

ROYAL
COURT
THEATRE

The Royal Court Theatre presents

the treatment

by Martin Crimp

*First performance at the Royal Court Theatre on
15 April 1993*

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*Persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any of the gangways intersecting the seating or sit in any of the other gangways. The Management reserves the right to refuse admission and to make any alterations in the cast which may be rendered necessary by illness or other unavoidable causes.
Patrons are reminded that smoking is not permitted in the auditorium. No photographs to be taken or tape recordings to be made.*

Martin Crimp

Martin Crimp was born in 1956. His plays include *Definitely the Bahamas* (1987), *Dealing with Clair* (1988, starring Tom Courtenay), *Play with Repeats* (1989, written while Thames TV writer in residence at the Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond, where these three plays were first performed), *No One Sees the Video* (Royal Court Theatre Upstairs, 1990) and *Getting Attention* (West Yorkshire Playhouse, 1991). A short fiction, *Stage Kiss*, was published in 1991.

His work for radio includes the Giles Cooper Award winning *Three Attempted Acts* (1985) and the original version of *Definitely the Bahamas*, winner of the 1986 Radio Times Drama Award.

In 1991 he spent some time in New York as an exchange playwright with New Dramatists.

Note on the Text

An oblique stroke / indicates the point of interruption in overlapping dialogue.

Brackets () indicate momentary changes of tone (usually a drop in projection).

A comma like this on a separate line

means a pause.

THE TREATMENT

A play in four acts

by Martin Crimp

Life as we know it has ended, and yet no one is able
to grasp what has taken its place . . . Slowly and
steadily, the city seems to be consuming itself.

Paul Auster

In The Country of Last Things

The genuine pain that keeps everything awake
is a tiny, infinite burn
on the innocent eyes of other systems.

Life is no dream. Watch out! Watch out! Watch out!

Lorca

Poet in New York

'It's really wonderful,' said Karl.
'Developments in this country are always rapid,' said
his uncle, breaking off the conversation.

Kafka

America

Characters

JENNIFER 40's
ANDREW 40's
ANNE 20's
SIMON 20's
CLIFFORD 60's
NICKY 20's
JOHN 40's
TAXI DRIVER 60's

also

WAITRESS
POLICE OFFICER
FEMALE MOVIE STAR
MAID
MAD WOMAN

JOHN, the POLICE OFFICER and the TAXI DRIVER are black ('African') Americans.

The play is organised so that the secondary parts can if necessary be taken by the actors playing NICKY and JOHN.

A CROWD is required in Act 4.1. If a real crowd is not feasible, it must be presented or implied by non-naturalistic means.

Time and Place

The place is NEW YORK CITY, the time the present.

ACT 1 – A day in June
ACT 2 – Evening of the same day
ACT 3 – A few days later
ACT 4 – A year later

ACT ONE

I TriBeCa.* An office.

ANNE, JENNIFER *and* ANDREW. ANDREW *smokes*.

JEN. So he comes right over to you

ANNE. He comes right over to me.

JEN. He comes over to you. *I see*.

ANNE. And he sticks tape over my mouth.

JEN. OK. Why?

ANNE. To silence me. He wants to silence me.

JEN. To silence you.

ANNE. Yes.

JEN. Good. What kind of tape?

ANNE. Sticky tape. The kind of sticky tape you use for securing cables.

JEN. Good.

ANNE. D'you know the kind / I mean?

JEN. We know the kind / you mean.

ANNE. The kind with a silver back. Sometimes silver, sometimes it's black.

JEN. Silver is good. The glint of it. That's good.

ANNE. He always has this tape on account of his job.

JEN. Which is? (*To ANDREW:*) The way the silver would catch / the light.

ANNE. OK. Yes. He's an electrical engineer.

*TriBeCa is the area of downtown New York forming a Triangle Below Canal Street.

JEN. *That's cool.*

ANNE. So he always has this tape.

JEN. *That's cool.* Do you struggle?

ANNE. *Inwardly* I struggle.

JEN. Good.

ANNE. *Inwardly* I struggle. But he has a knife and calls me a bitch.

JEN. He calls you a bitch.

ANNE. Yes.

JEN. And there he is, with the knife, with the tape, this kind of tape with the silver back that's used for securing cables.

ANNE. Exactly.

Yes. / Exactly.

JEN. So what does he do? He cuts off a length of the tape?

ANNE. Cuts? No.

JEN. Uh-hu?

ANNE. That kind of tape / you can tear it

JEN. *I* understand.

ANNE. with your fingers. In fact I would say it is *designed* to be torn.

JEN. I understand. So he tears off a length (which is after all less awkward) / and sticks it.

ANNE. Exactly.

JEN. over your mouth.

ANNE. Yes.

JEN. To silence you.

ANNE. Yes.

JEN. This is in your home.

ANNE. Yes.

JEN. On Avenue X.

ANNE. Yes.

JEN *glances at* ANDREW.

JEN. And the knife?

ANNE. And the knife?

JEN. What does he do with the knife?

ANNE. The knife isn't visible.

JEN. Uh-hu. Not visible. OK.

ANNE. It's more the sense, the *sense* / of a knife.

JEN. The sense of a knife.

ANNE. Yes.

JEN. But this knife, the knife that is sensed, (she senses a knife), is this a part of his array?

ANNE. His array? What is that?

JEN. The array of items – tools – required by his job.

ANNE. You mean like the tape.

JEN. Exactly.

ANNE. I'm not sure.

JEN. OK.

ANNE. Because as I say I only sense it. And whether or not it's part of his array is beside the point because it's then that he begins to speak.

JEN. He speaks. He speaks to you.

ANNE. He speaks to me.

JEN. OK. (The knife worries me / a little.)

ANNE. He speaks to me. Yes.

JEN. How?

ANNE. How does he speak?

JEN. Tell me (yes) how he speaks.

ANNE. OK. Well, he's rapt.

JEN. Good. I see. No. Explain. What, this is rapt as in. . . ?

ANNE. Rapt as in rapture.

JEN. OK. Rapture.

ANNE. Rapt as in (I don't know . . .)

JEN. Rapture is fine.

ANNE. Or ecstasy I suppose.

JEN. We're happy with rapture. Unless you mean – d'you mean? – is what you mean that he is in some kind of trance.
(The thought just / occurs to me.)

ANNE. A trance. Yes.

JEN. That's cool. He's speaking to her as if in a trance.

ANNE. More *from* a trance. As if *from* a trance. As if he's just. . .

JEN. Waking?

ANNE. Waking, yes, from / a trance.

JEN. The silver tape. The glint from the light. The mirror image perhaps of his face – distorted – in the strip of tape.
Tell me, has he been drinking?

ANNE. He doesn't drink.

JEN. Really?

ANNE. Not at these moments. *Later* he drinks. Later he goes out and drinks with his friends – Holly, Joel . . .

JEN. But now he begins to speak.

ANNE. Yes.

JEN. And what does he begin to speak about?

ANNE. He begins to speak about a parking-lot.

JEN. A parking-lot. OK. Does he? Which parking-lot is that?

ANNE. I don't know. It's outside a big store. At night. He talks about it at night. The white lines.

JEN. The white lines.

ANNE. The white lines that separate the cars.

JEN. OK.

ANNE. How they look at night when the cars aren't there.

JEN. Under the lights.

ANNE. Exactly. Those kind of orange lights they have at night.

JEN. Which now – OK, I see – *reveal* the previously concealed pattern of lines.

ANNE. Yes. And the low beds that divide the rows.

JEN. These are, what, these are beds of flowers?

ANNE. Flowerbeds. Yes. Which also have young trees in them.
He describes how they look at night.

JEN. How the young trees look at night under the orange lights.

ANNE. Exactly.

JEN. Good.

ANNE. The appearance of the leaves.

JEN. And this is why he's silenced you.

ANNE. And there's a dog.

JEN. In the room?

ANNE. In the distance. It sounds distressed as if the dog's / locked in.

JEN. So let me see if I've got this right. He's silenced you and now – what? he's telling? is he telling? he's telling if I've got this right he's telling the story of the women that he – here in this parking lot – he has – what? – abused?

ANNE. I'm sorry.

JEN. Abused? Women I mean? Beneath the lights et cetera et cetera – the young trees et cetera et cetera – the white lines.

ANNE. No. I'm sorry. He's abused no one.

JEN. Uh-hu? No one? Only called you a bitch. Only sealed your mouth. Only threatened you with this knife which you as you say you sense.

ANNE. He's abused no one. This isn't what he talks about.

JEN. OK. But you are – would it be fair to say you are nevertheless terrified. Your eyes. (To ANDREW) Somehow I imagine her eyes closed in terror.

ANNE. My eyes are *open* in terror.

JEN. Open in terror is good. Her eyes – yes – are open, wide open staring.

ANNE. Absolute terror. Yes.

JEN. They're staring – of *course* they are – they're staring into

his face.

ANNE. His hood.

JEN. What?

ANNE. Not face. He has a hood.

JEN. OK.

ANNE. A kind of leather hood.

JEN. OK. A leather hood. OK. Does he?

JEN and ANDREW exchange a look.

I see.

ANNE. And he continues to talk about the beauty of the world.

That's his theme.

JEN. The world. Which world is that? What theme?

ANNE. This world.

JEN. You mean the world, this world we are / living in?

ANNE. This world we are / living in.

JEN. You don't mean some specific sub-world such as the insect world or let's say art – 'the world of Vermeer'

ANNE. No. This world. The world we inhabit. It's beauty.

That's his theme.

JEN. OK so this man is weird.

ANNE. No, he's quite ordinary. I don't think of him / as weird.

JEN. Ordinary is better. It's better (you're right) than weird. He is weird – obviously – but he *seems* ordinary. (To ANDREW:) That can work.

ANNE. No he seems ordinary because he is ordinary. He is profoundly ordinary.

JEN. I might dispute that.

ANNE. That's what terrifies me.

JEN. His ordinariness. I see. I *think* I see. *Perhaps* I see. But what do you say?

ANNE. Say?

JEN. Yes. He talks a lot. This 'ordinary' guy. But what do you say? What's your *response*?

ANNE. I have tape over my mouth.

JEN. Of course. Sorry.

ANNE. I can't speak.

JEN. I'm sorry.

ANNE. How can I speak with tape over my mouth? Aren't you listening to me?

JEN. Naturally you can't talk of. Of *course* we're listening. So then – what? – he . . . strips you, touches you?

ANNE. I'm sorry.

JEN. The man, this man, he touches you?

ANNE. No.

JEN. *Inwardly* you struggle, but he overwhelms you, strips you, touches you.

ANNE. He just talks.

JEN. But as he talks he's touching your body, because the beauty of your body is part of the *world's* beauty. (To ANDREW:) We see her *body*, we see the / *hood*.

ANNE. He doesn't touch my body.

JEN. OK. Fine. (I see . . .) But he is . . . (I think I see now) he is forcing *you* to touch *him*.

ANNE. Not at all. No. There's no physical / contact.

JEN. He wants *his* body to be touched, admired.

ANNE. There's no physical contact.

JEN. But how can that be?

ANNE. It's just how it is.

JEN. No physical contact.

ANNE. Zero.

JEN. OK.

ANNE. Then he goes out.

JEN. With Holly, with Joel.

ANNE. With his friends. Yes.

JEN. Are you *sure* about that?

ANNE *looks away. Silence.* JEN *glances at ANDREW.*

OK why don't we break for lunch here. Andrew?

ANDREW. Japanese?

JEN. D'you like Japanese, Anne? Sushi?

ANNE. Sushi . . . that's . . .

ANDREW. It's fish, raw fish. Have you never had Sushi?

JEN. There's a place not far from here. Why don't we walk, get some / air.

ANDREW. Sushi is an art.

JEN. It's unpretentious. You'll like it.

ANDREW. We like it.

JEN. You'll like it. It's quiet. I should think you like quiet places, don't you Anne.

ANNE. I like clearings, clearings in a forest. Yes. I do. How did you know that?

ANDREW. It's not as quiet as a clearing.

ANNE. I understand that.

ANDREW. It's a restaurant.

ANNE. Of course.

JEN (*into intercom*). Nicky, have I had any messages?

NICKY'S VOICE. You're meeting Webb at two.

JEN. (*intercom*). Who the hell is Webb? We shan't be here / at two.

ANDREW. There's a certain amount of noise in a restaurant – there has to be.

ANNE: Orders. Conversation.

ANDREW: Exactly.

JEN (*intercom*). We're taking Anne to lunch right now. He'll just have / to wait.

ANDREW. What there is is a background, a constant background.

ANNE. It's like that in the forest too.

JEN. OK, let's go.

ANDREW. Shall we go?

He follows ANNE out, talking to her.

In the forest. Really? Is it?

2. Canal Street and Broadway. The sidewalk.

An elderly man, CLIFFORD, is selling dishes and other household goods arranged on a blanket. A young man, SIMON, picks through the items. He's drinking from a bottle of beer inside a brown paper bag.

CLIFFORD. I mapped out the course of my life very early on – in the fifties in fact. In the fifties I must've been your age, but already / I had decided

SIMON. How much is this?

CLIFFORD. (that one's ten) I had decided that I would divide each year of my life into two halves. In one half of the year I would do whatever was necessary to live – usually as it turned out in the summer months – meatpacking on 10th and 14th (of course I was stronger then) – or maybe / waiting tables

SIMON. And this?

CLIFFORD. (fifteen) last year for example I was security guard at the Museum of Modern Art because in recent years I've generally looked for something air-conditioned. And these modest jobs have given / me the means

SIMON. Fifteen for a *plate*?

CLIFFORD. to live because my outgoings are very low. That is Limoges. It belonged to my parents. It is not 'a plate', it is Limoges. And then the rest of the year, *each* year (the forks and spoons are solid silver) each and every year what I've done – generally through the winter months, the fall and winter months – is I've risen early, often in the dark, and I've sat at my desk, which is mahogany and belonged to my

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father and which I would never sell even though it fills my room and I have to sleep curled up under it – I've sat at my father's desk – he lost everything in 29 the year I was born – I've sat at that desk and every year without fail I have completed a play. That's forty-one shows in as many years. Now there's a word for that. The word my young friend is discipline.

SIMON. Discipline. Uh-hu. Is it?

CLIFFORD. As a young man I had a couple of big hits in the fifties.

SIMON *smiles. He's not listening. He examines the silver.*

You don't believe me? In the fifties a couple of my shows were playing on Broadway. I have the programs right here. *(He pulls out some tattered programs:)* You see – big stars – my name. And when I say Broadway I mean uptown – proper theaters – not these holes that call themselves theaters where people who call themselves actors mouth the obscenities of people who call themselves writers. *(He chuckles.)* Two shows on Broadway. Then after that, nothing.

He folds up the programs and puts them away.

SIMON. I like this fork.

CLIFFORD. Does that seem just to you? Is that justice?

SIMON. How much for the fork?

CLIFFORD. To dedicate your life to something, to an *art*.

SIMON. How much is the fork?

CLIFFORD. I'll take five for the fork. I send out scripts. Once in awhile I have a meeting with a young person like yourself who tells me my work is old-fashioned. I say to them that's also true of William Shakespeare. *(He chuckles.)*

SIMON. Uh-hu? You say five?

CLIFFORD. It's antique.

SIMON. I'll take it. *(He pays.)*

CLIFFORD. I can see you value things like this, beautiful things

like this.

CLIFFORD *pockets the five. He looks at SIMON.*

It's unusual to find someone on the street who values these things.

Perhaps you know someone who . . .

I mean could introduce me to someone who . . .

Because I have *meetings* / but I never–

SIMON. I have no interest in the theater.

CLIFFORD. I see.

SIMON. I have no interest in any form of art.

CLIFFORD. Which is your right. I see that.

SIMON. I will not pay good money to be told that the world is a heap of shit.

CLIFFORD. Listen, I write comedies. I've no / intention of –

SIMON. I won't sit in the dark to be told that it is an unweeded garden.

CLIFFORD. A garden.

SIMON. An unweeded (that's right) garden. Or that man is man's – OK? – excrement. And these are men who have supposedly *thought* would you believe about the world, men who are respected, who have a place in *history* . . .

CLIFFORD. Our own excrement? Is that *Biblical*?

SIMON. But what I say to them *is*, is the world is not a heap of shit, *you* my friend are the heap of shit . . .

Nearby a car alarm goes off.

. . . the world is not a heap of shit because the sickness is *in here* . . .

CLIFFORD. In the brain. OK. Listen–

SIMON. Right here – yes – in the brains of those individuals.

People who practice so-called *art*, who urinate on their responsibility to others in order to burrow down into themselves, to drag up stories *out* of themselves.

CLIFFORD. You mean it's a chemical? Have you *studied* this?

SIMON. It could be a chemical, it could be an *experience* they've had.

The alarm grows more piercing.

CLIFFORD. In the womb.

SIMON. Wherever.

CLIFFORD. (Because I believe that people *do have* experiences / in the womb.)

SIMON. Wherever. It could be chemical. It could be their environment. But all I would say to them is get off of my back. Get the fuck off of my back because I do not *need* that.

The alarm is piercing. ANNE, JENNIFER and ANDREW are passing on their way to the restaurant.

SIMON catches sight of ANNE.

Anne?

Anne! Stop!

ANNE *and her companions stop. She stares at SIMON.*

It's me. Simon.

JEN. Who is that?

ANNE. I've no idea.

No one speaks. The alarm sounds.

SIMON (*to ANNE*). Who are those people?

ANNE. I don't know you. I'm sorry.

SIMON. But it's Anne? You *are* Anne?

ANNE. I think you're mistaken.

ANDREW. Come along, Anne. We should go.

He tries to move her on.

JEN. This neighborhood's not safe. We should've gotten a cab.

(*To ANNE:*) I'm so *sorry*.

ANDREW. We should go, Anne.

They move on, but ANNE continues to stare back at SIMON.

SIMON. ANNE!

ANDREW. Just keep moving. Are you OK?

SIMON. ANNE!

They've gone. The alarm still sounds.

That was Anne. That was my wife. I'm sure that was my wife. Only she's changed something – her hair – her clothes. What has she *done* to herself? Who were those *people*?

Car alarm stops.

They called her Anne. Didn't you hear them call her Anne?

CLIFFORD. Who is Anne?

SIMON. Anne is my wife.

A POLICE OFFICER appears. SIMON is too absorbed to notice, but CLIFFORD immediately begins bundling his things up in the blanket.

SIMON. She is my wife. Where are they taking her?

OFFICER. There's a child in the trunk of that blue Plymouth. Chinese, male, about 8 years old. He's been shot through the back of the head. He has no face.

Has either of you seen a Chinese male about 8 years old?

Did either of you hear a shot?

Did either of you hear a car security alarm?

Silence.

The OFFICER notices that the paper bag has fallen from the bottle which SIMON still holds. He picks up the bag and thrusts it in SIMON's face.

What's this?

SIMON. It's a bag.

OFFICER. And what is this?

SIMON. It's a bottle, a bottle of beer.

OFFICER. SO PUT THE FUCKING BOTTLE IN THE BAG
YOU FUCKHEAD.

YES YOU YOU ASSHOLE.

I'M TALKING TO YOU.

THE BOTTLE.

IN THE BAG.

3 A Japanese Restaurant

ANNE sits with ANDREW at a table for 3.

ANDREW. I'll tell you what excites us, Anne.

It's because you're of the here and now. You're in the moment and of the moment. You're *real*. Because what are people *doing* out there? Out there they are listening to Schubert on authentic pianos. They are singing Bach at A-four-fifteen. They are squeezing into costumes, Anne, and mouthing words from old books. They are journeying on highly-polished steam-trains, looking tearfully out of the windows at a landscape to which one day they will no doubt return – older, wiser, immaculately lit.

He smiles at ANNE, pours her a drink.

These are people, Anne, who are allergic to the time we are living in. They can't eat the food. They can't touch another's body. They can't breathe the air. Their lives must be spent behind a screen or they will have a respiratory *crisis*.

ANNE sips the wine.

These are people who've given up. They say 'We do not have words to describe this state of affairs, this state of the world.' They say 'Words fail us.' But words can't fail, Anne, only *we* can fail.

ANNE sips the wine. A WAITRESS enters with dishes.
ANDREW lowers his voice.

I love you, Anne.

WAITRESS. K

ANDREW. K is mine.

WAITRESS. G?

ANDREW. G is for Jennifer. She's sitting here. [*The empty seat.*]

WAITRESS. F?

ANNE doesn't react.

F?

WAITRESS puts dish F in front of ANNE and goes.

ANNE. I'm sorry? You *love* me?

ANDREW. Yes, Anne. Yes, I do.

She laughs softly in embarrassment.

Please don't laugh.

What is the level of discourse here?

To 'make out'. To go down on a man's penis. To lick a woman's anus. That is the level of discourse here. But I'm talking about loving a person's soul as revealed through their eyes. You have the eyes of the city.

He runs his fingertips over her eyes and down her cheek.

Please don't mention this to my wife.

ANNE. I don't *know* your wife.

ANDREW. Jennifer. Jennifer is my wife.

ANNE. I didn't know that.

ANDREW. You're not eating.

ANNE..I'm sorry?

ANDREW. You're not / eating.

ANNE. Is Jennifer your *wife*?

ANDREW. *Eat* something. Yes.

ANNE. How can you love me?

ANDREW. Look, dip this in the sauce. (*He demonstrates.*)

ANNE. How can you love me?

ANDREW. You're saying to yourself 'I've known this man for only two hours'.

ANNE. Exactly.

ANDREW. You're saying 'What has this got to do with my purpose in coming here?'

ANNE. Exactly.

ANDREW. You are beginning to doubt perhaps what that purpose is. That's a natural part of the process.

ANNE. What process?

A moment passes. ANDREW dips food in the sauce and holds it up to her lips.

What process?

ANDREW. Eat.

ANNE. I'm not a child.

ANDREW. But you should eat.

ANNE. I'm not a child!

She knocks the chopsticks out of his hand.

(*Quietly.*) I don't want to be loved. That's not why I came.

She takes a cigarette. ANDREW lights it.

ANDREW. You've come to us with your story.

ANNE. Exactly. *Yes.*

ANDREW. You've come to us with your story, but once you come to us with your story, your story is also ours. Because no one's story is theirs alone. I hope you realise that – Anne.

A moment passes. JENNIFER appears and takes her place.

JEN. Everybody happy?

She takes ANNE's cigarette from her mouth and stubs it out.

Anne, you shouldn't smoke. You will die. D'you want to die?

All three laugh. JENNIFER looks at her dish.

Is this what I ordered?

ANDREW. G. Yes.

JEN. I ordered G? *Really?* (*To ANNE:*) No. I'm serious. D'you want to die?

ANNE. I had no idea you were Andrew's / wife.

JEN (*calls*). Excuse me. Waitress.

Really? Does that surprise you? How long have we been married now?

ANDREW. Sixteen years.

JEN. Who was that man in the street, Anne?

WAITRESS appears. No pause.

ANNE. I'm sorry?

JEN (*to ANDREW*). Sixteen? *Is it?* (*To ANNE:*) That man in the street. Who *was* that?

ANDREW (*looking at ANNE*). Of course she doesn't want to die. What kind of a question / is that?

JEN. Was that the man you described? The engineer? Was that *him*?

ANNE. I'd never seen him / before.

JEN. And yet he knew your name. He knew her name. He was calling / 'Anne'.

ANDREW. Anne is a common name.

JEN. So is Jennifer. Anne is in fact less common *than* Jennifer, yet did he call 'Jennifer'? - no he called 'Anne'.

ANDREW. He was drunk, Jen. He simply found Anne attractive and he called out (which is after all typical of a certain / kind of man.)

JEN. OK he found Anne attractive which she may well be but he still could've called 'Jennifer' - that's what I'm saying, Andrew. But in fact he called 'Anne' and Anne stopped -

ANDREW. Anne stopped because that is her name. Isn't that right, Anne?

ANNE. I just heard my name and stopped. / *Obviously*

ANDREW. And had he called 'Jennifer' then Jen would've stopped and we would be saying to Jen, 'Hey Jen, how come you are acquainted with that asshole?'

ANDREW and ANNE both laugh but JEN continues over.

JEN. This is not trivial, Andrew. Because the man called 'Anne' and Anne stopped and if this is the man of whom she was speaking then this disturbs me, this disturbs me because one I understood that on coming to us she had severed all links with this man because two what if this man wishes to exert a right a moral *right* over a story which after all is partly his and because three Anne from what you have said this is a dangerous a dangerous man (I mean the knife the tape the world the young trees *Jesus*.)

WAITRESS coughs.

(Yes, one moment.) So I'm asking you to confirm that that was not the man.

ANDREW. She says it's not the man.

JEN. Anne?

ANNE. No.

JEN. It wasn't.

ANNE. No. He was just a drunk.

JEN. OK.

ANNE. I'd never seen him before.

JEN. We won't pay you to lie to us, Anne.

ANNE. I would never *do* that.

JEN. Well then that's fine. (*To WAITRESS:*) Yes, *I'm* sorry, you've just been standing there. I feel so awful because you may not believe this but I used to waitress and people treat you like / total shit, they really do. I mean Andrew

ANDREW. You really should eat something.

ANNE. I'm not hungry.

JEN. remembers don't you Andy when I used to work in a place called *Corner Café* and the girls (I was a girl then) we all had to wear these aprons that said 'Meet me at the Corner.'

ANDREW. 'Meet me at the corner.' That was a real / humiliation.

JEN. It's totally humiliating but the terrible thing Anne is that we accept these roles. 'Waitress' 'Customer' 'Victim' 'Oppressor' Is this G?

WAITRESS. G. Yes.

JEN. Well I'm sorry, I wanted what he has, I wanted K.

WAITRESS. You want K.

JEN. If that's no trouble.

WAITRESS. No trouble at all. (*She goes.*)

JEN. And who was it said? because didn't somebody say that the ex-waitress is the shittiest customer and the ex-customer makes the most servile waitress (*laughs*) yes that is profound, Anne, because it's true I treat these people like the scum of the earth.

Silence.

ANNE. So this is Sushi.

ANDREW. This must be the moment she's always dreamed of.

ANNE. I'm not interested in dreams.

JEN. We need something on paper, Anne. Did Andrew tell you?
What has Andrew told you?

ANNE. Dreams are just circular.

ANDREW. Circular? Are they? How?

ANNE. In New York people dream of London, in London they dream of Paris, but in Paris they're dreaming of New York.

JEN. We really do need something on paper, Anne. Did Andrew not say?

ANNE. (That's what I mean by circles.)

ANDREW. Uh-hu. That's interesting.

JEN. Anne?

ANNE. Listen, I'm not a *writer*.

JEN. Just something on paper. You don't have / to *write*.

ANDREW. We can *find* / a writer.

JEN. Just tell the *paper* / what you've told us.

ANNE. Perhaps I need some time to think about this.

JEN. Of course you do. Yes. Think. Just a page. That would be cool. Because we love your story. We want to be *part* / of it.

ANDREW. It's our story too.

JEN. Exactly.

ANNE. OK.

JEN. OK?

ANNE (*softly*). He hated me even leaving the *house*. He'd bring the groceries back himself on the way home from work. He collected coupons. He was always so happy when he'd used coupons to buy an item. He used to say 'Well Anne, look how much we've saved on this 10 ounce pack of freshly squeezed juice.' He tied me to the chair with pieces of wire. (*Faint laugh.*)

JEN. Just a page, Anne.

ANNE (*getting up*). I'm going to the Park. I need space to think.

JEN. The Park is a good idea. Then come back to the office. *You* know where to find us.

As ANNE moves away from the table ANDREW follows her. At the same time WAITRESS enters with K.

Is this K? You know, I don't think I'm hungry. I think we're going to leave. Oh *God* you come to a restaurant that's so *typical* no one wants to eat. (*She laughs*)

ANDREW (*sotto voce*). I want you, Anne.

JEN. Could we just have the check, please.

4 Taxi!

ANNE. Taxi! Taxi!

The TAXI DRIVER appears.

Central Park West.

DRIVER. Where is that?

ANNE. Where is what?

DRIVER. Where do you want to go?

ANNE. Central Park. Central Park West.

DRIVER. D'you know the way?

ANNE. Right. OK. Are you an immigrant?

DRIVER. I've lived in this city all of my life.

ANNE. Uh-hu. My apologies.

DRIVER. I know this city like the lines on my mother's face.

ANNE. OK. Just take me in that case just take me to Central Park West.

DRIVER. I was born on a hundred twenty-ninth Street. I've lived in this city all of my life, I'm not an immigrant.

ANNE. I didn't mean to *offend* you.

DRIVER. Am I offended?

ANNE. OK. I'm sorry. Let's just drive.

DRIVER. Am I offended?

ANNE. Let's just drive.

DRIVER. I picked you up on West 10th – is that right?

ANNE. I guess.

DRIVER. So I take a left here into Hudson, I pass Abingdon Square and I join 8th Avenue. D'you see? It's simplicity.

ANNE. OK.

DRIVER. Just tell me when we reach Abingdon.

ANNE. OK.

DRIVER. I'd appreciate that.

Are you meeting someone in the Park?

ANNE. I'm sorry?

DRIVER. Someone maybe that you love. Someone maybe whose hand you will hold, under the trees.

ANNE. I'm not meeting anybody. In fact I want I *need* to be on my own.

Blast of horn.

ANNE. OK so this is Abingdon. (Listen, you've just gone through a red / light.)

DRIVER. Someone whose life maybe is dearer to you than your own.

Are we on 8th?

ANNE. Yes. Just go straight uptown.

DRIVER. Are you sure we're / on 8th?

ANNE. I *know* we're on 8th. (God the *filth* of this city how do we *live* like this look at that woman and her *child*. The garbage they are *eating* it no no no I can't / look.)

DRIVER. Are you sure we're on 8th?

ANNE. This is 8th and 16th. Yes. Just drive.

DRIVER. And the light's green?

ANNE. You have a green light.

DRIVER. Can you tell me if we come to another red.

ANNE. OK.

DRIVER. I'd appreciate that.

ANNE. Well OK.

Can I ask you a question?

DRIVER. I'm sorry?

ANNE. Can I ask you a question?

DRIVER. What question is that?

ANNE. Do you have a visual problem? Is your sight impaired? Are you blind?

DRIVER. I was *born* blind. Right up there on a hundred twenty-ninth street. Today you would operate, but back then / nobody even knew

ANNE (*intense panic*). Oh fuck. Oh Jesus Christ.

DRIVER. it was a medical condition. Because I was born out of wedlock and my mother was just a child they thought this blindness was a judgement from *God*. / They thought

ANNE. Let me out.

DRIVER. it was a *moral* issue not a health issue. Today it would take just a simple operation at birth but she was a poor woman and / she had *sinned*.

ANNE . STOP THE CAB! LET ME OUT OF THIS CAB!

Silence.

The taxi has stopped. ANNE recovers her breath. Very slowly the DRIVER turns his face towards her.

DRIVER. Is this where you want to get out?

Or drops. They just put drops in your eyes at birth.

Very slowly he turns back again.

You have to tell me the fare. That's the situation here. One of trust. Some nights I have dreams about those drops. I dream that I can see. I dream about light which I have never seen.

ANNE. Just drive on.

DRIVER. Don't you want to get out?

I thought you were *afraid*. I thought you wanted to / *get out*.

ANNE. Just drive on to the Park.

5 TriBeCa. The Office.

JENNIFER *faces downstage, her mouth closed*. ANDREW *sits facing upstage in a chair, his back alone visible*.

ANDREW. D'you feel confident in Anne?

I feel confident in Anne.

JEN *empties the contents of her mouth into an ashtray*.

What do you think?

JEN. About Anne?

ANDREW *stands, zips up his pants*.

D'you think this is safe?

ANDREW. I think it's safe for *me*. (*Faint laugh.*)

JEN (*intercom*). Nicky?

NICKY'S VOICE: Hello?

JEN (*intercom*). Could I have a glass of water, please.

ANDREW. (Not that I would endorse safety as a way of / living.)

JEN. I find her humorless.

ANDREW. Anne? Humorless?

JEN. What did she say when you told her you loved her?

ANDREW. That she didn't want to be loved.

JEN. OK. But she believed you?

ANDREW. *Oh* yes.

JEN. You looked into her eyes.

ANDREW. Yes.

JEN. You said. 'I love you, Anne.'

ANDREW. Yes.

JEN. And she believed you.

ANDREW. Yes.

Both faint laugh. NICKY enters with a glass of water and remains in the room.

JEN. It could be useful.

ANDREW. I think it *will be* useful. For her to feel as she now does that there is a commitment to her emotionally - / *personally*.

JEN. But what do you really feel?

ANDREW. I'm sorry?

JEN. What do you really feel about Anne?

ANDREW. What do I really / *feel*?

JEN. You looked into her eyes.

ANDREW. Yes.

JEN. You said 'I love you, Anne'

ANDREW. Yes.

JEN. And she believed you.

ANDREW. Are you *jealous*?

JEN. Nicky, is there something in particular you want?

NICKY. Yes *I'm* sorry but you have Mr Webb waiting / to see you.

ANDREW. Are you *jealous*? Because these are only *words*, Jennifer.

JEN. Webb?

NICKY. He arrived just after one for his appointment at two. It's now four. I just thought I would – I mean he asked me / to mention –

JEN. You say 'only words' but is it possible to use words without to some degree participating in their meaning? Because I'm not sure / that it is.

ANDREW. Perfectly possible. (*To NICKY:*) Who is Webb?

NICKY. He's a writer, Mr Wallace. He's been sitting out there for three hours.

ANDREW. You'd better show him in.

NICKY. Shall I show him in?

ANDREW. I think you'd better had.

NICKY *goes*.

(Three hours, that's / criminal.)

JEN. No Andrew, I am not 'jealous'. I'm simply questioning your level of insight.

JENNIFER *drinks the water as NICKY shows WEBB in*.

NICKY. Mr Webb (*She goes*.)

CLIFFORD. I'd rather you called me Clifford.

ANDREW. Clifford. Hello. Andrew.

They shake hands.

JEN. Jennifer.

CLIFFORD. Pleased to meet you, Jennifer.

They shake hands. CLIFFORD looks around.

Can I bum a cigarette from you?

JEN. I'm sorry, / I don't smoke.

ANDREW. Absolutely. Here.

He gives CLIFFORD a cigarette and lights it

CLIFFORD. It's just I've been out there for a couple of (thank you) couple of hours and I got through my whole damn pack.

He inhales deeply. JENNIFER and ANDREW look at him in silence. He feels ill-at-ease and loosens his cravat.

June – it's so humid. In Washington Square people are just standing under the fountains, young men and women just standing there with their clothes stuck to their bodies.

He drags again on the cigarette.

There's a bench where I usually sit.

ANDREW. A bench.

CLIFFORD. In the shade.

ANDREW. Uh-hu.

CLIFFORD. Listen . . . it's very good of you both to give me so much of your time. It's appreciated. I mean I realise the script is . . .

ANDREW. Please. Sit down.

CLIFFORD (*sitting*). I realise the script is (thank you) probably . . .

ANDREW. What script is that, Howard?

CLIFFORD. I'm sorry? I assumed that's what this / was about.

ANDREW. Do we have one of Howard's scripts?

JEN. Is it a *format* or *treatment* or what is it exactly? / (I'm not sure.)

CLIFFORD. It's a drama.

JEN. I'm sorry?

CLIFFORD. It's a drama. / I write comedy.

JEN. Howard says it's a drama. I don't recall this material.
D'you recall this material?

ANDREW. When did we receive it, Howard?

JEN. (That's if we *have* / received it.)

CLIFFORD. About a year ago now.

ANDREW. OK.

CLIFFORD. You see six months of the year I do whatever is
necessary / to live and for the other six months -

ANDREW. About a year ago. So that will mean that Nicky
will've read it.

JEN. Exactly. Nicky reads everything. She is *incredible*.

ANDREW. She will've written you see what she will've done is
she will've written / a report.

JEN. (*intercom*). Nicky, d'you have a report on / Howard's
script?

CLIFFORD. Nicky. That's the girl on reception.

ANDREW. She's incredibly bright. She majored in Dance and
Corporate Finance. She's here as an / intern.

JEN (*intercom*). OK could you make a copy and bring it in to us
then.

She remembers it clearly.
She'll bring us a Xerox.

CLIFFORD *has smoked his cigarette down to the butt. He goes to
stub it out but hesitates on seeing the fluid in the ashtray. He drops
the butt in.*

ANDREW. Tell us something about yourself, Howard.

CLIFFORD. My name is Clifford.

ANDREW. I'm sorry.

JEN. Clifford Webb.

CLIFFORD. You may know my name. A couple of my shows
were big hits in the fifties. (Of course that's before you were
even born.)

JEN. That's very gallant of you, Clifford.

ANDREW. And what have you been doing / *since* then?

JEN. Clifford is very / gallant.

CLIFFORD. And they were playing on Broadway - proper
theaters - not these little holes that *call* / themselves theaters -

ANDREW. And what have you been doing *since* then?

JEN. Clifford would probably like to know something about *us* -
isn't that so? What would you like to know about us?

ANDREW. What *do* you know about us?

CLIFFORD. I've heard . . . very good things.

JEN. (That's cool.)

ANDREW. OK well what we are is essentially we are *facilitators*
meaning we are here because we wish to make connexions we
think of ourselves don't we Jen as a kind of chip, we're a chip
and out there are many many inputs -

JEN. Like the city itself.

ANDREW. Like the city itself exactly a *grid* into which things
feed a grid yes or chip for which we the facilitators provide
the logic the power while you provide people like yourself
provide the input the signal -

JEN. So this could be an idea / or a skill -

ANDREW. It could be an idea or a skill or often something less
tangible

NICKY *enters quietly and remains at the back of the room.*

simply noise simply an input of noise pure noise
something intangible yes and random which nevertheless
comes on line it comes on line and generates the crucial
transformation.

JEN. The output.

ANDREW. The output. Exactly. Which is (we hope) / art.

CLIFFORD. Noise.

ANDREW. The kind of background you find (noise, yes) in a
restaurant or a forest. Something which both is and is not
silence.

(*Turns to NICKY.*) Nicky. Yes. (*She comes forward.*)

JEN. Or it could be an image, Clifford. A woman's face, her

eyes wide open in terror. Over her mouth a strip of reflecting tape. In the tape the image of her assailant's face forms and re-forms like globs of mercury.

NICKY. I have the report, Mr Wallace.

ANDREW. Excellent. Read it to us.

CLIFFORD. *Read it?* Listen, don't you want to -

ANDREW. To what? To wait?

JEN. Are you afraid? Don't be / afraid.

ANDREW. You've already waited three hours plus a year prior to that. I think we should just move on this. Nicky?

NICKY *reads the report.*

NICKY. 'Clifford Webb.
The Tenant.
A drama.

ANDREW *offers CLIFFORD a cigarette and lights it.*

'A man in his sixties - Brooke - has spent a lifetime doing menial jobs in order to finance his secret life as a painter. He paints obsessively in a tenement building up in the hundreds, spending whatever he earns on paint and materials.

'He rarely goes out, but one night he ventures into an East Village bar where he gets into a conversation with a young couple. They are art dealers and amuse themselves by getting Brooke drunk. However they miscalculate, and after a few hours become drunk themselves.

'When the couple say they must leave, Brooke asks to come with them. The man, Ethan, objects to this but is over-ruled by Clara, the girl.

'In their apartment on Christopher they continue to drink with Brooke until - it's not quite clear how this comes about does Brooke suggest it, or does he merely amplify a hint of Clara's? - it is agreed that Brooke will watch Ethan and Clara make love.

'This he does from a wicker chair at the foot of their bed.

'Tacitly - that is with no spoken agreement - this arrangement continues night after night until Brooke becomes part of the household.

'He abandons his casual work and begins instead to cook and clean for the couple, as well as caring for their baby son. In return he is allowed to be spectator of their most intimate moments.

'One afternoon, driving across town, Brooke is killed in a collision with a fire-truck.

'From this point on we witness the progressive degeneration of the young couple's relationship. Without the gaze of Brooke they no longer have any desire for each other. And in the absence of desire it soon becomes clear they have no other bond. Ethan immerses himself in his work at the gallery for longer and longer periods until Clara, disillusioned with a world which seems preoccupied only with fragments and surfaces, finally takes their son and joins the Amish.

'Several months later the new tenant of Brooke's apartment discovers a concealed doorway. She calls in a locksmith. The door leads to a basement beneath the stoop of the tenement. Inside are a number of paintings.

'These are the paintings made by Brooke during his last weeks of his life. They depict Clara and Ethan and are a unique record of the beauty of the human form at its most vulnerable. They are the work of a master at the height of his powers.

'The new tenant however considers the pictures obscene. With a pocket knife she cuts the canvases from the stretchers and burns them.'

Silence.

ANDREW *(softly)*. It's a mindfuck, Clifford.

JEN. This is a total mindfuck. Why haven't we seen this, Nicky?

(To ANDREW:) Have you seen this?

ANDREW. *I've* never seen this.

JEN. Nicky?

ANDREW (*shakes CLIFFORD's hand*). Congratulations.

CLIFFORD. Thank you.

JEN (*to NICKY*). Well?

NICKY. I *tried* to show you this.

JEN. I don't recall.

[*simultaneous conversations*]

NICKY. I tried to show you this but you said not to waste my time with unsolicited / material.

JEN. I don't *believe* that.

NICKY. You said why was I reading it. It should be *shredded*.

JEN. Shredded? I never said 'shredded'. Are you trying to *embarrass* me?

NICKY. *I'm* sorry.

JEN. I never said 'shredded' Nicky. I have great respect for people's endeavors. *You* know that. It's a *privilege* to see people's work. If I said 'shredded' I was kidding you.

NICKY. OK.

JEN. OK?

ANDREW. You told us you wrote *comedies*.

CLIFFORD. There *are* some funny lines.

ANDREW. She *burns* the paintings. That is a *mindfuck*. You are a dark horse, Clifford.

CLIFFORD. I've used a lot of personal experience. *Feelings*.

ANDREW. Of *course* you have.

CLIFFORD. There's a sense in which *I am Brooke*.

ANDREW. It's a metaphor.

CLIFFORD. In a way.

ANDREW. And it's so *real*.

CLIFFORD. So d'you think this can be used?

ANDREW. Used? Of course it can be used. We would be *privileged* to use this.

CLIFFORD. For many years I've despaired. I'll be frank.

If something like this comes along I want it on my *desk*.

NICKY. It was *on* your desk. It was on your desk for two weeks.

JEN. I don't want to argue.

NICKY. Then I filed it.

JEN. I'm not arguing with you.

ANDREW. Don't despair.

CLIFFORD. This is the moment I've always dreamed of.

ANDREW. Of *course* it is.

CLIFFORD. Look at me. I'm *shaking*.

ANDREW. Have a cigarette.

CLIFFORD. Thank you.

ANDREW. Listen. I have an idea. There's someone you should meet. You should meet Anne.

CLIFFORD. Who is Anne?

ANDREW. Don't you think, Jen? He should meet Anne?

What?

(*To NICKY.*) You can go (*NICKY goes.*)

What?

ANDREW. I think Clifford should meet Anne.

JEN. Who is Anne?

ANDREW. *Our* Anne. Don't you think?

CLIFFORD. Who is Anne?

JEN. Anne. *Yes*.

Blackout.

ACT TWO

Evening of the same day.

1 Central Park.

ANNE lies on the grass with a blank sheet of paper. She pays no attention to two MOVIE STARS playing from Act V.2 of 'Othello', their voices amplified by throat mics.

MOVIE STAR 1 (as Othello). He, woman:
I say thy husband; dost understand the word?
My friend, thy husband – honest, honest Iago.

MOVIE STAR 2 (as Emilia). If he say so, may his pernicious soul
Rot half a grain a day! He lies to th' heart.
She was too fond of her most filthy bargain.

MOVIE STAR 1. Ha!

MOVIE STAR 2. Do thy worst:
This deed of thine is no more worthy heaven
Than thou wast worthy her.

MOVIE STAR 1. Peace, you were best.

MOVIE STAR 2. Thou hast not half that power to do me harm
As I have to be hurt. O gull! O dolt!
As ignorant as dirt! Thou hast done a deed –
I care not for thy sword; I'll make thee known,
Though I lost twenty lives. Help! help, ho! help!
The Moor hath kill'd my mistress! Murder! Murder!

During the preceding speech SIMON enters, unseen by ANNE. The MOVIE STARS disappear. We become aware of the long evening shadows.

SIMON watches ANNE for a long time before speaking.

SIMON. (softly) Anne?

ANNE is startled but turns to him slowly.

You look different.
Have you changed your hair?
What have you changed?

ANNE. Nothing.

SIMON takes her sheet of paper and holds it up.

SIMON. What's this?

ANNE. What does it look like?

ANNE tries to recover the paper but he lifts it out of her reach and folds it as he speaks.

SIMON. I think it is your letter of reconciliation. I think you're trying to find words to express your sorrow and shame.

ANNE. I have nothing to be ashamed of.

SIMON. Everyone misses you.

ANNE. Who is everyone?

SIMON. They ask after you.

ANNE. I don't know them.

SIMON. They're concerned for you.

ANNE. I don't know them, Simon.

SIMON. Your hair used to be brown. Your eyes were blue.

ANNE. My eyes are blue.

SIMON. But not the blue they used to be, Anne.

He's made a paper flower. He gives it to her.

How are you living? You can't shop. You can't cook.

ANNE. They gave me an advance. They checked me into a hotel. I don't need to cook, Simon.

SIMON. Which hotel?

I hate Shakespeare in the Park. It pollutes the Park.

ANNE (*without interest*). Does it?

SIMON. Didn't you see it?

ANNE. When I snap my fingers you're going to disappear.

SIMON. I don't think so.

ANNE. You're going to disappear, Simon.

She snaps her fingers and begins to turn away. However he grasps her wrist.

SIMON. What do they want from you?

ANNE. Nothing. Ideas. Let go of me.

SIMON. What ideas? What ideas do you have?

ANNE. They want us to tell my story. It's nothing.

SIMON. You don't have a story. What story?

He's hurting her.

What story?

ANNE. Nothing. Simon. Just -

SIMON. What?

ANNE. Whatever I can recall. Childhood. That kind of shit like being swung up into the air by your father and screaming and screaming or being knocked down by the ocean for the first time when the salt water gets somewhere behind your mouth your nose you don't know where the water is you think you're going to die LET GO OF ME!

SIMON. Childhood?

He releases her. ANNE rubs her wrist and begins to laugh.

ANNE. You know what they tried to make me eat today. Raw fish.

SIMON. Raw fish. That's degrading.

They both laugh.

(*Gently.*) Come back with me.

ANNE. It's Japanese.

SIMON. Come back, Anne. They'll corrupt you.

ANNE. He tried to feed me with it. (*She laughs.*)

SIMON. 'He'?

ANNE. Yes.

SIMON. Who is 'he'? Is he the man?

ANNE. Of course 'he' is the man. What else / could he be?

SIMON. You looked right through me in the street. I felt transparent.

ANNE. Did I?

SIMON. He tried to feed you. Where?

ANNE. In my mouth.

SIMON. Obviously in your mouth.

Obviously in your mouth, Anne.

ANNE. *He* mentioned my eyes.

She turns away and unfolds the flower, smoothing out the paper, smiling to herself.

I'm not coming back, Simon. I'm never coming back. I have my own room. Money. People who are (because they *are*) interested in me.

SIMON. Interested in corrupting you . . .

ANNE. Well perhaps I want to be corrupted. Perhaps I *need* to be corrupted. I've spent my life with you behind a *steel door*.

SIMON. . . . people who feed you in the mouth, who give you money to tell them what happened to you as a *child* -

ANNE. Not just as a child, Simon. They want to hear about us. They want to hear about you. (*Faint laugh.*)

The distant sound of applause and cries of 'Bravo!' from 'Othello'.

Touch me and I'll scream.

*She stands her ground smiling faintly at SIMON.
The applause and cries grow louder, carried on the wind.*

2 The Japanese Restaurant

JENNIFER and CLIFFORD eat with the movie star who played Othello. His name is JOHN. The WAITRESS attends them. JOHN's manner is notably measured and relaxed.

JOHN. Damaged in what way?

JEN. I would say socially, wouldn't you, Clifford.

JOHN. Because I am wary of the equation 'black equals damaged'. I'm sure you understand that. I am wary of the equation 'black equals street'.

JEN. Exactly but this is not a street guy. This man is educated. He's a - what is he, Clifford?

CLIFFORD. An engineer.

JEN. He's an electrical engineer.

JOHN. Uh-hu.

JEN. And what distinguishes him - as I was trying to explain - is that he has a vision.

JOHN. OK. That's good. Vision is good.

JEN. So when we say 'damaged', John, we're talking essentially we're talking about a man who is *outside* of the society in which he finds himself-

CLIFFORD. Marginalised.

JEN. And when we saw your Othello (marginalised, exactly) your Othello tonight in the Park . . .

CLIFFORD (to WAITRESS). A little more Champagne, please.

JEN. . . . it blew my mind away . . .

JOHN. Thank you.

JEN. . . . it blew my mind away because - well because the

parallels are so striking, and I immediately knew you would be so *right* for this.

CLIFFORD. I'd like to introduce a Shakespearean element.

He drinks greedily. The WAITRESS goes.

JOHN. You are the writer.

JEN. Clifford has only just come on board.

JOHN. I'm sorry, I don't know your work.

JEN. And what is exciting is that this is a true story over which we have complete control.

JOHN *nods, reflects.*

JOHN. Jennifer and I go back a long time, Clifford, a long long time. I remember her with hair down to her waist and bells round her ankles, don't I Jen. (*Faint laugh.*) Look at her. She's embarrassed. But why?

I can remember her lying down in the street to protest. I remember because I lay beside her, Clifford. That's how far back we go. Side by side. In the street.

We felt that our actions might transform the world. We felt that if our own relationships were free of the tensions of race, sex, money, then the world itself would alter. In the way that if you begin to grow plants in a stagnant pool, over time the body of water will become clear.

He laughs at the naivety of this idea.

We saw this happening not for ourselves, but perhaps for our children. Not that we had children, Clifford. Since as I'm sure you realise, it's one thing to hang out with a black man, but something else again to marry him, to have his children.

JENNIFER *looks away.* JOHN *is amused by her embarrassment, but not bitter.*

JEN. (I'm sure Clifford doesn't want to hear about our wasted /

youth, John.)

JOHN. And if I didn't still possess such a strong picture of the girl who lay down beside me to protest about something I have entirely forgotten, then I would not – Clifford – contemplate getting involved even for one moment in the kind of degrading shit that has become her trademark.

A moment, before JOHN begins to laugh.

Come on, Jen. A joke.

JENNIFER joins in the laughter a little uncertainly. JOHN lays his hand on the back of CLIFFORD's neck – a good-humored gesture which nevertheless disturbs CLIFFORD.

A writer. A man of principle.

He continues to laugh as CLIFFORD tries to move out of his grip. The WAITRESS reappears.

WAITRESS. I have a call for a Mr Webb? Clifford Webb?

CLIFFORD. Excuse me.

CLIFFORD disengages himself and goes with the WAITRESS.
JOHN watches him go, laughing and shaking his head.

JOHN. 'Shakespearean element.' He kills me.

Silence.

JEN. I resent your description of our work, John.

JOHN. How is Andrew?

JEN. What you said was not true.

JOHN simply laughs and makes a gesture of mock surrender.

JOHN. How is Andrew?

JEN. He's fine.

JOHN. I hear interesting things.

JEN. About Andrew?

JOHN. About both of you. Very interesting things.

JEN. You've always been unbearable when you moralise.

JOHN. Moralise?

Again he laughs and repeats 'surrender' gesture.

A man in a hood.

He's damaged.

He's black.

He ties women up with pieces of wire.

He forces them to touch him.

He abuses them.

But he has a vision.

JOHN laughs and shakes his head, apparently in utter disbelief, before becoming serious:

I would want veto of cast.

I would want writer– approval.

I would require producer– credit.

I would require complete control.

Think about it.

He begins to laugh again. CLIFFORD reappears, smoking.

You know something. Jennifer. You're still beautiful.

You haven't changed. Don't you find this woman beautiful, Clifford.

JEN. Is something wrong?

CLIFFORD. I have to go.

JEN. Are you going?

Without sitting, CLIFFORD drains his glass of Champagne.

JOHN. There's a kind of beauty that survives. I don't possess it.

JEN. Are you alright?

CLIFFORD. I must go. I need to work.

JOHN. It's been a pleasure, Clifford.

JOHN *shakes* CLIFFORD's hand. CLIFFORD *goes*.
'I must go.' 'I must work.'

He laughs.

3 Upper West Side. ANDREW and JENNIFER's apartment.

A chair. An ambiguous sofa/bed.

A uniformed MAID lights candles.

ANNE *sits on the edge of the sofa examining a gun.*

ANNE. Who does this gun belong to?

The MAID says nothing.

I hate weapons.

The MAID says nothing.

I nearly *sat* on it. Shouldn't it be put away somewhere?

ANDREW *enters, unseen by ANNE.*

I said: shouldn't this be *put* somewhere?

ANDREW. She doesn't speak English.

ANNE. I nearly *sat* on this. Is it yours? I hate weapons.

ANDREW (*taking the gun*). It's Jennifer's. I'm sorry.

ANNE. What does she want with a gun? (*Faint laugh.*)

ANDREW (*shrugs*). Sometimes she feels threatened, that's all.

ANDREW *puts the gun away. He tells the MAID that she can go. She wishes them goodnight and withdraws.*

ANNE. Is that Italian?

ANDREW. Spanish.

Silence.

ANNE. I've brought the page.

ANDREW. What page is that? The *page*?

ANNE. The page. *This page.*

She passes him the page. He glances through it.

ANNE. Jennifer said she wanted it.

ANDREW. Uh— hu. 'Jennifer said.'

ANNE. Is that the kind of thing you mean?

ANDREW *looks up from the page and stares at her. He screws up the page and tosses it away.*

ANDREW. Why did you come here?

ANNE. To bring you the page. Jennifer said—

ANDREW. 'Jennifer said.' Is Jennifer *here*?

ANNE. I don't know.

ANDREW. She's not. She's not here. She's out of town.

Silence.

ANNE *gets up to retrieve the page.*

ANNE. I'm sorry. I'll just / go.

ANDREW. Please don't go.

44 THE TREATMENT

He goes up to her. He takes the paper gently from her hand.

We don't need this, that's all.

Drink?

ANNE. I lied to you.

ANDREW. Oh?

ANNE. It *was* my husband. The man who called out to me. And again tonight in the Park.

ANDREW. In the Park. Really? Your husband.

ANNE. Yes.

ANDREW. Tonight? What did he say to you?

ANNE. He asked me to come back.

ANDREW. To your Avenue.

ANNE. To Avenue X, yes. *(Faint laugh.)* He said I'd be corrupted.

ANDREW. And what did you say to that? To what extent did he mean 'corrupted'? *(He hands her a drink.)*

ANNE. It's just that Jennifer said—

ANDREW. 'Jennifer said.'

He laughs and this time she joins in and relaxes. She sips the drink and looks round the room.

ANNE. If he could see me here he would / kill me.

ANDREW. Jennifer tends to over-react. She panics. Now I'm the opposite (if you can have an opposite of over / react.)

ANNE. You *under*-react.

ANDREW. Exactly.

They both laugh.

ANNE. You under-react because you have no feelings. You are emotionally dead.

She laughs.

The eyes of the city. What did you mean?

She drinks. Silence.

It's so hot in my hotel room I take endless showers. There's no bathroom *in* the room so I have to cross the corridor to the shower. The curtain is rotting especially at the bottom where it's permanently damp there's a kind of black mold growing on the blue plastic and people've left scraps of soap which I use to wash because I'm permanently scattered in this heat and I forget my own. So I take a shower with the scraps of soap then it's back to my room. I throw myself down on the bed and just lie there drying off in the current of air from the fan which I keep on maximum. For the first time in my life, my whole life, I'm completely free and alone and I can't bear it.

She drinks.

I've never traveled out of this *state* and yet I think I must be somehow jetlagged because I can't sleep but I can't really wake up — is that what it's like? I just go from the shower to the bed and back to the shower again and my thoughts are in a loop: how I replied to the ad never thinking anything would happen — then there was the call and the limo arrived — it was so *long* and white and cool inside and the driver never met my eyes — then you listened to my story and we went to the restaurant where I must've made such a fool of myself knowing nothing about anything, what to *order*, how to use *chopsticks*, *nothing*, what to *say* to you, and I reply to the ad and the call comes, and the limo comes, and I tell my story, and we go to the restaurant and I just lie there staring at the fan which is like a person a disapproving person shaking its head going 'no no no I don't believe this can be you Anne no no no no no no no . . .'

As she chants 'no no no . . .' she moves her head slowly from side to

side in imitation of the fan, her eyes shut. ANDREW comes behind her and gently takes hold of her head, stilling it.

ANDREW. We could change your hotel.

She opens her eyes. She moves away, sipping the drink.

ANNE. I've escaped from the man who silenced and humiliated me. So why does it feel like I'm betraying him?

ANDREW. We could change your hotel. You shouldn't be in that kind of hotel. Does *he* know where you're staying?

ANNE. All the scraps of soap. I must smell of so many different people. . .

ANDREW. Does *he* know where you're staying? Might he harm you?

ANNE. Simon?

ANDREW. Might he? You said if he found you here he would kill you.

ANNE. That's just a figure of speech.

ANDREW. OK. Good.

ANNE. Because he wouldn't kill me, obviously. What he would do is kill *you*. That would be the most likely thing. Because he *can be violent* (did I not say how violent he can be?)

ANDREW. Simon.

ANNE. He wants to protect me, yes. (*Faint laugh.*)

Did I not say? He'd love this room. The furniture. The light.

ANDREW. Are you saying he's killed?

ANNE. Well hasn't everyone in this city? (Either killed or *been* killed. . .)

She laughs. She's drinking too much.

I thought that was what excited you. The 'present'. The 'moment'.

ANDREW. You couldn't begin to imagine what excites me – Anne.

ANNE. Really?

For the first time ANNE is a little afraid.

Faint knocking.

Knocking a second time.

ANDREW turns to the door.

ANDREW. Yes? Hello?

Knocking again.

Excuse me.

ANDREW goes to the door and slips out leaving ANNE alone.

She swallows the remains of the drink and puts the glass down beside the crumpled page which she opens out.

She lies stomach-down on the ambiguous sofa and reads the page to herself, mumbling the words aloud in such a way that they are not intelligible. Occasionally she laughs softly at what she reads.

During this, ANDREW reappears at the door.

He watches ANNE, unseen by her, as she mumbles and laughs.

Eventually she senses his presence and falls silent without looking at him.

ANDREW. Corruption, Anne, has three stations. The first is the loss of innocence. The second is the desire to inflict that loss on others. The third is the need to instill in others that same desire.

ANNE (*turning to him*). Which station are we at?

ANDREW *shuts the door.*

He approaches ANNE who moves onto her back. She expects and is willing to have intercourse with him – but not at all prepared for the sudden brutality of it.

ANDREW *penetrates her without any preliminaries.*

He comes immediately, immediately lifts himself away and drops onto his back.

CLIFFORD *appears in the room – not through the door, but from where he's been standing in the shadows. He drags on a cigarette.*

ANDREW. You're a dark horse, Clifford.

ANNE (*sits up*). Who is that? Get him out. Was he *watching* us?
(*She gets up.*)

ANDREW. I'd like you to meet Clifford.

CLIFFORD. This may not be the moment.

ANDREW. Clifford is your writer.

ANNE. Was he *watching* us? Get him the fuck out of here.

CLIFFORD. This may not be the moment. I understand.

ANNE. Get out.

CLIFFORD. I understand.

No. Really. / I do.

ANNE. A writer?

CLIFFORD. A couple of shows of mine were big hits in the fifties. Of course that's before you / were even born.

ANNE (*to ANDREW*). I thought we were alone.

ANDREW. We are alone, Anne.

CLIFFORD. I'm very interested / in your story.

ANDREW. He's very interested in your story. He just wanted to try something, to *experience* something / that's all.

ANNE (*approaching CLIFFORD*). To try something.

CLIFFORD. Yes.

ANNE. And now you've – what? – you've tried it.

CLIFFORD. Yes.

ANNE. So how was it?

CLIFFORD. Listen I understand exactly what you must feel at this moment.

ANNE. So what do I feel? Tell me – I'm interested – what I feel.

ANDREW. Anne. . .

ANNE *spits in CLIFFORD's face.*

ANNE. That's what I feel.

CLIFFORD. I respect that.

ANNE. That's what I *feel*.

ANDREW. Clifford's an old man and also a very good writer.
You don't have to *spit* on him. Jesus.

ANNE. I hope you *die*. Clifford. I hope you *burn*.

For a moment ANNE stands paralysed by anger and humiliation. Then she walks out, pushing past JENNIFER who has just appeared in the doorway.

JEN (*calls after her*). Anne? Anne?

CLIFFORD. Listen, if I've offended anyone. . .

JEN. You're an artist, Clifford. It's your job to give offense.
(*Calls again.*) Anne?

JEN. Oh god oh god I feel I've missed something. Have I missed something? Because there is a charge in the air, like when you rub fur on a stick.

ANDREW. How was your meal?

JEN. We made progress. Only Clifford deserted us.

ANDREW. He had to work.

JEN. I know (*She smiles at CLIFFORD.*) We all have to work.

*She sees ANNE's page where it's fallen on the floor.
She picks it up.*

JEN. What's this?

ANDREW. Her story.

Blackout.

ACT THREE

A few days later.

1 TriBeCa. The office.

JENNIFER, ANDREW, JOHN, NICKY, CLIFFORD.

Boogie-woogie music.

JOHN dances with NICKY, JENNIFER with CLIFFORD.

ANDREW sits watching them, without pleasure.

At a solo break in the music it transpires that NICKY (and JOHN ideally) is an extraordinary dancer.

JENNIFER and CLIFFORD stand aside, clicking their fingers and shouting approval as NICKY and JOHN do their stuff.

ANDREW takes no part in this.

He is the first to notice that ANNE has appeared in the doorway and is watching the dance.

He turns off the music.

The dance stops.

Silence.

ANNE's appearance has changed. Her hair is fashionably cropped. She wears a very plain very expensive dress. She takes off her dark glasses revealing eyes darkened by sleeplessness. She looks unwell. JOHN is first to speak.

JOHN. This must be Anne.

JEN. You look different . . .

ANNE. I changed my hotel.

JEN. . . it suits you.

ANNE. Am I late?

JOHN. We were just dancing. D'you dance? Are you a dancer?

JEN. This is John.

ANNE. John. OK.

JOHN. Very pleased to meet you.

He shakes her hand. JENNIFER continues the formalities.

JEN. Nicky you know.

ANNE and NICKY acknowledge each other.

Clifford you've met.

CLIFFORD nods and smiles. ANNE simply stares at him. It grows awkward.

Let's take five minutes everyone.

Three conversations A, B and C now occur simultaneously. A finishes first, then B, and finally ANNE and ANDREW in C.

A

JEN: John, you wanted to speak with me. . .

JOHN: It's a small matter but I feel we should resolve it now.

JEN: Tell me what's on your mind. [*cue NICKY in B*]

JOHN: It's a question basically it's a question of personnel.

JENNIFER's attention is on ANDREW and ANNE.

The creep has got to go.

JEN: What creep? You say 'creep' – the world is full of creeps, John.

JOHN: You know the creep I mean.

JENNIFER follows JOHN's glance.

JEN: Clifford?

JOHN: Uh-hu.

JEN: But Nicky likes his work. She says he is / a great craftsman.

JOHN: Nicky is an intellectual, Jen. The qualities she admires are precisely the ones we need to lose. I would find it impossible to work with him.

JEN: So Clifford is out.

Will you tell him?

JOHN: I'm happy to tell him. Is there a contract?

JEN: Are you kidding?

JOHN: Then the matter is resolved.

They fall silent as they watch ANDREW and ANNE.

B

NICKY is left with CLIFFORD. A moment's unease between them before NICKY speaks – cue 'Tell me what's on your mind' in A.

NICKY: You're so like my grandfather. Of course *he's* dead. [*cue ANDREW in C*] My grandmother moved to Sun City. She's considering Cryotherapy.

CLIFFORD: Cryotherapy.

NICKY: Yes it's a process whereby your body is preserved after death in liquid nitrogen at or close to absolute zero.

CLIFFORD: I like to think my *work* will outlive me.

NICKY: I write a little myself.

CLIFFORD: Really? That's interesting.

NICKY: Yes I've published one or two novels and I also write in a small way for the theater.

CLIFFORD: Uh-hu?

NICKY: I guess I've just been very lucky because some people struggle for years and of course I've never suffered in the way

you must've done (except when my parents divorced, *that* was hard.)

CLIFFORD: (Did they?)

NICKY: (My Dad had an alcohol problem. Yes.)

They fall silent as they watch ANDREW and ANNE.

C

As JEN begins to speak to JOHN, ANDREW takes ANNE's arm and leads her downstage. ANDREW's cue to speak is NICKY's 'Of course he's dead' in B.

ANDREW (*with quiet concern*). You look terrible, Anne. Has something happened?

ANNE: I'm not sleeping.

ANDREW: Why didn't you return my calls?

ANNE: What calls?

ANDREW: I kept calling you. I've needed to speak to you.

He touches her cheek. She flinches.

I've wronged you.

ANNE: I hate that man.

ANDREW: What man, Anne? Your husband?

ANNE: That man. The writer.

ANDREW: It was a mistake. Please. Trust me.

ANNE: I can't sleep thinking about it.

ANDREW: Trust me, Anne.

ANNE: About him.

ANDREW: I've wronged you. (*He takes her hand.*)

ANNE: How can I believe anything you say to me?

Have you really tried to call me?

ANDREW: Every day. I sent you *flowers*.

ANNE: Were those from you?

ANDREW: Wasn't there a card?

ANNE: I didn't look.

ANDREW: Didn't you look?

ANNE: The flowers were beautiful.

ANDREW: Didn't you look at the card? Of course they were from me.

ANNE (*faint laugh*). I've never seen so many *colors*.

ANDREW: Didn't you look at the card? I want us to start over, Anne. I want you to come away with me.

Silence. ANDREW realises that the others have become aware of the intimacy of their conversation.

I'll speak to you / later.

JEN (*claps hands*). OK can we begin everybody.

Andrew. Anne. Clifford. Nicky – would you like to stay? Anne? You have no objection to Nicky staying? I feel she should be involved.

ANNE *shakes her head: no objection.*

ANDREW *lights a cigarette for her.*

Slight adjustments to positioning.

All wait for ANNE to speak.

ANNE. Could I have a glass of water?

ANDREW *goes out to get it.*

All wait again.

ANDREW *returns, gives water to ANNE, and sits beside her again.*

JEN. OK. We're in your apartment. It's 7pm. He's brought some stuff home and fixed you a meal. Let's say: spaghetti. (*Laughter from JOHN, NICKY, CLIFFORD.*) You've been chatting about this and that. And now he comes over to you. Is that right?

ANNE. That's right. He comes over to me.

JEN. He comes over to you and he sticks tape over your mouth.

ANNE. Yes.

JEN. Why?

ANNE. To silence me. He wants to silence me. We've been / through this.

JOHN. That's very strange. Why does he want to silence you, Anne?

ANNE. Uh. . .

JOHN. Is it the sound, the *sound* of your voice, the timbre maybe of your voice?

ANNE. I'm sorry?

JEN. Is it the voice, Anne, or what the voice is saying?

ANNE. I guess it's what I'm saying.

JOHN. What are you saying?

ANNE. He finds me critical.

JOHN. Of what? Of him? You're critical of him? Why?

NICKY. (Isn't that obvious?)

ANNE. Not of him.

JOHN. (Not necessarily.)

ANNE. Not of him. No. More generally critical I mean this is of the neighborhood. Because he was brought up there and to him it's home, he just doesn't see the violence or the dirt, he feels I / exaggerate.

JOHN. What d'you mean 'brought up there'?

ANNE. Well his grandfather managed freaks on Coney Island in its heyday and his mother and father still run a bar down there to this day - 'The Lucky Throw' - you may / know it.

JOHN. Because I don't see him, Jen, as having this kind of background at all.

JEN. We'll come back to that / John.

ANNE. In fact on our first date he took me on the Cyclone - you know, the old roller-coaster down there - afterwards he said 'I've never heard anyone scream so much' (which was strange you know because I had no recollection of screaming I must've been / *so out* of it.)

JOHN. I don't see him as having this kind of background. Freaks. Bar-tender. No way.

ANNE. What d'you mean?

What does he mean?

JEN. Tell us about the tape.

ANNE. No. What does he mean?

JEN. These are just possible changes, Anne.

ANNE. What 'changes'? (*To ANDREW:*) What does she mean?

JEN. John is attracting a great deal of money to this.

ANNE. I don't want anything changed.

JEN. A great deal of money, Anne. Your new hotel. Your / *clothes.*

JOHN. Perhaps 'changes' is too strong a word. It's more a question of where we place the emphasis.

ANNE (*warily*). OK.

JOHN. OK?

JEN. Tell John about the tape.

ANNE. I explained all this before.

JEN. John would like to hear.

ANNE. Well he always has this tape on account of his job. (He's an engineer. He installs telephones).

JOHN. Is that a skilled job?

ANNE. I'm sorry. I've no idea. I really don't see that / it matters.

JOHN. Is he educated? Did he study?

JEN. No, I think John's right to be concerned.

JOHN. Did he?

ANNE. I think he studied for a while. Then he became disillusioned. (I don't really know the / details.)

JOHN (to JEN). Disillusion is good. I can do something with that.

NICKY. Tell me something: do you struggle?

ANNE. I'm sorry?

JEN. (Disillusion. OK.)

NICKY. Do you struggle?

ANNE. *Inwardly* I struggle, but –

NICKY. But not physically. Why is that?

ANNE. What point would there be? He's much stronger than I am and at least this way I know I won't be hurt.

NICKY. Because I think there must be a struggle. Are we saying she just *sits* there and lets the guy do this. I find that unbelievable. And besides I object very strongly to the idea of woman as victim, woman as dead meat.

ANNE. I'm not a victim. Dead meat? What is she / *talking* about.

NICKY (to JOHN). I think that kind of passivity is / totally degrading

JOHN. I agree. It's / unacceptable.

ANNE. I'm not a victim. Fuck *you*.

NICKY. 'Not a victim'. *That's* cool. (Of course / she's a victim.)

JEN. Nicky, can you / ease up.

NICKY. *I* say she struggles. *I* say she resists. I say how can she *tolerate* this treatment from a man?

JOHN. So it becomes violent.

NICKY. Of *course* it becomes violent.

ANNE. She knows nothing about this. Can't somebody / explain –

NICKY. You see: (*Indicates* ANNE.) this is not my idea of Anne.

JOHN. Now that's *very* interesting.

ANNE. Listen to me, this is my story, I've *lived* this.

NICKY. This is not my idea of Anne: passive? humiliated? victim? – She's 'lived' it. Haven't we also lived?

JEN. Nicky, you have no / right to –

JOHN. Please. Let her speak.

NICKY. You've 'lived' it. OK. But what does that mean? What if what you've lived is in fact banal? Must we accept that? No. We have a duty not to accept that, Anne, a duty to ourselves, a duty / to *you*.

JOHN. I think Brooke is the key to this.

NICKY. I think Brooke could well be – yes – / the key.

JOHN. Tell us something about Brooke.

ANNE. Who is Brooke?

CLIFFORD. Brooke is the old man who watches you both.

ANNE. Excuse me?

JEN (to JOHN). Brooke is Clifford's idea, John. / He's not –

JOHN (to ANNE). He interests me. What's his background?

CLIFFORD. He does menial work but has a secret life as an artist. / Every day he –

JOHN. I'd rather hear it from Anne, Clifford. Anne?

ANNE. What?

JOHN. Tell us about Brooke.

ANDREW. She doesn't *know* about Brooke.

JEN. Clifford wants to introduce a voyeuristic / element.

JOHN (to JEN). Why doesn't she know about Brooke?

ANDREW. Brooke isn't real. *Wait* / a minute.

JOHN. Isn't real? You mean she imagines him? I don't / buy that.

ANNE. I don't know who / Brooke is.

JOHN. I don't buy that. He has to be real. He has to be *there*, in the apartment. (To NICKY:) Isn't that right? He's there?

NICKY. Absolutely. He's right there. He witnesses / their sexual acts.

JOHN. He witnesses – exactly, thankyou – their sexual / acts.

ANNE (*increasingly distressed*). What sexual acts? There are no sexual acts. There is no struggle. There is no other person. Just Simon and myself. I've told you this. He doesn't touch me, he talks to me. (To ANDREW:) Why are they changing / everything?

JOHN. Of course he talks, Anne. People talk. Which is why we require dialogue. But the talking is only the build. He has a vision – accepted – but that is only the build. (To JEN:) Incidentally I'm not happy with this 'secret life' idea.

CLIFFORD. I'm sorry but who exactly is writing this?

JEN. (We have to talk, / Clifford.)

JOHN. We must have a release, Anne.

ANNE. But he doesn't touch me . . . He's *never* touched me . . .

JOHN. A release.

ANNE. He's not interested in that aspect of marriage. . .

JOHN. Now in this case the release is a sexual act –

NICKY. Series would be better.

JOHN. Series would indeed be better of acts witnessed by a third person, Brooke. (To JEN:) I thought we'd discussed this.

ANNE. Not with me. NOT / WITH ME. (*She weeps.*)

JOHN. Because your life is interesting, Anne. . .

NICKY. Absolutely.

JOHN. Undoubtedly interesting – up to a point. We are here to help you get beyond that point.

ANNE *continues to weep from exhaustion and strain.*

A moment passes.

ANDREW (*softly but firmly*). She's saying he only talks.

JOHN. Are you *defending* her?

ANNE *begins to moan.*

CLIFFORD. What is it you have to say to me?

JEN. This isn't the moment, Clifford.

ANNE *continues to moan – a thin monotone.*

Let's give her some space everybody.
Anne, would you like some space?

She doesn't speak. She seems oblivious.

Andrew, Clifford, Nicky – John – I'm sorry – would you mind very much leaving the room so Anne and I can have some space?

They do so. As they go JOHN puts his arm around CLIFFORD.

JOHN. Jennifer has asked me to clarify the situation, Clifford.

CLIFFORD. Uh-hu? What situation is that?

JOHN. Exactly. It needs to be clarified . . . (*Faint laugh.*)

They go out. ANDREW is last to leave, glancing back as he goes.

ANNE *remains moaning. JENNIFER comes downstage to where she sits. She moves the glass of water out of the way, then strikes ANNE's face with such force that she falls to the floor.*

JEN. You offend *John*.
You fuck *my* husband in *my* apartment.

ANNE *huddles on the floor.*

ANNE (*incoherent*). I was lonely.

JEN. What?

WHAT?

ANNE. I WAS LONELY

JEN. You were lonely. Couldn't you just talk?

I don't know what to do, Anne. You seem to have taken everything and given nothing.

ANNE *begins to whine unintelligibly*. JENNIFER *looks on*.

I can't hear what you're saying. (God, I wish I smoked.)

ANDREW *slips into the room*.

I can't hear what she's saying.

ANDREW. Why is she on the floor?

JEN (*shrugs*). Perhaps you can communicate with her.

JENNIFER *goes out*. ANDREW *remains at a distance from ANNE who has completely surrendered to her need to weep and keen*. He lights a cigarette.

ANDREW. I'm forty-four years old, Anne, but I sit at my desk and I write your name on pieces of paper. A-n-n-e. Anne. Then I strike it out in embarrassment. When I told you I loved you I thought 'OK this will be useful, I'll have some control', but now I find I meant what I said. The words, just the words, brought the emotion into being, and look at me—I have no control at all.

Is it because you're real? We don't often meet real people here. We ourselves have no memories or stories. No

enchantment, Anne. We are the disenchanting. We started out real, but the real-ness has burned out of us.

ANNE *pays no attention. She remains huddled*. ANDREW *crouches beside her and raises her head by the hair, forcing her eyes to meet his*.

Come away with me. Now.

ANNE (*with effort*). I don't . . . want . . . to be loved.

There's a commotion outside. ANDREW *roughly releases his grip*. CLIFFORD *barges in, followed by JOHN who is trying to hold him back*.

CLIFFORD. This nigger tells me I'm fired. What right does he have?

JOHN (*gripping him*). Ease up, my friend.

CLIFFORD. What right does this nigger have to fire me?

He shakes JOHN off.

JOHN. It's OK. He's upset. It's understandable.

ANDREW. Firstly he is not a 'nigger', his name is John.

Secondly John, it's not understandable, it's unforgivable. And lastly Clifford, if I remember correctly you were never hired. You were never *hired*, Clifford.

The crashing sound of a subway train terminates the scene. The sound crescendos alarmingly, finally fading as the train recedes and lights come up to reveal:

2 Avenue X. A subway station.

The station is at ground level. A black metal wall obliterated by graffiti. Untouched is a sign reading 'AVENUE X' in pure white letters on a black ground.

ANNE *has just gotten off the train. She's alone on the platform*.

SIMON *appears. They look at each other*.

SIMON. This has cost me a token.*

ANNE. Couldn't you've jumped it?

SIMON. There's a camera.

This has cost me a token and I'm not even going anywhere.
(*Faint laugh.*)

(*Expressionless – as if reading from a piece of paper, but staring at her.*)

'I'm not coming back Simon I'm never coming back I have my own room money people who are because they are interested in me perhaps I want to be corrupted perhaps I need to be corrupted I've spent my life with you behind a steel door.'

But here you are. Have you been waiting long?

ANNE. I just got off the train. No.

SIMON. The F.

ANNE. It doesn't mean I've come back.

D'you like my dress?

SIMON. Why?

The blind TAXI DRIVER appears and passes along the platform to the exit using a stick. He pays no attention to ANNE.

ANNE. Excuse me. Can I help you? Don't I know you?

Can I help? Excuse me.

He's gone.

SIMON. You know that guy?

* to pass through the turnstile

ANNE. He drives a cab. Yes.

SIMON. A cab?

ANNE. What d'you think? [*of the dress which she spins to exhibit*]

D'you think I'm a victim?

SIMON. What of?

ANNE (*shrugs*). You?

SIMON. This has cost me a token, Anne. I'm taking time off work. What do you *want*?

ANNE. I want you to hurt someone.

It's so hot I nearly stayed on the train. I thought I'd stay on to Coney Island, maybe ride the Cyclone, d'you remember how I / *screamed*?

SIMON. *What?*

ANNE. How I screamed.

SIMON. I fixed the shower.

ANNE. Did you? Was it the washer?

SIMON. I changed the washer.

ANNE. That's cool.

SIMON. It still drips.

ANNE. Uh-hu.

SIMON. But not so much.

ANNE. Simon?

She takes his head in her hands.

SIMON. Nice dress.

ANNE. Thank you.

SIMON. Hurt someone.

ANNE. Yes.

SIMON. I have a lot of work.

ANNE. Are they making you work too hard?

SIMON. I'm always digging up the sidewalk. It numbs my hands . . .

ANNE. Your poor hands. . . (*She takes his hands.*)

SIMON. . . . so I can't grip things.

I was doing the dishes and I dropped a glass in the sink.

ANNE. Did it smash?

SIMON: Of course it smashed.

ANNE: I'm sorry.

SIMON. Of course it smashed. A shard cut me. The sink was full of blood. I can't grip things, Anne.

ANNE. But it was wet. It slipped.

SIMON. I felt sick. I hate blood.

ANNE. I know you do.

SIMON. And it was the glass Adam gave us.

ANNE. Did Adam give us a glass?

SIMON. When we were married, yes.

ANNE. I don't recall that glass. Are you / *sure*.

SIMON. Well now it's smashed.

ANNE. Adam your father? *That* Adam?

SIMON. Yes, it was engraved.

It had our initials on it.

ANNE. Adam your father gave us an engraved glass?

SIMON. (When we were married, yes.) I mean I possess a skill, but they have me laboring, Anne. They make me dig like an animal.

ANNE. Why's that?

SIMON. I don't know.

I don't know. *Ask* them.

ANNE. It was only a glass, Simon. I remember that glass. It was just a glass out of the bar.

SIMON. It was not 'only a glass'.

ANNE: The initials weren't even ours.

SIMON: It was not 'only a glass'.

ANNE. Everything breaks.

SIMON. I refuse to believe that.

ANNE. (Everything *we* ever had. Cups. The shower.)

SIMON. I fixed the shower.

ANNE. Well everything else.

SIMON. I fixed the shower, Anne, and I know you hate because you've always hated and despised my family.

ANNE. That's not what I said.

SIMON. You hate them because they're good. They're simple. They're not interested in the *unknown*. They don't want – no – to break – like you – to break away or to burrow like you – no – to burrow into themselves like you into the dirt inside of themselves because we all have – yes good fine – we all have that dirt, Anne. I've burrowed into the city and I know it goes because yes it goes down, the city goes down as far maybe farther than it goes *up*. Down down down it goes, which is why we must stay pure, Anne, and good. Why we must look *up*. Life is a gift transmitted from one family to another, not a waste-product to be sent for analysis. You do not check into a hotel to reveal to strangers what goes on behind a private door. You do not reveal to strangers what goes on between *us*.

ANNE. Nothing *has* gone on between us, Simon.

SIMON. What did you mean: 'hurt'?

ANNE. And besides I have a lover.

Someone who loves me.

SIMON. Is he the one?

I fixed the shower, Anne.

ANNE. I know you did.

They look at each other.

3 The Japanese Restaurant.

*Faint music. Wine on the table. ANDREW alone, brooding.
WAITRESS appears.*

WAITRESS. Are you ready to order?

Silence.

ANDREW. What sort of music is this?

WAITRESS. It's Japanese music.

ANDREW. It doesn't sound Japanese.

Can it be turned off?

WAITRESS. I'm sorry?

ANDREW. The Japanese music. Can it be / turned off?

WAITRESS. I don't know, sir.

I could *ask*.

ANDREW. (Leave it.)

WAITRESS. Most people like the Japanese music, but I could ask.

ANDREW. No. Leave it.

Is life very different in Japan?

WAITRESS. I'm from Brooklyn.

ANDREW. OK.

WAITRESS. Would you like to order now?

ANDREW. I'm waiting for my wife.

WAITRESS. Of course.

ANDREW. Why don't you sit down?

WAITRESS. I can't sit down.

ANDREW. But would you like to?

WAITRESS. Not really, no.

ANDREW (*taking out card*). Listen . . . it's quite possible that we could use you for something. We're always looking out for new material, ideas.

She looks at the card and puts it back on the table.

WAITRESS. I don't want to be used, thank you.

ANDREW. Uh-hu? I thought that's why people waited tables – to be discovered.

WAITRESS. I don't want to be discovered.

ANDREW. Well that is your right.

WAITRESS. OK?

ANDREW. OK.

They laugh quietly together.
JENNIFER arrives.

JENNIFER. I'm late. *I'm* sorry. Did you order for me?

ANDREW. I didn't know what you'd want.

JEN. (He didn't know what I'd want.) Don't I always have K?
I'll have K.

Andrew?

ANDREW. What? Yes. Sorry. The same.

WAITRESS goes. JENNIFER pours herself wine and drinks,
scrutinising ANDREW who continues to brood.

JEN. *Defending* her in front of John I was so embarrassed.

ANDREW. Would you call this music Japanese?

JEN. I've been talking to him for hours, Andrew. (What music?)
Literally for hours. *Calming* him. There is no music.

The music has indeed stopped.

Calming him, Andrew.

ANDREW. I'm going, Jennifer.

JEN. *I see.* Good. Yes. Go. I've never seen him so mad. He
threatened to withdraw everything, the finance, his *name*.

Well aren't you going?

He averts his eyes.

The truth is Andrew is that you will never go. Go where?
With whom? With Anne? Go with Anne is that the idea? who

is at most half your age and in all likelihood mentally
(judging by her behavior today) deficient and what? meet her
parents in the Lucky Throw?

ANDREW. (That's not her parents, that's / his.)

JEN. Have *babies*? Move into the *suburb*? Barbecue a pig on the
fourth of *July*? Put up your / *flag*?

ANDREW. That's not the only alternative.

JEN. Fine. Go.

ANDREW *makes no move.* WAITRESS *appears with dishes.*

WAITRESS. I got them to stop the music.

ANDREW. (Thank you.)

WAITRESS goes.

JEN. Are you *crying*?

He averts his eyes. JENNIFER *begins to eat.*

JEN. I worry about you, Andrew.

She continues to eat, choosing her moment.

John said something very interesting. He said 'What if there
is no such man?'

ANDREW *looks at her.*

Exactly. 'What if there is no such man?' What if Anne is lying?
Because John can't come to terms with what she says. He
doesn't find any truth there. The man she describes is too
weird, he is too weird Andrew to be plausible. And to 've
married him? To 've experienced those humiliations day after
day? Well Nicky was right. It's not believable. There is no
man. There is just Anne and her imagination. The hood? The
tape? The young trees?

She continues to eat.

She has invented those things in order to exploit us. You're not eating. Here.

She holds up some food for him to eat. He doesn't move. She eats it herself.

Incidentally, you may like to know she's gone. Yes. She checked out of the hotel. (I guess it was inevitable.)

ANDREW. Anne is lying?

JEN. They showed me her room. It's full of dead flowers. Your eyes are red. You look / terrible.

ANDREW. She's lying?

JEN. Had you never thought of that?

(Yes she checked out right after the meeting. Her account has been closed naturally. The fax / has gone out.)

ANDREW. Let's leave.

JEN. Leave.

ANDREW. Yes. Come with me. I have to get out.

JEN. Keep your voice down. What d'you mean, get out?

ANDREW. Get out. Now.

JEN. Out of the restaurant? Andrew?

ANDREW. I feel sick.

JEN. Are you sick? What is it?

ANDREW. I need some air. (*I believed in her.*)

JEN. You *have* some air. This room is full / of air.

ANDREW. I want to go. I want to leave.

JEN. Right now?

ANDREW. I want to leave the restaurant, yes.

JEN. There's no air out there, Andrew. Out there it's eighty degrees.

ANDREW. I want to *get out*, Jennifer.

WAITRESS (*coming over*). Is he alright?

JEN. He feels a little sick. I think we should have the check.

WAITRESS *goes*.

ANDREW. I need to be outside (*He stands.*)

JEN. I'll call a cab. D'you need the bathroom?

ANDREW. I want to walk.

JEN. *Can you walk?*

ANDREW. Of course I can walk.

JEN. Is this about Anne?

ANDREW. Yes it's about Anne. Of course it's about Anne.

JEN. Forget about her Andrew. She's gone. (Those flowers, they were completely dry, they / crumbled.)

ANDREW. I'm frightened.

JEN. We closed the account. Don't be frightened.

ANDREW. I believed in her.

JEN. We all believed in her.

ANDREW. I *loved* her.

JEN. So did we all love her. But it doesn't affect the work. The work's unaffected.

ANDREW. She lied to us? To me? Are you sure?

JEN. In fact the buzz in good. Already the buzz is good. John ended up being very / positive.

ANDREW. I need to be outside.

JEN (*looking for the WAITRESS*). Where is that girl? Did you have a jacket? Is this jacket yours?

ANDREW. I don't know.

JEN. It looks like yours.

ANDREW. Is it?

JEN (*helping him into the jacket*). You need me, Andrew. You need me to help you.

ANDREW. I know.

JEN. You're too easily deceived. You lack insight.

ANDREW. I know. I'm sorry. She's a bitch.

JEN. John opened my eyes. A bitch (that's right) in heat, Andy.

ANDREW. I feel humiliated.

JEN. You have been humiliated.

ANDREW. It's frightening here.

JEN. Where is everyone? Waitress?

ANDREW. She *sat* here. She sat at this table.

JEN. Waitress?

ANDREW. She spoke.

JEN. The account's closed, Andrew. It's over.

4. Canal Street and Broadway. The sidewalk.

CLIFFORD *is selling dishes as at the beginning of the play. A MAD*

WOMAN *is picking through the items. In a corner, unseen by*

CLIFFORD, ANNE *and SIMON are watching.*

WOMAN. My kid has diarrhoea. He's had diarrhoea for three days.

CLIFFORD. Uh-hu?

WOMAN. Isn't that something? Three days of diarrhoea?

CLIFFORD. Quite something.

WOMAN. D'you have anything for diarrhoea?

CLIFFORD. You need a drugstore. All I / have is -

WOMAN (*picks up a bottle*). What's in this bottle?

CLIFFORD. It's silver polish.

WOMAN. But what's *in* it.

CLIFFORD. Silver polish is in it.

WOMAN. But what's in the polish?

CLIFFORD. I'm sorry.

WOMAN. You think because I'm poor I'm ignorant? That I would poison my child? But what I'm saying is there are things *in* things. You say 'this is polish' but inside the polish may be something good for diarrhoea just as in many

medicines there is a poison. How come you have silver polish anyway?

CLIFFORD. It belonged to my mother.

WOMAN. Did she polish silver or was it polished for her?

CLIFFORD. The latter, I suppose. (That's very astute.)

WOMAN. 'The latter I suppose.' You have a very English way of speaking, you know that? Was your mother English?

CLIFFORD. She was from Europe.

WOMAN. And she brought all this silver? - and this china? - is that Limoges?

SIMON. Is that him?

ANNE. Yes. Go on.

CLIFFORD. It was a wedding present. Yes.

WOMAN. I'll take the polish. How much is it?

CLIFFORD. Fifty cents - but don't give it to a child.

WOMAN. D'you have children?

CLIFFORD. No.

WOMAN. Then you know nothing. What do you know? You could have children. You could have grandchildren. Then you might understand.

SIMON *comes over.*

CLIFFORD. My work has always come first.

WOMAN. What work is that?

SIMON. Excuse me.

WOMAN. Well I'm pleased to 've met you. (*She moves away.*)

SIMON. Excuse me.

CLIFFORD. Do we know each other?

The WOMAN sits on the ground and begins to drink the polish. SIMON takes out the fork.

SIMON. I have a complaint about this fork.

CLIFFORD. A complaint?

I remember. I sold you this for five. What's wrong with it?

SIMON. Look at these tines.

CLIFFORD. What tines? What is a tine?

SIMON. The prongs. Look at them.

CLIFFORD. The prongs are called tines? *That's interesting. I didn't / know that.*

SIMON. Didn't you know that? I thought words were your trade. Feel them. Yes.

CLIFFORD. They're like needles. They shouldn't be / like that.

SIMON. Exactly. I sharpened them on a stone.

CLIFFORD. Well you've done a very foolish thing. You've ruined a good fork.

SIMON. Don't call me a fool.

CLIFFORD. It was a good fork. It had a history.

SIMON. I have a complaint.

CLIFFORD. *You did that to the fork, young man. I sold it you in good faith. Now I'm sorry / if you've -*

SIMON. The complaint is not on my behalf. It's on behalf of my wife.

CLIFFORD. Now listen. I don't *know* your wife

SIMON. I think that you do.

CLIFFORD. Why did you do this to a good fork?

SIMON. I think that you do. I think that you defiled her honor.

CLIFFORD. You use some very strange words. Now listen -

SIMON. You looked at her. You spied on her. You defiled her.

CLIFFORD. I don't know your wife.

SIMON. I think that you do.

CLIFFORD *catches sight of ANNE.*

CLIFFORD. Listen . . . I'm sorry about the fork. Please choose

another.

SIMON. I don't want another.

CLIFFORD. Look, take back your five. Take back ten.

SIMON. I don't want back my five.

CLIFFORD. So what do you want?

ANNE. DO IT.

SIMON (*matter of fact*). Revenge.

CLIFFORD. Listen, why don't we -

SIMON *stabs the fork into CLIFFORD's eye.*

ANNE. TWIST IT.

SIMON *twists the fork, lets it fall.*

The other eye. Simon!

As SIMON backs away ANNE rushes forward and stabs the fork into CLIFFORD's other eye as he lies on the ground. Immediately a siren sounds. SIMON and ANNE run off. The MAD WOMAN starts to pick through CLIFFORD's things and drop them into a bag.

JENNIFER and ANDREW *appear on their way from the restaurant to the office. They've not seen SIMON and ANNE. The MAD WOMAN picks up her bag and makes off, knocking against JENNIFER.*

JEN. Has something happened here?

WOMAN. His things. He asked me to take care of his things.

The WOMAN slips away. The siren sounds. JENNIFER hangs back, but ANDREW approaches CLIFFORD. Neither recognises him.

JEN. Has something happened here? Andrew? Don't touch him.

CLIFFORD. Help me.

JEN. Don't touch him, Andrew. You're sick.

CLIFFORD. Help me. I've been robbed.

JEN. My husband's sick. I'm sorry. He can't help. Andrew.
Come on. This neighborhood's / not safe.

CLIFFORD (*turning to JEN*). I know you. I know your voice.

ANDREW. Clifford? Are you Clifford?

CLIFFORD. I know you. Who are you?

ANDREW. Who did this to you?

JEN. You're sick, Andrew. Come / on.

CLIFFORD. A man. It was a man.

ANDREW. A man did this to you? What man?

CLIFFORD. It was her husband.

JEN. This is not our problem, Andrew.

ANDREW. Whose husband?

JEN. This is not our *problem*.

ANDREW. Whose husband?

CLIFFORD. Who are you? I know you. Help me. It's dark.

JENNIFER *eases ANDREW away. They go.*

It's dark. Who did I offend?

Blackout.

ACT FOUR

A year later.

1 TriBeCa. The empty office.

In silence a group of formally dressed men and women file in until they fill most of the space. They don't speak. They wait.

Then, in this order, enter JENNIFER, NICKY and lastly JOHN, also wearing formal clothes, jewelry. The crowd begins to applaud on seeing JENNIFER, the enthusiasm increasing with NICKY, at maximum on JOHN.

The applause goes on and on as the three take up positions: JENNIFER and NICKY at the back of the crowd, JOHN at the front, facing them.

Finally JOHN, smiling, gestures for silence.

The mood is happy and relaxed. The crowd reacts to JOHN's speech with unforced good humor and enthusiasm.

JOHN. What is the meaning of success?

The answer, my friends, is nothing.

Nothing that is, unless it be success deserved, success merited.

Tonight we have merited that success.

Applause.

Let me begin – a rhetorical device because I have of course already begun –

Laughter.

Let me begin with a word or two about Anne – the real Anne.

Stillness.

Art is nothing without life – and life is what Anne brought to us – *true* life – with all its fragility, inconsistency and banality – and yet at the same time – in Anne – both beauty and

strength. This is the room, the same room, in which she told us her story and wept.

Stillness.

Our only regret is that she was not able to understand the process of transformation by which life becomes art – a process in which, at times, truth must be laid on a Procrustean bed and cut here and there until it fits. (Not too messily we hope.)

Laughter.

Talking of Anne brings me – a little too conveniently I admit –

Laughter.

– but brings me nevertheless to Nicky. To Nicole. Nicole.

He extends his hand. To applause, NICKY makes her way to the front and takes JOHN's hand.

When I first joined this project a year ago, Nicky here was working on reception. She was answering *telephones*.

Laughter.

I'm quite serious. Wasn't that so?

NICKY. That's what I did.

JOHN. That's what she did. That is indeed what she did and none of us at that time could've foreseen the stroke of genius (my own as it happens) –

Laughter.

which would result in her – untrained – inexperienced as she then was – in her being chosen to play Anne. But – as you have all seen tonight – she does not 'play' Anne, she *is* Anne. She inhabits Anne. At certain moments she is more Anne than herself.

NICKY. (Thank you.)

JOHN. (It's true.) (*Gesture.*) Nicole.

More applause for NICKY.

Now I know you're all anxious to eat, to dance. Yes. I see it in your eyes. A certain restlessness.

Laughter.

But tonight would not be complete if I failed to mention the two facilitators of this project. Jennifer. And Andrew.

To applause JENNIFER makes her way to the front.

Andrew? Where are you?
We seem to 've lost Andrew.

Laughter.

JEN. (He's not well. He's lying down.)

JOHN. (He's lying down?)

Andrew is lying down. What've you been doing to him, Jen.

*Laughter. JENNIFER forces a smile.
JOHN takes her hand and waits for stillness.*

A year ago what was this project? It was nothing. It was a page.

JEN. (Less than a page.)

JOHN. It was less – exactly – than a page. But their tenacity, their violent need to create, transformed that page.

Stillness.

Jen and I go back a long way, a long long way.

JEN. (Not too far, John.)

Laughter. She forces a smile.

JOHN. Not too far – of course not too far –but far enough.
Far enough to be part of a time when we seriously believed
our actions would bring about – what Jen? revolution?
peace? (fuck knows quite frankly)

Laughter.

But that idealism –

JEN. (We weren't quite so vague, John.)

JOHN. (Not quite so vague but vague enough.) That idealism
has stayed with us. It has stayed with us in our art. Now, it's
fashionable to believe, my friends, that art changes nothing.
But on the contrary, what I say to you is that art changes
everything –

Tremendous applause.

(*Over applause.*) It is the enduring reflection of our transient
selves. It is what makes us *real*.

The applause continues until JOHN gestures for silence.

And now, I believe – yes – my speech has ended.

Laughter.

There is food. There is wine.

NICKY. (A band.)

JOHN. Even a band. Thank you all.

(*He gestures to the door.*) Enjoy.

The crowd files out.

NICKY *is first to move. She sits in a chair. She lowers her head.*

NICKY. Why do I feel so tense? John?

JOHN *comes behind her and begins to massage her shoulders, which
are naked.*

JENNIFER *doesn't move.*

*The massage goes on in concentration and silence to JENNIFER's
increasing discomfort.*

Finally, without stopping, JOHN speaks.

JOHN. How is Andrew?

Should you see him?

JEN. He may be asleep. He often sleeps.

JEN lights a cigarette. Massage continues.

JOHN. Jennifer is smoking. When did you start smoking /
Jennifer?

JEN. He just lies down and sleeps.

JOHN. Wake him.

Rouse him.

Faint laugh from NICKY.

Or is that no longer possible?

He's a weak man.

NICKY. He's not asleep.

JEN. I'm sorry?

NICKY. Andrew. He's not asleep.

JOHN. He's a weak man. Not only does he have many
weaknesses, but he gives in to them all. Perhaps that's his /
charm.

JEN. Have you been in to him?

JOHN. Because he does have charm – he can charm people away – *oh* yes.

JEN. Have you been into the room?

Massage continues.

NICKY. What room?

JEN. The room he was sleeping in. (Are you doing this / deliberately?)

JOHN. To think that when she married him I was crushed. Utterly. / (*Faint laugh.*)

NICKY. He was never asleep. He was not *in* the room. He's gone. (*To JOHN:*) Really? Were you?

JEN. Where?

NICKY. To Anne. He's gone to Anne.

JEN. How can he 've gone to Anne?

JOHN. ('Gone to Anne'. It doesn't surprise me. That's what I mean by / weakness.)

NICKY. He made me get out the old file. He wanted her address. That's where he's gone.

JEN. And you gave him the file? You let him go? You *said* nothing? When *was* this?

NICKY. I'm no longer your servant, Jennifer.

NICKY and JOHN exchange a look and quiet laugh which confirm JENNIFER's exclusion. JENNIFER perceives this and leaves the room.

(*Calls after her:*) The file's still out if you want it. It's green.

In silence the massage continues.

NICKY. Did you mean what you said?

JOHN. What did I say?

NICKY. Don't you recall? You made a speech, a great speech.

John?

She twists her head round to look up at him, but he stares ahead, continuing the massage.

JOHN. I recall nothing.

D'you hear that sound?

NICKY. I don't hear any sound.

JOHN. It's the elevator. It's Jen going down to the street. Down down down she goes. To the street.

NICKY. I don't hear it.

JOHN. Listen. (*He stills his hands.*)

Longest possible silence.

Blackout simultaneous with crashing sound of subway train which finally recedes as before to introduce:

2 Avenue X. ANNE and SIMON's apartment.

ANNE is alone. She occupies exactly the same position as NICKY in the previous scene, sitting in a chair. However, unlike NICKY, she is tied to the chair and her mouth is taped shut. In the distance, intermittently, a dog barks.

Close to ANNE's face a battered fan slowly oscillates. She wears the same dress as in Act 3. It has grown ragged.

Banging at the door – which is offstage. The sound of the door opening. ANDREW appears in the room, dressed in his formal clothes. He goes to ANNE.

She makes no sound. He unties her. He carefully peels the tape from her mouth.

She wets her lips. No other reaction.

ANDREW. Anne?

ANNE. Who are you?

How did you get in here?

ANDREW. The door's not locked.

ANNE. That's a steel door. It's always locked.

Always.

ANDREW. It's Andrew.

ANNE. Andrew?

ANNE. You don't own that dog do you, Andrew? I worry about that dog. It sounds distressed.

ANDREW *starts to look around the room.*

You know *I'm* sorry but this is wrong. It's wrong to walk into someone's apartment like this. What are you looking for? We don't have anything. Do we look like we have things? Why are you dressed like that? Do I know you?

ANDREW. Is there somebody here?

ANNE. We've *been* robbed. A while back. There's nothing left to take.

ANDREW *picks up a piece of dark fabric.*

ANDREW. What is this?

ANNE. A hood. It belongs to my husband.

ANDREW *examines the hood. The dog is heard.*

I'm sorry but it has no value. Listen, if you own that dog why don't you feed it or exercise it or *care* for it / in some way?

ANDREW (*discards hood*). I thought you'd like to know it's a great success, Anne.

ANNE. What is?

ANDREW. Your life.

ANNE. I don't follow. A success?

ANDREW. Yes.

ANNE. Well. OK. Perhaps. I have enough to eat. I have my health. (*Faint laugh.*) Also I'm pregnant, so please – please don't hurt me.

ANDREW. You don't look pregnant.

ANNE. I even quit smoking. I used to smoke. I quit.

ANDREW (*hardly suppressing his anger*). Why don't you move?

ANNE. I beg your pardon?

ANDREW (*as before*). Why don't you *move*? Get out of that chair? I've untied you. That door isn't steel. It's not even *locked*.

ANNE (*calmly*). Move where? *I'm* sorry – this is my home. This is my chair. Why don't *you* move? Why don't you get the fuck out? (*Dressed like that, poking about, Jesus Christ this is my / apartment.*)

She looks away from him, rubbing her wrists.

ANDREW. I want you to come with me before he gets back.

ANNE. Before who gets back? What if I don't want / to come?

ANDREW. The man.

ANNE. What man? D'you mean my husband?

ANDREW. Do you have a husband?

ANNE. I'm pregnant. Of course I have a husband.

ANDREW. Simon.

ANNE. Yes.

ANDREW. Where is he? Where is Simon?

ANNE. Don't you believe me?

ANDREW. Where is Simon?

ANNE. Are you one of his friends? I never meet his friends. He

prefers to go out alone. He tells me all about them, though.

ANDREW. Please, Anne . . .

ANNE. There's Joel – Joel's gay but he's very very funny – and Max of course – and Holly who's just had a baby girl. Then there's Ross who works for Adam behind the bar. *His* cousin's a police officer. Which one are you? Are you Joel?

ANDREW. My name is Andrew.

ANNE. He's never mentioned you.

ANDREW. I'm not one of his / friends.

ANNE. I used to really crave to go out. My dream was to go through that door. But now I see how wrong I was to crave and how right he was to keep me in. Because last time we went out together we did something really really terrible. (*Lowers voice.*) You won't believe this, but we put out a man's eyes. (*Faint laugh.*)

She continues to rub her wrists.

ANDREW. How d'you mean 'put them out'?

ANNE. Right out of his head. How else out?

She turns and looks straight at him. Her tone changes.

I know who you are.
I think you should leave.

SIMON *appears*. *He's drinking from a bottle of beer in a paper bag, as when first seen.*

He looks briefly at ANDREW and ANNE.

SIMON. I need to take a shower.

ANNE. Is it hot out?

SIMON. It's still hot.

ANNE. What time is it?

SIMON. It's 2 am.

ANNE. You're back early.

This is the man owns the dog.

SIMON. What dog?

ANNE. The dog we always hear, Simon.

SIMON. (*Pleased to meet you.*) I never hear a dog, Anne.

ANNE. He never hears it. He imagines this neighbourhood is / peaceful.

SIMON. What sort of dog do you have?

ANDREW. I don't have a dog. I don't own a dog. I'm *sorry*.
That's not why I'm here.

SIMON. Uh-hu?

In that case Anne is / mistaken.

ANNE. How was Joel?

SIMON. Joel wasn't there tonight. Why is he dressed like that?

ANDREW. My name is Andrew.

SIMON. In fact that's why we left. It's not so much fun without Joel. Andrew? *I see*. Is it?

ANDREW. I want Anne to come with me.

SIMON. Would 'Andrew' like a beer? What do you drink, Andrew?

ANDREW. I want her to leave. / Now.

SIMON. Anne, why don't you get Andrew a beer?

Perhaps you don't drink. That's very wise. My wife is pregnant. She's given up – haven't you Anne? – tobacco *and* alcohol. In fact the last time she drank / which was approximately.

ANNE. (*Please stop, Simon.*)

SIMON. twelve months ago (*stop? why?*) the last time she drank she was raped by a complete stranger.

ANNE. I was not raped / Simon.

SIMON. Raped by a complete stranger, Andrew. This is in

we're talking a respectable apartment on the Upper West Side where they have servants and candles and if they look east they can see the Park.

Yes.

ANNE. (I was not raped.)

SIMON. So perhaps you don't drink. Do you drink?

Why don't you sit / down?

ANDREW. Anne, we have / to go.

SIMON. D'you see – Andrew – how the color's come back to her hair – and to her eyes? (Go? I don't think so.) Look at her eyes. They're blue again. Show him your eyes, Anne. D'you see how the light comes from the inside? That's because she eats properly now. No one's trying to feed her in the mouth, Andrew. She eats good fresh things which I cook for her. I shop for her, I cook for her, everything is done for her, isn't it, Anne. Sometimes I *wash* her, I wash her body – isn't that so?

ANNE. Sometimes he washes me. It's true.

SIMON. You see? Why don't you sit down?

ANNE. But I'll wash the baby sometimes, won't I Simon? That is what you said?

SIMON. Of course you'll wash the baby.

ANNE. (*faint laugh*) I hate the way their heads flop back.

SIMON. You have to cradle their heads, Anne. I've told you.

ANNE. (Yes. OK. Cradle them.) It's kind of scary. So many things can go wrong. Pregnancy. Delivery. Infancy. Do you have any children?

SIMON. Nothing will go wrong, Anne. Just cradle his head.

ANNE. I will take him out sometimes, won't I?

SIMON. Of course you'll take him out. He has to see the world. The sky. Trees. The young trees.

ANNE. I'd like to go out.

SIMON. You can always go out.

Silence.

ANDREW. Can she go out now?

Silence.

SIMON. She can always go out, but she chooses not to.

ANDREW. Why don't you go out, Anne. Get some air.

ANNE (*confused*). What? Now? It's late. I . . .

SIMON. It's just that she chooses not to.

ANDREW. Yes. Go out now.

ANNE. I'm not really dressed. I . . .

SIMON. She doesn't *want* to go out. That's *her* choice.

ANNE. I'm not really dressed. My hair . . . (*she runs her hand through it*) look at it.

Perhaps for a few minutes, Simon. May I?

ANDREW. Go now.

SIMON. She chooses not to, that's all.

ANNE hesitates, then moves very slowly away from SIMON and towards the way out. She breaks into a run and goes.

This proves nothing.

Offstage, a single shot.

SIMON goes out.

A moment passes. ANDREW doesn't move.

JENNIFER enters, holding the gun.

JENNIFER. She *ran* at me. I just *reacted*. Why did she *run*? I *reacted* to that. It's so *threatening* here, Andrew.

Stillness.

She was running *towards* me. *At* me. There's no light, she *appeared*. *Don't* look at me like that. She appeared, it was a reaction.

Stillness.

I've been wandering this lousy project in a state of *total fear*, Andrew. Nothing is *numbered*. *Total fear*. *Why* did you do this? FUCK this. Are you now HAPPY?

She throws down the gun.

SIMON *enters*. *He looks at them.*

(*Softly.*) She ran at me. It was a threat. I reacted.

Long silence.

SIMON. My child.

JEN. Are you *Simon*?

Blackout and simultaneously CLIFFORD's voice calling "Taxi! Taxi!"

3 Taxi!

Faint light reveals CLIFFORD calling for a taxi. He's clutching a sheaf of papers. Throughout the scene pages fall from the sheaf and are swept away by a current of air.

The TAXI DRIVER *appears as before*.

DRIVER. Where to?

CLIFFORD. Where is this?

DRIVER. 'Where is this'? Don't you know?

CLIFFORD. *I think* I know.

DRIVER. Well tell me what you think.

CLIFFORD. I think this is Canal Street and Broadway.

DRIVER. I think you're right. I think this is Canal Street. It feels like Canal Street.

CLIFFORD. Don't you know? Isn't there / a *sign*?

DRIVER. I've lived in this city all of my life.

CLIFFORD. Me too.

DRIVER. That's unusual.

CLIFFORD. Yes. D'you think?

DRIVER. Where can I take you?

CLIFFORD. Broadway and East 52nd.

DRIVER. There is no such thing.

CLIFFORD. But I was given the address.

DRIVER. Well I'm sorry but there is no such thing.

Sheets of paper continue to blow away.

What kind of place is it you want? I could take you to *West* 52nd and Broadway.

CLIFFORD. I have to deliver some work.

DRIVER. In the middle of the night.

CLIFFORD. Is this the middle of the night?

DRIVER. Certainly.

CLIFFORD. I didn't know that.

DRIVER. What kind of work is it?

CLIFFORD. A script.

DRIVER. Can't you mail it?

CLIFFORD (*gripping the paper*). Am I losing pages?

DRIVER. A script? You a writer?

Pages continue to blow away.

DRIVER. Listen, why don't I just take you uptown. (A writer, you must have lots of things inside of yourself, *stories*.)

CLIFFORD. I need this delivered. I don't want to talk.

DRIVER. I'll take you uptown. Do I have a green light?

CLIFFORD. I'm sorry?

DRIVER. Do I have a green / light?

CLIFFORD. Are you mocking me? I'm blind. *Look at me.*

DRIVER. I'm not mocking you.

CLIFFORD. OK.

DRIVER. Were you blind at birth?

CLIFFORD. No.

DRIVER. D'you have a *disease*?

CLIFFORD. I don't want to talk.

DRIVER. So I just / drive?

CLIFFORD. Just drive. Yes.

They drive.

DRIVER. May I ask your name?

CLIFFORD. (Clifford. Clifford Webb.)

DRIVER. You're not *the* Clifford Webb.

CLIFFORD. Yes as a matter of fact yes I am.

DRIVER (*with joy*). Shit! I have Clifford Webb in my taxi. This is an *honor*, Clifford. Hey . . .

CLIFFORD. (Thank you.)

DRIVER. This is a real honor. I wish I could see your face. I hear your name all the time on the radio. Clifford Webb says this. Clifford Webb thinks that. And my wife she watches that show you do on TV.

They drive.

CLIFFORD. What d'you mean 'see my face'?

DRIVER. She says it is so thought / provoking.

CLIFFORD. What d'you mean 'see my face'? Why can't you see my face?

DRIVER. Listen, you don't want to talk to me, Clifford, and I

respect that. Would the radio bother you? Are you trying to *think*?

He turns on the radio.

Softly, the Boogie-Woogie heard at the top of Act 3.

CLIFFORD. Am I losing pages?

The pages continue to blow away and tumble across the space. The DRIVER clicks his fingers in time with the music.

DRIVER. Let's try taking a right here.

Blast of horn.

Take it easy my friend. I have Clifford Webb in the back of this cab.

He continues to click. The music grows louder. The pages tumble through the air. More frequent horn blasts.

CLIFFORD. What d'you mean 'see my face'? Where is this? Where are we going?

DRIVER. I've no idea, Clifford. But isn't that one of the joys, one of the great joys of this city?


Music up loud.

Lights fade.

Music continues as they go into the dark.

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