right to the waters of Bimini ever day of the year.

ZENOBIO

It's my job--

EVERETT

I am a dirty--indecent person--but I appeal to your sense of decency--

ZENOBIO

That's all you wanted to tell me?

EVERETT

No.

(pause)

You know I went to prison.

ZENOBIO

For a year.

EVERETT

I was released from San Quentin in 1918, but remained imprisoned all my life.

ZENOBIO

I'm sorry. That must be terrible.

EVERETT

For you, too.

ZENOBIO

What do you mean?

EVERETT

I'm sure you're--affected--you're what?--forty four years old, unmarried--that's my fault, I think.

ZENOBIO

What could you do worse than a war? Dachau? The world is bigger than you, worse than you! My life didn't stop with you!

EVERETT

I tied you up.

ZENOBIO

As punishment.

EVERETT

Punishment, for what?

ZENOBIO

For stealing the dire wolf baculum.

EVERETT

I don't remember--

ZENOBIO

The bone went missing, you accused me--

EVERETT

(in tears)

No, I wrote it all down in my confession, in a notebook. I tied your hands. There was...blood--

ZENOBIO

I don't remember any blood.

EVERETT

I wrote it down!

ZENOBIO

No. No, there wasn't any blood. Writing doesn't make it true. I'll tell you what I remember.

EVERETT

What?

ZENOBIO

I asked if you loved me. And you didn't answer.

EVERETT

I do love you, Zeno.

ZENOBIO

I don't.

EVERETT

No, how could you? What I did was wrong.

ZENOBIO

It was wrong. That...is always wrong.

EVERETT

Betraying the trust of a child.

ZENOBIO

But it isn't always bad.

EVERETT

Yes, it is. Always!

ZENOBIO

I am--I'm sure--affected as you say. But I live in a world where people starve and stab and stomp each other, where buildings burn and bodies burn, you think you're important in that world? For the last 32 years, I hardly thought about you at all. Saw a couple of your movies. But I was thirteen. I grew up. You stayed the same. And you love me. How funny.

ZENOBIO produces the bone.

EVERETT

You did steal it.

ZENOBIO

For a second I thought I finally had it figured out. Math. Science. Hate. Love. Nobody figures it out.

EVERETT

But we have to try.

HISAYE appears isolated in light.

EVERETT

Remedios is silent.

ZENOBIO

That's what Si said.

EVERETT

So let her in.

Lighting change reveals BAYARD next to HISAYE. Silently they raise their health certificates.

ZENOBIO

We're open.

BAYARD

Open to us?

ZENOBIO

Apologies for the delay. Bimini Baths is now open.

HISAYE

You're letting us in?

ZENOBIO

(after a moment)

Let's see those health certificates.

EVERETT

Medium shot: Remedios accepts the certificates and lets them in. After Rustin and Yamamoto enter the baths, Remedios is confronted by Warrick and Yasunari.

HISAYE becomes WARRICK and BAYARD  
becomes YASUNARI.

HISAYE AS WARRICK

Zeno, have you lost your mind?

BAYARD AS YASUNARI

You're making trouble for everybody!

ZENOBIO

They have health certificates. I had to accept them.

HISAYE AS WARRICK

Not without checking with me first!

BAYARD AS YASUNARI

Listen to the boss man!

ZENOBIO

We had to let them in sooner or later.

BAYARD AS YASUNARI

That's not for you to decide.

ZENOBIO

I didn't decide it. The world changed! We had a war!

HISAYE AS WARRICK

And thank you for serving, but--

ZENOBIO

Concentration camps--in Germany--and Arizona--

BAYARD AS YASUNARI

Not the same!

ZENOBIO

I came back and everything is different!

HISAYE AS WARRICK

BAYARD AS YASUNARI

I'm sympathetic, but we can't change that fast. We ain't Nazis!

ZENOBIO

Sometimes you just have to jump!

HISAYE AS WARRICK

Zeno, I'm sorry, but we gotta let you go.

ZENOBIO

What?

BAYARD AS YASUNARI

You're fired!

HISAYE AS WARRICK

Please go quietly and we'll call the police to take care of these Communists.

ZENOBIO

I have to--get my kit--

HISAYE AS WARRICK

We'll send your things.

ZENOBIO

But--

BAYARD AS YASUNARI

He said please.

ZENOBIO

Nope.

HISAYE AS WARRICK

What do you mean, nope?

ZENOBIO

I want that dip you promised me right now.



ZENOBIO starts stripping.

BAYARD AS YASUNARI

What are you doing?

HISAYE AS WARRICK

Get him out.

ZENOBIO

I can even pay for it.

EVERETT

Yasunari advances on Remedios.

BAYARD AS YASUNARI

Let's go, bean-eater.

EVERETT

As he strips, Remedios reaches into his pocket.

ZENOBIO

Two Roosevelts and a Jefferson!

BAYARD AS YASUNARI lunges for  
ZENOBIO, who throws the coins at  
HISAYE AS WARRICK.

HISAYE AS WARRICK

Throw him out!

BAYARD AS YASUNARI

Fucking wetback!

EVERETT jumps into the fray.

EVERETT

Release him!

ZENOBIO

Let go of me, asshole!

HISAYE AS WARRICK

(restraining EVERETT)

Stay out of this, grandpa!

BAYARD AS YASUNARI wrestles with  
ZENOBIO.

HISAYE AS WARRICK

You're gonna get hurt!

BAYARD AS YASUNARI

I'll drown you like a kitten!

EVERETT  
This is indefensible!

ZENOBIO  
I paid! Let me in the pool!

HISAYE AS WARRICK  
I can fire my own employees,  
you old cocksucker!

ZENOBIO  
Let me in! Let me in!

BAYARD AS YASUNARI shoves ZENOBIO,  
who falls down backward. Sounds of  
breaking glass.

EVERETT  
Yasunari throws Remedios through a plate-glass window.

BAYARD AS YASUNARI  
Are you narrating?

HISAYE AS WARRICK  
My window! Goddammit,  
Yasunari!

EVERETT  
He's bleeding!

HISAYE AS WARRICK  
Get the police now! No respect for property! Communists!

BAYARD AS YASUNARI leaves. EVERETT  
goes to ZENOBIO lying there.

EVERETT  
Zeno, you're cut!

HISAYE AS WARRICK  
The police'll be here in a minute to arrest you nancies.

HISAYE AS WARRICK leaves.

EVERETT  
(helping ZENOBIO up)  
Do you know a back way out?

ZENOBIO  
I'm not leaving.

EVERETT  
The police--!

ZENOBIO

I'm not leaving--

(finishes stripping)

I'm gonna get in that plunge with all those white people and if they don't like my blood, they can get out!

BAYARD rushes in.

BAYARD

What was that crash?

EVERETT

You have to stop him!

ZENOBIO

They threw me through a window!

EVERETT

He's going to jump in the pool!

HISAYE runs in.

HISAYE

Zeno, are you OK? Your face--!

She dabs at the blood.

ZENOBIO

It's Mexican Day, Si! Now every day is Mexican Day!

EVERETT

We're breaking the law!

BAYARD AND HISAYE

We're changing the law!

ZENOBIO

I have to come clean about something before I jump in.

HISAYE

What?

ZENOBIO kisses HISAYE. It's the best kiss so far. BAYARD picks up the mandolin and plays an introduction, then sings.

BAYARD

(singing)

At Bimini the springs are hot  
And soothing to the skin

HISAYE strips to bathing attire.

HISAYE AND BAYARD

(singing)

The world got cleaner that day, too  
When Zeno let us in

Humming under as all four spread  
out into the audience. BAYARD  
strips to his bathing suit.

HISAYE

My last *Small Talk* column for the Los Angeles Tribune was never published, of course. Neither was Everett's screenplay. In fact, it arrived in the mail a month after he died in 1964.

EVERETT sees BAYARD and ZENOBIO  
staring at him and reluctantly  
strips to his bathing suit.

I put both manuscripts in a box along with the pages from his diary that I found in my leather notebook years before. I told my children to destroy the contents upon my death. Children, however, are often disobedient. I don't mind: after all, it wasn't just my story.

EVERETT

Nor mine.

BAYARD AND ZENOBIO

Nor mine.

HISAYE

(to an audience member)

It's your story.

EVERETT AND BAYARD

(to an audience member)

And yours.

HISAYE

(to an audience member)

You're in it.

EVERETT

(to an audience member)

You, too.

BAYARD

The story isn't over.

HISAYE

We're in the middle of it.

ZENOBIO

All of us together.

HISAYE

As was the case for most public bathing facilities in those days, the reluctant welcome of Bimini Baths wore out just a few years later.

ALL

At Bimini the spring was capped  
In nineteen fifty-one  
The baths were closed forever then  
To us and everyone

Sound of a police siren. They all  
dash back onto the stage.

EVERETT

I told you! Here they come!

BAYARD

Let's make them work for it!

HISAYE

(takes ZENOBIO'S hand)

Quick!

Ready?

BAYARD

ZENOBIO

Jump!

BAYARD

Jump!

ZENOBIO, HISAYE, BAYARD

Jump!

EVERETT

Fade to black.

They all jump. A big splash.

END OF PLAY