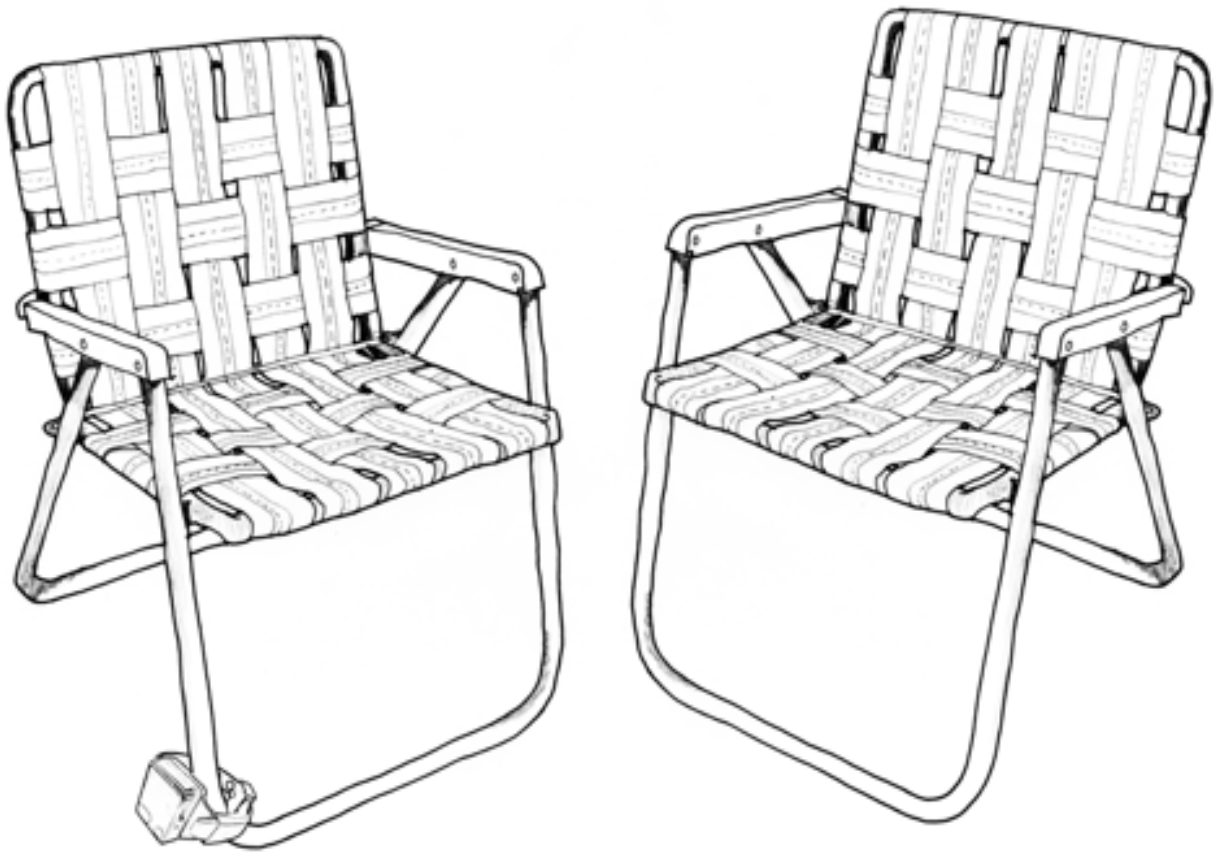


ANOTHER QUALITY JOB BY PECOR VINYL SIDING

A Play in One Act

by Craig Bailey



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Craig Bailey
350 Woodbine Rd
Shelburne VT 05482-6777
(802) 598-8164
info@readmyplay.com

CHARACTERS

JOSH Male, early-20s, any ethnicity.

TINK Female, mid-40s, any ethnicity.

SETTING

Outside a Florida home.

TIME

This morning.

SCENE 1

(The front lawn of a modest Florida home. Two aluminum lawn chairs sit C with a small fire pit between them. It's filled with ash and half-burned logs. TINK, 40s, sits R, reading a magazine. A drink sits at her feet. SHE wears an ankle monitor. JOSH, 20s, enters L. Wearing a crisp, overly-colorful uniform, HE carries a clipboard with a thick three-ring binder tucked under his arm.)

JOSH

Morning!

(A barrage of BARKING from a tiny dog inside the house off R.)

JOSH

(Continued.)

Gonna be a hot one, huh?

TINK

(Shouting OS.)

Hey! Shut up! Shut up, dog! Robert E-Lee! Shut up! Shut. The fuck. Up!

(To JOSH.)

Not you, honey.

(Shouting OS.)

Shut the fuck up, you fucking mutt! You shut up or I'll shave you pink. You want me to shave you pink? Shave you down to the pink and feed you to the 'gators?!

(The dog continues to BARK, more furious.)

JOSH

Sorry. I'm Josh Pecor. We're in the neighborhood --

TINK

Hang on.

(SHE walks R and shouts OS.)

TINK (Continued)

Shut up, you little monster! You want the box? Do you want the box?! I'll stick you in that box and you won't never come out! You hear me, mister?!

(BARKING stops.)

There. That's what I thought.

(SHE walks back and sits.)

Sorry. You were saying?

JOSH

Right. I'm Josh Pecor from Pecor Vinyl Siding and we're in your neighborhood today talking to folks -- homeowners like yourself -- about the benefits of vinyl siding.

TINK

Mm-hmm.

JOSH

You have a fine looking home here --

TINK

Oh, sugar. Listen. You have a brochure? Some kinda literature you wanna give me? Foam cozy with your logo on it to keep my cola cold? Ballpoint pen or something?

JOSH

I do. A brochure. None of that other stuff. But, actually, better yet, I have a few quick questions ... If you have the time. I hoped maybe --

(HE fumbles for his clipboard and drops the binder. The dog starts to BARK.)

If I could take up just a moment of your time. I might be able to -- I might be able to get a feeling --

TINK

(Shouting OS.)

Box! Box! Is that what you want? Do you want the box?!

(The BARKING stops.)

He hates that box. Don't misunderstand. Just a kennel, really. Canine-specific, ASPCA-approved and all. It's luxury, far as he's concerned. Chock full of blankets and chew toys, and he can turn all the way around in it and stuff. But it works anyway. Ask him if he "wants the box" and he shuts right up. Like magic, usually.

JOSH

Robert E-Lee. That's cute.

TINK

It's racist.

JOSH

Oh.

TINK

Not to mention contrary to all logic for a black dog. Not my idea. Thank my ex for that one. Left me and left me his dog.

JOSH

You could change his name. I suppose.

TINK

Well, I thought about that, but doesn't seem fair. Most the time I just call him Lee. But the full name works best when it comes to scolding. Like a kid, I suppose. Lets him know you're serious.

JOSH

Why isn't he out here with you?

TINK

No recall.

(A blank look from JOSH.)

That means he doesn't come when you call him. Runs away. And keeps running.

(SHE lifts her leg and shows the ankle monitor.)

And I can't exactly go running after him. Not very far, at least.

JOSH

Suppose you could put him on a lead.

(TINK shrugs. Back to the business at hand.)

Well, like I was saying --

TINK

(Realizing.)

I know you. Joshua.

JOSH

That's right. Well, Josh. It's just Josh now.

TINK

Josh. Josh Pecor. I'm Tink. You went to school with my girl. Lizzie. Elizabeth Proctor.

JOSH

Right, I know Liz! Wow. How is she?

TINK

She's dead.

(Beat.)

Well, she's married. Same diff.

JOSH

Oh. Well, tell her I said, "Hi."

TINK

Sure. I'll do that.

JOSH

Tink. That's an --

TINK

Unusual name? Short for Tinkerbelle. Not so much unusual; more like stupid. Blame a couple of kids straight outta sophomore year who never heard the word "condom" and watched too much Disney.

JOSH

Right.

(At a loss. Back to the business at hand.)

Anyway, we're in your neighborhood this morning --

TINK

Josh, how do you know I own the house?

JOSH

Mmmm?

TINK

Just curious. How do you know I own it? You said, "Homeowners like yourself." I might just be the renter of this humble abode. Or a mere visitor.

TINK (Continued)

Or, worse, a lawn chair sitting lemonade sipping interloper from next county over.

JOSH

Well ... I --

TINK

(Laughs.)

I'm just joshing you. Josh.

JOSH

I'm sorry, do you?

TINK

Own the house?

JOSH

Yeah.

TINK

Well, the credit union owns most of it. You know how that works. But yeah, it's my name on the mortgage.

(JOSH records the fact on his clipboard.)

Your initial instinct proved to be one-hundred percent correct. Bravo.

(JOSH has lost his train of thought.)

Go on. Neighborhood.

JOSH

Right. We're in your neighborhood this morning --

TINK

Well, we have established you're in my neighborhood.

JOSH

Right. I'm sorry. Look --

TINK

Lemme guess. You're new at this.

JOSH

Yeah. Kinda.

TINK

That outfit gives you away. Looks like you should've run it through the wash a few times before putting it on the first time. Sorry, I'm probably coming off hostile, and that's not my intention. Truth of the matter is, I appreciate your stopping by. Fact is, you're probably the only visitor I'm likely to have during today's home detention, so I oughta do a better job of making you feel welcome.

(Offering him the other lawn chair.)

You wanna sit? Take a load off?

JOSH

Oh, I'm on duty.

TINK

Duty?

JOSH

I mean, I'm on the job. I just got started. In fact, you're my first.

TINK

First?

JOSH

My first pitch. First day on the job.

TINK

You don't say. I'm flattered. But you can't sit when you're working? How do you expect to sweet-talk me into buying vinyl siding for my place if we can't spend some time getting to know each other -- building a rapport. That is why you came, right?

JOSH

It is, we're in the neighborhood this --
 (Catches himself; laughs.)
 Sorry. This isn't ... I'm not ... Really ...

TINK

Go ahead, sugar. Speak your mind. Nobody here but us chickens. And Robert E-Lee inside. But as you've seen, he hardly listens to nothing.

JOSH

I'm not really cut out for this.

(HE sits.)

TINK

Not cut out for it? That's your name on the side of the van there, isn't it?

JOSH

My father's name. My father's company.

TINK

Oh. And you're ...?

JOSH

I'm the newbie canvassing the county to drum up new business, because it never hurts a young man to humble himself by starting at the bottom.

TINK

I see.

JOSH

Mmmm.

TINK

Your words?

JOSH

No.

TINK

Well, I'm all ears. And ...

(Showing him the ankle monitor.)

I'm not going anywhere. Get you a drink?

JOSH

It's a little early in the day. For me, I mean.

TINK

It's lemonade. Not even. Just that powder crap you mix with water.

JOSH

Well, now you put it that way ...

TINK

Make yourself comfortable.

(SHE rises and exits R. Another litany of BARKING off R. Offstage.)

TINK (Continued)

You stupid mongrel, it's me! The head of the household! Leader of the pack! Your daily meal ticket!

(Enters R carrying a glass of lemonade. To herself.)

Loyal companion, my round behind.

(Hands glass to JOSH.)

Here you go. Pace yourself now.

JOSH

Thanks.

(HE sips, grimaces.)

TINK

Too strong?

JOSH

(Lying.)

Just right.

TINK

So. What you got in the binder?

JOSH

Samples.

TINK

No kidding.

JOSH

(Flipping through binder.)

Different colors, styles. You've got your standard lap siding, like this one. Or you can go vertical, with something like this. Not as popular. Then there's my favorite here: Shake siding, a pretty good imitation -- well, not imitation, but a ... kind of a ...

TINK

Representation.

JOSH

Right! A pretty good representation of wooden shingles. You've got your choice of Walnut, Meadow --

TINK

Meadow?

JOSH

Yeah, that's what they call this one. I don't know why. Harbor Gray, Espresso --

TINK

Oh, that's nice!

JOSH

You like that one? I do, too. But maybe not for your place. Cinnamon might not be a bad choice. But the shakes look better on something like a Cape Cod. For a ranch-style like yours, probably just the standard lap siding.

TINK

Mmmmm.

(Beat.)

So why do you say you're not cut out for this? You seem to know your stuff.

JOSH

Honestly? Not by a long-shot. I mean, I know this stuff. Color and styles and cost per foot, all that. But when it comes to ... I don't know.

TINK

You don't know what?

JOSH

I don't care. Does that make sense? I shouldn't say that. Did I just say that? Out loud?

TINK

You don't care about vinyl siding.

JOSH

No. I don't!

TINK

(Laughs.)

Well, there it is!

JOSH

Right? I said it! I just don't care.

TINK

That's the crux of the matter. For you.

JOSH

I guess it is.

TINK

You wanna love what you do.

JOSH

Yeah! I mean, shouldn't I? Shouldn't everyone?

TINK

If it's not fun, why do it?

JOSH

I guess.

TINK

Someone famous said that.

JOSH

Well, there's rent. For one.

TINK

What's that?

JOSH

Rent. You gotta pay your rent. So there's that.

TINK

True.

JOSH

(Starting to rise)

I'm sorry, I shouldn't be dumping this all on you. Two years at community college. I don't know what I expected. Something. Something that's not this.

TINK

Hold it right there. Have a seat.

(JOSH sits.)

You know, Josh, sometimes the things we think are important are really just shackles that hold us back.

JOSH

Okay.

TINK

Lemme see that.

(HE hands her the binder. SHE tosses it
in the fire pit.)

Problem solved.

JOSH

Those are like two-hundred bucks a piece.

(TINK shrugs.)

OK. But, honestly, don't burn that. It's like
seriously toxic.

TINK

Consider it a favor. You're free. What do you think
about that?

JOSH

I don't know. Feels good. I guess.

TINK

Right? Do something else. Anything else. And if you
find that something else and it feels like a box full
of vinyl siding, too, toss that in a fire pit. And try
something new. Just like it says on the bottle:
Shampoo, rinse, repeat.

JOSH

Wow. I never ... I never do that.

TINK

No one does. First wash does the trick. Always.

JOSH

(Standing. Freed.)

Thank you.

TINK

Hold on, captain. Where you going?

JOSH

(HE pauses to consider.)

I don't know. My whole day just kinda opened up.

TINK

Well, what do you say a little tit-for-tat?

JOSH

Sorry?

TINK

Tit-for-tat. I rub your back, you rub mine?

JOSH

(Reluctant.)

Okay. I guess.

TINK

Figuratively speaking.

JOSH

(Relieved.)

Oh! OK.

TINK

You got tools in that van of yours?

JOSH

Sure. I mean, some. Not like the installer rigs, but, you know. Sure. Why?

(TINK wiggles her ankle bracelet at him.)

Oh. Oh, I don't know. I mean --

TINK

I figure any set of tools that can work their way through a sheet of vinyl siding oughta be able to do a number on this, right?

JOSH

Oh, I don't know.

TINK

You mean you don't know if your tools are up to snuff? Or you mean you don't know if you wanna help me out?

JOSH

Well, no, I mean. It's ...

(HE takes a closer look at the bracelet.)

Well, sure. That's like heavy duty, but, I mean, that'd be like a felony. Right?

TINK

Oh, please, Joshua. Weren't any felony put this rubber wart on my person in the first place, so it won't be no felony taking it off.

TINK (Continued)

Besides you'd just be a supporting character in the whole affair. The bringer of tools. I'm the one who'd take the heat. So what do you say?

(JOSH hesitates, considering.)

You're reluctant. I can see that. And I understand. Would it help if you knew?

JOSH

Knew what?

TINK

What I did. The nature of my legal indiscretion.

JOSH

Oh, no. No, that's none of my business.

TINK

It's not like a killed a man in Utah just to watch him die. Or any other place, for that matter. Grievous bodily harm didn't play into it at all.

(JOSH is lost, again.)

It wasn't a violent crime.

JOSH

Oh. Okay. I believe you.

TINK

I sense your apprehension, Josh.

(Pulling a newspaper clipping out of her bra.)

Here. Freeburg Chronicle did a pretty good job explaining it. Photo leaves a little to be desired. DMV special.

JOSH

(Reading it.)

You really did this?

TINK

Bullshit for a bullshitter.

JOSH

(Reads more.)

Three and a half tons. Wow.

TINK

Listen, not like I hurt anyone. Manure's a hundred percent natural. And it's not like him or his child-bride ever use that above-ground monstrosity for anything except dipping their feet anyway.

JOSH

Still.

TINK

Hell, I'd do it again. Course that was my first mistake right there: Telling the judge I'd do it again. That's what earned me my fashion accessory. No, I take that back. My first mistake was paying retail on three and a half tons of fresh manure. Should've shopped around for a wholesale deal.

JOSH

(Handing back the clipping.)

Why do you carry that around?

TINK

Part of my rehab.

(Air quotes.)

"Never forget." So ...?

JOSH

(Hesitates, regarding the binder in the fire pit. Resolved.)

Wait here.

TINK

Hey, where am I going, right?

(JOSH marches off L. The sound of a van door SLIDING OPEN and SLAMMING SHUT. HE enters L carrying a toolkit.)

You're a darling.

(JOSH piles through the kit and locates a pair of snips. SHE reaches for them.)

Give them here.

JOSH

No, I got you. This one's on me. Tit-for-tat.

(TINK, suddenly a coquette, offers her ankle. JOSH cuts off the anklet.)

TINK

(A big sigh.)

Oh, boy. That's the stuff alright.

(SHE tosses the ankle monitor into the fire pit. JOSH tosses the snips back in the toolkit. Pause.)

JOSH

Now what?

TINK

I don't know.

JOSH

You need a lift somewhere?

TINK

A lift? God no. Where am I going?

JOSH

Well, I just figured ...

TINK

I got no plans for the day. Accept sitting on my rear-end reading Cosmo.

JOSH

Then ... Why'd we ... Why'd we cut that thing off?

TINK

Principle of the matter, I guess. As someone famous once said: Fuck 'em. Any-hoo, I figure I got about twenty minutes before some black-and-white pulls up the driveway. You wanna wait here and watch the fireworks?

JOSH

(Sits.)

I'd like that. Tink.

TINK

(Pulling a tanning reflector from under her chair and holding it under her chin. Eyes closed.)

Gonna be a hot one, huh?

JOSH

I'll say.

(Pause.)

TINK

Now, vinyl. That's another word for plastic, right?

JOSH

Pretty much.

(BLACKOUT.)

(END OF PLAY.)