

WHIT (E) MAN

A New Play

by

Colin Speer Crowley

© "Whit(e)man"
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CAST OF CHARACTERS
(4+ in total; 2-3 men, 1-2 women)

Walter Whitman ("Wally") - 30's - a "normal," soft-spoken, good-looking African-American male with an identity crisis

Mandy Alvarez* - 20's-30's - a flamboyant, gum-chewing, heavily-accented, Hispanic transgender woman, who rather likes Wally

Angele Kleinheister - 30's-50's - a dour, hawk-like, hippie psychiatrist with a PhD in gobbledygook

Additional Caucasian Actor to Play:†

- Peter Gambol - 60's - self-important CEO of Gambol Customer Solutions
- Dexter - 40's - a scruffy, homeless man with blond dreadlocks and a knit Jamaican cap
- Bobby - 30's-40's - a customer service representative somewhere in India for Time Warner Cable
- Juan Luis Garcia Vicente Santander Fernando Diego Maurizio Duhalde Pedro Smith - 30's-50's - an ambulance-chasing trial attorney
- White Wally - 30's - a white version of Wally Whitman
- Various Voices - of a judge and a bailiff

TIME

Today and tomorrow.

PLACE

Various places in Wally Whitman's memory, all taking place in New York, NY - including: Wally's apartment, the office of Dr. Angele Kleinheister, the law office of Señor Juan Smith, and more besides.

A NOTE ON THE SET

The set for "Whit(e)man" is essentially non-existent since the play solely takes place in Wally Whitman's recollections. There is therefore no need for the locations we visit to be anything remotely realistic. A few furniture pieces will occasionally suffice, framed by two doors for entrances and exits - one in the back, one more upfront.

* Could be played by a man or woman.

† Of course, these people could all be played by different actors, too, but the author thinks that one actor would be more fun.

ACT ONE

The stage is dark for a moment after the curtain rises. We can hear some staggered, heavy breathing in the silence. It sounds like the uncertain breaths you'd take if you were about to take a jump out of some high-flying airplane. A SPOTLIGHT rises on a man sitting down in a chair next to a desk. HIS name is WALTER WHITMAN - "WALLY" to us - in HIS 30's - and HE is dressed very neatly in the type of sleek suit you would expect to see gracing a young, urban professional. HE is staring down at the ground, breathing, thinking, trying to prepare HIMSELF for what's ahead. Then, suddenly, HE looks up and seems to notice that we're looking at HIM. HE thinks a moment - and then speaks:

WALLY

Hi there - and thank you for coming. I've been waiting a long time to share my story with someone. I'm not going to pretend it won't seem strange at first, because it will... but I hope, by the end of it, you'll understand me a lot better. Believe me, it's not easy being "different." I don't mean "different" in some gaudy way that makes other people cross the street when you approach them on the sidewalk. I'm not talking about dying my hair blue or wearing socks that don't match - or even yelling loudly like a madman in the middle of a playground. I mean really different - different on the inside - a difference so silent, so hidden that no one would even think it lived inside of you... buried, like a treasure. I don't know if you've ever experienced that or not. If you haven't, then you're very lucky. If you have, then you're just like me.

The LIGHTS rise slightly to reveal the sparse, simple set. A door opens and in comes a proper, dignified, corporate-looking man - PETER GAMBOL. He is about 60 and looks not unlike some Roman statue that jumped off its pillar and plopped himself down in the boardrooms of America. GAMBOL is nothing less than CEO of Gambol Customer Solutions. HE enters with a tight smile. WALLY immediately shoots up from HIS chair like a soldier would respond to a drill

sergeant. GAMBOL looks at HIM and seems evidently surprised by something. WALLY hurriedly (too hurriedly?) extends HIS hand for a shake. GAMBOL seems pleased by the military-like attention and shakes the hand.

MR. GAMBOL

Sorry I kept you waiting, Mr. Whitman.

WALLY

(Pronouncing it "WHITE-muhn.")
It's no trouble, sir - and it's "Whiteman."

MR. GAMBOL

What is?

WALLY

My name.

MR. GAMBOL

I stand corrected, then.

WALLY

Actually, please call me "Wally."

MR. GAMBOL

I'll do that - and you, you may call me "Mr. Gambol."

MR. GAMBOL smiles again and gestures for WALLY to sit, which HE does. MR. GAMBOL then sits behind the desk. HE carries with HIM a manila folder filled with papers. HE opens the folder and looks over the papers.

MR. GAMBOL

I hope I haven't kept you too long.

WALLY

Oh, no, I was just admiring your pictures.

WALLY points to some unseen pictures on some unseen wall. MR. GAMBOL turns and looks at them for a moment.

MR. GAMBOL

Oh, yes - those. I got them from someplace - someplace in France - pretty damn expensive, too. I'm not into art, but my wife is - and, more importantly, so are our clients. It adds a touch of class to the place - but me, I could care less. Either way, "Monet" spells "money"... almost.

WALLY

My father used to collect art.

MR. GAMBOL

Oh? Did he have clients, too?

WALLY

No, he just... liked art.

MR. GAMBOL

I see.

MR. GAMBOL looks at the pictures again.

MR. GAMBOL

I suppose they're all right.

WALLY

Maybe you're just too used to looking at them. Sometimes, when our eyes get used to something, they become lazy and they just accept things for what they are.

MR. GAMBOL

Yes - you're right about that. Thirty years ago, when I founded Gambol Customer Solutions, I could only have dreamed to be sitting in an office like this.

WALLY

And yet here you are.

MR. GAMBOL

And here you are.

WALLY

Yes - and very glad for it, sir.

MR. GAMBOL

That makes two of us. I'm sixty-seven next month. My father died when he was sixty-eight. My mother died when she was sixty-five. My secretary, Vivian, has been with me for almost twenty years. She's almost as old as I am. You ask her and she'll deny it - but, damn it, she is. Half the time, I feel like I'm living in the Paleolithic Era, so I'd appreciate the opportunity to inject some young blood into the place.

WALLY

(Smiling suavely.)

I could spare a quart or two.

MR. GAMBOL

(Amused.)

Well, I may ask for more than that. I value the work of young men, such as yourself, the older I get. A company starts to stagnate when it doesn't have fresh faces revolving through the

MR. GAMBOL (CONT)

door. I mean fresh - young and foreign. I didn't build up Gambol Customer Solutions by hiring cousins, nephews, and nieces. It helps, of course, that I don't have any - but, if I did, their resumes wouldn't be as impressive as yours.

WALLY

I appreciate that, thank you.

MR. GAMBOL

You deserve to. Vivian was very impressed when she spoke with you last week. She told me I just had to interview you for the Client Manager position. She's been nagging me to meet with you again - and I'm glad she did.

(Looking at a piece of paper.)

Yale undergrad. Harvard grad. Four years at Lehmann Brothers. Five years at Fidelity.

WALLY

Six... six years at Fidelity.

MR. GAMBOL

Six, yes - which is a century or two in this day and age. People change jobs as quickly as they change spouses. I should know. I've been married four times.

(Leaning forward.)

Do you know why?

WALLY

No, sir.

MR. GAMBOL

Because five would have been an odd number.

MR. GAMBOL stares at HIM, waiting for some reaction. WALLY smiles only slightly in response.

MR. GAMBOL

Good. You didn't laugh. The last three young men I interviewed laughed - too hard. I didn't hire any of them. I know when someone is just trying to please me.

(Sitting back - interrogation done?)

Do you have any questions about the position?

WALLY

Yes. When do I start?

MR. GAMBOL smiles broadly.

MR. GAMBOL

You have a better sense of humor than I do.

WALLY

I just know there's a lot I can give your company.

MR. GAMBOL

I have no doubt. Tell me, why did you leave your last job?

WALLY

With Fidelity? It was a... mutual decision. I was getting bored with the work. I didn't feel I was being true to my talents.

(A beat - meaningfully.)

I wanted a change.

MR. GAMBOL

A change? I see no employment history after then. That was six months ago.

WALLY

I took some time off before looking for work again.

MR. GAMBOL

Oh? Why is that exactly?

WALLY

I... I wanted to learn more about myself.

MR. GAMBOL

Learn about yourself?

WALLY

For work reasons - to reconfigure, to reconstitute, to...

MR. GAMBOL just stares.

WALLY

To reassess my choices.

MR. GAMBOL

Your choices?

WALLY

My career choices.

MR. GAMBOL

Yet you are looking for work in a similar position.

WALLY

I found my changes were more on the personal side.

MR. GAMBOL

(Not quite buying it.)

I see.

MR. GAMBOL peers at the papers again.
We can feel the nervousness gravitate

back to WALLY's face. HE looks anxiously as MR. GAMBOL reads in silence - until:

WALLY

I'm here to answer any questions you want, Mr. Gambol. I know that an employee is a big investment for a company. I want to make sure you're happy with what you're getting. I want to be full and free and frank with you.

MR. GAMBOL

I appreciate that, Wally.

WALLY

I want to be as direct with you as I now am with myself.

MR. GAMBOL

I appreciate that, too.

WALLY

I won't disappoint you.

MR. GAMBOL

Well, we shall soon see - won't we?

MR. GAMBOL smiles at HIM. WALLY understands the meaning and smiles, too.

MR. GAMBOL

I will have Vivian send you a proposal within the next two days.

WALLY

Thank you, Mr. Gambol.

MR. GAMBOL

No, Wally - thank you.

MR. GAMBOL rises and extends HIS hand again. WALLY takes the hint, rises, and shakes HIS hand. WALLY starts to exit and then abruptly stops. There is a nagging thought in HIS mind. HE thinks for a moment and turns:

WALLY

I have another question, Mr. Gambol...

MR. GAMBOL

Shoot.

WALLY

When you first saw me, you looked surprised.

MR. GAMBOL

I did?

WALLY

If you don't mind my asking, I was wondering why you...

MR. GAMBOL

Well, to be frank, Wally, I was surprised. In your job application here, you checked off "Caucasian" for your race. I wasn't expecting a black man - but, well, even better. I love helping African-Americans. Good for you. Good for me. Good for the company. Besides, I'm a big believer in affirmative action - although, believe me, you don't need it. Vivian will make sure the paperwork is corrected.

MR. GAMBOL smiles and returns to looking at the papers. WALLY doesn't move. HE has seemed to freeze under weighty and pendulous thoughts. A long pause ensues. MR. GAMBOL eventually raises HIS head and notices that WALLY is still standing before HIM.

MR. GAMBOL

May I help you?

WALLY

Yes, about the application...

MR. GAMBOL

What about it?

WALLY

I don't want Vivian to change anything.

MR. GAMBOL

Why not?

WALLY

Because... the application is correct.

MR. GAMBOL

What do you mean?

WALLY

I am Caucasian.

MR. GAMBOL keeps staring.

MR. GAMBOL

What did you say?

WALLY

I said... I am Caucasian.

MR. GAMBOL

That's what I thought you said.

A standoff of sorts ensues. We can see MR. GAMBOL's mind is in motion. HE stares long and hard at WALLY - then:

MR. GAMBOL

(Letting HIS thoughts trail off.)
Perhaps...

WALLY

(Hopefully.)
Perhaps?

MR. GAMBOL

Perhaps your sense of humor isn't quite as good as I thought.

MR. GAMBOL grimaces and returns to the papers.

WALLY

(Stiffening up his resolve.)
I am Caucasian, Mr. Gambol.

MR. GAMBOL

(Pronouncing it "Whitman" now.)
No, Mr. Whitman - you're not.

WALLY

How do you know?

MR. GAMBOL

Because I am Caucasian.

WALLY

Yes, well... so am I.

MR. GAMBOL

No, well, you are not.

WALLY

I could have a white mother.

MR. GAMBOL

You don't look like you have a...

WALLY

(Snapping back.)
People don't look like a lot of things. It doesn't mean that they are what they appear to be.

MR. GAMBOL just stares... and stares... and stares... and, in HIS mind, reaches a verdict:

MR. GAMBOL

Have a nice day, Mr. Whitman.

Mr. GAMBOL returns again to HIS work in stony silence. WALLY stares at HIM for a moment as if thinking of something to say - but nothing comes. The LIGHTS slowly fall on the desk and MR. GAMBOL. A SPOTLIGHT remains on WALLY. HE takes a deep breath and turns to us:

WALLY

I searched the mailbox in my apartment complex every day for two weeks after that... until I realized I wasn't going to get a proposal from Vivian. I even checked with my neighbors to see if they received a letter for me - by accident. It turned out the only accident was my good fortune to get so close to a job in the first place. It was the first chance in many weeks. It also was the last. Every application had the same question, which, for me, always had the same answer. I couldn't bring myself to check anything other than... the truth. Then, when I came for my in-person interview, the truth became complicated.

With loud gusto, a door at the back of the stage opens. The LIGHTS rise slightly upon a colorful-looking, 30-year-old woman who looks like a carnival circus on legs. HER name is MANDY ALVAREZ. SHE wears gaudy make-up, gaudier earrings, and even gaudier clothes and SHE sports an infectious smile that somehow always seems to retain its composure through near-constant gum-chewing.

MANDY

(To WALLY.)
Hola, Loyola!

WALLY

Hello, Mandy.

MANDY

Any luck today?

WALLY

No, I'm afraid not. Still no word.

MANDY

Poor baby. Do you want to hear about my day?

WALLY

Well, honestly...

MANDY

Okay, good! I got a job at that Ecuadorian deli.

WALLY

What deli?

MANDY

The Casa Del Queso.

WALLY

I don't know the place.

MANDY

They're known for their cheeses.

WALLY

Their cheeses?

MANDY

You munster passed it a million times.

WALLY

I munster what?

MANDY

It's gotta brie the best place in town.

WALLY

Oh, I see.

MANDY

I camembert to think you've not gone in there.

WALLY just stares at MANDY. MANDY smiles in pure delight and exits through another door. WALLY shakes HIS head and turns to us:

WALLY

More often than not, when I went to check my mailbox, I ran into Mandy. I'm not sure how it worked out that way. I came to check the mail at different times of the day, just to avoid her. It's not that I didn't like her. I would have just preferred to be alone. I could barely deal with myself, let alone other people - yet, somehow, Mandy always seemed to enter the apartment building just when I opened my mailbox.

With loud gusto, the back door opens yet again and the LIGHTS rise slightly. MANDY re-enters with an even bigger smile and ever-louder chewing.

MANDY
Hola, Loyola!

WALLY
Hello, Mandy.

MANDY
Still no luck?

WALLY
No, nothing. How are you?

MANDY
Muy bueno! I got a new job.

WALLY
You're not at the zoo anymore?

MANDY
No. I left and took the elephants with me. We were both paid peanuts.

WALLY tries to ignore the joke.

WALLY
Where are you working now?

MANDY
I'm a waitress at Bar-Bados.

WALLY
The night club down the street?

MANDY
Sí.

WALLY
Isn't that place a bit dangerous?

MANDY
Sure is. There was a shooting last week.

WALLY
What happened?

MANDY
I missed.

WALLY just stares at MANDY again. MANDY smiles again in pure delight and exits through the other door. WALLY shakes HIS head and turns to us:

WALLY

I really didn't know that much about Mandy - except too much. It's odd, in retrospect, because I seemed to see her every single day, yet I didn't feel I knew her at all. I didn't know what music she liked. I didn't know what movies she watched. I didn't know what eyeshadow she wore. I didn't know if she had a brother or a sister or a stepfather, perhaps. I didn't know anything, except that she was... well...

With loud gusto, the back door opens yet again and the LIGHTS rise slightly. MANDY re-enters. SHE is brushing HERSELF off frantically from what appears to be torrential rain. A gaudy umbrella (torn apart by the rain) is dangling helplessly from HER other arm.

MANDY

Hola, Loyola!

WALLY

Hello, Mandy.

MANDY

That my name! Don't wear it out.

WALLY

Speaking of names, you do know my name is Wally, right?

MANDY

Wool-ee.

WALLY

Wall-ee.

MANDY

WALL-ee.

WALLY

That's right.

MANDY

Any luck today, WALL-ee?

WALLY

Don't worry about me. You look soaked.

MANDY

This is why I don't like rain. It makes me wetter than sun. I like sun better.

WALLY

I do, too.

MANDY
My hair is the most wet.

WALLY
I can see that.

MANDY
I can feel that.

WALLY
(Feeling obligated to ask.)
Is there... is there anything I could do to help?

MANDY grins broadly and chews HER gum
ever louder. SHE seems delighted that
WALLY stepped up to the plate.

MANDY
Sure! My blow-dryer blew out this morning.

MANDY reaches up to HER hair and
promptly pulls it off. SHE extends it
in WALLY's direction.

MANDY
Could you dry my hair?

WALLY just stares at it for a moment.
MANDY has a huge, mischievous grin on
HER face. Granted, the very use of the
term "Her" is debatable. MANDY is,
quite simply, transgender.

WALLY
One cycle or two?

MANDY laughs.

MANDY
That's what they all ask.

MANDY winks and exits through the other
door. WALLY thinks for a moment and
then turns to us:

WALLY
I had known about Mandy being transgender for a few years. We
both moved into the apartment complex around the same time. She
was "Emmanuel" or "Manny" back then. I watched her change, bit
by bit, sometimes just eyelash-by-eyelash. She was always very
pleasant to me. I didn't know why, because I mainly stuck to
myself - but she didn't much care. I guess I admired her for
being so forthright, so open - in many things.

The LIGHTS start to dim until only a SPOTLIGHT remains on WALLY. HE thinks to HIMSELF deeply for a moment. There is clearly something HE wants to say. HE takes a deep breath and looks straight at us:

WALLY

I remember when I first knew I was white. I grew up in Harlem, but, when my dad got a new job at a big investment firm, we moved to the suburbs - Greenwich, Connecticut. In Harlem, I never really felt at home. Then came Greenwich and, suddenly, I felt like I belonged. I couldn't believe it, because no one around even looked like me. Between my parents, my sisters, and I, we about doubled the black population.

The LIGHTS start to rise faintly. We hear the VIBRANT SOUNDS of a CITY STREET rise in the distance. Car horns are honking. People are yelling. Loud music is playing. A subway roars occasionally underneath the noise.

WALLY

I realized how much I belonged in those 98.2% white suburbs when I went to visit my friend Louis in Harlem one weekend. It was about a year after my parents and I moved and I felt like I hardly knew the place. I might as well have been walking on Mars - and, most of the time, I wished I was.

The LIGHTS have picked up a shuffling man in the shadows - DEXTER.

WALLY

Then came Dexter.

DEXTER is a grizzled homeless man dragging a life full of cares behind HIM. HE is dressed like some African hippie with a colorful Jamaican knit cap and blond dreadlocks in HIS hair. There is something oddly majestic about HIS mountainous frame and HIS carefree manner. One quick look and we catch the most surprising part - HE's white.

WALLY

I was so confounded by the noise, the smell that I took my eyes off the street and kept walking straight when Louis and his mom turned left. I soon found myself, alone, the sole preppy boy on the sidewalk, with only Ralph Lauren to keep me company. Believe me, he was no match for Harlem.

We have been transported back to a memory in WALLY's mind. DEXTER raises HIS head, as if discovering WALLY, and smiles broadly. We soon find that HE sports a stereotypically "black" accent.

DEXTER

Hey, kid - what's happenin'?

WALLY suddenly freezes and turns.

DEXTER

What're you doing here by your lonesome?

WALLY just stares.

DEXTER

I guess God done forgot to teach you to speak. Wish you could've taught my ex-wife that trick.

WALLY

My mom said not to talk to strangers.

DEXTER

Does I look all that strange to you?

WALLY

Actually... yes.

DEXTER bursts with an enjoyably hoarse laughter. We can sense traces of smoking lurking behind the hilarity.

DEXTER

At least you is honest. I know plenty of people that ain't. Your momma done got you off to a good start. So - tell me - what are you doin' 'round here, then? This ain't a good place to be if you don't like strangers.

WALLY

I'm here with my friend and his mom.

DEXTER

It looks like they done disappeared.

WALLY

No, I just took a wrong turn. I need to find my way back.

(A beat, uncertain whether HE should ask.)

Do... do you live around here?

DEXTER

I do, yeah. I live here.

Here?
WALLY

Right here.
DEXTER

Right where?
WALLY

DEXTER is pointing to the ground. HE points at various other places.

DEXTER
Sometimes I live there... or there... or there. I done have me a mo-bile home.

WALLY
So you're... homeless?

DEXTER
That's what the government calls it. I calls it "transitory aboding."

WALLY
Well, it looks lonely.

DEXTER
That's 'cause it is.

WALLY thinks for a moment, then points to the cap.

WALLY
Are you from Jamaica?

DEXTER
Now how do you know 'bout Jamaica?

WALLY
My cousin likes Bob Marley. You look like him - except you're not black.

DEXTER
(Jokingly shocked.)
I ain't?

WALLY
(Taking it seriously.)
No - but you do look like Bob Marley.

DEXTER
I likes to think Bob Marley looks like me.

WALLY
Well, he does... so are you?

DEXTER
Bob Marley?

WALLY
From Jamaica?

DEXTER
I sure is.

WALLY
You can't be, you're white.

DEXTER
Who says there ain't white people in Jamaica?

WALLY
Encyclopedia Britannica. The population is 92.1% black.

DEXTER
That leaves another 8%, don't it?

WALLY
Yes, but they're mainly Asian or mixed. I know. I did a report on Jamaica last year for my geography class. You're too white to be from Jamaica.

DEXTER
(Pointing to HIS heart.)
That's 'cause this part of me is from Jamaica.

WALLY
That doesn't count.

DEXTER
It doesn't?

DEXTER bends forward, as if about to reveal a great secret.

DEXTER
"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

(A beat.)
You know who done said that?

WALLY
Bob Marley?

DEXTER

(Pointing to Heaven.)

The Lord! All the stuff you see with your eyes don't mean next to nothin'. I knows that. I's been many a million things and they all done come and gone like the wind. I's been a high school athlete. I's been a father. I's been a store manager. I's been a drunk driver. And now? Here I is. I don't got no family. I don't got no car. I don't got no track suit. I don't got no job and sure as hell I don't go no store.

(Pointing to HIS heart.)

...but I gots this and I's still here. This keeps me here and tells me who I is. The stuff in here is like a di-a-mond. It done last forever.

WALLY stares at DEXTER in mesmerized admiration for a moment. Then a piece of paper comes flying onto the set. Some passerby has evidently thrown away some trash. DEXTER sighs, picks up the trash, and puts it in the bag next to HIM.

DEXTER

People done always throw trash in my backyard.

DEXTER smiles wryly at WALLY. The tender moment between THEM has been broken. It's time to move on, but no one knows where or how. A pause hangs in the air - until:

DEXTER

You said your momma said not to talk to strangers. What did she say about givin' them money?

WALLY

She said don't do that either.

DEXTER

That's a downright shame.

WALLY looks at HIM for a moment and slowly reaches into HIS pocket. HE takes out some small, crumpled-up bills and extends them towards DEXTER.

WALLY

Here - this is my lunch money.

DEXTER thinks for a moment and excruciatingly rises from the ground. HE lets out the groan of a man who has led a hard life and smiles at WALLY.

DEXTER

I wish your momma had been my momma.

DEXTER salutes WALLY and hobbles out of the LIGHT into the darkness. WALLY looks after HIM for a moment and then turns back to us:

WALLY

Dexter was the first person I ever really connected with. I saw him a few other times when I visited Louis and his mom in Harlem. He's actually the only reason I ever really wanted to go, because I hated it there otherwise. I always seemed to see him on the same street corner. Then, one day, when I was eighteen and learned I had gotten into Yale for my undergrad, I took the train to Harlem to see Dexter and tell him the good news - but he wasn't there. I never saw him again. I don't know what happened to him, but I missed him - and I still do. It was Dexter who taught me that the heart is what matters. The heart is what dictates who you are.

Suddenly, the back door slams open. MANDY stumbles in holding a hand to HER head. SHE is dirty and bleeding and clearly has been roughed up. WALLY immediately turns in shock.

WALLY

Mandy!

MANDY

(Rather weakly - but still trying to maintain HER jocular spirit.)
Hola, Loyola.

WALLY

Oh, God. What happened to you?

MANDY

I fell.

WALLY

You fell.

MANDY

On someone's fist. Three times in total.

MANDY stumbles and WALLY catches HER.

WALLY

You need help.

MANDY

I need help.

WALLY

Here. Come into my place. I have a first aid kit.

WALLY takes MANDY and shakingly walks with HER through the other door. THEY then turn and walk back to center stage. The LIGHTS change slightly to represent a change in venue. We are in WALLY'S apartment. WALLY helps MANDY to sit down on a chair. MANDY winces in clear pain.

WALLY

Who did this to you?

MANDY

Some chicos down the street.

WALLY

You should tell the other ones about them. They'd probably beat them up for you.

MANDY

What other ones?

WALLY

The ones who whistle at you.

MANDY

Hmmmm... no, that won't work.

WALLY

Why not?

MANDY

Because they're the chicos who beat me up.

WALLY

I'm sorry.

MANDY

They didn't know who they were really whistling at. Today, they found out.

(A beat, gesturing vaguely.)

It's long story.

WALLY

Here, let me get you something.

WALLY jumps up and rushes offstage. MANDY takes a moment and looks around the room. WALLY re-enters with a first aid kit and a towel. WALLY gives the

towel to MANDY, who puts it under HER nose.

MANDY

You have nice place.

WALLY

Thank you.

MANDY

I like your curtains.

WALLY

Thank you.

MANDY

I like your furniture.

WALLY

Thank you.

MANDY

I like your eyes.

WALLY

Thank you... I think.

MANDY

Don't worry. I just mean to be nice. I'm a girl. I don't obsess about sex like you men.

MANDY coughs violently.

WALLY

You should see a doctor.

MANDY

It will heal, like before.

WALLY

This has happened to you before?

MANDY

Two times. This is third time. I'm waiting for the charm.

WALLY

Would you like something to drink?

MANDY

No, thank you.

WALLY

Okay, well, if you change your mind, I have some tequila in the...

Yes, please.

MANDY

WALLY reaches behind the couch and pulls out a bottle of tequila. HE pours some into a glass and hands it to MANDY.

Here.

WALLY

MANDY takes the drink and promptly drinks the whole thing. SHE smacks HER lips and then hands the empty glass back to WALLY.

Yes. I try that.

MANDY

WALLY, a little flummoxed, pours more tequila into the glass. HE then puts the glass aside. MANDY starts to drink - slower now. WALLY stands there and watches HER. MANDY becomes conscious of HIS staring.

Would you like me to leave?

MANDY

Oh, no! Not at all. No. No. No. No.

MANDY looks at HIM unbelievably.

No.

WALLY

You are shy.

MANDY

Yes. I mean... sí.

WALLY

I like that - very cute.

MANDY

Thanks. May I ask you something?

WALLY

No.

MANDY

What? WALLY

No. MANDY

No, I can't ask you? WALLY

No, you can't date me. MANDY

I wasn't going to ask to date you. WALLY

Why not? I'm not beautiful? MANDY

Yes, but you're a... a... WALLY

... "guy?" WALLY catches MANDY looking at HIM. HE thinks for a moment.

...a pretty girl, but I can't. I have to figure myself out before I figure out someone else. WALLY

What do you have to figure out? MANDY

You'd be surprised. WALLY

No, I wouldn't. MANDY

MANDY smiles wryly. A wince of pain abruptly crosses over HER face. WALLY sees this and wants to say something, but stops. HE can't really think of anything to say.

I'd like to ask you something... WALLY

Please, ask question. MANDY

I have two, actually. WALLY

First? MANDY

WALLY

Why do you call me "Loyola?"

MANDY

I can't help it. It's a habit I have. I look at men and I think what their name would be if they became women. Yours would be Loyola.

WALLY

Yes, but... why Loyola?

MANDY

You went to school there, no?

WALLY

No.

MANDY

(Interpreting the comment as agreement.)
So that's why!

WALLY

No, I mean - "no"... I didn't go to school there.

MANDY

You get mail from Loyola.

WALLY

Well, I... how do you know that?

MANDY

I accidentally look at your mail a few times - like eight. I also see you no have a girlfriend.

WALLY

I just get some promotional flyers from Loyola's grad school. I actually went to Yale and Harvard.

MANDY

Fine, but those aren't good girl names.

WALLY

I guess not.

MANDY

So don't judge - and second?

WALLY

How was it for you... the change?

MANDY

(Thinking it a joke.)
What? Why? Are you thinking to do it?

WALLY

I'm just curious.

MANDY

That's how I started.

WALLY

I'm sorry. If I'm offending you...

MANDY

No. No. I'm just not in good mind. You let me into your home. You can ask me whatever and I tell you. You ask about the change. For me, it wasn't a change. It felt like a release. It was like I was holding my breath all my life and I was finally able to let it out. I still hold my breath now sometimes, but I breathe more - and I like it.

(A beat.)

I don't know what else you want.

WALLY

Did... did someone help you?

MANDY

Well, I talk to a doctor once about surgery, but...

WALLY

No - I mean psychologically. I mean someone who helped you come to terms with who you are.

MANDY

There is a professor at Columbia, if that what you mean. I still go to therapy with her each week.

WALLY

Would you mind... if I went with you?

MANDY

(Suspiciously?)

Why?

WALLY

I'm... I'm thinking of changing things up in my life - finding myself - like a... a better career... a different path... maybe going back to school to... well...

WALLY trails off into silence as HE finds it hard to believe HIS own lie. MANDY considers HIM for a moment and smiles.

MANDY

See you on Tuesday, Loyola.

MANDY rises and smiles broadly.

MANDY

Ha, you got a date after all.

MANDY walks past WALLY. The LIGHTS shift. WALLY turns to us:

WALLY

The week after, Mandy took me to see her therapist at Columbia University, where there was and still is a "Special Office for Personal Discovery and Self-Realization" - and I quote. The doctor in charge of the program was Angele Kleinheister, a world-renowned psychiatrist. I wasn't allowed to attend the therapy session, but, afterwards, I did get a chance to speak with Dr. Kleinheister in her office.

The LIGHTS rise indeterminately. A determined-looking tank of a woman enters - ANGELE KLEINHEISTER. SHE is about 40 and wears a constipated look. SHE dresses in clothes that look like they were made by a Native American hippie and SHE wears huge glasses on HER face. HER skin appears oddly tanned (too many rounds in the tanning booth?) and HER voice betrays a nasally self-righteousness.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Good morning.

WALLY

Good morning?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Good morning.

WALLY

It's five o'clock in the afternoon.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Not in Mongolia.

WALLY

I suppose not.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

In Mongolia it is 6am.

WALLY

That's fascinating.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

In Cape Verde, it is 8pm. In India, it is 2am. In Germany, it is 11pm.

WALLY

Is that where you're from - Germany?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

(Almost indignant.)

No. I am not from Germany. I am Dutch, Swedish, Estonian, and one-eighteenth Cherokee. The Germans are an oppressive people. They are the greatest purveyors of militarism and fascism and they have slaughtered countless millions of workers and Jews. There is only one thing worse than being German.

WALLY

What's that?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Being Jewish. Ask the Palestinians.

WALLY

Oh, of course.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Back to time...

WALLY

(Trying to keep up.)

Oh, yes - time.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

You think it is evening. Other people do not think so. Why are you right? Why are they wrong? What gives you the right to dictate their reality?

WALLY

I never thought of it like that.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Of course not. You were brought up in oppression. I am here to free you. I am here to free anyone who needs my help.

(A beat.)

What is the color of the sky?

WALLY

Why, it's...

DR. KLEINHEISTER

It's green.

WALLY

It's green?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

To someone wearing green glasses, yes.

WALLY

Green glasses?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

If you have glaucoma, it is always overcast.

WALLY

Yes, I suppose so.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

If you are blind, it is always a moonless night.

WALLY

That makes sense, yes.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Take nothing for granted.

WALLY

Oh, no - I swear I won't.

MANDY

(To WALLY, brimming with admiration.)
Isn't she marvelous?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Now, why are you here?

WALLY

I wanted to chat with you, if you don't mind. Mandy has said many wonderful things about you and...

DR. KLEINHEISTER

No. I mean "why are you here?" Why are you on this Earth?

WALLY

That's a weighty question.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

You are here to be yourself.

WALLY

Oh, definitely.

MANDY

(As before.)
Isn't she the best?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

If you don't be yourself, you might as well kill yourself.

WALLY

Isn't that a bit... drastic?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Not at all. If you aren't really yourself and you kill yourself, then you're killing someone else. You're killing someone who is smothering, suffocating the real you. It is justifiable homicide. It is self-defense.

WALLY

Wow. That's a good point.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Of course it is. I have a PhD.

WALLY

Maybe later I could schedule an appointment and...

DR. KLEINHEISTER

(Pointing to a chair, as if talking to a dog.)
Sit.

WALLY

Oh, but I...

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Sit!

WALLY

Sure.

WALLY obediently sits.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

(To MANDY.)
Please excuse us, Mandy. I wish to speak with Wally alone. I will see you next Tuesday.

WALLY

(Starting to rise.)
Well, actually...

DR. KLEINHEISTER

(Pointing to the chair again.)
Sit, stay.

WALLY obediently sits back down.

MANDY

(A little confused.)
Oh. Yes. I will see you then.
(To WALLY.)
Adios, Loyola.

MANDY thinks to herself and exits. An awkward pause descends upon the room. DR. KLEINHEISTER stands in front of

WALLY and peers deeply at HIM. This lasts for a million years, until WALLY grows too uncomfortable and must speak:

WALLY

If you don't mind...

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Silence. You are interrupting you.

WALLY

I am what?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

I am having a conversation with your soul.

WALLY

My soul?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

I sense torment. I sense anguish. I sense a million years of struggle. I sense a new patient.

WALLY

You sense struggle?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

I know why you're here, Wally. You are trapped in someone else's body. Your soul cries out to be heard. You are not Walter Whitman, you are... the other Walter Whitman. You are the person who God denied and yet your very being cries out for freedom and justice and a release from the world and its myopia. You think I don't know? I know. I know.

WALLY

You know... that I'm white?

A dense pause. A huge smile of victory lights upon DR. KLEINHEISTER'S face.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

I have been waiting for you.

WALLY

You've been waiting for me?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Yes. I have been waiting, and here you are. I knew you would come. I have always known. It was inevitable. I am surprised it took so long.

(Leaning forward, intently.)

How do you know you're white?

WALLY
Well, there's this feeling I have inside...

DR. KLEINHEISTER
Specifics. I want specifics.

WALLY
I like Classical music.

DR. KLEINHEISTER
Go on.

WALLY
I vote Republican.

DR. KLEINHEISTER
Go on.

WALLY
I love Alabama.

DR. KLEINHEISTER
Go on.

WALLY
I really, really hate rap music.

DR. KLEINHEISTER
Racist.

WALLY
"Racist?"

DR. KLEINHEISTER
Yes. I called you "Racist." Does that give you a secret thrill?

WALLY
Well, honestly...

DR. KLEINHEISTER
The truth now.

WALLY
Yes.

DR. KLEINHEISTER
What else?

WALLY
I think Ebonics is bad grammar.

DR. KLEINHEISTER
Racist!

WALLY

I think Kwanzaa is a joke.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Racist!

WALLY

I think soul food is just nasty.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Specifics!

WALLY

Grits. Pigs feet. Hominy. Greens.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Specifics!

WALLY

Mustard greens. Collard greens.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

What do you think of the police?

WALLY

They are much-maligned.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

What do you think of Michael Brown?

WALLY

He was a thug.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

What do you think of slavery?

WALLY

Get over it.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

And you? You dress as them, don't you?

WALLY

Well...

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Admit it.

WALLY

No.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Admit it.

WALLY

(Desperately spewing out HIS heart.)
All right! Yes! I do! I have a closet full of clothes from Ralph Lauren and Vineyard Vines. I can't stand baseball caps. I can't stand sagging jeans. In fact, I don't own any jeans. I just wear khakis - light ones - and coral-colored shorts. When I go to the beach, I put on sun lotion - even though I don't have to. When I go to text my friends, I correct my grammar first. If I wear a sweater, it's got to be around my neck.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Cashmere?

WALLY

Always.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

You feel it inside, don't you?

WALLY

I do.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Deep, deep down in your soul?

WALLY

I do.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

So deep you cannot dig it out?

WALLY

I do!

DR. KLEINHEISTER looks at WALLY for a moment. SHE sits back and smiles in magnificent contentment.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

I believe you.

WALLY takes a deep breath. It's as if HE has just passed some celestial test of the universe.

WALLY

Thank you, doctor. Thank you for believing me.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Not only that, but I am like you.

WALLY

You mean... you're black?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

(As if insulted.)
 God, no - even though I don't believe in God.
 (Leaning forward.)
 I am Mongolian.

WALLY just stares.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

You don't believe me.

WALLY

No, it's just...

DR. KLEINHEISTER

(In Mongolian.)
 Believe me.

WALLY

Excuse me?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

(In Mongolian.)
 Believe me. I am Mongolian.

WALLY

What... what are you saying?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

If you were Mongolian, you'd know.

WALLY

But I'm not.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

No - because you're white... aren't you?

WALLY stares back at DR. KLEINHEISTER.
 A great comfort floods over HIS face.

WALLY

(As if truly embracing it for the first time.)
 Yes. I'm white.

DR. KLEINHEISTER smiles grandly. The
 LIGHTS slowly fall on HER. WALLY takes
 a moment to think and then turns to us:

WALLY

It was the most magical moment of my life and one for which I'd
 waited far too long. Someone - who, apparently, was Mongolian -
 finally acknowledged me for who I was. I felt, like Mandy said,
 as if I was finally allowed to stop holding my breath - at
 least, that is, in the privacy of Dr. Kleinheister's office. I

WALLY (CONT)

learned that I wasn't suffering in silence and that many people had gone through what I was going through. Apparently, Frederick Douglass was white and Martin Luther King, Jr. was, too - and, as for Barack Obama, he was the whitest of all... but then I knew that already. Dr. Kleinheister even insisted that Kanye West was a closeted white man.

WALLY thinks pensively to HIMSELF. The LIGHTS rise slowly on the stage again. We are back in WALLY's apartment.

WALLY

I didn't want to be like that anymore - oppressed, angry, pretending to be someone I'm not. Dr. Kleinheister rescued me from all that and she only charged \$400 a session - and that was after the discount. In return, the peace she gave me was... priceless. Before too long, I was seeing Dr. Kleinheister twice a week, sometimes more. I didn't tell Mandy because I wasn't quite ready to reveal myself to the world yet. I wanted to tell her, though - very much. She was fast becoming a friend and someone I could really rely on.

The back door abruptly bursts open. MANDY hurriedly enters carrying a big paper bag in HER arms.

MANDY

Hola, Loyola!

WALLY

Hello, Mandy.

MANDY

How was your day?

WALLY

Same as all the others - still no luck.

MANDY

Poor Loyola. Still a loser. That's why you need a sugar mama, sí?

MANDY grins wildly and holds up the paper bag, filled with takeout.

WALLY

Thanks! I'm ravenous.

MANDY

After we eat.

MANDY plops the take-out on the table.
WALLY opens the bag and begins to take
out the food.

WALLY

(Pronouncing it "sow.")
General Tso?

MANDY

General Meow.

WALLY

Yummy.

MANDY

And Kung Pao Kitten.

WALLY

(Mimicking MANDY, in a friendly way.)
Is tasty.

MANDY

Is purr-fect.

WALLY

How was your day?

MANDY

It was good day. I was interviewed for new position.

WALLY

Oh?

MANDY

(Doing an exaggerated pose.)
Sí. I go from this...
(Doing a different pose.)
...to this.

WALLY

No, seriously. How was your day?

MANDY

(Fake Chinese.)
I am silly-ass.
(Back to regular voice.)
It suck, like Dracula. They demote me from waiter to chef, so I
quit.

WALLY

Isn't chef a better position?

MANDY

No - the food is very bad.

WALLY

I'm sorry.

MANDY

Is okay. I didn't like the chicos there anyway. All the men whistle at me. All the women whistle at me. Even the rats, they whistle at me. Between the three, I go for the rats. Now I go find another job - better one. I already find one on Craig's List at a salon. I call them today.

WALLY

How did it go?

MANDY

Good! They said hello.

WALLY

And?

MANDY

I said "hello."

WALLY

And?

MANDY

Then they hung up. At least I got my foot in the door. You never hear from the Gambol hombre?

WALLY

No, but I didn't really expect to.

MANDY

Why?

WALLY

I don't want to talk about it.

MANDY

Okay.

WALLY

Thank you.

MANDY

So what happened?

WALLY

I said I don't want to talk about it.

MANDY

I hear you the first time.

WALLY waits for a second, but MANDY just stares. HE sighs weightily.

WALLY

Well, it... it had to do with race.

MANDY

Ah, they don't like los chicos negros.

WALLY

What's that?

MANDY

Black people.

WALLY

Well, I mean... they didn't like me.

MANDY

You're black.

WALLY

(Half-way between a statement and a question.)
I am (?).

MANDY

(Ditto.)
You are.

WALLY

Yes, well... I just don't want to talk about it.

MANDY

You live in denial, Loyola - because it hurts too much. I know. Dr. Kleinheister, she tell me all about it. You don't want to admit the truth. I also never wanted to admit the truth. When I first start to feel things, I think I'm gay. Me, I never wanted to be gay - never ever... ever. Then Dr. Kleinheister convince me "No, you're not gay - you really are a woman." Now I'm straight again. The truth sets you free.

WALLY

(HIS mind elsewhere.)
Well, now that you mention it...

MANDY

Talk.

WALLY

There is something that bothers me.

MANDY

Yes.

WALLY

It does have to do with race.

MANDY

You see?

WALLY

Yes, but it's not what you think...

MANDY

I think you should see Dr. Kleinheister.

WALLY

Actually, I'm already...
 (Stopping himself.)
 ...thinking that's a great idea.

MANDY

When I first came to her, I very depressed. She put me on Cymbalta very, very quick - but, still, life just too hard. One day, I think "is time to end it all," so I decide to take all thirty of the pills she gave me.

WALLY

Oh, God! What happened?

MANDY

After the first two, I felt better.

MANDY stares at HIM for a moment and slowly smiles. WALLY smiles back at HER. It was a joke.

WALLY

Thank you, Mandy.

MANDY

I like you, Loyola.

WALLY

I like you, too.

MANDY

You're the only one who likes me for me. You no try to get into my pants.

(A beat.)

Why not?

WALLY

Like I said, I "like" you - but...

MANDY

But what?

I'm not gay.

WALLY

That's good.

MANDY

It is?

WALLY

Sí. What would a gay man want with a woman like me?

MANDY

Yes, but I... okay.

WALLY

You are very special.

MANDY

So are you.

WALLY

These last three months, I don't know what I do without you. I don't like to go back to my apartment now. It's lonely. Here is warm. You is warm.

MANDY

I is? ...I mean, "am?"

WALLY

Yes - you am.
(A beat.)
Still got no girlfriend, Loyola?

MANDY

Not really.

WALLY

You do now.

MANDY

I told you. I'm not ready for that.

WALLY

It's okay. That's what all men say.

MANDY

Yes, but me... I'm not really. I haven't even found out who I am yet.

WALLY

Then hurry up! If I can do it, anybody can - and you, you can be anybody.

MANDY

WALLY
 Except me, it seems.

MANDY smiles gently.

MANDY
 You know what you need?

WALLY
 An identity?

MANDY
 A lawyer.

WALLY
 A lawyer?

MANDY
 Sí - for those Gambol people. You must stand up for you. You can't let people hate on you. They can't tell you "no" because you're black, only if you're white or Christian. Me, I know a lawyer. He work in the barrio. His name is Antonio Lopez Garcia Vargas Santander Gomez Duarte Ibanez Duhalde Blanco Smith. He is very, very good. My uncle, he rob three stores and Señor Smith get him off on a technicality.

WALLY
 What was that?

MANDY
 He was deported.

WALLY
 I'm not really the suing type.

MANDY
 Then you are un-American! You can sue and we can make a lot of money.

WALLY
 We?

MANDY
 You.

WALLY
 I can't do that.

MANDY
 Yes, we can.

WALLY
 We?

MANDY

You no share with your girlfriend?

WALLY

I told you - I'm not ready.

MANDY

I said "girl-friend," Loyola.

WALLY

I'm sorry.

MANDY

Too bad. The one gentleman I meet is a gentleman.

MANDY smiles and walks out. Is SHE toying with HIM? WALLY isn't sure. A pause hangs in the moment. WALLY thinks and turns to us again:

WALLY

It was awkward for me, but I started to have feelings for Mandy - although I don't know what they were. We just clicked, we just connected - and it made me happy. I didn't connect with many other people. I didn't even connect with myself. Mandy, though, always managed to make me smile. That just made it even more awkward that I didn't tell her about my visits to Dr. Kleinheister. I was just... so embarrassed... so ashamed... so afraid that the one person I liked would judge me. I couldn't stand to lose that relationship. I had already lost my relationship with so many other people - my mom, my dad, my sister. They all said I needed "help." Mandy, for once, actually made me feel that I... belonged someplace.

WALLY smiles as HE thinks about MANDY. The LIGHTS shift slowly on the stage. A SPOTLIGHT picks up a lone psychiatrist's couch. We are back in Dr. Kleinheister's office. DR. KLEINHEISTER is sitting on the couch as if SHE were the patient, looking up at the sky.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Stop smiling.

WALLY

I'm... I'm sorry.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

You should be. This is no time to smile. You are oppressed.

WALLY

Oh, yes - I forgot.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Of course you did.

WALLY

What? Why?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Your mind is trying to save you from the airless void that is your life.

WALLY

Really?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Yes - the mind does that. It protects you. It comforts you. It shelters you from life - but there is no shelter here. Here, there is only reality, cold and hard. If you want to be free, you shouldn't look for a port in a storm. If you want to be free, you need to be a storm-chaser.

WALLY

I will be. I promise.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Good. Now tell me again when you finally knew you were white.

WALLY

Well, I suspected it when I was young. It started with small little things, like how I talked, how I walked, how I never fit in with my other black friends. Before my father got his big job, we lived in Harlem and I hung out with some of the neighborhood boys. They used to make fun of me because I wanted to spend more time studying than rapping. I couldn't help but feel different. Then came Greenwich - then Dexter - and then Phillips Andover - and then Yale - and then Harvard - and then Lehmann Brothers - and, by that time, I wasn't used to seeing many black people around, so...

A LOUD SNORE erupts from the couch.

WALLY turns and stares. DR.

KLEINHEISTER has fallen asleep.

WALLY

Dr. Kleinheister?

DR. KLEINHEISTER snorts awake.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

You stopped.

WALLY

You were asleep.

DR. KLEINHEISTER
I was listening. I hear best when I'm asleep.

WALLY
You do?

DR. KLEINHEISTER
Yes. Even so, my hourly rate stays the same.

WALLY
So all these time I've caught you snoring, you were actually...
listening?

DR. KLEINHEISTER
That's right.

WALLY
Fascinating.

DR. KLEINHEISTER
If you had a PhD, you'd understand.

WALLY
If you don't mind me asking, though... shouldn't I be the one on
the couch?

DR. KLEINHEISTER
Yes.

WALLY
Yes?

DR. KLEINHEISTER
Yes, I do mind you asking.

WALLY
Sorry, I just thought that...

DR. KLEINHEISTER
Stop being a conformist. It is better for you to stand when you
speak to me. Your blood flows better. Your mind thinks better.
You are more alert. You are more aroused. You are more engaged.
Besides... I'm tired.

WALLY
Of course. I'm sorry.

DR. KLEINHEISTER
Think clearly now. You always suspected you were white - but
suspicions are only suspicions. When did you know? Who convinced
your soul of the truth?

WALLY
Well, it...

DR. KLEINHEISTER
Yes?

WALLY
It was...

DR. KLEINHEISTER
Go on.

WALLY
It was... Time Warner Cable.

A LOUD RING sounds. RING, RING, RING... RING! A SPOTLIGHT rises and picks up a lonely, bored-looking Indian man at a desk. HIS name is BOBBY and HE wears a headset. We don't know much about HIM and can tell even less. All we know is that HE wants to be someplace else - desperately.

Hearing the ring, BOBBY sighs in annoyance and bends forward. HE moves a mouse on a mousepad in front of HIM and peers at us. Clearly, we are in the direction of an unseen computer monitor. BOBBY clicks, clicks, clicks on the mouse, picks up a nearby cue card, and reads from it:

BOBBY
(A thick Indian accent.)
Oh, hell!

WALLY
I'm... I'm sorry?

BOBBY
(Turning the cue card over and reading it again.)
Ah, no, no... I mean "hell-oh."

WALLY
Oh! "Hello."

BOBBY
Thank you much to call Time Warner Cable. My name is Bobby. How can't I help you today?

WALLY
Hi, Bobby. There's a charge I don't recognize on my account. Could you help with that?

BOBBY
Thank you, yes. You're a cunt.

WALLY
I'm a what?

BOBBY
You're a cunt.

WALLY
Sorry, I don't understand.

BOBBY
I need you're a cunt number.

WALLY
Oh, yes - sorry. It's 7-8-1-2-0-6.

BOBBY feverishly starts writing down
the number on a pad of paper, but can't
keep up.

BOBBY
Wait. Wait. Slow down, cowboy. I have 9-8-5-2-7-7-9-6-5-8-2-3-7-
4-3-6-1-8.

WALLY
No, it's just 7-8-1-2-0-6.

BOBBY
Well, why don't you say so?

WALLY
I... I just did.

BOBBY
What is the name on the a-cunt?

WALLY
(Pronouncing it "WHITE-muhn.")
Walter Whitman.

BOBBY
W-H-I-T-E-M-A-N?

WALLY
No - W-H-I-T-T-M-A-N.

BOBBY
Oh - Whitman.

WALLY
No - Whitman.

BOBBY
Sure, sure. Now how can I help?

WALLY

Well, I just noticed my bill today, and it seems I was charged an extra \$85 for my cable and internet.

BOBBY rolls HIS eyes in jaded boredom and shakes HIS head. HE sighs the weighty sigh of a man burdened by never-ending stupidity.

BOBBY

One moment, please, while I hold you.

BOBBY clicks a button and LOUD INDIAN RAP MUSIC starts playing, almost blasting off WALLY's ear. BOBBY yawns widely and looks through a stack of papers. HE is evidently in no rush whatsoever. Eventually, HE finds what HE is looking for and removes a single piece of paper. HE presses a button and the RAP MUSIC miraculously dies.

BOBBY

You still there?

WALLY

Yes, I'm here.

BOBBY

(Disappointed.)
Oh.

BOBBY clears HIS nostrils rather loudly into the phone and snorts a few times, as well, for good measure. WALLY takes the phone away from HIS ear. BOBBY picks up the piece of paper and reads from it methodically:

BOBBY

Hello, dear customer. You are asking about an increase in charges on your subscription. This is because your one-year promotional price has expired. Your cable-internet package has now renewed at the normal monthly rate. Thank you for your business. Have a nice day.

(Back to the phone.)

Any questions?

WALLY

Well, actually, I do remember that I started with you guys on a promotional price. I just didn't think the regular price would be so expensive.

BOBBY
Okay, fine. I give you dirty sex.

WALLY
Give me what?

BOBBY
Dirty sex.

WALLY
Dirty sex?

BOBBY
Yes. I can get you dirty sex off your monthly charge.

WALLY
Oh - "thirty-six."

BOBBY
No more than that.

WALLY
You mean dollars?

BOBBY
What else?

WALLY
That would be great, thanks. I appreciate it.

BOBBY
Okay, all done. Thank you for calling Time Warner Cable. If you have any further questions, please...

WALLY
Actually, I do have another question...

BOBBY
What is that, please?

WALLY
Where are you located?

BOBBY
(Clearly looking for a lie.)
Me? Why you ask?

WALLY
I'm just curious.

BOBBY
You leave me good survey afterwards?

WALLY

Oh, definitely.

BOBBY

In that case, please, I am located in Missypissy.

WALLY

You mean "Mississippi?"

BOBBY

(Angry at HIS correction.)
No - I mean Missypissy.

WALLY

Oh? Where's that?

BOBBY

It's a town... in Mippissippi.

WALLY

Oh, good - so you're American.

BOBBY

I'm as American as Peek's Pike. That is why my name is Johnny.

WALLY

I thought it was Bobby.

BOBBY

It is. Johnny is my middle name.

WALLY

Do you mind if I ask you something, Bobby?

BOBBY

Yes.

WALLY

Yes you do or yes you don't?

BOBBY

Yes.

WALLY

Well, to tell you the truth, Bobby, I'm depressed. That's why I was calling you. I noticed my bill and I was angry and then I thought "Do I really need this service? Do I really need more TV to ruin my life?" And then I thought "Well, actually - yes - I do." I need all the mindless entertainment I can get. My mind has been too weighed down by other things - by life. I couldn't sit in a room alone with my thoughts.

BOBBY

Very nice. Thank you for calling Time Warner Cable. If you have any further questions, please...

WALLY

Wait, I'm not finished.

BOBBY

Okay, please, what is it?

WALLY

Where are you from, if you don't mind my asking?

BOBBY

(Becoming defensive.)

What is this, eh?

WALLY

I'm just trying to show some interest in you as a human being.

BOBBY

I told you, I from Missy-sippy!

WALLY

But where are you from originally?

BOBBY

Originally, I from Washingmachine DC. You happy?

WALLY

Oh, well, I just thought I detected a slight Indian accent.

BOBBY

Oh. No. Stop right there. How dare you ask me that. You are being a racist.

WALLY

No, I'm not - honestly! I can't be racist.

BOBBY

Why not?

WALLY

I'm black.

BOBBY

You're what?

WALLY

I'm black.

BOBBY

No, please, you're not.

WALLY

Yes, please, I am... at least technically.

BOBBY

No, you're not. I know you're not. I call a spade a spade.

WALLY

How do you know I'm not black?

BOBBY

I can tell when I listen to you.

WALLY

That's ridiculous.

BOBBY

Ridiculous? You ask my boss, Rama Khranaja, if it's ridiculous! We are all trained here to know accents. We take calls from all over the world. Me, I trained in accents - many, many accents - all English language. I can do British. I can do American. I can do everything in-between. Mr. Khranaja, he train us to change our accent to fit the customer. You, I can tell - first when you call - are whiter than dandruff.

WALLY

You know accents?

BOBBY

Yes!

(Slight change in the voice - but same accent.)

Hello, partner.

(Back to "normal" voice.)

That, that is my Western accent.

(Slight change again - but, still, same voice.)

Cheerio, old boy.

(Back to "normal" voice.)

That, that is my British accent.

WALLY

(HIS mind elsewhere.)

That's very convincing.

BOBBY

I even have Boston accent.

(Slight change again.)

I pahk my cah in Hahvahd Yahd...

(Back to "normal" voice.)

...all the friggin' time! I speak cockney, too.

(Slight change again.)

"...so buggger off an' bloody 'ell!"

(Back to "normal" voice.)

...and I can do Southern accent.

(Slight change, flinging a white handkerchief.)

"Oh, fiddle-dee fiddle-dee-dee!"

BOBBY (CONT)

(Back to "normal" voice.)
 ...and I even know Ebonics!
 (Slight change, plus appropriate hand gestures.)
 "...so dun mess wit me, cracka."

WALLY

Okay, okay. I believe you.

BOBBY

You should believe me, white boy.

WALLY

So... you really think I'm white?

BOBBY

I tell you what I think and I know I'm right.

WALLY

Wow, I don't know what to say. I thought I had you fooled.

BOBBY

You can't fool on me. I know you are not black. Black people can't even speak friggin' English!

WALLY

I guess so.

BOBBY

I know so. Now thank you for calling Time Warner Cable. If you have any further questions, please...

BOBBY suddenly stops and waits. WALLY waits also on the other end of the line.

WALLY

Hello? Are you still there?

BOBBY

Yes. Just making sure you no interrupt again.

WALLY

Oh, no... not I.

BOBBY

You see! Very white!

WALLY

Well, I...

BOBBY

Goodbye.

BOBBY hangs up the phone. The SPOTLIGHT on BOBBY instantly dies. A LOUD DIAL TONE sounds from all corners of the stage. As the LIGHTS brighten anew, revealing DR. KLEINHEISTER on the couch, the DIAL TONE disappears into the distance. WALLY returns to addressing us directly:

WALLY

That was the first time someone acknowledged me for who I was - a white man. He didn't know me from Adam, but he knew I was white. After that, I deliberately called up customer service telephone numbers as often as I could - AT&T, Liberty Mutual, Bank of America - and I'd chat casually with a representative. I would test the waters by making a casual joke about "colored people time" - usually as a result of a prolonged hold - and oh, boy, the swears I'd get back. Everyone thought I was white - and racist. It was just so wonderful. Then, one day, I made the ultimate plunge. I called the Nation of Islam and even they thought I was white. I know, because they denied me a membership. If people just listened to my voice, they knew who I was without question. It was the appearance that threw them off - and appearances are deceiving.

A LOUD SNORE escapes again from DR. KLEINHEISTER.

WALLY

Dr. Kleinheister?

DR. KLEINHEISTER jumps to life again.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Stop it. You interrupt my listening.

WALLY

I'm sorry.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Be sorry. I am now too awake to hear you.

WALLY

I won't do it again.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

No, you won't - because our session is over.

WALLY

I'm almost relieved. It was very hard for me this week.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

It has to be. That is how you will get better. Next week, we have our final session.

WALLY

Our final session?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Yes. I am undergoing... the change.

WALLY

You are? You found someone to do it?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Yes. Finally, after many years, I will be Mongolian.

WALLY

How long will you be gone?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Four months - maybe more.

WALLY thinks to HIMSELF.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Quick! What are you thinking?

WALLY

I don't know.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

You must. Who else would know?

WALLY

God, perhaps.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

There is no God... remember? If there were, why are there so many lawyers and psychiatrists?

WALLY

I admire you. It's such a life-altering change.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

I'm ready. I just closed on a summer cottage in Ulaanbataar.

WALLY

I wish you luck, Dr. Kleinheister.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Thank you, Wally.

WALLY

Is there anything else?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Yes. Your last bill is past due.

The LIGHTS fall on DR. KLEINHEISTER.
WALLY turns to us:

WALLY

When Dr. Kleinheister told me she was going to go through "the change," it really struck me. It showed me how much further I had to go to become my true self. I was just white inside, but not on the surface - and, let's face it, in this world, the surface is what matters. Then it occurred to me that the two most important people around me had decided to change themselves substantially - Dr. Kleinheister and Mandy. I knew then I had to do more, so I asked Dr. Kleinheister about the cost of her surgery and she said it was about \$500,000. She even put me in touch with the doctor who was going to "do the deed" so I could ask about possible options for... for me. The doctor seemed very nice, although I only got to speak with her on the phone, because she was based in Nepal - and, anyway, she needed a translator - but, when the doctor said she might be able to help me, she could have been speaking Urdu, for all I cared... I was just thrilled! I could finally become my true self - but then where could I get all that money?

The back door swings open and MANDY enters again. SHE carries another big paper bag.

MANDY

Hola, Loyola!

WALLY

Hello, Mandy.

MANDY

How was your day?

WALLY

Same old, same old - no new job.

MANDY

Poor Loyola. Still a loser. You better learn to do some cooking and cleaning.

MANDY grins wildly and holds up the paper bag filed with takeout.

WALLY

I'm good, thanks.

MANDY

You no want to eat?

WALLY

No, thanks. I had som tum pbooh earlier.

MANDY

Oh, no! Hope you feel better now!

MANDY plops the take-out on the table.
WALLY can't help but be curious.

WALLY

Japanese?

MANDY

Ahhh so, but no.

WALLY

Italian?

MANDY

No-so-le-meo.

WALLY

Mexican?

MANDY

Mejicanoo.

WALLY

What is it, then?

MANDY removes a huge bottle of
champagne and plops it on the table.

MANDY

French! I get new job!

WALLY

Oh, wow! That's wonderful!

MANDY

I'm going to be a model.

WALLY

Really? Where?

MANDY

Steinman's Funeral Parlor on Seventy-Second Street. Very popular place - only Kosher funeral parlor in Brooklyn. Part-time right now, but I work my way up to full, you wait. I just have to practice looking dead. They hire me on the spot and I just got my first paycheck. I pretend to be poor chica killed by stray bullet in South Side Chicago. I do good, by next month, who knows, I start doing coffin tours, too!

(A beat, looking him over.)

That remind me... how tall are you?

WALLY
What? Why?

MANDY
Your clothes, not so good.

WALLY
They're not?

MANDY
No - just make you look old.

WALLY
Old? Really?

MANDY
Yes. You look thirty-five. How old are you?

WALLY
Thirty-five.

MANDY
There you go.

WALLY
There I go what?

MANDY
If you look your age, you always look too old. Take it from a woman.

(Removing a shirt from the bag.)
Anyway - this for you. I hope it fit.

WALLY
(Touched,)
For... for me?

MANDY
Yes. Happy Birthday.

WALLY
Thank you, but my birthday is in two months.

MANDY
Don't kill the moment.

WALLY
I won't, sorry. It means a lot to me. The shirt is... is...

WALLY unfurls the shirt. It is fairly basic with big letters "I'M WITH HER" and an arrow pointing off to one direction - which just so happens to be where MANDY is standing.

WALLY
It's very stylish.

MANDY
It matches your eyes.

WALLY
I don't know if I want to understand that.

MANDY
You think it over - and, while you think, I have this...

MANDY turns around to rummage around in the bag. By doing so, SHE reveals HER back. MANDY is wearing a shirt like the one SHE just gave WALLY and on the back is the message "I'M WITH HIM" and an arrow pointing in WALLY's direction. WALLY notices the shirt and stares at it for a moment. Then MANDY whirls around with a small envelope.

MANDY
Ta-da!

WALLY
What's that?

MANDY
Open and you see.

WALLY opens the box and HIS face immediately lights up. HE removes a ticket from the envelope.

WALLY
Oh, wow! A ticket to see Suze Orman.

MANDY
I know you like her. She is lecturing at Javits Center on retirement planning and the IRA.

WALLY
This must have cost a lot of money.

MANDY
For your birthday, is okay. The tickets go whoosh.

WALLY
Yeah, I can imagine.

MANDY
Now you may kiss me.

WALLY

Do what?

MANDY

Don't you give girls kisses when they give you things?

WALLY

Not really.

MANDY

(Waving the champagne bottle.)
In France they do!

WALLY

Oh, well, I... I...

MANDY

Come, on! What do you say, Loyola?

MANDY puckers brazenly and sticks HER face in WALLY's direction. WALLY thinks for a moment and then turns to us. The rest of the stage seems to freeze, as:

WALLY

Just then, it suddenly occurred to me... Why was I holding myself back? Was it because Mandy was really a man - sort of, kind of - but not really? Was it because I was afraid of what other people would think? Then I thought how hypocritical it was of me. Here I was wanting everyone to treat me like who I really am - a white man - and I wasn't even willing to give that same respect to someone like Mandy. I still saw her as a man, even though she wasn't and had never been one. At that moment, I resolved to leave my worries aside and just...

Suddenly, MANDY lunges for WALLY and gives HIM a great big kiss - smack! SHE releases WALLY after what seems like an eternity. WALLY looks at HER in astonishment.

MANDY

You take too long!

WALLY

No, no, wait. I told you, Mandy - I don't know if I'm ready for this.

MANDY

(Posing.)
So what? No one ready for this.

WALLY

It's not just about that, though.

MANDY

I no care. You are one sexy man.

WALLY

Thank you. You are, too.... sexy, I mean.

MANDY

Good! Don't make me slap you. I normally wait until third date for that - but, for you, I make it second. I like you ever since I saw you getting your mail that day you move in. I watch how you jiggle your keys... so cute!

WALLY

I have a lot of stuff to figure out.

MANDY

Who doesn't?

WALLY

I'm still even discovering who I am.

MANDY

Who isn't?

WALLY

There's a part of me, though, that's...

MANDY

Whatever it is, Loyola, I no judge. I love you no matter who you are. It's not like you're white.

WALLY

Yes, but I'm not even sure that I...

(Suddenly.)

What was that?

MANDY

I said it's not like you're white.

WALLY

Well, then, what if I were?

MANDY

Then it's "too bad, so sad!" I say "no" to white men. They live and be white and life is muy bueno. We live and be us and life is too hard. White people don't know what it like, so they don't know us. Besides, they mean. They deport my grandfather. They deport my father. They deport me - but, aha, I come back! And now? Now I'm a woman, so they never find me. White people, they mean to everyone except themselves - black people, brown people, yellow people. If there were green and blue people, they'd be mean to them, too. That's why I make a pledge. I only have sex with men who have dark skin - number AF-110 and up at Benjamin

MANDY (CONT)

Moore. Extra points if they are gay, homeless, recently paroled convicts, or illegal immigrants.

WALLY

So what does that make me?

MANDY

That makes you AF-160.

WALLY

AF-160?

MANDY

You're "carob" - carob with big, brown ojos.

WALLY

Ojos?

MANDY

Eyes.

WALLY

Look, Mandy, you've got me all wrong.

MANDY

Okay, Loyola, so help me get you all right.

WALLY

I'm not a color at Benjamin Moore. I'm more than that - just like you were more than people thought. Before your change, what would people have said about you? They would have said you looked like a boy, right? First a boy, then a man - but you weren't either... not really. Well, it's the same with me - although I haven't had the courage to walk as far as you have. People look at you now and know who you are. People look at me and they still just see the surface. Even you just see the surface - but that has to change.

MANDY

Look, Loyola, you go on and on too much.

WALLY

Well, it's just... you see... I... I'm...

MANDY

I no judge you.

WALLY

(Blurting it out.)
I'm white.

MANDY

What's white?

I am.

WALLY

You are what?

MANDY

White.

WALLY

MANDY stares at HIM for a moment.

MANDY

That's not funny, Loyola. You make fun of me.

WALLY

I'm not joking, Mandy. I'm white - very white.

MANDY

No. You're AF-160. My uncle painted his house with you.

WALLY

That's what people would have said about you before, too.

MANDY

That I'm AF-160?

WALLY

That you're a woman, when you're not.

MANDY

But I am!

WALLY

So I'm not?

MANDY

A woman?

WALLY

No - white.

MANDY

Of course not, silly. You are black.

WALLY

Yes, but I'm not. I never have been. Oh, sure, on the outside I'm black, but on the inside...

MANDY

Look, if you don't like me, just say so.

WALLY

It's not about that.

MANDY

You don't have to make cruel joke at me.

WALLY

I'm not making any joke.

MANDY

You make fun of me and my change. Well, it's not funny. I've been the butt of many jokes. I won't be the butt of yours. You're the butt - great and big!

WALLY

I'm being serious!

MANDY

No, you're not - because you're black and crazy!

WALLY

Crazy?!

MANDY

Muy loco!

WALLY

Okay, so I'm black, just like you're a man - is that it?

MANNY

No - is different! I always felt like a woman. I was just born in the wrong body.

WALLY

I was, too. I've always felt like I was white.

MANDY

You can't "feel" white.

WALLY

But you can "feel" female?

MANDY

Sí! When I young, I always want to wear dresses and make-up and have pretty nails and...

WALLY

Oh, I see! So being a woman is all about dresses and make-up and pretty nails, is that it?

MANDY

I didn't say that!

WALLY

Yes, you did! Well, guess what? The 1950's called and they want their gender norms back. Being a woman isn't about what you wear

WALLY (CONT)

or how you walk or how colorful your nails are. Even I know that - and I'm a man. You've just thrown one hundred years of feminist theory out the window.

MANDY

Is more than that!

WALLY

Then enlighten me. How did you know you were a woman?

MANDY

Well, I... I just knew... inside.

WALLY

Well, I know inside, too - so there.

MANDY

Yes, but me, I can have surgery and...

WALLY

That doesn't mean you really "become" a woman.

MANDY

But you can become white?

WALLY

Yes! Race is different. Race is a social construct.

MANDY

So is gender.

WALLY

No, it isn't!

MANDY

How you know that?

WALLY

Because men can't have ovaries!

MANDY

Black men can't be white, ether!

WALLY

Who says they can't? Ask Michael Jackson!

MANDY

I can't! He's dead!

WALLY

Look, if you don't accept me for who I am, how can you expect me to accept you for who you are?

MANDY

Because I look like this!

WALLY

Tell me when you start menstruating! Then I'll be impressed!

A loud silence fills the stage. MANDY stares at WALLY fiercely. WALLY stares back at HER with similar ferocity. MANDY suddenly bursts into tears and runs crying from the stage. WALLY makes to run after HER.

WALLY

Mandy!

...but no luck. MANDY is gone. WALLY waits a moment and then calls lamely after HER:

WALLY

I'm sorry.

WALLY hangs HIS head in sadness. A hollow pause fills the stage.

The LIGHTS slowly fall.

END OF ACT ONE.

ACT TWO

The stage is draped in a familiar darkness. A SPOTLIGHT picks up WALLY as HE enters the stage.

WALLY

I guess there comes a time in life when we all have to take the bull by the horns. Sometimes it's hard enough just to find the bull - but, when you do, you have to act quickly before he gallops away again. I guess that feeling is what led me to my next destination. I never thought I'd be the one to seek out a lawyer - especially a slimy one... although, really, that's most of them. The honest ones don't win as many cases, so they can't afford the billboards and those ads after Judge Judy on weekday afternoons. It came to the point that I needed someone who could win something for me. I had spent most of the prior year or so losing - and, after that something included Mandy, the least I could do was get the rest right.

The LIGHTS rise vaguely to reveal a desk filled with papers. An Hispanic man with a large, way-too-Mexican mustache is sitting behind the desk: JUAN LUIS GARCIA VICENTE SANTANDER FERNANDO DIEGO MAURIZIO DUHALDE PEDRO SMITH. A huge poster hangs behind HIM that looks not unlike some overly colorful movie star advertisement. It shows the same man, with a huge smile plastered across HIS face, HIS hands filled with money and vague protestations of "Justice."

SEÑOR SMITH

Hello. You are Mr. Walter Whitman?

WALLY

Yes, I am. Are you Señor Antonio Smith?

SEÑOR SMITH

No, that is my brother. I am Juan Luis Garcia Vicente Santander Fernando Diego Maurizio Duhalde Pedro Smith. My brother is Antonio Lopez Garcia Vargas Santander Gomez Duarte Ibanez Duhalde Blanco Smith. He cannot help you.

WALLY

Why's that?

SEÑOR SMITH

He's dead.

WALLY

Oh, I'm sorry. I just spoke with him on the phone.

SEÑOR SMITH

I know, but he's dead now. I will speak for the dead.

WALLY

You're a lawyer, too?

SEÑOR SMITH

Yep. Now what is it today? Sexism? Racism? Homophobia?

WALLY

Well, I guess... eh...

SEÑOR SMITH

If possible, I prefer a little of each.

WALLY

I don't think that's relevant in my case.

SEÑOR SMITH

I see. Too bad.

WALLY

Honestly, I'm not even 100% sure, but I think it's racism and hope that we can just...

SEÑOR SMITH

(Putting HIS fingers to HIS ears and singing.)
La-la-la-la-la-la!

WALLY

I'm sorry?

SEÑOR SMITH

(Ditto.)
La-la-la-la-la-la!

WALLY

What are you doing?

SEÑOR SMITH

I'm not listening to you.

WALLY

Yes, but I was just saying that...

SEÑOR SMITH

La-la-la-la-la-la!

WALLY

You're doing it again.

SEÑOR SMITH

That's because you keep talking.

WALLY

Well, what do you want me to do?

SEÑOR SMITH

Talk - but only about what helps.

WALLY

What helps what?

SEÑOR SMITH

Your case. You want to sue someone's ass off, right?

WALLY

Yes... I think.

SEÑOR SMITH starts to move HIS forefingers close to HIS ears again.

WALLY

Sorry.

SEÑOR SMITH

Who discriminated against you?

WALLY

A potential employer.

SEÑOR SMITH

Okay, tell me more.

WALLY

Well, I was applying for a high profile job at Gambol Customer Solutions...

SEÑOR SMITH

(Suddenly interested.)

Did you say Gambol Customer Solutions?

WALLY

Yes. You know them?

SEÑOR SMITH

No.

WALLY

Okay, well, I was on the verge of getting the job - six-figure salary and all. The CEO told me that someone would be in touch

WALLY (CONT)

with an offer. Then, just before I left the interview, I pointed out my race and I never heard back from him.

SEÑOR SMITH

He couldn't tell your race by looking at you?

WALLY

Well, not quite, no... but appearances can be deceiving.

SEÑOR SMITH

Really? You look black to me.

WALLY

Yes, but it's racist to presume - at least, I think it is.

SEÑOR SMITH

Good point! We'll use that.

WALLY

For what?

SEÑOR SMITH

For suing their asses off!

WALLY

Oh, well, I'm not sure about that. I was hoping we wouldn't have to go that far. Maybe we could arrange a nice settlement out of court or something that would...

SEÑOR SMITH

(Back to the routine.)

La-la-la-la-la-la!

WALLY

Sorry. I'll stop talking now.

SEÑOR SMITH

Good. You have to learn to shut up.

WALLY

(Looking around uncertainly.)

I hope I came to the right place.

SEÑOR SMITH

You did, amigo. My brother and I have always been devoted to the common man - the more common, the better. Together, we have saved a shit ton of lives - no joke. That warning on belts that says "Don't wrap around neck?" That was me. That warning on Preparation H that says "Don't put on a toothbrush?" That was me, too. Here's another one... You know that warning on those salt packets that says "don't eat?"

WALLY

Oh, wow. That was you?

SEÑOR SMITH

Damn right it was. You know how many human lives I've saved over the past twenty years? I'm like goddamn Mother Teresa - but do I get the credit? No! I just make history - that's all. Still, each bit of history started with someone like you - some poor, innocent bastard who was the victim of someone else jacking off. You're in good company, though, believe me. My Preparation H client, he had a PhD in chemistry.

WALLY

This isn't exactly a warning label situation.

SEÑOR SMITH

Doesn't matter. I do it all - big, small, and in-between. Last month, I won a case against an Orthodox Jewish cake shop owner. Two gay men went to him and wanted him to make them a wedding cake in the shape of a great, big dick.

WALLY

Oh, I see, and he refused to make the cake.

SEÑOR SMITH

Hell, no. He's Jewish, so he just charged them extra. Still, because of his religious convictions, he insisted the cake be circumcised. The court case lasted two years - but, in the end, the precedent was set against religious bigotry.

WALLY

(Impressed, thinking to HIMSELF aloud.)
So this business for you would be a cakewalk.

SEÑOR SMITH glares at HIM, unamused by the joke.

WALLY

Sorry. Again, though, I don't want to go all crazy on the Gambol people or anything...

SEÑOR SMITH

Bullfuck!

WALLY

(A little taken aback.)
Bull what?

SEÑOR SMITH

Fuck!

WALLY

Oh, that.

SEÑOR SMITH

You've got to take a stand.

WALLY

Yes, but I was hoping that I...

SEÑOR SMITH

Suing is like sex; you're either in or you're out - and, if you're in, you better stay in till you're finished.

WALLY

Thanks for that.

SEÑOR SMITH

So what will it be?

SEÑOR SMITH raises HIS fingers to HIS ears in preparation for a denial.

WALLY

I'm in.

SEÑOR SMITH

Good boy!

WALLY

I suppose you need a retainer.

SEÑOR SMITH

I will send you the details.

WALLY

Thank you.

SEÑOR SMITH

...plus 30% of your winnings.

WALLY

Thirty percent?!

SEÑOR SMITH

(Looking at a smartphone.)

Yeah - I'm reading up on these Gambol people now. They're pretty big, pretty powerful, so it'll take a hell of a lot of work... but you know what they say, don't you? The bigger they are, the harder they fall!

SEÑOR SMITH laughs contentedly, rises, and extends HIS hand towards WALLY.

WALLY

Thank you, Señor Smith.

SEÑOR SMITH

I'll be in touch, Wally.

WALLY

Thanks - and I'm sorry about your brother.

SEÑOR SMITH

What? Oh, him. Don't worry about it. It happens.

WALLY

What happens exactly?

SEÑOR SMITH

He got curious last week and put a plastic bag over his head. He never was good at reading labels.

SEÑOR SMITH snorts and exits into the darkness. The LIGHTS fall and only remain lit on WALLY.

WALLY

Honestly, I never thought it would come to this. I just didn't feel I had a choice. I had to make a change in my life - the change that Dr. Kleinheister and Mandy chose to make - and I needed money to do it. What else could I do? I had gone through my 401k and all my savings after a year without a job. I guess my need for the change grew as my life became lonelier. Without Mandy, everything seemed so empty. I didn't see her much after everything happened - as you might expect - only every now and then and always by the mailbox.

The back door flies open and MANDY walks in with some groceries. SHE immediately stops and glares at WALLY.

WALLY

Hi, Mandy.

MANDY

Get lost, white boy!

MANDY scoffs and thunders out through the other door. WALLY sighs to HIMSELF and turns back to us:

WALLY

Apparently, Mandy was still a little upset with me. I couldn't really blame her for that - not after what I said. The thing is, I was upset, too. The one person I loved - yes, actually loved - had denied who I really was. Then again, in my anger and hurt, I had denied Mandy her true self, too. I didn't even know what I was saying to her at the time. I just know that all these words came pouring out of my mouth, too quick, too fast. I kept trying

WALLY (CONT)

to connect with Mandy and apologize - always at the mailbox - but it never came to anything.

The back door flies open and MANDY walks in with more groceries. SHE immediately stops and glares at MANDY.

WALLY

Hi, Mandy.

MANDY

Screw you, cracker barrel!

MANDY scoffs again and thunders out through the other door. WALLY sighs yet again and turns back to us:

WALLY

Of course, it made it worse that Dr. Kleinheister was still in Nepal recovering from her surgery. I didn't have anyone to talk to. I tried to connect with another psychiatrist she recommended, but, every time I called, he was playing golf on Martha's Vineyard. In one particular moment of moral crisis, I called the resort and was able to get him off the golf course for about 10 minutes - but, because it was only the ninth hole and the sun was already going down, he couldn't spare much time. He still charged me for the call, though.

The back door flies open and MANDY walks in with even more groceries. SHE stops yet again and glares at WALLY.

WALLY

Hi, Mandy.

MANDY

Drop dead, honky-tonk!

MANDY scoffs again and storms out through the same ol' other door. WALLY turns back to us again:

WALLY

Fortunately, in all my isolation, I found some degree of solace - a distant but willing ear. By then, he was the only person I could really talk to.

A LOUD DIAL TONE sounds. RING...RING... RING... A SPOTLIGHT rises on a corner of the stage and picks up the familiar figure of BOBBY sitting at HIS desk. HE sighs audibly, stares at an unseen

computer screen - click, click - and answers the phone.

BOBBY

Hello. Thank you much to call Time Warner Cable. My name is Bobby. How can't I help you today?

WALLY

Hi, Bobby. It's me - Wally.

BOBBY

Oh, Wally - the white American racist.

WALLY

I asked the other girl to transfer me. Is it okay to chat?

BOBBY

Not now. My sales no good today.

WALLY

Don't worry. I'll add another cable channel.

BOBBY

Make it two and we got a deal. My conversion is low.

WALLY

Sure. Just pick two. You have an awful lot of channels anyway.

BOBBY

Oh, yes, we have a lot of awful channels. I give you Insect Network and MSNBCBS. Now what is it?

WALLY

I'm at an impasse.

BOBBY

Don't forget to look both ways.

WALLY

No - I mean an impasse in my life.

BOBBY

Hit me, cowboy.

WALLY

Frankly, I don't know where to begin. My transgender girlfriend - at least, she was going to be girlfriend - has broken up with me and thinks I'm a terrible person. My psychiatrist has gone to Nepal to become a Mongolian. My investments and my savings are all gone. I'm lying through my teeth to sue an innocent company for everything they have. My substitute psychiatrist blames me for his bogeys - and, well, as for me...

BOBBY

You - all you have is bad news.

WALLY

I don't have much else to convey.

BOBBY

You can find many things, because life is good.

WALLY

Well, it doesn't look that great from where I'm standing. I don't have much going for me right now.

BOBBY

Cry me a friggin' river, cowboy! I live in slum outside Calcutta - but, listen, is not as glamorous as you think! We have no washing machine - no stove - no sink - no toilet... so what? So we crap out the window - which is bad, because we live on first floor. When it rain is the only time we do laundry, because we have no water in faucets, just in well - small one - one mile away, next to slaughterhouse... and by "we" is me, my wife, my aunts, my brother, my sister, my granddaddy, and twelve loud babies, all in three-room shithole!

WALLY

I'm... I'm sorry.

BOBBY

You should be, cowboy! Me, I give anything to almost have a transgender girlfriend! I tell you, my wife, she is so desperate now she turns to prostitution.

WALLY

She's selling?

BOBBY

She's buying!

WALLY

Oh, wow.

BOBBY

She has to, because she's very, very ugly! I will not touch her - not even with long, dirty finger. Our parents arrange our marriage, but Picasso arrange her face.

WALLY

Oh, dear.

BOBBY

You think I joke, but her face no joke! I look at it every night, so I start working nights. I work thirty hours a day, twelve days a week, sixty-five weeks a year!

WALLY
How do you manage that?

BOBBY
I work overtime.

WALLY
I see.

BOBBY
No clothes, too, so we all walk naked!

WALLY
I'm sorry.

BOBBY
Also no electricity, so no television!

WALLY
That's terrible.

BOBBY
If not for my iPad, I would go crazy!

WALLY
Okay, I get it, but...

BOBBY
I'm not finished! My wife, she cook dirt, every night, except on Tuesdays.

WALLY
What do you eat on Tuesdays?

BOBBY
Leftover dirt!

WALLY
Oh, God.

BOBBY
Our floor, it creak.

WALLY
Look, I...

BOBBY
Our ceiling, it leak.

WALLY
Okay, but...

BOBBY
Our back door, it squeak.

WALLY

What about the front door?

BOBBY

We don't have a front door!

WALLY

I'm sorry.

BOBBY

Why you sorry? Nothing worth stealing!

WALLY

Okay, Bobby - okay! I get it. I'm a privileged white American. I should be ashamed.

BOBBY

You should, stupid Yankee.

WALLY

I guess my life isn't that bad.

BOBBY

It isn't. You want some advice from Bobby?

WALLY

Yes, please.

BOBBY

All that matters in life is having a penis.

WALLY

Having a what?

BOBBY

Having a penis.

WALLY

Having a penis?

BOBBY

Yes. All that matters is being 'appy.

WALLY

Oh - happiness.

BOBBY

That's what I said. Happiness is a frame of the mind.

WALLY

I guess you're right.

BOBBY

Okay, now you go.

WALLY

Just one more thing...

BOBBY

Hurry, please. You make big my talk time.

WALLY

I just want to say... thank you, Bobby. You're the only person I feel actually listens to me. You bring a lot of clarity to my life. At times, I feel like I'm in a room of darkness - a room without a door - but you, you are a north star in an otherwise black sky. How can I ever repay you?

BOBBY

Take post-call survey!

With that, BOBBY hangs up the phone and the SPOTLIGHT on HIM dies. WALLY returns to us again:

WALLY

While I liked Bobby, he still wasn't Mandy. Funny how the one person or thing we always want is the very person or thing we cannot have - and funny, too, that you most want someone when they are out of your reach. So life moved along. Señor Smith filed all the court papers for my lawsuit and made sure to get Jesse Jackson on board. My savings dwindled further and further until I had to give up my Starbucks card in favor of Folgers Instant Breakfast Blend. Mandy kept ignoring me. Then, out of the blue, I finally had some good news. After five months, Dr. Kleinheister had finally returned from Nepal! I got a call from her secretary one afternoon and...

The back door flies open and MANDY walks in with more groceries. WALLY turns and stares at HER in surprise. SHE, in turn, returns a familiar glare back at WALLY.

WALLY

Hello, Mandy.

MANDY scoffs and makes to exit again through the other door.

WALLY

Please don't go. Hear me out.

MANDY stops and listens, but does not turn to face WALLY.

WALLY

Look, I'll keep this short. I know I hurt you. I know I was cruel. I didn't mean to be. I... I love you, Mandy. I truly love

WALLY (CONT)

you. It took me a while to realize it, but now I know. I know and I'm sorry and I just hope we can get passed all this and support each other in our loneliness, because... well... we're both of us very lonely in our own ways. There's so much hurt we have to go through, so much pain. To go through it is one thing. To go through it alone is another. I just want you to know that... I'm here. I'm here, Mandy. I'm here to love you and support you and cheer you on. I just hope you can find it in your heart to do the same for me.

MANDY turns and looks at WALLY for a moment. It seems SHE may actually respond with something other than an insult. Then, like a final denial, SHE extends a long middle finger in WALLY's direction and thunders out through the other door. WALLY shakes HIS head in abject sorrow, sighs to himself, and turns back to us:

WALLY

Anyway, like I was saying, I received a phone call from Dr. Kleinheister's secretary after she returned from Nepal... Dr. Kleinheister, that is, not her secretary. I was touched, because, of all her patients, I was the first one Dr. Kleinheister wanted to see.

The LIGHTS rise generally. The WHITE ACTOR has wheeled in a portal door. WALLY turns to face the door and pauses. There is a gold nameplate on the door - presumably, advertising Dr. Kleinheister's name - that has been obstructed by a piece of paper with Mongolian script on it. WALLY looks at the message for a moment and carefully knocks on the door. HE then waits for a response, but none comes, so HE knocks again. Still, there is no response. WALLY is about to knock again, when:

DR. KLEINHEISTER'S VOICE

Come in.

WALLY smiles to hear the voice and slowly opens the door. The WHITE ACTOR wheels off the portable door. The LIGHTS brighten - but not much. The lighting still remains subdued. The MUSICAL TWANG of MONGOLIAN MUSIC dances ever so daintily in the air. WALLY looks around HIM with surprise. HE

finds it difficult to see, but HE moves forward nonetheless.

WALLY

Dr. Kleinheister?

Nothing emanates from the darkened room. WALLY tiptoes further into the darkness. HE stops for a moment, thinking HE should perhaps try moving in the opposite direction. Just as HE does, though, HE hears a loud, guttural sound set to music. It seems to come from some sort of human orifice - which one, we don't know - but it's a little disturbing nonetheless.

WALLY

Dr. Kleinhiester?

A LIGHT comes on. It is found atop a tall, ornate lamp next to a chair. In this chair sits DR. KLEINHEISTER dressed in a deel - traditional Mongolian garb. SHE is facing away from us, towards the back of the stage, so we can't see HER face. WALLY freezes upon seeing the sight. The guttural music stops. Evidently, it has been coming from DR. KLEINHEISTER. A loud pause of comprehension follows - then:

DR. KLEINHEISTER

(Fake Asian accent.)
Herro, Warry.

WALLY

Is that you, Dr. Kleinheister?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

(Fake Asian accent.)
Of course it me. It just as much me as it is you.

WALLY

I don't know about that. I'm kind of lost about now.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

(Fake Asian accent.)
Leery? Wheah ah you?

WALLY

I'm... I'm sorry. I'm having a hard time understanding you.

DR. KLEINHEISTER
 (Suddenly speaking perfect English.)
 You should. It's my Mongolian accent.

WALLY
 Oh, yeah. You're Mongolian, after all.

DR. KLEINHEISTER
 That's right. Nowadays, Mongolian is my first language.

WALLY
 I can tell. You do the accent very well.

DR. KLEINHEISTER
 I've practiced. I went to a British school in Ulaanbaatar just so I could learn their bad English.

WALLY
 Oh, wow. It was bad - very, very bad.

DR. KLEINHEISTER
 Thank you.

WALLY
 So what was that sound you were making before?

DR. KLEINHEISTER
 That sound you heard was Mongolian throat singing.

WALLY
 I was wondering which part of the body it came from.

DR. KLEINHEISTER
 It is an ancient custom. Americans, being a young people, do not understand it.

WALLY
 I hear you. It's pathetic.

DR. KLEINHEISTER
 (Gesturing mysteriously.)
 Come closer.

WALLY starts to move closer.

DR. KLEINHEISTER
 Stop.

WALLY suddenly stops.

DR. KLEINHEISTER
 Where are you now?

WALLY

I'm about fifteen feet away from you.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Continue.

WALLY starts moving again.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Stop!

WALLY suddenly stops again.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Where are you now?

WALLY

I'm about five feet closer than before.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Which is where?

WALLY

I... I have no idea.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Nowhere - for that is where you are in life. You are closer to me, but as far as ever from your destination. I, I have taken a great step into the light of truth. You, you are still mired in darkness. Ask yourself where you are and the answer is "too far from where you should be."

WALLY

Yes, Dr. Kleinheister.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

No, Wally - I am no longer Dr. Kleinheister.

WALLY

You're not?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

I now go by my Mongolian name - Enkhjargal.

WALLY

Enkhjargal?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

It was between that or Altantsetseg.

WALLY

It must have been a tough decision.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

It was - but I chose my name wisely. It means "ray of peace."

WALLY

That's beautiful.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

I even had to give my father a new name. His name is now Eljigidei.

WALLY

Oh? Why's that?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Because we Mongolians follow a paternal surname system. Our surname comes first and it is the first name of the person's father. I couldn't call myself Harry Enkhjargal. It would sound like I had a personal problem.

WALLY

Wow. That's very brave. I hope your father doesn't mind.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

He doesn't. He's dead. I've already ordered a new tombstone.

WALLY

I bet he'd be proud.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Come, let me gaze upon you.

DR. KLEINHEISTER slowly turns around in the chair and faces WALLY. SHE looks positively bizarre. HER eyes are basically closed shut into two long slits and HER skin has been died an odd orange. HER hair is black, as well - black and pulled back tight - so tight it looks like it's clinging onto HER skull for dear life.

WALLY

Oh, wow. You're... you're...

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Say it.

WALLY

You're Mongolian.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

I am Mongolian.

WALLY

You don't even look Chinese or Japanese. You actually look Mongolian - except...

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Except?

WALLY

What happened to your eyes?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

They have been Asianized. I told the doctor to pull my neck skin the tightest that she could. I wanted to be as Asian as possible. If you struggle for years and years to become black, would you want to emerge looking like John Legend? Of course not. You would want to be as black as a starless night. You would want to be Sidney Poitier.

WALLY

That's a great point.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Of course it is.

WALLY

So how does the world look through Asian eyes?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

(With an airy, mystical lilt about it.)
It is like looking through a golden letterbox.

WALLY

It looks painful.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Liberation can be painful, Wally. It is like a birth in which you deliver yourself.

WALLY

Ouch - that does sound painful.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

I ask you, Wally - do you have the courage?

WALLY

I don't know.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

You must know.

WALLY

Yes, but... I don't.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Yes, but you must. If you cannot give birth to yourself, there will never be a new you. You must feel the morning sickness in your stomach. You must feel your new self kicking and screaming in your womb. You must feel the need for midnight ice cream and tikka masala potato chips. You must open your vagina of the mind and let your new baby peek its head through into the light of day. Then, when you are born, you must eat your former self, vomit its remains into an open grave, and cover the grave with a million pounds of quicklime, so no trace remains - and there is only you, gunk-covered and glorious.

WALLY

That's intense.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Indeed it is. I suggest you sit and contemplate my words.

WALLY

I'd like to, thanks.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

To assist you, would you like some süütei tsai?

DR. KLEINHEISTER gestures vaguely - and none-too-accurately - towards a portable cart on the other side of the stage.

WALLY

Isn't that illegal?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

It's tea with milk.

WALLY

Oh. No, I'm good, thanks.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

(Sneering.)

I suppose you'd like a "Coca-cola."

DR. KLEINHEISTER slowly - very slowly - rises. SHE starts feeling around the premises with HER hands, because SHE can't see a blasted thing. SHE slowly starts inching towards the portable cart like a shuffling Japanese performer in "The Mikado."

WALLY

Would you like me to wheel the cart over to you?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

No. I don't need your help. No true Mongolian would. Don't you know we conquered China?

DR. KLEINHEISTER eventually reaches the tea set. SHE takes a cup and puts it next to the tea kettle. SHE then takes the kettle and pours the tea - onto the floor. SHE doesn't seem to notice. SHE then takes a few cubes of sugar in a nearby bowl and drops them - onto the floor. Lastly, SHE takes a spoon and spoons the nonexistent sugar in the nonexistent tea. DR. KLEINHEISTER picks up the teacup and takes a sip. SHE breathes in contentedly.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

This tea is light, like air.

WALLY

It certainly smells delicious.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

(Sniffing the empty cup.)

It smells like... nothing. This very subtly is what makes Eastern cultures superior.

DR. KLEINHEISTER gestures for WALLY to sit. WALLY slowly does so. DR. KLEINHEISTER then begins to scamper back to HER chair, bumping into things along the way.

WALLY

I'm glad you're back, doctor.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

I'm glad to be back, Wally.

WALLY

When can we start our sessions again? I have so much to tell you. It's a long story, but I contacted a lawyer and I've filed suit against Gambol Customer Solutions for racial discrimination. I'm due in court for the first hearing on Thursday. Then there's Mandy. I'm afraid things aren't too well there. I told her about my true self and...

DR. KLEINHEISTER

She rejected you.

WALLY

Yes, how do you know?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

I know, because it was inevitable. Sometimes the people who are braving great struggles are too absorbed by their own battles to lend a hand fighting in yours. It is a common phenomenon known in psychology as an S.P.D.M. - "Social Dissociative Coping Mechanism." You may know it by its layman's name - "selfishness." She will come around to you.

WALLY

I wish I was so confident.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

You care for her, do you, Wally?

Slowly, MANDY emerges from the darkness and listens:

WALLY

Yes, I do - I actually do. I didn't think so at first but, after Mandy left, it felt like I lost six hours in my day. She took up that much space in my life. I didn't realize how much I depended on her weird sense of humor and how much I needed her crazy little accent and how much I would miss her talking about the latest season of "The Bachelor" or why she thought Scott Dysick was an asshole. Sad thing is, I was excited to share my secret with her and I was hoping she of all people would understand - but, instead, like all the others, she didn't. In the process of that, I said some very bad things to her.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

"In all life's things, forgive - for, through forgiveness, there shall you find a place in Heaven."

WALLY

That's beautiful.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

I know.

(Removing a book from underneath HER deel.)

It's from my last book - \$19.99 at Amazon.

(Putting the book down and looking towards the darkness.)

Ah, but there are certain things that money cannot buy.

DR. KLEINHEISTER nods off towards the darkness. WALLY turns and sees MANDY staring at HIM. HE appears shocked, embarrassed, unsure of what to say. MANDY just stares back at HIM with an indeterminate glower.

WALLY

Hello, Mandy. It's nice to see you again.

DR. KLEINHEISTER
Listen, Mandy. Listen to what Wally speaks.

MANDY just stares glumly.

WALLY
I'd like us both to start all over again.

DR. KLEINHEISTER
He speaks to you from the heart and soul.

WALLY
I truly mean it.

DR. KLEINHEISTER
He truly means it.

WALLY
I just want to...

MANDY
(Exploding.)
Little white liar!!

WALLY
But I'm not!

MANDY
Yes, you are - but not for what you think! I take your word now that you are white! I think about it and I see what a fool I was with you. I should have known it was true. You never did let your pants sag - never. So? So I sorry I hurt you... but I don't care about that anymore. I hurt by you because you do not believe I am a real woman!

WALLY
What?

MANDY
That's what you tell me!

WALLY
I was upset! I didn't know what I was saying!

MANDY
How do I know that? How do I know to trust you?

WALLY
Well, because... because...

MANDY
You could just be saying this to get into my pantalones!

WALLY

But why would I want to do that if I thought you were a man?

MANDY

Because, if you're white, you could be gay! How do I know what else you have hidden in there?

WALLY

I swear I just want to be with you.

MANDY

No.

WALLY

I need you to give me another chance.

MANDY

No!

WALLY turns to DR. KLEINHEISTER,
desperate for a way out:

WALLY

You see, doctor?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

What, Wally?

WALLY

This is what I was talking about!

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Good. Express your frustrations. Don't hold them in.

WALLY

She's being unfair!

DR. KLEINHEISTER

What else?

WALLY

She's being unreasonable!

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Go on.

WALLY

She's being... being...

DR. KLEINHEISTER

(A great scream.)
Say it!

A whiny bitch!

WALLY

MANDY stops, turns, and freezes.
Instant silence descends upon the stage. DR. KLEINHEISTER sits back in great satisfaction. MANDY, meanwhile, appears to be fuming.

What you call me?

MANDY

Oh, well... I... I...

WALLY

What you call me, white boy?!

MANDY

I was angry.

WALLY

Angry again!

MANDY

I didn't mean it.

WALLY

Didn't mean it again!

MANDY

He called you a bitch.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

A bitch?

MANDY

MANDY looks angrily at WALLY. WALLY cowers in anticipation of the tongue-lashing to come. MANDY moves towards WALLY slowly, slowly, slowly...

Look, Mandy, I...

WALLY

...but before HE can finish, SHE jumps joyously into HIS arms.

Thank you, Wally! Thank you!

MANDY

Thank me? Thank me for what?

WALLY

MANDY

You reveal your true soul to me!

WALLY

I... I did?

MANDY

Yes! You call me a "bitch." I can't be a bitch unless I'm a woman... and I am a woman!

WALLY

(Thinking about it and realizing.)
That's right... that's right!
(Smiling astonishingly at DR. KLEINHEISTER.)
Well, whaddya know?

DR. KLEINHEISTER

You see how subtly our heart reveals itself?

MANDY

I love you, Wally! I love you much! We make up now!

MANDY starts to take off HER clothes.

WALLY

No, no. Not right now, Mandy. I thought maybe we could go to dinner first.

MANDY

(To DR. KLEINHEISTER.)
See? You were right. Always a gentleman.

WALLY

(Realizing.)
So this is your doing, doctor.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

I had a word with Mandy, yes.

WALLY

Oh, wow! I can't thank you enough.

DR. KLEINHEISTER

Yes, you can. I will add on to my bill.

WALLY

I'm so glad you're back, Mandy. I will need all your love and support. With the court case coming up, I...

WALLY suddenly freezes and thinks to HIMSELF. The LIGHTS fall on MANDY and DR. KLEINHEISTER.

WALLY

The court case! In the joy of reconciling with Mandy, I had forgotten all about it. There I was celebrating one of the greatest moments of my life - a moment I found love and acceptance from the person who mattered most - and I had to worry about the court case. Señor Smith had been sending me stacks of papers to review - testimony I had to give - points I had to make - coaching me, day in, day out, about what to say and how to say it and everything in-between. I had homework to do. I had a whole persona to prepare. It's just... well... after reconciling with Mandy, it all seemed dirty... even dirtier than it seemed when I began it.

The LIGHTS rise on the stage. SEÑOR SMITH walks in wearing a far-too-dashing, pimp daddy-style suit with bright ties and a bright pocket hanky. HE seems filled with good humor.

SEÑOR SMITH

Today is the day, amigo!

WALLY

(To us.)
My court date for the lawsuit.

SEÑOR SMITH

That door is going to open in the next ten minutes and then... wham!

SEÑOR SMITH smacks HIS hands for emphasis.

WALLY

You're going to knock me out till it's over?

SEÑOR SMITH

We're going to be kicking ass and taking names!

WALLY

Oh, yeah.

SEÑOR SMITH

Ready or not, here we come!

WALLY

I'm as ready as I'll ever be.

SEÑOR SMITH

Shit, boy, that's not enough. You need to be readier than that.

WALLY

How can I be?

SEÑOR SMITH

Haven't I given you enough direction?

WALLY

Well, I...

SEÑOR SMITH

Did you read "Roots" like I told you to?

WALLY

Well, yes.

SEÑOR SMITH

And you watched the Tavis Smiley Show - the past three seasons?

WALLY

I did, yes.

SEÑOR SMITH

And you kept that appointment with Danny Glover, so he could teach you how to act like an aggrieved black man?

WALLY

Yes.

SEÑOR SMITH

Then, hell, you're golden!

A LOUD COMMOTION sounds from offstage.
It sounds like a bunch of people
yelling.

WALLY

What's that sound?

SEÑOR SMITH

Oh, yeah - Al Sharpton brought a crowd of five-hundred-plus protestors. Granted, about a half of them are his wardrobe staff, but still. Louis Farrakhan offered to come, too, but I said "no" - too controversial. We got a pretty good bunch, though - 50% black, 30% Hispanic, 10% white, 8% Asian, and, somehow, we even got a handful of Jews. They always seem to pop-up everywhere anyway, you know?

WALLY

Are the protests drawing lots of attention?

SEÑOR SMITH

Are you kidding? Don Lemon just set up a tent outside. I hear Anderson Cooper is sharing it with him. After that, I'm not asking any questions.

WALLY

Oh, wow.

SEÑOR SMITH
Yeah, wow. All thanks to you, amigo.

WALLY
To me?

SEÑOR SMITH
Well, me really.

WALLY
Oh, yeah - you.

SEÑOR SMITH
Cheer up, amigo!

WALLY
I'm just nervous, that's all.

SEÑOR SMITH
Probably PTSD as a result of the discrimination you faced. We should have sued for that, too.

WALLY
Well, yes, but when they ask which race I am...

SEÑOR SMITH
Why would they? You're black as the ace of spades and everyone knows it. You let the human mind work its logic. Look, amigo - don't fuck me up. The prospects for the trial are good. The judge is a former immigration attorney who used to work for the ACLU. The prosecutor and the defendant are both old white guys in their sixties. This is a perfect set-up.

WALLY
Yes, but... I'm not black - I'm white.

SEÑOR SMITH
You're my client. That's what you are. I don't care if you're pink-and-purple-polka-dotted. I took this case so I could win it. I don't lose - ever - because losers are losers and winners are winners and there ain't no in-between... and if you're going to win, you might as well win big, otherwise there's no goddamn point in winning at all... comprende?

WALLY
I can't just lie on the stand, though.

SEÑOR SMITH
Then sit on it - sit and talk your ass off.

WALLY
But when Peter Gambol testifies that I claimed I am white...

SEÑOR SMITH

Say he's lying. Who will believe him? It's just so damn crazy...

WALLY

Crazy?

SEÑOR SMITH

...sorry - "unlikely" - that no one would believe it. Look, he's an old, rich, white CEO. He's the most unpopular type of person in America. You're different. Everyone loves a nice, clean, law-abiding, articulate black man.

MANDY appears from out of the darkness and stands next to WALLY. SHE is dressed in HER court best.

MANDY

How is you, Loyola?

WALLY

Besides being scared shitless?

MANDY

Well, if anything to be scared less of, what's better than that?

A FAMILIAR CELLPHONE JINGLE sounds. WALLY, MANDY, and SEÑOR SMITH all dive into their pockets. It turns out that SEÑOR SMITH has the ringing cellphone. HE grabs it out of HIS pocket and puts it to HIS ear:

SEÑOR SMITH

(Into the phone.)

Hi, Janice. What's the news?

(A beat.)

Aha, we've got him, we've got him!

WALLY

We've got who?

SEÑOR SMITH

Gambol. He's screwed!

WALLY

He is? Why? What's happened?

SEÑOR SMITH

A gold mine - that's what. Yesterday, an ex-employee at Gambol Customer Solutions, who was fired for indecent exposure, leaked some letters written by Gambol over the prior two years. Janice poured over them all night and has already found five separate uses of the word "niggardly."

WALLY

Yes, but "niggardly" means...

SEÑOR SMITH

Like a nigger!

WALLY

No, it doesn't.

SEÑOR SMITH

Well, who cares? That's what people will think. The average American can barely spell "asshole."

MANDY

(Spelling aloud, in great thought.)
A-S-S-H...

SEÑOR SMITH

It's subconscious racism.

WALLY

It's subconscious what?

SEÑOR SMITH

Not only that - but the black population of America is 13.2% black. You know how many managers at Gambol are black?

WALLY

No.

SEÑOR SMITH

Ten-point-nine percent.

WALLY

(Processing this.)
Okay.

SEÑOR SMITH

I rest my case.

WALLY

Honestly, I don't think...

SEÑOR SMITH

You're damn right you don't. Leave that to me.

WALLY

Yes, but...

SEÑOR SMITH

(Back on the phone.)
Wait a second, Janice. I'm having trouble hearing you.

SEÑOR SMITH bolts offstage to continue HIS phone conversation. WALLY is left behind in abject misery

MANDY

Look, Loyola - soon it all be over.

WALLY

And then what?

MANDY

We'll be rich.

WALLY

Rich? We can't win this stupid case.

MANDY

No, but they settle... sí? Too much humiliation.

WALLY

Sí. I guess.

The LIGHTS slowly dim as WALLY thinks to HIMSELF. HE turns to us:

WALLY

At that moment, standing there, I looked back on my life - and, in doing so, I realized something. I had always been hiding - always - and hiding at the expense of whom? Myself, above all - but also my family and friends. I lied to them - day in, day out - because I was too afraid to reveal who I really was. As a result, as painful as it was to admit, I never had a real relationship with them - not really - for what is a relationship if it's not framed by truth? Then, it occurred to me, with all the attention garnered by my case, I would never have the opportunity to have that relationship. My name would be recorded in history - literally - as the black man who sued a company and won a huge financial settlement. The NAACP would invite me to their annual convention. Jesse Jackson would friend me on Facebook. I would always be a black man - always... and so, it was now or never, do or die, truth or... or dare.

SEÑOR SMITH has re-entered.

SEÑOR SMITH

All right, amigo. Lights, camera, action!

SEÑOR SMITH snaps HIS fingers. The LIGHTS fall and a SPOTLIGHT focuses on WALLY. WALLY, sensing this, terrified, fearful of the limelight, stares limply out at us. MANDY and SEÑOR SMITH both disappear in the darkness. The stuffy sound of A CROWDED COURT ROOM rises

from the sides of the stage. A LOUD GAVEL then sounds. The COMMOTION swiftly dies and the VOICE of a COURT BAILIFF emanates from the wings:

BAILIFF'S VOICE

All rise. The Federal District Court is now called into order. The honorable judge, Frederick J. Schmuck, is now presiding.

The SOUND of a RISING CROWD emits from the stage. A pause follows as the unseen Judge positions himself.

JUDGE'S VOICE

Thank you, Mr. Wilson. You may all be seated.

We can hear the audience members sit.

JUDGE'S VOICE

I call now the case of Walter H. Whitman versus Gambol Customer Solutions. This case is brought by the plaintiff, Mr. Whitman, against Gambol Custom Solutions, alleging racial discrimination in the latter's hiring process. This type of case is of the utmost seriousness, as it deals directly and substantially with the inalienable rights of our citizenry.

WALLY slowly raises HIS hand.

JUDGE'S VOICE

Before proceeding, I would like to take this opportunity to remind those assembled that decorum must be observed at all times in this court. There is absolutely no cheering or shouting aloud in the court room. This case has garnered a great deal of attention over the past few months and there are plenty of cameras outside - more than I care to see.

WALLY starts waving HIS hand.

JUDGE'S VOICE

However, the fact remains that this case has indeed prompted significant public curiosity. We must all accept that fact, since it is the reality with which we're faced. We must also, though, accept the fact that, because so many eyes are upon us, we have a public duty and an obligation...

WALLY starts waving HIS hands even more aggressively.

JUDGE'S VOICE

...to ensure that justice is served and that... that...

WALLY is now waving HIS hands like a madman. The Judge has clearly noticed HIM from atop HIS bench.

JUDGE'S VOICE

Yes? May I help you, Mr. Whitman?

WALLY

If it please the court, I would like to make a brief statement.

JUDGE

After I'm done, Mr. Whitman.

WALLY

I'm sorry, but it can't wait.

JUDGE'S VOICE

It can't wait?

WALLY

No, sir... and it's "Whiteman."

JUDGE'S VOICE

What is?

WALLY

My name.

The JUDGE sighs loudly.

WALLY

What I have to say has an important bearing on the case, your honor.

JUDGE

Very well, then. You have two minutes.

WALLY

Thank you, your honor.

WALLY clears HIS throat and talks out at us:

WALLY

Please, your honor, I would like to withdraw my claims against the defendant company.

A MURMURED SOUND of SHOCK and SURPRISE sounds from the court. The Judge BANGS a GAVEL.

JUDGE'S VOICE

Order, order!

The MURMUR dies down.

JUDGE'S VOICE

What exactly are you saying, Mr. Whitman?

WALLY

Whiteman, your honor.

JUDGE'S VOICE

Duly noted.

WALLY

To be brief, your honor, I can no longer lie to the world any longer. It is true that I was discriminated against because of my race - but not for the reason you think. Mr. Gambol didn't want to hire me, it is true - but it wasn't because I'm black, but because I'm white.

The MURMUR begins to rise again.

WALLY

...or, perhaps more accurately, because he thought I was crazy, because I said I'm white... because I am... white, that is... not crazy... although sometimes the world around me has made me think that I'm crazy. I'm not, though. I know who I am - I know who I am better than anybody else - and I am here to declare, your honor, before you, before these good people, before all those TV cameras outside, that I am now - and, in my heart, have always been - a white man.

DISTURBED CRIES erupt from AN UNSEEN CROWD of court room attendees. We hear "Shame!" "Insanity!" "He's crazy!" "What a freak!" "Send for a therapist!" amongst the cacophony. The Judge BANGS the GAVEL again. This time it is harder to reduce the noise.

JUDGE'S VOICE

Order, order in the court!

The CRIES aren't dying down, but growing louder. WALLY stands steadfast and erect, staring straight ahead, taking it all in. The Judge BANGS the GAVEL again and again and again - but to no avail.

JUDGE'S VOICE

Order, I said... order!

The CRIES slowly fade down - as does all sound - removing us from the moment. WALLY is now onstage, surrounded by silence. HE waits a moment, contemplating the memory before speaking again.

WALLY

After I made my speech in court, I just walked out - that's it. I walked out, with Mandy by my side, into a sea of television cameras. I repeated my statement - and my statement was then repeated for me... again... and again... and again... across so many networks that I got more publicity than the President. For a moment, I was a celebrity - hated by some, loved by others, pitied by most - and then, finally, the celebrity faded, as I hoped it would, and there was just me and Mandy... which is all I ever really wanted it to be to begin with. I wasn't trying to prove anything to anyone. I just didn't want to lie anymore, because lying... lying is wrong.

By now, MANDY has joined WALLY by HIS side. SHE is holding a letter, which SHE hands to HIM. WALLY takes it and shows it to us.

WALLY

Funny, you never know where life will take you at times - and the people you'll meet, or re-meet, on your way. About a few months after I faded from the headlines, I received a letter without a return address. I opened it up. I didn't recognize the hand-writing at all. It was scraggly and nearly ineligible - but, still, I could read it clear enough. It just said "To thine own self be true. Your friend, Dexter."

WALLY smiles to himself and puts the letter in HIS pocket.

WALLY

Well, I didn't get to strike a gold mine with the lawsuit - but, thanks to my temporary fame, I managed to get a good book deal with Harper-Collins, which netted me a nice advance, plus royalties. I put it all to good use. Mandy got new cheekbones - two of them - and me... well, I was finally able to take that last, big step into the light and become on the outside the person I knew I always was on the inside.

By now, the WHITE MALE in the play has entered and is now standing next to WALLY. THEY are both dressed in the exact same clothes.

WHITE WALLY

I finally had enough money to contact Dr. Kleinheister's physician - the one in Nepal. Who would have thought? It was all made possible by being true to myself. I guess, as Mandy says, the truth really does set you free.

The WHITE MALE looks at WALLY. WALLY looks back at HIM.

WALLY
Hello, Wally.

WHITE WALLY
Hello, Wally.

WALLY
You're looking good.

WHITE WALLY
I'm feeling good.

WALLY
Are you? Are you really?

WHITE WALLY nods.

WALLY
In that case, there's not much more I could have asked for. I always wondered what it would mean to be you.

WHITE WALLY turns to us and steps forward. The other WALLY fades into the darkness.

WHITE WALLY
At the end of the day, you see, there really is such a thing as happily after ever. Dr. Kleinheister went to live in Mongolia and eventually served a few years as their Minister of Culture. Señor Smith struck oil when he sued Starbucks after finding that their lattes cause throat cancer. Bobby ended up being promoted at Time Warner Cable to Assistant Manager. Mandy had ten other surgeries and ended up becoming a Victoria Secret's model. As for me, well, after my own change, I just lay back and lived life... lived it, really, for the first time... thanking God, all the time and every day, in every way I could imagine, that life was finally... normal.

WHITE WALLY smiles shyly at MANDY. SHE smiles shyly back at HIM. THEY both turn back to us - a nice, happy couple.

The LIGHTS slowly fall.

THE END.