# THE ROBIN HOODS

A Stage Play in Two Acts

by

DickRogers

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CHARACTERS

| | |
|---|---|
| Richard Ferguson (Richie) | A fit, older gentleman, age 79 |
| Fred Nelson | A similar character, age 78 |
| Richie Ferguson | Richard Ferguson as a 12 year old, the leader of his little troop |
| Frankie Sullivan (Lump Lump) | Somewhat clumsy, dependent, age 11 |
| Edgar Costello (Eggy) | Irascible, but dependable street urchin, age 12 |
| Chief of Police and Narrator | Standard issue small town cop, age 60s |
| William Berger | Boston Globe newspaper reporter, age 50s |
| Marlene Contreau | Wealthy, waspish  mystery woman, age 70s |
| Non-speaking: | |
| Fred Nelson's sister | age, 70s |
| TV woman | Green room attendant, age, 30s |

3ACT I

| | |
|---|---|
| Scene 1 | WBZ TV Green Room populated with a few overstuffed chairs, a table with a few goodies, magazines, and a TV monitor. |
| Scene 2 | A clump of bushes in a field or meadow, with large papier-mâché boulders set to stage a small, vegetation covered hole between the boulders, a distant home should be set on background scenery. A few sticks should by lying about. |
| Scene 3 | A small hut designed to indicate a tree house sufficient to hold three kids, with pictures of nude women on the walls, assorted baseball paraphernalia on the floor and a partially full, small burlap sack in the corner |

ACT II

| | |
|---|---|
| Scene 1 | A room at the police station where the audience would represent a crowd attending a news conference |
| Scene 2 | Return to the WBZ TV Green Room |

Act I

Scene i

SETTING

The Green Room, at WBZ Television Station, in Boston, modern day. The room is small, with a half dozen assorted chairs, one of these a soft or overstuffed chair, a table and a small array of hors d'oeuvres. Magazines populate the table.

AT RISE

RICHARD FERGUSON, a fit man, age 79, sits by himself across from another man, about the same age, who is flipping through a magazine. A two-hour special on exceptional teachers is airing.

FERGUSON
(looks at the man)
Are you here for the teacher special?

MAN
I am. You too?

FERGUSON
Yeah, my brother is being featured.
(looks at his watch)
I'm early. I remembered how Boston traffic can be.

MAN
Oh, you're from out of town?

FERGUSON
I'm from Alaska. I just happened to be in town. When my brother told them, the producers, about our youth and said that I was in town, they wanted to put me on. (beat)
(gets up, extends hand)
Rich Ferguson.

MAN
Fred Nelson, a pleasure. I haven't met too many people from Alaska.

FERGUSON
(chuckles)
I've been there for over forty-five years. A ways back, I found it necessary to...ah,
(hesitates)
to leave the state.

NELSON
(becomes serious)
That sounds a bit heavy.

FERGUSON
Some might think so. I just found it uncomfortable to stick around.

NELSON
(joking)
From what you're saying it sounds like the law is after you.

FERGUSON
That would be the romantic interpretation, wouldn't it?

(FERGUSON looks away)

NELSON
(shrugs it off)
So, you spent most of your youth in this area?

FERGUSON

I grew up here in Brookline, (beat) Whiskey Point.

NELSON
No kidding, I live in the Point now. (beat) Funny, they don't call it Whiskey Point anymore, you know, politically correct.

FERGUSON
What was wrong with Whiskey Point?

NELSON
The newbies felt it sent the wrong message.

FERGUSON
(shudders)
Wrong message? They're sending the wrong message! Whiskey Point was an education of the best kind.

NELSON
I guess I missed that, I didn't grow up in the Point. I lived in Newton until I was twenty-seven.

FERGUSON
Newton! Our old nemesis.

NELSON
You sound like you enjoyed your time in the Point.

FERGUSON
One hundred percent!

NELSON
Where did you live in the Point?

FERGUSON
An old three-story, at the corner of Chestnut and Henry Streets.

NELSON
(laughs)
I live right around the corner on Franklin Street.

FERGUSON
I'd be afraid to go back. I'm sure nothing remains as I remember it.

NELSON
I can’t talk to that.

FERGUSON
You said you moved to Brookline when you were twenty-seven, then you might know some of the kids I grew up with.

NELSON
Probably.

FERGUSON
I’ve lost track of most of them. (beat) Did you know Dickie Franks?

NELSON
He became a priest, (beat) last known digs were at the Boston Archdiocese.

FERGUSON
That figures, how about Lump...ah, Frankie Sullivan?

NELSON
(laughs)
Poor Frankie, he became a liquor salesman. Tested too much of his product line and died young.

FERGUSON
You probably didn’t know Nick Prolenski?

NELSON
Nick, the academic, got his PhD in some scientific thing and ended up professing at Northeastern. He was a big wig in the EPA too.

FERGUSON
Huh. That’s really not a big surprise. Oh, I nearly forgot...Eggy, Edgar Costello?

NELSON
(sours)
Not good, not good at all, he got mixed up with the Boston mob and spent most of his years in prison. He died there.

FERGUSON
How old are you if you don’t mind my asking?

NELSON
I’m seventy-eight.

FERGUSON
You seem to know a lot about Costello.

NELSON
I read the papers.

FERGUSON
(nods, but is cautious)
What did you do for a living?

NELSON
(smiling)
I’d prefer not to answer on the grounds, da da, da da.

FERGUSON
Now, who seems to be on the run from something.

NELSON
Seventy-eight year-olds don’t run.

FERGUSON
They run, they just don’t run fast.

NELSON
I’ll throw it back at you, what did you do in Alaska?

FERGUSON
I stayed warm.

NELSON
(laughs)
We’re being very evasive, aren’t we?

FERGUSON
Well, think about it, you’re from Newton.

NELSON
I don’t think that’s what’s behind this subterfuge.
But I’ll give you one thing, you seem to focus on memories.

FERGUSON

Some of those memories have dark linings. Do you remember a Patrick or Pat O'Neil?

(NELSON ponders it)

NELSON
I remember the name. I can't place it.

FERGUSON
City of Revere? Bathtub?

NELSON
Ahh, yes, killed his wife in the tub.

(NELSON draws back and rubs his chin)

NELSON (cont'd)
He was never caught, but was found some years later face down in Hammond's Pond.

FERGUSON
You have a good memory.

NELSON
(long pause as he studies FERGUSON)
Was this the reason for your…ahh "departure?

FERGUSON
Why I left isn't important, unless you have a reason for wanting to know?

NELSON
I'm just keeping the conversation going. You're the one who brought O'Neil up.

FERGUSON
I did, didn't I.
(slight chuckle)
Being a Point raised kid, suspicion rated high on our list of attributes.

NELSON
I'm having a hard time digesting it as an attribute. What are some of the others?

FERGUSON
An insatiable curiosity, oriented toward nature; being street savvy and fearless, oriented toward,
(he looks severely at NELSON)
survival.
(now leaning toward NELSON)
What do JP and Roxbury mean to you?

NELSON
Neighboring towns?

FERGUSON
(chuckles)
You're right. I think you had to grow up in the Point. Kids from Jamaica Plain and Roxbury were personas non-gratis in the Point. Jamaica Pond, the border, was the demilitarized zone, (beat) except Eggy got carried away one time near the boathouse and the war was on.

NELSON
Interesting that you say that. Edgar Costello was sent up for murdering two Roxbury hoods.

FERGUSON
You seem to know a lot about ancient history in the Point.

NELSON
As I said, I…

FERGUSON
Yeah, yeah, you read the papers.

NELSON
(slight irritation)
My knowing about Costello bothers you?

FERGUSON
(sly smile)
You know, it does in a way. It causes some unusual stirring in the pit of my stomach. And your name, it's bouncing around in there too.

NELSON
It's a common name.
(slight pause)

And it was in the papers. He gunned them down as they sat in a car.

FERGUSON
“Gunned them down” you say?

NELSON
That’s how they were killed. Three kids left without a father.

FERGUSON
I fret for the kids, but I don’t cry over spent hoods. (beat) You came to the Point about the time of my departure. (beat) Does my name ring a bell?

NELSON
(smiling)
You know, it does, and I have been trying to connect it with something.

FERGUSON
Do you remember how Sargent Estates looked before the hospital went in?

NELSON
(thinks)
That’s right across the street from where you lived, right?

FERGUSON
Exactly, (beat) there was a large tree as you went into the estates, almost on a line with Henry Street. We had a little hut up in that tree.

NELSON
(connects)
I know the tree! Way back in the 60s I had to walk our dog. I could see the thing, at least what was left of it. How in hell’s name did you build that?

FERGUSON
Remember the Tarzan movies? We could climb any tree, and with ropes and whatever else we could find...up it went.

(FERGUSON seems to
drift off in a reverie)

NELSON
(smiles)
Looks like you're going back.

FERGUSON
(laughs)
Yeah, they were good times.

NELSON
There were just a few boards left when I saw it.

FERGUSON
We had to tear it down. (beat) A local twerp, Joey McGillicuddy, who wasn't part of our Point gang, told our parents we had pictures of nude women on the walls.

NELSON
The little snitch!

FERGUSON
(now very cautious)
Snitch?

NELSON
Yeah. Snitch. What would you call him?

FERGUSON
Back in those days we'd call him a stoolie.

NELSON
I'm applying a more modern view of it.

FERGUSON
Modern in some circles.

NELSON
Jesus Christ, man! What's on your mind? You say stoolie, I say snitch. Shall we duke it out over something like that?

(a nervous silence settles in
as they stare at each other)

FERGUSON
Cool your heels. I can't shake my tendency to fill in blanks when it comes to people.

NELSON
Be happy to oblige. What "blanks" need filling

FERGUSON
What was your line of work?

NELSON
Ask another. That blank will…never mind, I'll answer that if you say why you fled to Alaska.

FERGUSON
(in thought)
I don't like the word "fled."

NELSON
Will relocate make you feel better?

(FERGUSON gets up and slowly paces the room, occasionally looking back at NELSON. He removes something from his pocket and nervously fingers a gold coin, which NELSON notices)

NELSON (cont'd)
(now smiling)
Olay, I've got it!

FERGUSON
Should I start sweating?

NELSON
I'm over causing people to sweat.
(jabs a finger at FERGUSON)
You were one of the kids who found the gold coins back in the 40s.

FERGUSON
I was, and I wish I had a batch of them today.
(reaches in his pocket)
I have always kept this one.
(shows the coin)
There were 349 more of these. We found them in the estates near Sargent Pond.

NELSON

Incredible! And the story is...you gave them away?

FERGUSON
We had to, we didn't know squat about them. Back then, you weren't allowed to keep gold. You had to turn in all but a few coins or jewelry.

NELSON
Didn't the Boston Globe get in the picture?

FERGUSON
It was a big deal at the time. A Globe reporter actually figured out who we were.

NELSON
But the heat in Brookline, didn't they...

FERGUSON
(interrupts)
Yeah, the Feds put the pressure on the Chief because of all the articles in the paper. The Globe basically gave the proverbial finger to all of them.

NELSON
I don't remember how all that got sorted out.

FERGUSON
It really didn't get sorted out. The Boston Globe reporter got busted by a judge who was under pressure from the feds. The reporter wouldn't reveal who we were..

NELSON
I don't remember that.

FERGUSON
You didn't hear about it because the reporter only spent about ten hours in custody. While he was sitting in his cell, he wrote a commentary on the Feds that made them eat slices of humble pie. He was cut loose by a judge, and from that point on he, and we, were left alone.

NELSON
And you guys didn't get to keep any of that loot?

FERGUSON

Loot? It wasn't loot. We actually found out who they belonged to. The whole thing was on the up and up.

NELSON
You didn't answer my question.

FERGUSON
You're looking at what I got out of it. (beat) Just the one, Eggy and Lump Lump got one too.

NELSON
You were like the Dead End Kids.

FERGUSON
I suppose we were, right down to the screwball names.
(recalls)
Oh! How could I forget this? Eggy...Edgar Costello. He had a girl friend...

NELSON
(interrupts)
Eileen...Eileen Cotter, he married her. They had four boys. She spent a few years in prison for harboring and abetting, but she cleaned up after that, and her kids didn't follow their dad's career path. One's a cop, another's a fireman and I can't recall on the other two.

FERGUSON
(suspicion returns)
That's a lot of detail for "just reading the papers."

NELSON
(chuckling)
You ooze suspicion!

FERGUSON
I survive on it!

NELSON
It didn't seem to keep Costello out of trouble, did it?

(takes a seat and relaxes somewhat)

FERGUSON
(nostalgic)

I’m sorry about Costello. We were very tight. He was absolutely fearless.

(then laughs)

Some of those gold coins went to Eileen to fix her buck teeth. Eggy was crazy about her, except he wanted to do something about her choppers.

(pause)

There must have been twenty or more families we helped. We called ourselves The Robin Hoods.

NELSON

How many of you were there?

FERGUSON

Just the three of us, Eggy, myself and Frankie Sullivan. We called Frankie, Lump Lump.

NELSON

Lump Lump? how’d he get that name?

FERGUSON

(thinks about it)

You know, I don’t have a clue. That goes for Eggy too. (beat) I never thought about it.

NELSON

And you, no nick name?

FERGUSON

Just Richie.

NELSON

Well, that gold coin thing is an urban legend in the Point.

FERGUSON

I can see where it would be, but it’s something I try not to dwell on, but it keeps creeping into my thoughts.

(both seem to settle in(

FERGUSON (cont’d)

Well, if you lived in Newton until you were twenty-seven, as a teenager you must have gone to the Saturday, Newton/Brookline football fiasco at Tech Field?

NELSON
(excites)
Ha! Did I? I took some good punches and threw some. Man, were we crazy or what?

FERGUSON
Did you ever go to watch the game?

NELSON
(laughs)
Hell no! We went there to kick your ass! I remember one game where all hell broke loose. Fists were flying everywhere. One poor sap got crowned with a soup ladle. It was sticking out of his head, and he...

FERGUSON
(breaks out laughing, then animated)
Are you kidding me? That poor sap was me!
(parts hair to show scalp)
I was chasing this jerk who rabbit punched me and he ran out by the busses. He darted in and out and as I was gaining on him he threw what I thought was a rock. It creamed me on the top of my head. I could feel warm blood on my face. Women were screaming. I didn't know it was a spoon. The dip threw it so hard that when it hit, the curved part hit my scalp just above the hairline and embedded itself under the skin. A bus driver grabbed me and when he told me I had a spoon in my head, I reached up and felt the handle.
(dittos the movement)
I pulled it out, pushed the bus driver and ran to find the dip shit. I didn't find him, but I had to go home and patch myself up...everyone was looking at me. I was a mess.

NELSON
Fix yourself up? What did you do?

FERGUSON
My folks weren't home, so I went into the bathroom, cleaned it up and mashed the flap down. I told my mom and dad that I ran into a steel door.

NELSON

No stitches?

FERGUSON
Stitches? Everything short of slicing an artery was just patched up. We couldn't afford doctors. (beat) One time I fell out of a tree, playing Tarzan, and landed flat on my back. I must have had a major concussion. I was in bed for at least ten days. (beat) I couldn't walk fast or jump for months.

NELSON
Did you go to Tufts Dental School for dental work?

FERGUSON
Hell yes! Tufts Dental School. Knee jerk college kids learning how to use a hypo filled with novocaine, all the time their hands shaking and the real dentist saying, "...go on, shove it in, yeah, push!"

NELSON
Hard times.

FERGUSON
We didn't know that's what it was...we were all in the same boat. Even the nut jobs didn't have it so well. Danvers State Hospital was packed with them.

NELSON
Now, they're roaming the streets.

FERGUSON
(laughs)
Get this, not all the nut jobs were locked up. I was about twelve years old and had a terrible toothache. There was one alternative to Tufts Dental School. Hennesey, a local dentist who was on the sauce most of the time. He had a room in his house where he set up shop. My dad gave me the going rate, I think it was ten bucks, can't remember, but it was a Saturday and my Dad said to go there in the morning. For some reason I didn't get to his office until early afternoon. The good Doc Hennessy was in the bag.

NELSON
This isn't going to end well, is it?

FERGUSON

Not a chance. He sat me down, him smelling like a barroom. I pointed out the offending tooth. “Oh, that’s gotta come out!” he said. He loaded a syringe as the telephone rang in another room. He set the syringe down on the tray. When he came back a few minutes later he opened my mouth, packed both sides of the tooth with cotton pads and reached for what I thought was the syringe. Nope, he had whatever it is they call the extraction tool. He grabbed the tooth and twisted it this way and that, pulling and twisting and finally waved this molar in my face. “There’s the little buggah!”

NELSON
The son-of-a-bitch! What did you do?

FERGUSON
My mouth was full of blood and all that packing. I said something like, “You din gib ma da shaw!” He said, What?” I pointed to the tray and he covered his face with his hands.

(a pause as NELSON reacts)

NELSON
Jesus, did your Dad kill him?

FERGUSON
I didn’t tell my parents. Actually, I felt sorry for him. When other kids told me they were going to see him, I told them what my Dad said, go early in the morning.

NELSON
I guess people went to him because he was cheap?

FERGUSON
I suppose, but along with being a souse, he was thought to be a pretty good dentist. (beat) But things like that toughened you.

NELSON
Today, someone would sue his ass off.

FERGUSON
Back then, something like that wasn’t an option.

NELSON
Jesus, Spoons in your head, your teeth being ripped out by drunk dentists...I guess you were, well, poor.

(with that FERGUSON studies him, not sure what he meant by the statement)

FERGUSON
(draws back a bit)
Poor? (beat) Frankly, I didn't think we were poor. If we were, then everyone else in our neighborhood was poor, (beat) as you call it. Of course, coming from *Newton*, you had no such worries.

NELSON
(now he takes slight offense)
Don't presume anything like that. My father was a trolley driver for the MTA. (beat) I meant no offense in making that statement.

FERGUSON
(smiles)
None taken. (beat) You can see how quickly we got our fire up.

((FERGUSON slouches and appears in deep thought)

FERGUSON (cont'd)
I've never thought of all that in a collective sense.

NELSON
I'm not following you.

FERGUSON
When you said "poor," my immediate reaction was that we were tough not poor.

NELSON
(said warmly)
How tough were you?

FERGUSON
After those football games, you have to ask me that?
(shaking his head)
We took care of business.

NELSON
What kind of business?

FERGUSON

If you need a definition of that, you are still in  the woods.

NELSON
(serious)
Why did you bring up O'Neil earlier?

FERGUSON
Would it make sense to you if I said he reminds me of Eggy?

NELSON
(draws back)
Eggy?
(long pause)
That's not where I thought you were going. What's Eggy's connection to O'Neil?

FERGUSON
O'Neil's wife was Eggy's aunt.
(slightly emotional)
she raised him for a few years while Eggy's dad was in Walpole prison.
(looks at the gold coin in his hand)
He thought a lot of her.

(this info perplexes NELSON)

NELSON
So, when his aunt was killed, he was, what, twelve..or so? Too young to…

FERGUSON
(cautious)
Too young to what?

NELSON
Ahh, nothing, nothing. He was on the lam for years if I remember.

FERGUSON
Who was on the "lam" as you put it?

NELSON
O'Neil, of course.

FERGUSON
Well, someone was on the “lam,”
(with an edge)
You know, I can almost see the gears in your brain cranking away with this.

NELSON
That’s because your “attribute” is working overtime! What are you suspicious over?

FERGUSON
You trying to sneak in my back door!

NELSON
(gets up and sits down in another chair, frustrated)
Only because you’ve slammed the front door! Do all your conversations work like this?

(they both settle back, ignoring each other for a few seconds. NELSON picks up a magazine, scans the cover and throws it back on the table)

FERGUSON
I can see that you’re just busting out trying to tell me something.

NELSON
You know, you’re damn cocky for someone with one foot in the grave.

FERGUSON
(slight laugh)
Me? I’ve got both of them on terra firm-a.
(sarcastic)
How bout you?

NELSON
Let’s knock off the bullshit! I’ll throw it back at you. You are one click away from telling me why you planted you suspicious ass in Alaska!

FERGUSON
Now who’s the cocky one?

NELSON
Just spit it out!

(suddenly, the door opens and
a young woman enters)

YOUNG LADY)
Mr. Nelson, we’re ready for you.

BLACKOUT

ACT I

Scene ii

SETTING

Sargent Estates, a wealthy enclave of homes with large acreage. A thicket in the middle of a field in the estates, where three young boys have trespassed, something they do with regularity. Background scenery should suggest large homes in the distance. There is a clump of boulders in the center of the thicket as well as small clumps of brush to conceal them. It is a summer afternoon in 1948. About 350 Sacagawea gold coins, or similar coinage, are needed for this scene.

AT RISE

Three boys, RICHIE FERGUSON, EDGAR (EGGY) COSTELLO and FRANKIE "LUMP LUMP" SULLIVAN, ages 12, 12 and 11, have been seen trespassing and are hiding from a caretaker of one of the estates. They wait for things to settle down. They are dimly lit and motionless.

NARRATOR (OS)

Chestnut Street, in Brookline, Massachusetts, where all three of our miscreants live, is affectionately called Whiskey Point, and it is a study in contrasts, at least it was so in 1948. On one side of the street are scattered three-story apartments, called tenements in poorer neighborhoods, and on the other side, Sargent Estates, hundreds of acres of woodlands, streams and

ponds, where the young Irish toughs would roam, hunting for wild scallions in the meadows and snapping turtles and bullfrogs in Sargent Pond. On their way home, late for supper, they would pick Lilies of the Valley to appease their mothers. Although these lands belonged to the well-heeled, the Irish Pointers embraced these wilds as their very own. And although they were trespassing, no one, save a few dogs, could catch them. We find them doing what they are best at, eluding. SPOT BRIGHTENS ON THEM.

RICHIE
(looking back over bushes)
I don’t think he saw us.

LUMP LUMP
I think he’s the chauffeur.

EGGY
What do you know about chauffeurs?

LUMP LUMP
I know about them, (beat) Bobby’s dad is one. (beat) The guy had a black hat on.

EGGY
(as he looks back)
You’re daffy. (beat) I don’t think he saw us neither.

RICHIE
We better take the road back home, just in case.

LUMP LUMP
I think that was the place where the St. Bernard lives.

RICHIE
He won’t hurt you he just wants to play.

EGGY
That’s not what it looks like when he chases us.

LUMP LUMP
Let’s head back.

RICHIE
Lump, for crying out loud, we came here to catch a snapper. (beat) Go home by yourself if you don't want to do it.

LUMP LUMP
I don't wanna catch one, not the way You said you do it.

RICHIE
You just have to be fast.

EGGY
Yeah, you look down through the hole in the bank and look for his tail.

LUMP LUMP
What if he turns?

EGGY
When you grab the tail, all he wants to do is get away.
(looks at RICHIE)
Remember the time I had one and he almost dragged me into the pond?

RICHIE
That was the biggest snapper ever. (beat) Maybe we'll see him today...he must weigh fifty pounds.

LUMP LUMP
Why do you even want to catch them?

RICHIE and EGGY look at
each other, then smile)

RICHIE
Why do we come into the estates? Why do we build a tree house with pictures of naked women? Why do we peek at girls taking showers at the tank? Why do we sneak under the turnstiles at the trolley station?

EGGY
Why do we shit? Why do we steal candy bars?

LUMP LUMP
We don't steal candy bars.

EGGY
I do.

RICHIE
(studies him)
You do?

EGGY
Sometimes.

(RICHIE thinks about this
as it seems to trouble him)

RICHIE
You never told me that.

EGGY
(slight offense)
You ain’t my priest.

RICHIE
Huh. You never got caught?

EGGY
Nope. (beat) Never.

LUMP LUMP
Richie got caught.

EGGY
(to RICHIE)
You did?

RICHIE
Yeah. (beat)
(smiling)
Sometimes we’re not as smart as we think.

EGGY
What happened?

RICHIE
Bobby and me went to the tank last summer. My dad gave me two cents for candy after our swim. On the way home, we stopped at

Morgan's for the candy. I got two cents worth of penny candy and stuck a 5th Avenue bar in my shirt.

EGGY
So?

RICHIE
Bobby and me were playing on the floor of our parlor. My dad walked by and saw the 5th Avenue wrapper.

EGGY
Geez! What happened?

RICHIE
He said, "Isn't a 5th Avenue a five-cent candy bar?

EGGY
What did you say?

RICHIE
Nuthin. Then he marched me back to Morgan's and made me tell Mr. Morgan what I did. I was bawling my ass off.

EGGY
Did he beat you?

RICHIE
My dad never *beat* me. He would give me three whacks on my bare butt sometimes, always three.
(looks at EGGY)
They stung. He marched me back to Morgan's and that was it.
(points a finger at EGGY)
If you're smart, you won't let your dad catch you doing that.

EGGY
I don't have to worry, he's never there, and I'm real careful.

LUMP LUMP
I wouldn't want your dad to catch me.

EGGY
Why?

LUMP LUMP
I know he's beat you pretty good sometimes.

EGGY
(cocky)
That’s only when he catches me doing something I shouldn’t, which is most of the time. He can’t run fast and when I come home, he’s forgotten about it.

RICHIE
I guess you need a dad who notices things.

EGGY
Yeah, I’m lucky.

RICHIE
(to himself)
I didn’t mean it that way.

LUMP LUMP
(to RICHIE)
Richie, your dad is a nice person.

RICHIE
Yeah, Lump, I know that. (beat) So, are we here to get a turtle or not?

LUMP LUMP
I never went with you for turtles. If we get one what are we going to do with it?

EGGY
We see how easy it is for him to break sticks. They can snap your finger off. We let him go when we leave.

lUMP LUMP
Bobby killed one last year.

RICHIE
(alerts)
Who told you that?

LUMP LUMP
He did, why?

RICHIE
(irritated)

Yeah, well that's why we don't go into the estates with him anymore. (beat) I don't know why he did that. I should have stopped him.

EGGY
Why didn't you?

RICHIE
I was half way around the pond looking for bullfrogs. He was still playing around with the turtle. I looked back and saw him pushing a sharp stick into his head. (beat) I asked him why he did that.

EGGY
What did he say?

RICHIE
He didn't say anything. He had a funny look, like what a dog looks like before he bites you.

EGGY
Like the way the fucker O'Neil looks all the time.

RICHIE
Who? Pat O'Neil?

EGGY
Yeah. He kilt my auntie. I thought I saw him the other day.

RICHIE
Where?

EGGY
By Kurkman's store.
(hangs his head)
But it wasn't him. I wish I had a gun.

RICHIE
(slight laugh)
Whaddya gonna do, shoot him?

EGGY
Not right away. I'm make him squirm a little.

LUMP LUMP
Ha Ha. I'd like to see that.

EGGY
If I found him, you'd see it.

LUMP LUMP
Where you gonna get a gun?

EGGY
(defeated)
Somewhere. Sometime.

LUMP LUMP
I never liked him.

EGGY
You never knew him!

LUMP LUMP
I meant Bobby. I never like him.

RICHIE
Well, don't let that bother you. he never liked you either.
(he looks around)
Eggy, remember when this whole field was planted with corn?
(EGGY nods)
You and me were walking through it trying to get to the road.

EGGY
And you ran into a skunk!

LUMP LUMP
You got squirted by a skunk?

EGGY
No, he didn't. He spooked it out.

RICHIE
(laughing)
It wasn't something I planned. All of a sudden here's this skunk, two feet from my leg, looking me up and down, giving me the once over. I'm like a wooden Indian. He takes a few steps, sniffs my foot, takes a few more steps, looks around, and walks off.

EGGY

See, you gotta be real sharp. Sometimes the best thing to do is do nuthin..

RICHIE
Which we’re doin a lot of right now. So, what is it, the pond or head home?

LUMP LUMP
But what if the guy did see us?

EGGY
(points away)
Lump, the pond’s in the other direction.

LUMP LUMP
Maybe he called someone.

EGGY
You’re just yellow!

LUMP LUMP
(looks down)
I just don’t wanna be caught.

RICHIE
If you ran faster you wouldn’t be caught.

(LUMP LUMP throws a clump of moss at RICHIE. In ducking, he falls back by two large rocks. they HEAR A DOG BARK)

EGGY
(stands cautiously)
I think that’s the St. Bernard.

RICHIE
We better stay here for awhile.

(RICHIE lays back and tosses a small rock into the air. It falls above his head. He pushes back between the rocks to get it, but his arm falls into a

crevice that seems to go deep
into the ground.

RICHIE (cont'd)
Geez, what?...

LUMP LUMP
What happened?

RICHIE
I don't know. (beat)
(as he pulls debris away)
There's a big hole here, between the rocks.

(The two are disinterested
until they see RICHIE staring
down into the hole)

EGGY
What is it?

RICHIE
(motionless)
It's a...
(EGGY scrambles over to him)
There's a box or something, with metal straps.

EGGY
Let's get it out.

(RICHIE reaches in to grab
it but it is too heavy)

RICHIE
It won't move...it's stuck.

LUMP LUMP
It's probably someone's dead cat.

RICHIE
The wood's pretty rotten, maybe we can break some off.
(he looks around)
Lump, give me that stick.
(he wedges it in the hole)
It's not stuck, it's just real heavy.

(RICHIE jabs at the wood,
breaking away enough that
he drops the stick and again
stares into the hole)

EGGY
Is it something dead?
(RICHIE doesn't budge)
lemmee see!
(he crowds in, flat on the ground)
What is that?

RICHIE
They're coins.

LUMP LUMP
What kind of coins?

RICHIE
I think I can jimmy one out.
(he works on it for awhile,
then reaches in and holds up
a coin)
It says five dollars. It looks like gold.
(studies it)
And it says 1878.
(he hands it to EGGY)

LUMP LUMP
That's not gold, (beat) it'd be rusty.

EGGY
Your head's rusty!
(looks at RICHIE)
How many are there?

RICHIE
If the box is full, there's a lot.

LUMP LUMP
(his face a study in worry)
What are we gonna do?

RICHIE
I can tell you what we ain't gonna do. We gotta keep our mouths shut, (beat) at least until we figure out what we found.

LUMP LUMP
Do you think they’re worth money, I mean they’re probably not good any more?

EGGY
I never seen one.

(RICHIE digs into the box and retrieves two more coins, giving one to EGGY and LUMP LUMP)

RICHIE
Now we all have one
(looks at both of them)
Gimmee your hands.

LUMP LUMP
What for?

RICHIE
We gotta do a blood oath.

LUMP LUMP
No, I don’t want...

EGGY
Shuddup!

(EGGY puts his hand out as RICHIE opens a small knife and lightly jabs the tip of EGGY’S finger. He does the same to himself, then holds out his hand for LUMP LUMP)

LUMP LUMP
I don’t want to.

(EGGY grabs him and holds him down as RICHIE takes his hand eventually drawing a small amount of blood. Once the ordeal is over, LUMP LUMP looks at his bloodied finger with pride.

RICHIE
(holds his finger up as they both put their fingers to his)
On a blood oath, I won't let anybody know about what we found, not even our parents, and especially not the cops. (beat) Say I swear.

EGGY
I swear.

LUMP LUMP
I swear

RICHIE
And I swear.

LUMP LUMP
(looks at his finger)
It stings.

EGGY
Put some spit on it, that's what dogs do.

(LUMP LUMP licks his finger as RICHIE wipes his finger on his pants as he examines the coin)

RICHIE
Huh, 1878, I wonder how it stayed so bright after being in the ground for so long?

EGGY
Maybe they were just put there?

RICHIE
Unh, unh, they've been there a long time.

EGGY
Where do you think they came from?

RICHIE
When's the last time there were stage coaches here? The box is like the ones in the movies.

EGGY
What are we gonna do?

RICHIE
(thinks about it)
Well, we gotta move them before somebody else finds them, (beat) maybe to our tree house.

EGGY
Can we get the box out?

RICHIE
The wood's pretty rotten. I think we have to carry them in our pockets.

EGGY
Will they be safe in our tree house?

RICHIE
We'll take off the boards on the bottom of the tree when we leave.
(looks over at LUMP LUMP who is flipping his coin)
Lump, listen, you too Eggy, we gotta make some rules. One, no one gets invited into the tree house, especially no girls. Two, no one goes to the tree house unless all three of us are there. Three, we gotta find out how we can spend these.

LUMP LUMP
That ain't a rule.

RICHIE
Shuddup! I'm making it one. Don't go blabbing around asking anyone anything. (beat) Maybe we can find out something in the library.

LUMP LUMP
Maybe we should put the coins back and pretend we didn't find them.

EGGY
Maybe we should beat you on top of the head and pretend we gave you some sense. We ain't gonna put them back, right Richie?

RICHIE
No...

(looks at LUMP LUMP)
You ain’t so dumb.
(takes a long time)
No, we’ll get them out of this hole first, see how many there are.

(RICHIE starts digging, handing coins to EGGY, who hands them to LUMP LUMP)

LUMP LUMP
Geez, there’s a lot!

EGGY
(looks at occasional coins)
They’re all the same date.

LUMP LUMP
Maybe they’re fake.

EGGY
(stops and hefts some coins)
Hey Richie, Lump Lump musta had a brain storm for once. They’re all the same date and they’re real heavy. Maybe they’re lead, painted gold.

(on this, RICHIE stops and examines a coin, scratching it with his fingernail)

RICHIE
Nah, it looks too good.

(by now, a fairly large pile of coins sits in front of them)

RICHIE (cont’d)
Okay, that’s about it. (beat) There were some papers in there too, but you can’t read anything
(sees the pile)
Wow! If they’re worth anything it must be a lot. (beat) Lump, fill your pockets, you too, Eggy.

(all of them grab coins and stuff their pockets)

EGGY
Geez! They’re heavy!

RICHIE
Eggy, you and me will follow the stream home. Lump, you go up to the road and take the long way back. That dog may be outside.

LUMP LUMP
I wanna go with you guys.

RICHIE
And have the dog catching you? The last time you froze and the gardener kicked your ass.

EGGY
Listen to him. We’ll wait for you at the tree house.

(LUMP LUMP reluctantly takes off, STAGE RIGHT, waddling from the heavy load of coins. RICHIE and EGGY watch him leave)

RICHIE
(smiling)
Look at him mope.

EGGY
You think he’ll blab?

RICHIE
I hope he doesn’t. He was right about one thing. We wouldn’t have to worry about it if we put them back.

EGGY
We found them. Finders keepers.

RICHIE
I don’t think it works that way.

EGGY
If someone owned them, they wouldn’t be in some hole.

RICHIE
(in a tired voice)
Yeah, we own them now.

EGGY
Why are you so dumpy about it?

RICHIE
It seems like we could get into a peck of trouble. Someone put them there, so someone will be looking for them some day, right?

EGGY
It isn't like we stole them.

RICHIE
(snaps out of it)
No, we didn't. (beat) Stand up...let me look at you.

(EGGY stands, hands outstretched)

RICHIE
Looks like you have potatoes in your pockets. (beat) Maybe sending Lump Lump out to the road wasn't a good idea.

EGGY
Why? You think he'll get stopped?

RICHIE
I hope he doesn't get stopped.

EGGY
The cops never come out this far.

RICHIE
Did I tell him to stay at the tree house?

EGGY
I don't remember, why?

RICHIE
Lump has to be told everything. I hope he doesn't go home. (beat) You ready?

(EGGY nods and they walk half-way to stage left. EGGY grabs RICHIE'S arm and points in the direction LUMP LUMP went)

EGGY
Richie, look! The cops have got Lump!

END OF SCENE

ACT I

Scene iii

SETTING

A tree house, a few hours later.

AT RISE

RICHIE and EGGY and are squatting in the middle. A baseball bat, gloves, and assorted items any 12-year old would have are scattered here and there. A BB gun is propped against the side. In the corner is a bulky burlap sack.

RICHIE
(as he looks out below)
Where is he?

EGGY
We should’a stayed around to see what happened.

RICHIE
Knowing Lump, he probably told them everything. They’ll be looking for us too.

(as they fret, LUMP LUMP sheepishly appears on the tree house rungs below)

RICHIE
You were caught! We saw it!

LUMP LUMP
(big smile)
I was almost caught.

EGGY
I gonna “almost” kill you if you squealed.

LUMP LUMP
They saw my pockets bulged out and said, “Where you coming from?” I said, “Sargent’s Pond.” They said, “What’s in your pockets?” I said, “Bullfrogs, wanna hold one?” They laughed and said, “No thanks, kid.” and drove off.

EGGY
They didn’t get out?

LUMP LUMP
They’re too lazy to get out.

RICHIE
Lump, that was good. Bullfrogs! Ha Ha.
(slaps LUMP on the shoulder)
Okay, we’re all here. We gotta figure some stuff out. I brought my BB gun in case we need it. Don’t mess with it.
(eyes each of them)
Has everyone kept their mouth shut?
(they both nod)
I talked with Frankie Hamilton. He knows a lot about coins. He has a collection.

LUMP LUMP
I thought we were supposed to keep our traps shut.

RICHIE
Shuddup! How are we gonna find out anything? We gotta find out something.

EGGY
Richie knows what he’s doin.
(to RICHIE)
What did Frankie say?

RICHIE
Like I said, he has a coin collection.

LUMP LUMP
Like our coins?

RICHIE
No, they're pennies, Indian head pennies, but I asked him about 5 dollar coins. (beat) He said there ain't no such thing.

EGGY
So we don't know nuthin.

RICHIE
Shuddup, and let me finish. On the way home from Robinson's Field, I saw Barlow, the town drunk. I figured we could trust him. He said there used to be five dollar coins. I said, "How do you know?" He said the only five dollar coin is a gold coin. (beat) So our coins are gold. I said, "What if someone had one of these coins?" He said he'd have himself a big hunk of change, but he better keep it to himself.

LUMP LUMP
Why'd he say that?

RICHIE
I asked him why too. He said that there's a law that says you can't keep gold. He said you had to turn it in and the govmint would pay you for it.

LUMP LUMP
So, we're rich!

RICHIE
Not so fast. He said the govmint wouldn't care about a few coins. They were after people who hoed it, you know, has a lot of gold
(motions to the bag)
like what we got or something like that,

LUMP LUMP
What does Barlow know? he's a drunk.

RICHIE
My dad says he was a smart guy before he hit the bottle.

EGGY
I heard he’s a bookie.

RICHIE
No, he isn’t a bookie, he’s a bookkeeper, (beat) a guy who keeps records or something. Anyway, I asked him, “What if someone had a whole bunch of these coins?” He said the govmint would take them.

LUMP LUMP
So we ain’t rich?

EGGY
Right, we ain’t nuthin! Can you see us going to Raymond’s to buy a fishing rod? We plunk down gold coins and we end up in the pen.

(RICHIE seems in deep thought)

EGGY (cont’d)
Richie, what do you think?

RICHIE
(looks at LUMP LUMP)
You weren’t far off, after all. We got a ton of gold coins sittin over there and we can’t do nothin with them. Ain’t that great?

LUMP LUMP
We could take them back.

RICHIE
Nah, we were lucky enough getting them here.

EGGY
How bout we turn them in? Maybe we’d get a reward.

RICHIE
Turn them in to who? Whoever they belong to is eating daisies, and if we try to turn them in, no one will believe us. They’ll think we stole them.

LUMP LUMP
Can’t we just put them in the bank? I don’t like them being right over there.

EGGY
(ridiculing)
Yeah, let's do that. All three of us walk into a bank, our pockets busting open with gold coins and say, "I wanna open a Christmas account. (beat) You're a nincompoop!

LUMP LUMP
Well why don't you come up with something?

RICHIE
Shuddup! (beat) I got a idea. Listen up. I think I know how to get rid of them. Eggy, you know that girl you like, Eileen Cotter? You said you'd like her better if she didn't have buck teeth.
(he nods)
We can give her some of the coins so she can go to a real dentist instead of that dental school.

EGGY
We're gonna give em away?

RICHIE
Yeah, but no one will know where they came from. (beat) We'll put them in something and write a note saying what they are for.

LUMP LUMP
I like that idea.

EGGY
We're gonna give em away to fix buck teeth?

RICHIE
We'll give them away for good things. We have to listen for who needs things real bad.

EGGY
They're not gonna know who gave them the coins?

RICHIE
No. (beat) We'll have to come up with a name.

(they think about it)

LUMP LUMP
How bout the Gold Kings?

EGGY
That sounds like a pack of butts.

RICHIE
We'd be like Robin Hood,
(thinks about it)
but without the bow and arrows.

EGGY
That's good! We could be the Robin Hoods.

RICHIE
The Robin Hoods, (beat) yeah, I like it too. Okay, Eggy, count out ten coins. We'll need something to put them in.

LUMP LUMP
My dad has these little canvas bags in the cellar. He uses them for nickels he collects. He won't miss a few.

RICHIE
We're gonna need a note on it, but nothin that tells them who we are. (beat) Okay, we need to get smart about this. Before we can do anything, we need supplies.

EGGY
Who else can we give them to?

RICHIE
Yeah, we don't need supplies for that. Any ideas?

LUMP LUMP
Jimmie got his bike stolen.

EGGY
The bonehead left it on the sidewalk. I don't wanna give him anything!

RICHIE
That's just little stuff. Think about sick people or people who are in trouble.

EGGY
Mrs. Flatley can't shit.

RICHIE
What?

EGGY
She got something blocked up in her belly.

LUMP LUMP
How are coins gonna make her shit?

EGGY
The doctors will make her shit. She ain’t gonna eat the coins, idiot!

RICHIE
We gotta think like adults, so we’re not gonna get Eileen’s buck teeth pushed back. They’ll figure out that kids are doin it.

EGGY
Yeah, well if Eileen don’t get them, Mrs. Flatley don’t get to shit!

RICHIE
Shuddup!

LUMP LUMP
My dad got gassed by the Germans. He needs...

RICHIE
No, no, all our parents could use some help, but we can’t do it that way. They’ll figure it out. We gotta be secret about it.

EGGY
I came up with two and now we have none.

RICHIE
(reconsiders)
No, we have two. Eileen will get her teeth pushed back and Mrs. Flatley will get to shit. (beat) C’mon, think! Come up with some others.

LUMP LUMP
How bout that kid in the wheelchair over by Kirkman’s store?

RICHIE
Sure! They could use some help.

EGGY
Ain’t we gonna keep some of it?

RICHIE
I thought about that.
(reaches in his pocket)
Let’s put our coins back in before one of us makes a mistake and someone sees it. (beat) We can’t spend it, and there is no way we can explain how we got them.

LUMP LUMP
Here’s mine, I don’t even want it.

EGGY
(reluctant)
Seems sorta crazy, but here’s mine.

(RICHIE appears in thought and studies EGGY)

RICHIE
If you aren’t going to say it, I will. Your aunt’s kids are being raised by..? Who is it? Your other aunt?

EGGY
Aunt Polly. They have it tough.

RICHIE
Why didn’t you say something about them?

EGGY
You said we should keep it away from our family.

RICHIE
Your aunt Polly had three of her own, now two more, and her old man works for the town. You don’t think they could use…
(motions to the coins)
…some of these?

EGGY
(slight smile)
Sure. If it’s okay?

LUMP LUMP
That was sad what happened to her…
your aunt.

EGGY
And the prick is still roamin around out there.

RICHIE
Nobody in your family has any idea where he is?

EGGY
He’s from someplace in Pennavanya. They’re hicks. They’re probably hidin him. If I find him he won’t be hidin any more.

LUMP LUMP
He killed her when she was takin a bath, hunh?

EGGY
(tolerant)
No, Lump, she had her clothes on. He held her head down in the tub.

LUMP LUMP
Geez, what a prick!

(RICHIE snaps out of it)

RICHIE
I thought of someone. The Floods had that fire. They’re living in half their house.

EGGY
Billy Floods an asshole!

RICHIE
This ain’t for Billy. His parents are real nice. (beat) Remember the Christmas party?

EGGY
As long as it goes to them.

LUMP LUMP
Can we get some new uniforms for St. Mary’s High?

EGGY
Are you nuts?

LUMP LUMP
They don’t fit. The Roman helmets jiggle all over their heads.

EGGY
First of all, they shouldn’t even have a band and second of all, they can’t play shit, and...

RICHIE
Okay, enough of that. Think more like people in need...people.

EGGY
How bout Mr. Thornton?

RICHIE
What about him?

EGGY
He got canned for slapping Billy Myers.

RICHIE
Teachers aren’t supposed to slap anybody.

EGGY
But Billy deserved it. (beat) I saw it. Billy was a complete asshole.

RICHIE
You’re right there.
(thinks about it)
Yeah, I can go for that.

LUMP LUMP
My dad was gassed. Don’t you...

RICHIE
Shuddup! No more crap about the gas stuff!

LUMP LUMP
Yeah, well your dad’s workin three jobs. (beat) You ain’t gonna help him?

RICHIE
If we just found money, real money, I’d just divvy it up between us. This stuff was put there by somebody, probably a long time

ago. Somebody must know something about it, If we used it for ourselves, we'd stick out like Margie's pimples, and they'd just take it away from us. (beat) No. we'll stick to our plan.

EGGY
We got a lotta coins. We better come up with more people.
(looks at LUMP LUMP)
And don't be bringin up your father again. (beat) I know he gets help from the army.

RICHIE
He gets help from the govmint.

LUMP LUMP
He's gonna need a wheelchair.
(seems forlorn)
I wish we didn't find them.

RICHIE
Okay, we got a good start. Lump Lump, you get some of those canvas bags. I'll get some paper and pencils.
(pause)
I just thought of somebody else, the Hamiltons.

EGGY
Oh yeah, their son, Johnnie, was killed in the war. Wait a minute, I don't get it. We're gonna give them coins because their son was killed?

RICHIE
No, they've been saving for a grave stone. We're gonna give them coins for that grave stone.

EGGY
(mulls it over)
Yeah...yeah, that's good.

LUMP LUMP
My dad was almost...

EGGY
(makes a knuckle with his middle finger)
Lump lump, you better shuddup or I'll knuckle you!

LUMP LUMP
Yeah, well I thought of someone we can help, Mary Curley. She's got something wrong up here.
(points to head)
They took her to...

EGGY
(interrupts)
Isn't Mary Curley your father's sister, your aunt? Whattya trying to pull?

RICHIE
Is that right, Lump?

(he nods and looks down)

EGGY
Maybe she was gassed too?

RICHIE
Don't make fun of it! His dad was gassed. (beat) He can't breath easy.
(he looks at LUMP)
Lump, we gotta keep this stuff away from our families. Do you understand?

(he nods)

EGGY
You know, I've been thinking. What if Barlow is wrong? maybe we can keep these coins. Why are we gonna listen to the town drunk?

RICHIE
I told you, he was smart before he hit the bottle.

EGGY
When he's soused, he makes no sense. (beat) I even seen him sleeping in his car.

RICHIE
He doesn't own a car.

EGGY
Jesus, we're gonna listen to a guy who sleeps in someone else's car?

RICHIE
No, you’re gonna listen to me.

(EGGY subdues some)

EGGY
Yeah, who made you Pope?

(RICHIE gives EGGY a nasty look and he puts up his hands in submission)

RICHIE
We got our plan and we’re gonna stick to it. (beat) Let’s go.

(RICHIE gets up and they follow as they head for the exit. RICHIE turns, looks each in the eye)

Not a word to anyone, got it?

(They both nod as they leave, STAGE RIGHT)

END OF SCENE

NARRATOR

As the three Robin Hoods slipped their booty filled bags onto porches and inside screen doors, their cryptic notes saluting the purpose, the quietude of the neighborhood transformed as happy, but confused recipients sought answers.

What started as a simple inquiry addressed to a local Boston jeweler, morphed, as one became two, then doubled to four, all, as questions to bankers, savings and thrifts and jewelers. "How can I change five-dollar gold pieces into cold, hard cash?" When it was learned that the coins were 1878 CC five-dollar pieces, offers to buy them, at inflated prices, came flooding in.

The Robin Hoods had, in deciding what each recipient would receive, quite accurately estimated the potential value of the coins. Not only would Eileen Cotter straighten her teeth, she could throw in a few crowns and fillings. The Hamiltons were so overwhelmed by their gift, they took out a newspaper ad thanking their unknown benefactors; a wasted effort in that Richie, Eggy and Lump Lump would never take newspaper in hand.

What the tumult did cause, was a developing interest on the part of the Boston Globe newspaper, the federal government and a horde of coin dealers.

As with all good plans, there was a flaw, and it came in the note to Eileen Cotter. Although her note was written in block letters, the use of the term "buck teeth" suggested to all that the author was, at least, juvenile in nature and in age.

Although the Robin Hoods were fleet of foot, they were less capable at being secretive. The end came as Lump Lump crept, like a stalking puma, onto the porch of "Lockjaw Eddie", gift bag in hand. None other than Billy Flood spotted him and called to his father. When Mr. Flood walked out onto his porch, he yelled to Lump Lump, who might as well have screamed out, "We are the Robin Hoods", which, of course, he didn't. Instead, he did what a Robin Hood would do if the Sheriff was on his trail, he ran.

ACT II

Scene i

SETTING

A large room at the Brookline Police Station, with a podium, chairs and a large table. The audience will serve as the group attending the hearing. Parents of the Robin Hoods are also in this audience. The dais is slightly higher than RICHIE is tall.

AT RISE

The Chief of Police has called a news conference. We see RICHIE, EGGY and LUMP LUMP sitting at the table. Sitting apart is WILLIAM BERGER, a Boston Globe reporter.

CHIEF
(peers out at audience)
Looks like the whole town turned out.
(laughter, as he turns to the three Robin Hoods)
I'd like to introduce, (beat, clears throat) the three Robin Hoods, Richard Ferguson, Edgar Costello and Frankie Sullivan, and, of course, their parents who are seated amongst you. The gentleman to my right is William Berger, from the Boston Globe, who was instrumental in bringing to the light of day, the (beat) escapades of the young men seated to my left.
(a whistle goes up from the audience. The chief holds up

his hands to ask for quiet. He turns to RICHIE)

Richard, you stated you would tell us how you came across the gold coins.

(he steps aside as RICHIE nervously steps up, but he is hidden by the dais. He moves to the side)

RICHIE

I guess I was the one who found them.

(hesitant)

It was an accident.

(looks around, nervous)

We were all there.

BERGER

Tell us where you found them, Richard.

RICHIE

(hesitates and turns to EGGY and LUMP LUMP)

We made a blood oath that we wouldn't tell where we found them. (beat) I'll tell you how we found them.

CHIEF

(sure of himself)

Blood oaths are not lawful, go ahead and tell us.

RICHIE

(looks at the CHIEF)

No, I ain't tellin!

(a man in the audience yells out, "YOU TELLEM RICHIE!")

CHIEF

I want quiet from the audience. I'll instruct my officers to expel anyone who makes an outburst.

(someone yells, "GET LOST" as the CHIEF motions for his men to move around)

We are looking for answers to lingering questions and outbursts serve nothing.

(he turns to RICHIE)

Richard.

RICHIE
I’m still not tellin. If you want the coins you can have them.

BERGER
Wait! There are more coins?

(RICHIE nods)

CHIEF
Boys, you agreed to tell us what happened, how you came by the coins. (beat) So far, we haven’t turned up anything illegal, but not telling us how you found them may be a problem for you.

BERGER
Chief, I told the boys that if they agreed to this meeting, they wouldn’t be getting into trouble. They did find the coins. Unless someone can connect them to a crime, or to a lost cache, they are free to keep them, aren’t they?
(he turns to RICHIE)
Richard, how many more are there? I don’t need to know where they are.

RICHIE
Maybe a hundred, or more.

(suddenly, everyone is riveted to a matronly woman who has slowly walked up to the stage and climbs the stairs)

WOMAN
Excuse me please.
(she walks onto the stage)
May I talk privately with this Richard?

(The CHIEF and BERGER are dumbfounded as she is waved off to the side with RICHIE where they talk in hushed tones. The CHIEF and BERGER stare at them, then)

CHIEF
(motions to the woman)
Mr. Berger, are you aware of...

BERGER
Not at all, I have no idea who she is.

(The WOMAN walks back with RICHIE)

WOMAN
My name if Marlene Contreau. I live on Sargent Terrace in Sargent Estates. You may know of my late father, Maurice Spaulding, who was presiding judge in Suffolk County during the Roosevelt years. (beat)

(The CHIEF and BERGER show immediate recognition of the name)

WOMAN (cont'd)
Before I go any further, Master Ferguson has something to tell you.

(RICHIE again walks nervously to beside the dais)

We found the coins near Sargent Pond, in some rocks. We didn't steal them. (beat) We just found them.

CHIEF
I'm confused. What connection do you have with these coins, Mrs. Contreau?

CONTREAU
The story is long and lacks a decent plot. Suffice it to say that my grandfather had received payment for a large parcel of land in Nevada, twenty years after statehood. The payment was in new gold coins from the Carson City mint.

BERGER
How many coins?

CONTREAU
Three hundred and fifty, according to my grandfather.

(THE CHIEF'S AND BERGER'S
mouths drop)

CHIEF
I'm missing something. How did the coins get to...
(to BERGER)
Where were they found?

BERGER
By rocks, right boys?

(all three nod)

CONTREAU
Perhaps I can clear this up. When I was a young girl, I was told that gramps had buried the coins on the property. When I married, his attorney would give me a sealed envelop which contained a map showing their location.

BERGER
So, You never married?

CONTREAU
(laughs)
Of course I married, my name is Contreau, but there was no envelop, no map.

CHIEF
This is sounding like it has a plot!

CONTREAU
(sly smile)
Our family attorney was Arnold Shapiro.

CHIEF
(The CHIEF and BERGER alert)
Oh, heavens, he died in that Newton Hills fire back in...

CONTREAU
As did many important family documents.

CHIEF
I'm not sure where this should go now. I'm out of my realm.

CONTREAU
I can assure you, I am not.
(turns to RICHIE, EGGY and LUMP LUMP)
Richard, Edgar and Francis...

LUMP LUMP
They call me Frankie.

EGGY
No we don't, we call him Lump Lump

CONTREAU
(laughs)
And what do they call you Edgar?

EGGY
Eggy.

CONTREAU
Eggy? (beat) as in eggs?

EGGY
Like in, I don't know.

CONTREAU
Richard, what do they call you?

RICHIE
Mostly, Richie.

CONTREAU
Well, Richie, Eggy and (beat) Frankie, I can't imagine a better use for these old coins than what you are doing. Now that the cat is out of the bag, I do think you should put what remains of the coins in a safe place. (beat) There are people who would take advantage. (beat) I am curious about one thing. Was there any paperwork with the coins?

RICHIE
The coins were in a wooden box. The wood was rotten, but I could break it away real easy with a stick. I found some papers but I couldn't read nuthin. They were all faded and had a lot of holes.

CONTREAU
Perhaps you could come visit me and walk me down to where you found them. It would mean a lot to me.

EGGY
So we can keep the rest?

LUMP LUMP
No, she said we could give them away, right?

CONTREAU
I want you to do what you were doing with them.

RICHIE
We were running out of people we thought could use the money.

CONTREAU
(studies them for a few moments then turns to BERGER)

Mr. Berger, I've read many of your stories in the Globe. You seem responsible and you were one of the first to uncover the Robin Hoods. Perhaps your paper could help the boys find appropriate recipients for their gifts?

BERGER
(considers it)
Let me work on that. I like it, but I'm as concerned as you regarding the safekeeping of the remaining coins.
(turns to the boys)
Have you removed all the coins?

RICHIE
We have them in a safe place.

BERGER
Mrs. Contreau, let me air this a bit. You are letting the boys keep the remainder of the coins, correct?

CONTREAU
That is correct. (beat) You see, my grandfather also had a caveat to the gift of the coins. He had it in his mind that I should marry...well, he isn't important. I married a man of my choice. I couldn't, in good conscience, have anything to do with the coins.
(looks out at audience)

I would like to meet the parents of these boys and have you come visit me. I will send a car for you when we have a date set.

(turns and kisses each boy on the forehead)

What a wonderful thing you are doing.

(she looks out over the audience as though this is all a dream and in a fading voice...)

What a wonderful thing...what a wonderful...

END OF SCENE

ACT II

Scene ii

SETTING

Quick return to the Green Room at WBZ TV

AT RISE

FERGUSON rouses slowly from his nap. He looks around and sits up in his chair. He sees NELSON sitting near him.

FERGUSON

Oh, I guess I dozed off.
(shakes his head)
I must have really been under.

NELSON

You were snoozing. I finished about ten minutes ago. My sister should be out soon. (beat) I didn't want to disturb you.

FERGUSON

I wonder when they're going to call me?

NELSON

They said they were running short of time. I don't think you'll get to go in.

FERGUSON
Well, that's a colossal waste of time (beat)
(smiles)
but not totally. I was dreaming about the early years. Our talk must have triggered that.

NELSON
I'm not surprised you dreamed about that. It was a stellar time in your life.

FERGUSON
I guess, for sure they were happy times, sometimes confused, but happy...and occasionally sad and particularly sad now. (beat) Eggy and Lump Lump were the Light Foot Boys and The Light Foot Boys, now, are sleeping, by brooks too broad for leaping.

NELSON
Oh, that's sort of sad.

FERGUSON
Yes, it is...I read it during a long winter back a few years. Housman penned it. (beat) One can smile at a life well lived, but there comes a time for tears.

NELSON
You said "light Foot Boys," that really fits your young group, (beat) always ready for pursuit.

FERGUSON
And when one is primed for pursuit, it tends to follow him in life.

NELSON
How so?

FERGUSON
(gives it some thought)
Just thinking about Eggy and Lump Lump, the way they turned out, especially Eggy. As kids they were willing to give, but always seemed to be looking over their shoulders.

NELSON
Perhaps we're talking about you too?

FERGUSON
(looks him in the eye)
Man, you like to fish, don't you?

NELSON
I tend to look for the whole, not parts.

FERGUSON
(smiles)
Don't you know, it's all part of life's rich pageant.

NELSON
Okay, so what are we doing, talking about what they did with their lives?

FERGUSON
I guess I'm talking about how people get by. After those innocent years, things over which they probably had little control turned them in bad directions.

NELSON
Let's stop beating around the bush. You didn't stay around the Point. You said you spent most of your years in Alaska. I am going to ask you directly, why did you leave?

FERGUSON
(seems troubled by this)
Why did I leave?
(ponders the question)
I had to leave...
(in his face with no emotion)
Shit! I'm seventy-nine, what's the use? Would it be melodramatic for me to say (beat) I'm a wanted man?

NELSON
Should I ask you why you are wanted?

FERGUSON
No, you probably shouldn't ask me that.

NELSON
(smiles, considering it)
The Point was a tough place when you lived there.

FERGUSON
It was. (beat) Along with the usual talents of nearly feral kids, there was a blind adherence to a code of...performance, I guess...

NELSON
You are losing me again.

FERGUSON
An example. Sargent Estates, the woods, the pond, all that expanse was our ground. It was beyond any kind of oversight. Cops couldn't patrol it because it was too wild. No one could catch us, and when other kids violated our ground, we expelled them. It didn't matter how many there were. They either got in the wind or the battle was on.
(straight at NELSON with a strange smile)
you performed or you were tagged with something you wouldn't want.

NELSON
(laughs)
You had some brass! Kids who don't have a window or a bucket are embracing (beat) no, poaching on hundreds of acres of wild lands. (beat) Only in Whiskey Point.

FERGUSON
You saw Eggy as a mobster. I saw him in a different light. One very hot, summer day, we confronted five kids from JP, Jamaica Plain. They were foraging well into the Estates, and they knew they were off limits. The two of us faced off against the five of them. When Eggy threw out his challenge, usually, "Who's the first to lose his teeth?" they melted away, back to JP. It never occurred to him that he might end up on the ground, bloodied, he had this warrior instinct.
(RICHIE seems saddened and holds off before continuing)
Maybe he was born too late. If he was old enough for the war, he probably would have a chest full of medals.
(he looks at NELSON with emotion)
Do you get it? Do you get anything of what I'm saying?

NELSON
I think I do. (beat) That's the "performance" part of the Whiskey Point mystique you were talking about.

FERGUSON
Precisely! There were no rules, no set of standards. You were measured and accepted by what you did when something had to be done.

NELSON
Rebellious little bastards, weren't you?

FERGUSON
In spades, except with our parents. And because we were so wild in our approach to living in the Point, we always assumed we were in the wrong, even when we were in the right.

NELSON
You're going to have to explain that.

FERGUSON
(thinks about it)
The best I can do with that involves Al Rose. He didn't live in the Point, but he was a friend. He and I went to a Saturday matinee in Brookline Village. When we left the theatre in the late afternoon, we zipped across the street to an island in front of the fire station. This is a big intersection and this little spot is like a no-mans land in traffic. For some reason, Al stepped off the little island and was creamed by a Plymouth coming from our right. It sent him flying in about a thirty-foot arc. He landed rolling, came to his feet and ran up High Street where I joined him.

NELSON
He must have been hurt!

FERGUSON
A week later, he showed me his thigh. It was solid black and blue, but no broken bones. He ran off because that is what we had to do most of the time. We were rarely about to stick around when something happened because we were usually screwing something up.

NELSON
And I suppose his parents, like your parents didn't have a clue this stuff was going on?

FERGUSON
Look at the times. Our parents lived through the depression, and then WW2. They were focused on keeping a roof over us and having enough food. They just let us be, let us find our niche.

NELSON
Wild doesn't cover it. (beat) I'll give you this, when it came time to go to the Saturday games, I wasn't too keen on the idea, knowing what we were going to be up against. That wildness came through every time we mixed it up with Point guys

FERGUSON
(smiling)
Of course, you knew you were going to have your asses kicked.

(they both laugh)

NELSON
On average, you're right. In fact, I stopped going for that reason.

FERGUSON
I think you're getting an idea of our life in the Point.

NELSON
I think so, but I don't think I'd agree to your term, "feral."

FERGUSON
What else would you call kids who had no fear, who lived their young years in a suburban wilderness, who took blood oaths and obeyed no laws?

NELSON
Crazy? Anti social? Juvenile gangsters?

FERGUSON
Bullshit! You're not serious?

NELSON
(laughs)
No, I'm not. Actually, you're early years were amazing. And that gold coin caper puts a frosting on it.

FERGUSON
(thinks about it)

There was a tangent to that coin thing. It brought us into contact with things that were remote from our lives in the fields and hills of Sargent Estates.

NELSON
The notoriety?

FERGUSON
No, it was all fairly positive. We saw how desperate some families had it, and got patted on the back for doing what we did with the coins, but it changed all of us.

NELSON
In what way?

FERGUSON
I think we saw the futility of living and acting the way we did. For some reason, we rarely visited Sargent Estates after the coin caper. (beat) You asked me if you should ask why I am wanted. The reason I will not tell you is that the basis for the act has its roots in the almost warrior mentality of those early years, and my flight has its roots in the new, awakening dynamic of my life after our splash of fame.

NELSON
(smiles, shaking his head)
You’re a hard man to follow at times, but I think I understand.

FERGUSON
I tend to lose people when I think deep. (beat) Let me ask you this, are there things, in life, that would stimulate you to immediate, forceful action?

NELSON
(considers this awhile)
I believe there are. Could you be a bit more specific.

FERGUSON
Do you have brothers and sisters?

NELSON
Two sisters, one older, one younger.

FERGUSON
How close to the edge would you go for them?

NELSON
You are a very strange man.

FERGUSON
As you would say, you are not answering my question.

NELSON
Define the “edge.”

FERGUSON
You know damn well what the edge is.

NELSON
There are legal edges and totally illegal edges.

FERGUSON
I make no such distinctions. (beat) I’m trying to find out if you make distinctions.

NELSON
I’m afraid I do. (beat) I tend to validate every move I make.

FERGUSON
As I do, but when events tend to overrule logical or rational action, I will make my move.

NELSON
I think I know what answer you’re seeking, and although I’m not giving you an answer, I think you’d approve of it if I did.

FERGUSON
Who’s the strange man now?

(they both laugh)

NELSON
(serious now)
I will answer your question. (beat) I would come close to the edge...very close.

FERGUSON
(silence as both stare at each other, then)
Thank you.

(The studio door opens as NELSON'S sister emerges. He stands and offers FERGUSON his hand as he also stands)

NELSON

It has been a pleasure, truly a pleasure. (beat) The Point has changed, (beat) There are no feral kids. There are no "Eggys." Your three-stacker is now a condominium. Don't go back…you won't like it.

(as NELSON and his sister. turn to leave)

FERGUSON

Fred.

(he turns)

Before I return to the bush, I want you to have something. I think it should remain where it has roots.

(he then places the five-dollar gold piece in his hand)

NELSON

(looks at the coin)

I'm honored. I really am honored.

(pauses, then)

I knew a lot of the trouble makers in the Point, (beat) and I also knew their backgrounds.

(big smile)

And I didn't read about it in the papers. Life there in the 40s and 50s was challenging, very challenging, but most were able to wiggle through it. Your Eggy, unfortunately, strayed too far.

(NELSON then reaches in his jacket and hands Ferguson his card)

I gave the Massachusetts State Police twenty-nine years, retired as a detective/lieutenant. I made some good busts and made some I regretted.

(shakes FERGUSON'S hand again)

Have a safe trip back, (beat) to the bush.

(NELSON and his sister leave) as FERGUSON studies the card, and eventually sits again in the chair)

FERGUSON
(to himself, slowly)
To brooks too broad for leaping, my friend.

CURTAIN

OBJECTIVES:

We have marveled at the celluloid depictions of nearly wild, some would say feral, children of Hell's Kitchen in New York or the Irish toughs of Whiskey Point in the Boston suburb of Brookline. There are stories to be found, focussing on the "tough" years of the 1940s and early 1950s. One such event was the discovery of gold coins by three of these miscreants in the woodlands of Sargent Estates, an area claimed as their very own by the Whiskey Point trespassers. By telling their story and that of their leader, Richard Ferguson, a man cloaked in mystery over an event that caused him to leave the area for the wilds of Alaska for forty-five years, I hope to share with viewers the illusive nature of truth and justice, that although justice is an admirable end, there are events in the lives of men that demand that truth and action win the day.

**THE ROBIN HOODS**