

Providence Players – “Side Man” Audition Sides/Segments

#0 - pp 13-14: **Clifford and Terry**; Start at Clifford’s line “ And even though there are no clean breaks,” and ends on Clifford’s “I know ma.”

#1 – pp15-16 **Patsy, Clifford and Terry**; Start at Patsy’s Line “Clifford is that you?” and ends on Terry’s “...when they sign for their unemployment Check.

#2 pp 16-19: **Clifford (primary), Gene, Al, Jonesy (primary), Ziggy (primary)**; Starts on Clifford’s line “She can be a little...dark.” Ends on Gene’s line: “The eyes have it.”

#2A p19 Short bridge sequence (5 lines) if Jimmy decides to connect 2 and 3 during auditions; **Clifford, Jonesy, Gene, Ziggy, Al.**

#3 pp 20-21: **Gene (primary), Clifford (primary), Patsy, Al, Ziggy, Jonesy** Gene’s line “He’s still my boy. Managed to get twenty weeks on the books...” to Patsy “keep em in your pants boys

#4 pp 21-22 **Clifford’s jazz musicians as ball players monologue.**

#5 pp 22-24 **Gene & Terry**; (**Clifford** has two line) starts on Gene’s entrance & line “Name that tune”; ends at Gene’s line “It’ll be at the door kid”.

#6 pp 25-27: **All** Starts at Jonesy’s “Nice blowing Genie” ends at Jonesy’s line “dating Florence Nightingale”

#7 pp 31-33: **Al, Terry, Gene (primaries), Ziggy, Jonesy; no Clifford/Patsy**; Starts on 31 with Al “Hey Terry, Nice crib.” Ends on Ziggy “we oughtta have a wake: Requiem for a Motherfucker.”

#7A pp33-35 Bridge segment if Jimmy decides to connect 7 and 8 during auditions **ALL** (total of 36 lines).

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#8 pp 35-36: **Gene, Terry & Patsy**. Starts Terry’s line “Patsy says these doo-wop groups” to Patsy’s line “He’ll get used to it..”

#9 pp 39-40: **Patsy (primary) and Clifford**; Patsy’s line “Here you go, Clifford”; ends on Patsy’s line “just get the hell out of here.”

#10 pp 43-45 + 46-47: **Terry & Gene (primaries), Ziggy**. Terry’s line “How come they keep arresting Jonesy?”; ends on top of 45 Ziggy “He probably needsh a fix, poor bashtard”; resumes 46 halfway through Terry’s line “you lied to me” and ends Terry “You have until midnight. If that phone doesn’t ring and you stay in the business, I’ll fucking kill you. And I’ll kill the baby”

#11 pp 60-61: **Clifford and Gene**; Starts on Clifford’s line “ Couldn’t you tell that she was losing it.” And ends on Clifford’s line “You don’t have a fucking clue [second time]...”

#12 pp 65. **Clifford’s final monologue**

Side #11

~~Side #11~~

SIDE MAN

ACT ONE

Downstage center, lights up on the slightly awkward, twenty-nine-year-old Clifford. To his right, an old bar. Downstage left, a circular booth and table. Clifford faces the audience:

CLIFFORD. It's almost ... *(Looks at wristwatch.)* oh, I'm late. I'm sure it has nothing to do with the fact that I'm seeing my parents tonight. Both of them: mom *and* dad; a kind of *This Is Your Life* bender. I'm not seeing them together, mind you. *Not* a good idea. Definitely not a good idea. Once, long ago, this trumpet player, who I'll probably also see tonight, told me: "The rocksh in her head fit the wholesh in hish." Not anymore. They haven't seen each other, and I haven't seen him in — So, OK, it's complicated. Plus, if I see past all the ... history, I sense, and this one really screws me up, that things would have been better for them if they'd never had me. But, they did. I'm on the scene, as my old man would say. And even though there are no clean breaks, I swear, tomorrow morning I'm out. So tonight, before the "big reunion" with my father, I have a farewell dinner at Mom's, in the zip code of my youth ... *(Lights up on Clifford's mom, Terry. She stands in the doorway to her offstage bedroom, smoking a cigarette, alone.)*

TERRY. Don't start with me, Clifford — I'm not going over there.

CLIFFORD. Ma — I wasn't asking you to —

TERRY. I can't stand to hear him play —

CLIFFORD. I just wanted you to know I was —

TERRY. I already knew. I had a dream you saw him. And you know what pissed me off? He hasn't aged. He'll never age — nothing gets to him —

#0
Clifford
&
Terry



#0
Clifford
&
Terry

CLIFFORD. Well, I —

TERRY. Don't stick up for him Clifford. You know he gaslit me. Everyone thinks your father's so sweet: "Poor Gene, clean Gene, sweet Gene. How he suffers with crazy Terry."

CLIFFORD. No one says —

TERRY. That rat-bastard *gaslit* me. (*Quick shift, concerned now.*) How does he look? *Is he eating?*

CLIFFORD. What?

TERRY. Your father. In the dream. He looked thin.

CLIFFORD. How should I know? I haven't seen him.

TERRY. I made lasagne; there's some containers in the freezer. He can't even feed himself. Will you be home for Christmas?

CLIFFORD. I don't know.

TERRY. You better get going, have a good time ... There's a box in the hallway with some old photos and magazines. I thought you could use them for your art projects.

CLIFFORD. Thanks, Ma.

TERRY. And tomorrow, on the plane —

CLIFFORD. I know Ma: "Say hello to the pilot" when I board.

TERRY. It keeps them alert if they meet the passengers. Responsible.

CLIFFORD. I know, Ma. (*She snuffs out her cigarette, as the lights go out on her. Clifford now walks into the Melody Lounge. From an unseen bandstand, a trumpet player solos on "I Remember Clifford."**) I walk in and I hear him before I see him. Playing a ballad. You could play me a hundred trumpet solos and I'd know which one was his. My father's voice. (*Listens a bit, fights getting overwhelmed by the music. Goes over to a seat at the bar. Clifford takes it in.*) When I was a kid, I thought the Melody Lounge was the coolest place on Earth. In high school, where I was a complete loser, the only thing I had going for me was bringing the guys here to see my old man play trumpet. I was drinking screw drivers at this bar from the time I was thirteen. They sound good tonight. All of them. Up there, on the bandstand, a little over two hundred years of musical experience. Ziggy and my dad and Al and Jonesy keep time so well that it's kind of stood still for them, at least when they're playing. They were all horn players in the legendary, com-

* See Special Note on Songs and Recordings on copyright page.

pletely forgotten Claude Thornhill big band. They recorded things on *wire* in the forties, right after the war, that are still too hip for the room. (*Looks around.*) Not that there's anyone in the room tonight. In the audience there's me, two drunks from Jersey, and (*Turns to see.*) ... Patsy? (*Patsy has walked past the bar and now sees Clifford. She is in her late fifties, but you'd never know it. In her hey-day, she stopped traffic on 52nd Street. She hugs him as:*)

PATSY. Clifford? Is that you? I haven't seen you in ... forever. Does your father know you're here?

CLIFFORD. It's kind of a surprise.

PATSY. (*Looks him over.*) You haven't changed —

CLIFFORD. Don't tell my shrink — she'd be heart-broken.

PATSY. No, you haven't — when you were six, you looked thirty, and you still look thirty ... So, how's work?

CLIFFORD. I quit.

PATSY. Good for you.

CLIFFORD. I'm going west.

PATSY. You *have* changed.

CLIFFORD. (*Changing the subject.*) You haven't. You look great.

PATSY. What can I say, it's my cross to bear ... How's Terry?

CLIFFORD. I just came from there — (*Lights up on Terry. Music out. She stands in the doorway to her offstage bedroom, smoking a cigarette, alone.*)

TERRY. Clifford, what's the name of that Tiny Kahn tune?

CLIFFORD. (*To audience.*) She does this to me all the time, even when she's not here, she's here. (*To Terry.*) "Just My Fucking Luck?"

TERRY. No, not Kahn, the other one —

CLIFFORD. Kern? "Why Was I Born?"

TERRY. (*She nods.*) Yes.

CLIFFORD. (*Turns to audience.*) You kind of have to work with her.

TERRY. Ask your father to play it. (*She closes the door, as lights go out on her. Music up again: "I Remember Clifford."**)

CLIFFORD. OK Ma, "Why Was I Born?" I'll ask.

PATSY. Yoo hoo, Clifford.

CLIFFORD. (*He returns to Patsy.*) Sorry.

PATSY. How is she?

* See Special Note on Songs and Recordings on copyright page.

#1
Patsy, Clifford, Terry

CLIFFORD. Terry? Good days ... bad days. *(Patsy doesn't push him.)*
PATSY. Old days. You know, *(Looks across the stage to the empty booth.)* they had their first date here.

CLIFFORD. Their only date, I think.

PATSY. Once upon a time Clifford, we were in our prime ... *(She hugs him.)* Hey, it's been too long.

CLIFFORD. *(To audience, during the hug.)* Years, actually. Time flies when it crawls. *(To Patsy.)* These guys together ... I can't even think of the last time that happened. *(Terry reopens her door. Music out. Patsy retreats upstage.)*

TERRY. Well, you know it wasn't on a family vacation or at a restaurant. Or a party. *Your father never took us anywhere.*

CLIFFORD. Ma, please —

TERRY. All of them — if they're not on a club date, their idea of a big get-together is when they sign for their unemployment check. *(Terry closes her door.)*

CLIFFORD. *(To audience.)* She can be a little ... dark. But she's usually right. The last time I saw these guys together was at Unemployment. Nine years ago, at the old 92nd Street Office. The musicians called it Club 92. *(Harsh lights up on: Club 92. Clifford stands, walks over to the head of the beginner's unemployment line. Two lines away, his father, Gene, and Al, Ziggy, and Jonesy wait on the old-timer's line. To audience.)* I am twenty-one years old, out of college, out of work. On line for my first unemployment check. It is 1977. As I inch my way up the beginner's line, I spot my father, who is over there *(Points.)* to sign for what, his four millionth check. As a jazz musician, he is sort of always there. There's the National Endowment for the Arts, which is money for classical musicians, and there's the New York State Bureau of Unemployment, which gives grants to jazz musicians. It's a two-tiered system.

GENE. *(Calling out to the other musicians.)* Al, Ziggy, Jonesy — get a load of this: My kid is signing for his first check. *(The guys all see Clifford, shout hellos and wave.)*

CLIFFORD. He is, at that moment, prouder of me than I have ever seen him: Today, I am a man. *(Clifford joins Gene, Al, Ziggy and Jonesy in a booth at the Melody Lounge. To audience.)* To celebrate, the old man takes me out afterwards. The guys are in a

booth at the back. You can always spot them: they wear car coats, caps, a lot of brown and tan polyester; and they sit as far away from daylight as possible.

GENE. *(Pointing to Clifford.)* My son my son. *(To the guys.)* Did you see him? *(Handshakes of congratulation.)*

AL. Mazel tov.

ZIGGY. Geshundheit.

AL. Thank you. *(Clifford, beaming, now turns back to audience.)*

CLIFFORD. It's a special day. And it will prove to be the only time in my life I'll see my father pick up a check: Not that Al, Ziggy, or Jonesy picks up a check either. Musicians don't pick up checks. They don't dance. They don't buy when they can rent. They don't care about clothes, shoes, light, or weather, except in terms of how it might effect alternate-side of the street parking. They order soup: *(The waitress comes. It's Patsy. Eight years younger.)*

AL. I'll have the ... soup.

ZIGGY. Ish there a shpecial shoup?

JONESY. What do you care? Four soups, Patsy. *(Patsy exits to get soups.)* You want one kid? Five — make it five. Or four soups, one shoup, for Ziggy.

ZIGGY. Shcrew you. Schmuck. *(Shouting.)* And um, extra crack-ersh. *(Patsy brings the soups and crackers.)*

CLIFFORD. *(To audience.)* Soups come. They wait ten minutes for them to cool down; they're horn players, they can't burn their chops. After a while, I become aware that Jonesy, who has one eye and used to play trombone, is staring at me. Or my arms. *(Jonesy stares at Clifford's rolled-up shirt sleeves, or more accurately, at the veins in his exposed forearms.)*

JONESY. Gene, your kid has great rope. Man —

CLIFFORD. *(To audience.)* What do you say when an ex-junkie compliments your veins? *(To Jonesy.)* Thank you.

JONESY. *(To Gene, very sweet.)* No, he does. I wouldn't have said it if I didn't mean it. I mean, Christ, by the time I was his age, I'd shot out so many veins I was reduced to shooting between my toes.

ZIGGY. We're eating. Ish it too much to ashk ...

JONESY. Or maybe at that time I was still between my fingers.

ZIGGY. Thank you. That'sh better.

JONESY. Lost my eye in the war. *(He pops his glass eye out and*

#1
#2
Clifford, Gene, Al,
Ziggy, Jonesy

#3
Clifford, Gene, Al, Ziggy, Jonesy

#2 Clifford, Gene, Ziggy, Jonesy

shows it to Clifford and the guys.)

ZIGGY. He spent the war teaching retarded buglers reveille.

JONESY. The home front was very dangerous.

AL. Ask Dicky Smith. *(Everyone laughs. Al explains the reference to Clifford.)* Piano player, poor schmuck, gets his notice. Now Dickie was clean at that time.

ZIGGY. A Mormon.

CLIFFORD. *(To audience.)* A Mormon: this means, a little pot, a couple of times a day. Benzedrine inhalers. Booze.

AL. *Clean.* But he's pissing in his pants about being called up. There was a very big war going on at the time.

ZIGGY. Enormous.

AL. And little Dickie — he doesn't want any part of it. So he goes to Jonesy and says, fix me up. *(Explaining to Clifford.)* He figures, if he's a junkie, he's automatic 4-F.

CLIFFORD. Got it —

JONESY. I tried to warn him — kid, I said, it's so good, don't even try it once. *(To Clifford.)* Which is actually what someone said to me when I first started. Which of course only made me want to try it all the more. *(For the table.)* So I show him the ropes. What I didn't know is he's also got someone lobbing him bennies — ZIGGY and AL. *(Singing.)* Everytime it rains it rains, bennies from heaven.

JONESY. And he's knocking back about a quart of bourbon a day. Beer chasers. He spends three weeks just about killing himself, then they postpone his friggin' physical. Now by this point, he's pretty strung out —

AL. He can't stop even if he wants to —

JONESY. Which you never do, by the way.

ZIGGY. — Sho he's mainlining and taking uppers and drinking and he's losing weight 'cause he's vomiting sho much.

AL. And he's got the shakes. And he hasn't slept in weeks. And finally —

JONESY. They call him in — and he can barely drag his ass up the stairs. He's down to about ninety-five pounds, his eyes are like bulging out of his forehead. He's lost his hair. He's a total friggin' mess — they take one look at him — they say: "Pal, no point in even giving you a physical" — get this:

JONESY, ZIGGY and AL. "You're too fuckin' short." *(The guys laugh ahead of the punchline, and through it.)*

CLIFFORD. *(To audience.)* The musicians love this story.

ZIGGY. Too short. *(The guys break up again.)* You get it? He wash like five-two. None of us ever thought about it. Piano. What difference did it make?

JONESY. They never even noticed he was a junkie. Me though, I wasn't a junkie then so much as an addict —

AL. Ah-huh.

CLIFFORD. *(To audience.)* It's a subtle distinction.

JONESY. But these southern bases were so friggin' hot you had to wear short sleeves all the time, so I can't shoot into my arms, so I'm between my fingers, my toes, and then, into my eye —

ZIGGY. I would argue thish makes him a junkie, but —

JONESY. So I had to shoot into my eye. Which only worked for a while.

AL. And that's how he got the Purple Heart —

JONESY. — and lifetime partial disability. *(The guys all salaam-bow to him.)*

ZIGGY. *(To Clifford.)* Even though he's already got dishability, he still comes down every week to sign for his unemployment check. *(Half-serious.)* That's a work ethic.

JONESY. *Thank you.* I told the sergeant if I had to go home to Ohio —

CLIFFORD. *(To audience.)* He was from the Bronx — they all were.

JONESY. — with a jaundiced, pus-leaching sore where my eye —

ZIGGY. Jeshush Christ. Can anyone eat with thish? *(Al and Jonesy raise their hands.)*

GENE. The eyes have it. *(Everyone laughs. Gene winks at Clifford.)*

CLIFFORD. *(To audience.)* These are my role models. My authority figures. My —

JONESY. *(To Clifford.)* Hey kid. What kind of horn do you play?

GENE. *(To Jonesy.)* Bite your tongue. *(To Clifford.)* Someone has to make a living in the family.

ZIGGY. I remember when you wanted lessshonsh. Your old lady shaid no shon of hersh would ever do to another woman what he *(Points to Gene.)* did to her.

AL and ZIGGY. *(Imitating Terry.)* "The rat-bastard." *(Everyone*

#2 Clifford, Gene, Al, Ziggy, Jonesy

21
60

#3 Clifford, Patsy (aimed), Gene, Al, Ziggy, Jonesy

laughs at this.)

GENE. He's still my boy. Managed to get twenty weeks on the books — as a painter.

AL. Houses?

CLIFFORD. Collages. School job. I cut and paste these —

GENE. The kid got a scholarship to some painting school.

CLIFFORD. (To audience.) RISD. Grad school ...

GENE. But instead, he's gonna write for TV. (To Clifford.) Right?

ZIGGY. (Impressed.) TV? That's a pretty good field. Your father and I were going to do that once.

CLIFFORD. I know, I know. But it's not TV — it's advertising. Maybe. I'm up for something.

ZIGGY. TV paysh pretty good.

CLIFFORD. If I get it, yeah. Like twelve hundred a week. But it's not — (To audience.) The money stops the group cold.

GENE. You cop that kind of bread — you work three weeks, you can lay out the whole year. (Everyone agrees.)

CLIFFORD. (To audience.) You're listening to jazzonomics. The theory that —

GENE. You keep your nut small, you pay your dues, you get to blow your horn.

AL. Wait, wait, wait ... Twelve hundred a week? You mean a month, right?

GENE. As long as you got a place to flop, the rest is ... (He spaces out.)

CLIFFORD. (To audience.) There is no rest. From the time I was four, I knew the family was headed for financial ruin.

JONESY. You gonna finish your crackers? (Jonesy pockets a few cracker packets.)

CLIFFORD. From the time I was six, I, and everyone else knew, it would be up to me to save us.

GENE. I heard about people making money with money, but I always figured that was a sick head to get into —

CLIFFORD. (To audience.) Jazzonomics is why I can't afford to take the RISD scholarship: "Someone has to make a —"

ZIGGY. (To Gene — figuring out "the catch".) Yeah, yeah, but how does he collect next year if he jusht worksh three weeksh?

GENE. Here's the beauty part. I already got my twenty weeks in.

So every week I'm on the books now, I lose a check.

CLIFFORD. (To audience.) This kind of talk used to drive my mother crazy.

GENE. So the kid works three weeks at his TV gig. Quits. Then I do club dates under his name, the union won't know —

AL. — you work seventeen weeks under his name, —

ZIGGY. — he getsh hish twenty weeksh in —

JONESY. — that way you collect —

AL. — he pays you cash for the gigs you do in his name —

GENE. (To Clifford.) You're getting your weeks, I'm —

CLIFFORD. Dad, Dad — It's not TV, it's advertising. I don't have the job yet. I may not get it. And if I do get the gig, I may not quit. (Group is appalled.) I mean, it might be worth trying to stay.

GENE. (To the guys, winking.) I have no son. (The guys crack up. Patsy returns, with five separate checks.)

PATSY. Here you go fellas. (Gene signals for her to give him all the checks. The men, and Patsy, stop in mid-breath.)

GENE. No, no, my treat. (To Patsy.) My boy signed for his first check today.

PATSY. Did you really? Congratulations, Gene! (Clifford nonchalantly shrugs. Gene beams.) Drop by later kid, I'll buy you a drink. (Al, Ziggy, Jonesy ogle Patsy as she walks away.) Keep 'em in your pants, boys. (Gene stares at his son.)

CLIFFORD. (To audience.) My father covers the checks, and then, he does something else he's almost never done. He looks at me. He just stops and stares. And I think he sees something, some promise, some sadness, or ... (Gene starts to whistle the first phrase of "The Afternoon of a Faun." Clifford waves a hand in front of his father's face: no reaction.) He's gone now. Back to when he had no son, back to 1953 — before the Beatles, before Elvis. When these guys were like ball players. On the road, written up in the papers, endorsing trumpets in Down Beat. Bands passing each other in the night even traded sidemen: one first trumpet player and an alto for a second trumpet and a tenor to be named later. (Lights fade on the guys as they exit, and come up on a dimly lit hotel basement — overhead pipes, low ceiling, white walls. Clifford sets up a few folding chairs. Note: Throughout the rest of the first act Clifford, when narrating, also stage manages, or plays care-

#3

#4

Clifford

taker to his parents and their friends. He hands or receives props, drinks, instruments, clothes, and even does simple set changes. He is engaged and in motion throughout.) It was after such a trade my father found himself returning to New York, to his usual room — nine dollars a week — at the Hotel Nevada, an old Upper West Side dive. Mom told me that after road trips, he'd stay there a couple of weeks, until he was clean enough to go home to his mother in the Bronx. The Nevada let the musicians practice in the basement ... Right now, a young flutist thinks she has the place all to herself. *(Lights up on Terry — Clifford hands a flute to a young Terry as she enters. She is twenty-four, fresh-scrubbed face, curly Italian hair. Hand-sewn clothes. She starts to play "The Afternoon of a Faun." Sweet, simple tone. She misses a note.)*

TERRY. **Fuck.** *(Terry takes a breath, starts to play again. She gets to the same passage. Hits the same clam: DAAAH-DUH-DAH DUH DAA DAH. She cannot find the right note.)* **Fuck.** *(Now from somewhere else amidst the pipes, a sweet trumpet starts the phrase again, in the flutist's key, echoing her and correcting her at the same time. Gets to the area where she's wiped out, slows down, gracefully plays through the phrase: Da-duh deee-dah. She listens. Then picks up her flute, starts again. In unison now, slowly: Da-duh deee-dah. They play together for a while, he now starts to swing the melody. She gets to another tricky spot, wipes out. This time he quotes her wipe out, riffs on it. Starts to really improvise on the phrase.)* **Fuck.** *(She puts her flute down. Starts to disassemble it and put it in her case. He continues to improvise on Debussy. His sound gets jazzier. To herself.)* Show off. *(Clifford stands at the bar unseen by Gene or Terry. Now Gene enters.)*

GENE. Name that tune. *(She looks up.)*

TERRY. Mine or yours?

GENE. Yours.

TERRY. How many seconds?

GENE. *(Whistles the tune again.)* As many as you want, just name it.

TERRY. What do I win?

GENE. *(Thinking.)* A ticket to see Woody Herman?

TERRY. How can you get a ticket?

GENE. Friends of mine are in the band.

TERRY. You're teasing me.

GENE. You have six seconds. Five ... four ... three ... t —

TERRY. Time out. Stop the clock. You don't know it?

GENE. It doesn't swing.

TERRY. It did when you played it.

GENE. Are you new in town?

TERRY. I've been here four days, thank you.

GENE. My mistake. It's classical, right? *(Whistles first few notes again.)* My mother played it when I was —

TERRY. Your mother played trumpet?

GENE. No. Cello. With Casals.

TERRY. Pablo?

GENE. Him too.

TERRY. And you don't know it?

GENE. Only had two lessons. She caught me roller-skating with her cello. Made me study trumpet, with her father.

TERRY. A jazz trumpet player?

GENE. Moscow Symphony. Tell me what it is. *Please ...* I'll never be able to nap unless I get it out of my head.

TERRY. "Afternoon of a Faun." Debussy. *(Mispronounced: De BOO-sy. Gene is greatly relieved.)* Whatever the fuck a faun is.

GENE. It's a little deer.

TERRY. Ohh.

GENE. ... dear. Useful for crosswords.

TERRY. *(Very impressed.)* You do crosswords?

GENE. Sure.

TERRY. Shit.

GENE. You know all the other four-letter words. I'm surprised you don't know fawn.

TERRY. Screw you ... *(Gene starts to walk away.)*

GENE. Cold front. Feel the breeze. Catch you later. *(Clifford goes to Terry.)*

CLIFFORD. Ma — that's not how this ends ...

TERRY. *(To Clifford.)* It would have been a lot easier —

CLIFFORD. Yeah, but ...

TERRY. *(To Clifford)* All right. *(Clifford takes her flute, hands her a wrapped sandwich. Then she and Gene replay the scene from a second before.)* Screw you ... *(Gene starts to leave again, but —) ... dear. (Gene turns to her. Smiles.)*

#5
Gene
&
Terry

GENE. It's Genie.

TERRY. "Genie?" Should I make a wish?

GENE. Genie Glimmer. Gene. *(He puts out his cuff-linked, manicured hand for her to shake.)*

TERRY. Anna Maria Prencipe Defeceo Abbruzese.

GENE. What do they call you for short?

TERRY. Crazy Terry.

GENE. Sure. Why not —

TERRY. My brother Guy says I look like St. Teresa when she was hallucinating.

GENE. She wasn't hallucinating, the chick was having a major orgas —

TERRY. You look like you're starving. Do you want some of this? *(She offers him her sandwich. Gene shakes his head.)*

GENE. I'm fine.

TERRY. *(Maternal.)* You don't have to be embarrassed 'cause your hungry. I mean, I don't have a pot to piss in, or a window to throw it out. But you shouldn't go without eating. Here have some. *(Gene takes a huge bite out of the sandwich.)* When was the last time you had something to eat?

GENE. *(Chewing, shameless.)* An hour ago. Bickfords. Breakfast.

TERRY. Breakfast? It's three in the afternoon.

GENE. I just got back into town at six this morning — Woody's band.

TERRY. You're in Woody's ...

GENE. We're in Philly, we play 'til four, then onto the bus with my road tour pillow. *(He double-joints his arms over his head.)* Now I'm trying to get some life back into my chops before tonight.

TERRY. What's tonight?

GENE. The Paramount. Thanks for the sandwich.

TERRY. The Paramount?

GENE. As far as I know. *(Gene nods, it's no big deal to him, it's unthinkable glamorous to her.)*

TERRY. You can't really get me a ticket?

GENE. It'll be at the door, kid. *(Gene takes the sandwich, walks off. Terry turns to Clifford who brings her a coat and purse. Slowly, we start to hear the sound of a big swing band.)*

TERRY. *(To Clifford.)* I went.

CLIFFORD. *He really got you a ticket?*

TERRY. *He couldn't get a ticket, so he met me at the stage door. He told me to stay in the basement —*

CLIFFORD. Classy —

TERRY. — but I snuck upstairs and watched from the wings. *(We listen with Terry to the sound of a soaring trumpet section. Soloing above them now, a heartbreakingly beautiful trumpet. To Clifford.)* He has a beautiful tone. I went to the band room afterwards to tell him. *(Ziggy, Al, Jonesy, all younger, zoot-suited, packing up their instruments. They are in their prime. A lot of bustle except for Gene who seems to move in his own incredibly slow world. Ziggy watches him.)*

JONESY. Nice blowing Genie.

GENE. Not me, it was Ziggy's charts —

ZIGGY. They should like shit until you sholo.

GENE. I really couldn't get anything going up there. My chops are hanging ... *(They all look at him.)*

CLIFFORD. *(To audience.)* He stole the show, and he has no idea.

TERRY. *(To Clifford.)* He never had any idea.

ZIGGY. Hey turtle, shcrew you. We'll be over at Charlie'sh. *(The guys start to leave. Al, always on the prowl, notices Terry.)*

AL. *(To Terry.)* Hey orphan, you want to come?

TERRY. *(Goes to Gene.)* I'm with him.

GENE. *(Noticing her for the first time.)* You're still here?

TERRY. *(Confessing.)* I snuck upstairs, and heard you, you sounded so —

AL. *(To Terry, on his way out.)* Beautiful doll, if he's still packing up in half an hour, c'mon over on your own.

JONESY. *(To Al.)* Let's go Romeo, libation awaits.

AL. *(To Terry.)* Ask for table 69. *(This breaks the guys up. Terry doesn't get it.)*

ZIGGY. *(About Al and Gene.)* One man'sh an octopush, the other'sh a turtle. *(They leave. Terry and Gene alone now in the band room. Clifford hands Gene his trumpet case.)*

TERRY. Are you the turtle?

GENE. *(Proud.)* They did a contest, on the road, Krupa's band. They timed all the slow guys. How we ate, how long it took us to pack up, to shave. I had no idea this was going on. Some of the guys knew, were trying to go slow. But I still beat everybody. *(She*

#6
ALL

#6

All

starts to help him pack. Touches the horn to put it in the case. He swiftly takes the horn away from her.) Hey — don't touch the horn! Never touch the horn. (He lays it in the case, as if it were glass.)

TERRY. You sounded beautiful out there.

GENE. That guy Al, Romeo we call him, best lead player in town. Can sight-read fly shit at 500 feet.

TERRY. But you're the one who gets to solo. You know who you sound like? (She puffs her cheeks out.) You sound like Dizzy.

GENE. (He covers her mouth.) Don't ever say that in front of the guys.

TERRY. There's something you do that he does.

GENE. Just an octave and a half lower.

TERRY. You don't know how good you are. You know that?

GENE. You want to go over to Charlie's? (She nods.) Good. Just do not mention me and Dizzy in the same sentence. I am not worthy. (Clifford watches as Terry and Gene walk out.)

CLIFFORD. They go across the street to Charlie's Melody Lounge. Where we are now: same table cloths, same songs on the jukebox, same smell. (They cross over to Charlie's Melody Lounge: neon lit, red-checked hamburger joint. There's a big round booth in the back; Al and Ziggy are already there.) Ziggy has already bought the next morning's papers — he's obsessed with Joe McCarthy.

ZIGGY. (Looking up from his paper.) Anti-shemitic bastard. (Terry and Gene walk to the booth. Gene signals the guys.)

GENE. Boys, this is Terry. Terry, I'd like to introduce the trumpet section. (Ziggy and Al now rise and do shtick:)

AL. (To Ziggy.) I'm Al.

ZIGGY. (To Al.) I'm Ziggy.

AL and ZIGGY. (To each other.) How do you do? (They shake each others' hands, then they sit back down. Patsy now arrives with drinks.)

PATSY. (To Terry) And I'm Patsy, Romeo's piece on the side.

ZIGGY. (Pointing to Al's toupee.) Not to be confewshed with hish piece on top. (Everyone makes a face at this. Ziggy shrugs.)

PATSY. What are you drinking?

TERRY. Water's OK.

PATSY. Water? Genie, another one out for your money. What do you do, meet these girls the moment they step off the boat?

ZIGGY. Order a drink honey, itsh polite. (About Patsy.) She'sh

putting herself through medical school. One intern at a time.

TERRY. (Has no idea what's going on.) I'll have a ...

PATSY and TERRY. Shirley Temple. (Patsy goes offstage as Jonesy now lurches into the booth.)

ZIGGY. Incoming! (Jonesy has evidently shot up, Terry is worried by his state, the others take it completely in stride. He passes out, slowly, face flat on the table. Ziggy makes an umpire's call.) Shafe!

TERRY. Is he OK?

GENE. Honey, he's fine. He just likes to ... relax after a gig. (Terry is oblivious to the cause of his condition, but she is concerned.)

TERRY. He doesn't look so good.

ZIGGY. He doesn't feel sho bad —

TERRY. (In Jonesy's ear.) What did you eat today? Did you have tuna? I bet you had tuna, mayonnaise — you have to be very careful in warm weather. (She lifts Jonesy's head off the table. Al and Ziggy are laughing. She takes a napkin, dips it in water, wipes his brow. To Jonesy, loud.) Was it tuna? Does anything hurt?

JONESY. (Nods back in for a second.) Jesus, Gene, you didn't tell me you were dating Florence Nightingale. (He nods back out.

Over to the bar, where Patsy, dressed in the coat she wore at the beginning of the play, enters and resumes her 1985 talk with Clifford. Music goes back to "I Remember Clifford"* last heard when Clifford entered the Melody Lounge.)

PATSY. How's Terry?

CLIFFORD. Good days, bad days —

PATSY. Old days. She was something else back then, Clifford. (Patsy and Clifford look across the stage to the booth: they watch Terry take the lit cigarette out of Jonesy's hand and put it out. He doesn't notice.)

CLIFFORD. (To Patsy.) She still has her moments: just got kicked out of her senior center crafts course for crocheting obscene homilies.

PATSY. I tried calling, but she —

CLIFFORD. She doesn't talk to too many people.

PATSY. Everyone always turns on Terry. You know your father and I never —

CLIFFORD. Even if you did, he wouldn't have noticed.

* See Special Note on Songs and Recordings on copyright page.

PATSY. Don't be mean, you. *(Listens to the music.)* He's playing "I Remember Clifford."

CLIFFORD. Genie on a ballad — break your heart every time. *(She kisses him on the cheek — music out, lights cross fade as Clifford helps Patsy take off her coat. She leaves him and crosses the stage, over to the booth, drinks in hand. It's 1953 again.)*

PATSY. I'm off for a while. *(She sits on Al's lap, while he finishes rolling a joint.)*

GENE. So's Jonesy.

TERRY. I think he may have had some bad tuna. He doesn't look very good.

PATSY. Wait a few minutes ...

ZIGGY. He'll look worse. *(While they've been talking, Al and the guys have started passing the joint. He passes it to Patsy.)*

TERRY. You roll your own? I should do that. It's much more economical.

PATSY. *(To Gene while taking a hit off the joint.)* Is she for real? *(The joint is passed from Al, to Ziggy, to Gene, to Terry, who, thinking it's a cigarette, takes a drag. Keeps up her nervous monologue.)*

TERRY. I don't smoke that much. The only reason I started smoking at all was because the sisters at St. Mary's accused me of smoking all the time, so I finally figured I'd start smoking — Pall Mall Golds, 'cause that's what my brother Guy, he's a narcotics agent, *(Ziggy, Al, Gene and even Jonesy cough on this. Terry doesn't miss a beat.)* ... smoked; although nobody ever accused him of smoking. And I've seen people roll their own in the movies, but aren't you clever for rolling your own like this. And then, the way you all share — *(Hands the joint to Gene.)* Here ...

PATSY. What planet did you come from?

TERRY. Baltimore. Not originally. East Boston originally, but I can't go back because my husband, Dominic Defeces, the brick-laying prick, just left me, in Baltimore. I wrote Blimpie, she's my oldest sister, there's seven others, that I had to come home, and she wrote me and told me: "Don't come back." 'Cause my mother, Italian, Catholic, thinks divorce is a sin — even though the rat-bastard got an annulment to run off with my best friend, she'll make me join a fuckin' convent in Montana, if I do. Go home. So Blimpie, Cupie, Fat Raffie and some of my other sisters pitched in

and sent me a money tree with twenty-five dollars. So I came to New York. The room's eight, so now I'm down to thirteen dollars, but I can't go home. But I'm not worried because —

ZIGGY. Anybody following thish?

JONESY. *(Looks up from his haze.)* I am.

AL. What's she saying?

JONESY. Her prick husband, a mudslinger, took her from East Boston, which is a fuckin' tough ghetto, let me tell you, and left her in Baltimore. But Italians don't divorce — so she had to come here. Good night now. *(He nods back out.)*

ZIGGY. You're in luck then. Jazz musiciansh divorce all the time. Patshy's on her third trumpet player.

TERRY. You and Al are married?

PATSY. No. I mean, I am, he's not. My husband's on the road.

ZIGGY. Romeo'sh what you call the relief band. Shpeaking of which, we're due downtown in O ... *(Looks at wristwatch.)* twenty minutesh ago.

PATSY. And I'm back in ...

AL. We'll hop a cab, *(To Ziggy.)* your treat.

ZIGGY. *(Grabbing Jonesy off the table.)* I'll have to roll Joneshy. Genie, you coming?

GENE. I'll catch up with you later.

TERRY. *(As the gang leaves.)* Nice to meet you all. *(To Gene.)* It's amazing how economical you all are. *(Terry holds the remains of the joint but since it's now roach size, and since she thinks it's a cigarette, she just puts it out in an ashtray.)* It's pretty much down to the end. Here, have one of mine. *(Gene watches in shock. Now Gene takes Terry's hand and leads her out of the bar, and across the stage.)*

CLIFFORD. They didn't make it downtown that night, instead he took her to his room in the Hotel Nevada, for a nightcap. That's when she saw: *(Lights up on a bare room, as Terry and Gene enter.)*

TERRY. *(To Gene, now in his room.)* **You have a sink?**

GENE. State of the art: Cold comes out of the hot, cold comes out of the cold — *(Terry looks at the photos on the wall.)*

TERRY. Is that you with Frank Sinatra?

GENE. When he comes to town, he usually adds me to his —

TERRY. Oh my God, I've wanted to see him my whole life. More than anything.

GENE. Next time he's here, I'll get you in. *(Clifford hands him a wire recorder. Gene fiddles with it.)*

TERRY. Wait a minute, you're bullshitting me. Right? Everyone always does that. You didn't really play with him, did —

GENE. Here, this is me with him at the Copa — recorded it from backstage on this very wire recorder. *(A choppy quality, bootleg like, but recognizable big band, live from the Copa. * A trumpet section soars preferably after a short intro or patter from Sinatra. They listen for a few bars.)*

TERRY. That's so beautiful.

GENE. The club manager caught me with it, picked up the whole wire recorder, threw it against the wall. It still plays. We were gonna write to the company, see if they'd do an endorsement ad. "Famed Copa Manager and Hoodlum Jules Podell Couldn't Break This, Neither Will You." *(They listen for a few moments. Terry goes to Gene. She grabs his hand.)*

TERRY. Do you want to dance? With me?

GENE. Trumpet players don't dance — bad for the chops. Come here, let's just listen. *(He takes her in his arms. They kiss, as the voice of Sinatra comes up, and the lights fade down.)*

CLIFFORD. That night, with the help of Frank Sinatra, they made love. Then slept together, very close, in a single bed with the blinking neon of the Hotel Nevada flickering off and on. *(He watches them sleep as the lights fade up.)* Morning comes, and Terry's a little more chipper than he is.

TERRY. *(To Gene.)* Do you want to live together? *(He jumps.)*

GENE. I'm going on the road in a couple of weeks. Maybe sooner.

TERRY. I'll find us a place while you're gone. When you come back, it will be all fixed up.

GENE. No — it's out of the — *(Terry moves into their new apartment. Gene, in shock, tries to move quickly after her. But even when he moves quickly he's slow. The doorbell rings.)*

TERRY. We're in here! *(Ziggy, Al, and Jonesy arrive with furniture, from busted marriages, for the next scene; Gene remains in the last scene, or a limbo, for a little while.)*

ZIGGY. *(With Al, carrying a couch.)* The Sheven Shantini are here, minush four.

* See Special Note on Songs and Recordings on copyright page.

AL. Where do you want this? *(Jonesy unrolls a rug on to the floor.)*

ZIGGY. We were going to let Al carry the rug, but he already hash one. *(Terry supervises as Gene exits. And, like that — they're moved in. Terry shows Al, Ziggy, and Jonesy where everything goes; she rearranges things.)*

AL. Hey, Terry. Nice crib.

TERRY. There's a crib coming?

JONESY. Four-letter word baby.

TERRY. *(Getting it.)* Ohhh.

ZIGGY. *(Struggling to find something to compliment.)* The floorsh look good. *(Jonesy walks in with a lamp. Al plugs it in, as Terry embarks on another monologue.)*

TERRY. I did them by hand. I fucked-up my fingers something awful. Then I made the curtains out of some tablecloths I stole from Charlie's. You know those nice red and white ones, I went in, had a coffee, and I started pulling the thing off the table. Patsy looks at me, and says, "What are you doing?" So I says to her, "I'm stealing a tablecloth to make curtains, what does it look like?" She came back with three more tablecloths in a paper bag. "Here," she says, "the new manager is a prick." *(Al and Ziggy have no idea what she's talking about. Jonesy followed her perfectly. She exits to kitchen. The guys are alone.)*

AL. *(Sotto voce.)* So dig this guys — It's four A.M., I'm in my bed, there's a knock at the door. I open it, there's this beautiful blond in a full-length mink coat. She says, "Are you Al Paradisio?" I say, "Baby, I'm anyone you want me to be." She pops open da mink — nuttin' on — "Happy Birthday," she says, "From Charlie Barnett." ZIGGY. Cockshucker gave me cuff linksh. *(Now Gene walks in cradling an oversized nondescript box that he seems to believe is very delicate.)*

GENE. Hey guys, check it out.

AL. Whoa. Easy does it, let it down nice and easy.

GENE. I copped it from Leon.

TERRY. *(Entering.)* What is that thing?

GENE. It's an orgone box.

TERRY. Orgone? Like the Japanese POWs used to do? After the war I worked at a holding camp and —

ZIGGY. What ish she talking about —

#7
Terry
Gene
AL
Ziggy
Jonesy

Terry
Gene
AL
Ziggy
Jonesy

JONESY. (*Gently explaining.*) That's origami, this is orgone.
ZIGGY. How come he undershtandsh her?
GENE. Orgone box — Wilhelm Reich designed it.
AL. (*To Gene.*) Does she know about Reich?
TERRY. What did he play? (*This cracks Ziggy and Jonesy up. Now Al lights a joint. Note: They are all pretty close to high to begin with, so they get stoned quickly. On the other hand, they're pretty used to being stoned, so it's not like they're seeing colors or anything.*)
GENE. Wilhelm Reich. Shrink, writes about ... (*Takes the joint, inhales.*)
AL. ... about the armor that people carry on themselves. (*Al passes the joint to Terry, who still smokes it like a cigarette.*) ... it's caused by sexual repression, from the society, the family, and it causes people to develop ... armor. Layers of it. Which they think protects them —
JONESY. Honey, can you pass that? (*She takes one more drag on the joint, coughs.*)
TERRY. You guys get the shittiest tobacco.
AL. — but, you see, what the armor really does is shut them off from just ... fucking freely without shame. (*In mid-toke.*) Now you see good sex, I'm talking *really* good sex — (*Finishes toke.*)
ZIGGY. Like with someone whoshe awake — (*The others look at him.*)
AL. — really good sex, releases orgones. Which are this positive energy. And that box collects those orgones.
GENE. That's what this box does.
TERRY. You guys are fucking weird.
JONESY. Put your hand inside.
TERRY. What?
ZIGGY. You shaid you hurt your hand, shcraping the floorsh, right? Jusht put your hand inshide. (*Terry's not sure what to do.*)
GENE. Go ahead. It's OK. (*She does.*)
JONESY. I can't believe Leon's old lady won't let him keep his box.
GENE. His old lady's moving him to Massachusetts.
ZIGGY. Who'sh he gonna play with in Masha, Mashaschu — fuck it, Boshton.
AL. What play? She wants him out of the business.
JONESY. Leon? Neon Leon? Tell me he could get a job other than playing trumpet.

TERRY. Who's Neon Leon?
GENE. Neon Leon. I told you about him. The one Benny Goodman fired because he peed onstage.
JONESY. (*As Leon, stage whispers.*) Benny, Benny — I gotta go.
AL. (*As Benny Goodman.*) That's not my problem, Neon, you knew about this gig weeks ago.
JONESY. Benny, what am I supposed to do?
AL. You can pee on the stage for all I care.
AL, JONESY and ZIGGY. Sho he did.
AL. He's a motherfucker though. Let's face it, he's a motherfucker. (*The guys all agree, he's a motherfucker.*)
JONESY. Total motherfucker.
TERRY. Is motherfucker good or bad?
JONESY. (*Gently explaining.*) G's above high C, all night long.
GENE. What a waste, chops like that, going to law school.
ZIGGY. We oughtta have a wake: Requiem for a Motherfucker. (*Lights dim on them, lights up on Clifford, as a New Orleans funeral march, such as Louis Armstrong's interpretation of "St. James Infirmary"* plays.*)
CLIFFORD. (*To audience.*) A moment of silence. For Leon. Since he's leaving the business, in effect, he's passed away. Over the years there'd be more and more of these moments. Guys would O.D., or go to jail, or worse get married and have to work 9 to 5. By the time I was on the scene, these guys were sort of an underground railroad to the straight world. We got our eyeglasses from a former tenor player, car insurance from an alto, and of course that box, from Leon. (*Back to the living room, music out.*)
JONESY. How's your hand?
TERRY. What?
JONESY. Your hand. (*She takes it out of the box. Stares at it.*)
TERRY. Holy shit. It's better. It's almost healed.
JONESY. HALLELUJAH.
TERRY. (*Scared.*) What the fuck is in there?
ZIGGY and AL. (*Spooky-voice.*) Orrrr-gooones.
GENE. Don't ever tell anyone we have one of these things. They're illegal. They're chasing Reich all over the country.
TERRY. You guys are fuckin' weird. I don't want that thing in my

* See Special Note on Songs and Recordings on copyright page.

#7

TA
Trad. No.
L. NELSON

ALL

house. Get it out.

GENE. Calm down, Terry. It's harmless.

TERRY. I'm serious, get it out.

ZIGGY. Wait 'til she sees the rest of Leon's shtuff. *(Terry, very quickly, loses it. She starts to beat Gene's chest with her hands. He grabs them.)*

TERRY. Don't tease me. I hate when you all do that.

GENE. Terry, no one is doing anything to you.

TERRY. *(Embarrassed, calming down.)* OK — still, get it out of the house.

JONESY. *(Going to the door.)* C'mon guys. Let's —

AL. I want to stay and watch.

ZIGGY. C'mon, Al. *(They leave. Gene goes to her, holds her. Calms her down.)*

TERRY. Is that thing really illegal?

GENE. Nobody knows what it is, so we can't get in trouble.

TERRY. Do we have to have it in the house?

GENE. I'll take care of it. *(She calms down. Patsy enters at the booth of the Melody Lounge. Terry crosses to her.)*

PATSY. So, what's the problem?

TERRY. Gene's got some box. He says it's illegal. And it collects oregons that —

PATSY. Orgones. Leon used to have one.

TERRY. *(Happy this story checks out.)* That's where Genie got it.

PATSY. Leon's old lady probably made him give it up. She made him give everything else up — which is more than I ever got him to do.

TERRY. You went out with Neon Leon?

PATSY. Neon was my first husband. Not that he'd remember. The Big Junked-Out Lug. I told him, "If you really become a lawyer, I'll let you handle all my divorces."

TERRY. I couldn't make it through another divorce. When Dominic left me, I thought I'd go crazy.

PATSY. They get easier. After a while, it's like falling off a bicycle.

TERRY. That rat-bastard — left me for my best friend. You and Genie never —

PATSY. *(Laughs.)* Oh, honey. No. Never. I promise.

TERRY. Leon wasn't really a junkie, was he?

PATSY. Doll, you don't have to worry about that with Gene. Gene's clean. He's the one they all call when their cars break down. *(Terry nods, without really following this.)*

CLIFFORD. *(To audience.)* This was some sort of code, 'cause these guys' cars always break, *(To Terry.)* and half of them don't even have cars. *(Clifford hands Terry a dinner tray with two soup bowls. She crosses to the living room. To audience.)* Mom may have missed the finer points of Patsy's field work on trumpet players, but she got the gist of it. *(Back to the apartment, a quiet dinner. Terry serves Gene. He cuts slowly, blows on his soup.)*

TERRY. Patsy says these doo-wop groups don't even use horns.

GENE. She's married three trumpet players in a row, so she must think there's some future in it.

TERRY. She says the big bands are gone for good. And a lot of the clubs are —

GENE. Terry, trust me, it's nothing to worry about. I'm a professional. Like a doctor, or a lawyer. And here in New York, with all the TV and radio here. You can't ask for a more secure field — every station will have to have its own band. Honest.

TERRY. Then why is Patsy's husband getting out?

GENE. That's her ex-husband. The second one. Stu. Not Bernie. Bernie's a motherfucker — he's out on the road sixty weeks a year. When he comes back to town, Charlie Barnett's gonna add him to the band, and we'll record.

TERRY. Then why is Stu getting out?

GENE. Stu's a lead player. Great chops, but he can only work the big bands. But I'm a true sideman — I can solo, back up a singer —

TERRY. Or fake Deboosy —

GENE. And harmony. Three part. Four part. I'm a ... a —

TERRY. A jack-of-all-trades.

GENE. Bingo. *(They kiss, then she pulls back.)*

TERRY. Wait — it wasn't just Stu — Al too. She said he hasn't even had a Saturday night this month.

GENE. That won't happen. To me. I mean, look: if there ever comes a Saturday night when I'm not booked, just one Saturday night, then — I promise, I'll get out of the business, OK?

TERRY. You don't have to say that.

GENE. But I can. It's the easiest promise I could ever make. *(She*

7A

7A

ALL

7A

#8

Terry

Gen

Patsy

#8

#8
Terry
Gene
Patsy

kisses him.)

TERRY. Are you going to be on the road a lot?

GENE. I used to think I was. But you came in and *(Looks around.)* ...

TERRY. You like it?

GENE. I've never had a home in my life — I like it a lot.

TERRY. Patsy's gonna get me a job waitressing soon, at Charlie's. So you won't have to —

GENE. No. I don't want you working. I'm a little behind now — with the car breaking down, and the rent — but we're almost out of the woods. And, *(Looks straight into her eyes.)* I promise you. I'm going to take care of us, *(Kisses her.)* you won't ever have to work at all. *(Terry stands.)*

TERRY. *(Yelling to a kitchen's short-order window.)* BLT please, whiskey down. *(From the other side of the stage now, Patsy, in a waitress uniform, meets Terry D., hands her an apron.)*

PATSY. *(To an unseen cook.)* Fry two, in butter please, *not* grease. Thank you. *(To Terry.)* The prick at table six is waving for you.

TERRY. He tries to cop a feel every time I refill his coffee.

PATSY. If he does it again, spill some on his lap. How's Genie? *(To cook.)* Can I have my eggs please?

TERRY. He's going to record soon with Charlie Barnett. He says after that we should be squared away.

PATSY. *(Subtle announcement.)* Are you gonna come to my wedding?

TERRY. Patsy, that's great! *(She gives Patsy a big hug, then.)* Who are you marrying?

PATSY. Al. I've been in love with Al ever since Leon and I were engaged.

TERRY. Good for you.

PATSY. *(To cook.)* Where the fuck are my eggs?

TERRY. Does Al mind you waitressing?

PATSY. Somebody has to make a living.

TERRY. Genie can't stand it. He says —

PATSY. He'll get used to it — they all do. *(Lights up on Clifford, at the bar; while Clifford speaks, Ziggy and Jonesy return to the apartment, with ever more stuff. They place an end table down, upside down. Its bottom shelf now at top. Ziggy looks at the end*

table. Something's wrong.)

ZIGGY. *(To Jonesy.)* Shomething'sh wrong. *(Now they see the problem. Pick it up and clock it 180 degrees, still upside down, however.)*

ZIGGY and JONESY. Aaaahhh. *(They go back outside for more stuff. Note: Throughout the rest of the play, the portion of the stage that is Gene and Terry's apartment will go from bare to full to cluttered to cramped: Mismatched furniture, slightly broken or chipped chairs, frayed carpet.)*

CLIFFORD. While the rest of the country was moving to the suburbs, Mom and Dad stayed in the city. Nine floors up. Rent controlled. Little by little their place filled up. The apartment became "the hangout" before I was born. The lamps were from Ziggy's first marriage. *(Ziggy enters with two lamps.)*

TERRY. *(To herself.)* Sweet kid, what was her name? *(She joins Clifford at the bar. Gene sits on the couch, ignoring her.)*

ZIGGY. Shushie.

TERRY. *(To Clifford.)* Right. Susie — then he broke up with her, and dated ... Cecelia?

ZIGGY. Sheshily. *(Ziggy leaves. Terry continues with Clifford.)*

TERRY. I told Ziggy: "Date someone whose name you can pronounce. Lana. Diane."

CLIFFORD. *(To audience.)* When Patsy finally divorced Bernie to marry Al, we ... they — I'm not on the scene yet — got Bernie's stuff. *(Patsy and Al come on — lovebirds for the moment. She carries a box of Bernie's records, mariachas, and bongos. Al carries Bernie's hi-fi.)*

PATSY. *(To Terry.)* Ziggy's moving in with Sheshily. Get this: Sheventy Shecond Shstreet.

AL. *(To the girls.)* It'll never last. She's a call girl.

TERRY. *(Doesn't get the problem.)* What's wrong with working for an answering service?

PATSY. It's doomed — they'll each want the other to get out of the business.

TERRY. *(To Clifford.)* Patsy was right. Ziggy went back on the road. We got his hi-fi. *(Gene stays in his own world on the couch. Jonesy comes in, carrying a TV set, placed C. Ziggy brings a six-pack of beer. Patsy and Al neck — for a moment. Then she stops. Slaps him.)* Then, six months after they got married, Patsy and Al split up, and we got Al's TV set. And Al for a couple of months — on

Handwritten scribble

Bernie's couch. (*Jonesy and Ziggy move Al, as if he were another hand-me-down, on to the couch. Patsy plugs in the TV.*)

PATSY. This was almost my TV. Twice. (*Terry and Patsy exit. Gene, Al, Ziggy and Jonesy sit, and watch TV. Ziggy passes out a six-pack, looks at the furnishings.*)

ZIGGY. Genie, the Shalvation Army ish ready to talk peace —

GENE. (*To the guys.*) I tell Terry, our apartment is furnished in Early American Divorce. (*The guys break up at this. Terry returns with plates of food. Patsy plays kitschy dance music, like Manaña* or I Come From Jamaica* on the hi-fi. A party tableau: Patsy dances with Ziggy. A 1950s conga line starts: Ziggy, Patsy, Gene, Terry, Al — and finally Jonesy — playing bongos at the rear of the line. In the living room, everyone freezes. A flash goes off: A HAPPY TIMES PHOTO pose. They are captured "on film" in one final happy moment.*)

CLIFFORD. (*Looks at photos from long ago, looks in the living room at the party.*) From what I understand, EVERYONE WAS HAPPY BEFORE I WAS BORN. (*Everyone looks at Clifford, then:*)

PATSY. He's on! (*The line splits up. All grab seats to watch the TV.*)

TERRY. They're only showing him from the waist up. They're scared shitless.

CLIFFORD. (*To audience.*) This would be the night Elvis first played the Ed Sullivan Show. (*Group, this time including Patsy, who's now arm-in-arm with Ziggy, watches Elvis on TV. Jonesy stares intensely at the screen as an Elvis standard, such as "Hound Dog,"* ends to TV cheers. Jonesy turns the set off.*)

JONESY. Anybody here know how to play guitar? (*Gene, Ziggy, Al shake their heads.*) Too bad. That kid will do to horn players what talkies did to Buster Keaton. Mark my words. (*They all look at him. Terry is the only one who doesn't laugh. Al follows Jonesy as he leaves.*)

TERRY. (*To Clifford.*) Jonesy got arrested that night. Your father told me he got plastered and they took away his cabaret card, for disorderly conduct, which meant he couldn't work in New York, and we got his coffee table. (*Al puts the coffee table in front of the couch. Ziggy and Patsy, who are necking on the couch, put their plates down on it without losing a beat, then exit after Al. Clifford hands Terry a post card.*) He moved to Vegas for the year. Said it

* See Special Note on Songs and Recordings on copyright page.

was wide open and (*To Gene.*) WE SHOULD COME DOWN. GENE. Las Vegas? It's in the middle of a desert.

TERRY. Jonesy's doing well there, and he plays trombone. I have a feeling that —

GENE. You run the kitchen, let me take care of business. Vegas is never gonna — there's no future in it. It's a mirage.

TERRY. (*While clearing plates and bottles to the kitchen.*) What about LA? Ziggy says some of the TV shows are moving there.

GENE. Terry — it won't happen. New York is where the work is, and always will be.

CLIFFORD. (*From the bar.*) Gene was sort of an anti-psychic. But Mom was raised to believe papa knew best. And Pops was a City College man, after all. Besides, by now, Gene and Ziggy had gotten the idea that they could make it big as comedy writers for the Sid Ceasar show. (*Clifford hands Gene and Ziggy two scripts. They pace back and forth, scripts in hand, working on their comedy routine. Terry watches.*)

ZIGGY. (*To Terry, explaining.*) I'm Marie Antoinette.

GENE. I'm King Louie.

ZIGGY. (*Reading/bad acting.*) "Louie, what is thish fly doing in my vichysoisshe?"

GENE. "Looks to me like ... the backstroke."

ZIGGY. "The chef, he must be punished."

GENE. "But the kitchen staff is already revolting."

ZIGGY. "They certainly are, but nonetheless, I want his head."

GENE. "The guillotine is broken; what if he is hung?"

ZIGGY. "You fool. If he'd been hung in the first place, I'd have been happy to see his fly." (*They laugh themselves silly. Then leave. Terry watches them go.*)

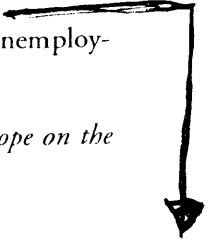
TERRY. (*To Clifford.*) They must have spent a hundred hours on those scripts. But they never sent them out. (*Patsy, with two drinks in hand, meets the twenty-one-year-old Clifford, in a booth at Charlie's. It is 1977.*)

1 PATSY. Here you go, Clifford. In honor of your first unemployment check. Cheers.

CLIFFORD. Thanks.

2 PATSY. And these are for you too. (*She drops an envelope on the table, stuffed with papers.*)

Handwritten note: #9 Patsy Clifford



Handwritten:
#9
Patsy
Clifford

CLIFFORD. What are they?
PATSY. Gene told me you're going to study TV, in Rhode Island. And I remembered, I still had some of his and Ziggy's scripts, I thought maybe you could —
CLIFFORD. No, Genie gets it ... wrong. I got a scholarship for Art School, in Rhode Island.
PATSY. Ohh. Well, congratulations on that. I could have sworn Gene said TV.
CLIFFORD. It's not TV, it's advertising. It's this job I'm up for. In New York.
PATSY. Here's to you — in *Rhode Island*.
CLIFFORD. The advertising job would pay really well and —
PATSY. You don't need money, you're a kid.
CLIFFORD. I don't need anything, but Gene's so far behind on his credit cards —
PATSY. Genie is always behind —
CLIFFORD. And Mom's not doing so well, lately. Her health ...
(Patsy, very sober all of a sudden, looks at Clifford.)
PATSY. Why do you think that is?
CLIFFORD. I'm sorry?
PATSY. Clifford, when you were about to go away to college, the same thing happened.
CLIFFORD. It's a good thing I didn't go away to college. Can you imagine Genie handling the —
PATSY. Clifford, listen to me: I don't care what you do, or where you go — just get the hell out of here. *(Patsy exits as Gene and Terry enter from bedroom door — a serious discussion underway. Clifford watches.)*
GENE. Are you sure?
TERRY. It's been two months.
GENE. Al knows someone who can take care of it.
TERRY. What?
GENE. Patsy knows him too, he's very reliable —
TERRY. *(Horrified.)* What are you talking about?
GENE. Terry, you're not in East Boston anymore. You don't have to have a baby just because —
TERRY. You want to kill the baby? Our baby? OK, OK. It's OK.
GENE. *(Goes to her.)* Terry — there's no baby yet.

TERRY. Oh my God. Oh my God. Oh my God. *(Terry "loses it" here for the first time. Terry and Gene overlap each other for the next several lines.)*
GENE. The sooner you take care of these things, the better it —
TERRY. Shut up. SHUT UP. SHUT UP. I don't want to kill the baby. I wanna have the baby. I don't care if he's a bastard. I want to keep the baby.
GENE. Terry. Calm down. Get a — he's not going to be a bastard.
TERRY. What?
GENE. He's not going to be a bastard. *(She calms down, a bit.)* Terry ... we're getting married. OK? You're having the baby. It's OK. It's OK.
TERRY. You mean it?
GENE. Sure.
TERRY. Oh, Genie. *(They embrace, then she pulls back.)* But, I've already been married. *(Note: Optional "Split Scene" inserts here and replaces until Gene's exit. See page 69.)*
GENE. We'll do it 'til you get it right. *(They kiss.)* We'll have a big wedding. I'll take care of everything. In the morning I'll talk to the caterers.
TERRY. We can't afford that. I can cook a lasagne —
GENE. Terry, it's your wedding. We'll have a band, a cake, the works. This is going to be a night to remember. *(Gene exits, to plan the celebration. Note: Optional "Split Scene" ends here.)*
TERRY. *(To Clifford.)* That was that. Two weeks later — *(Clifford crosses D. to Terry.)*
CLIFFORD. You made a lasagne.
TERRY. And we got married —
CLIFFORD and TERRY. In the apartment. *(Clifford helps her out of her robe — underneath, a wedding dress. She puts on shoes and a ring. He adds a corsage.)*
TERRY. I called Blimpie, I called Cupie, I called Fat Raffle, I called all my sisters, but they couldn't come ... Afterwards, we went over to Charlie's to celebrate. Jonesy — he'd just gotten back from Vegas, danced with me while Gene sat in with the band. Everyone cut in all night long. Not to dance with me, but to sit in with Gene and the band. *(Jonesy dances with Terry to a romantic ballad played by Gene.)* How come he doesn't dance with me? On

Dec 49

his wedding night?

JONESY. Trumpet players don't dance.

TERRY. How come you dance?

JONESY. I play trombone. Patsy taught me. After she left Al ... before she went back to her second husband.

TERRY. Bernie?

JONESY. No. Bernie was number three. She wouldn't leave me and Al for Bernie, because Bernie still plays. Greatest lead player in America. She went back to Stu — number two, if you're keeping score. Which in Patsy's case is almost impossible to do.

TERRY. Stu the foot doctor?

JONESY. *(To himself.)* Stu the foot doctor. *(To Terry.)* He used to be a good player. He came by 52nd Street one night, saw us all play. He started to cry. Ziggy looks at him and says: "Podiatrisht, heel thyshelf." *(The ballad ends. Jonesy and Terry applaud. She motions for Gene to come join her. Instead, the band starts another tune, an up-tempo, undanceable, hard-bop number.)*

TERRY. How do you dance to this?

JONESY. You don't. You drink to it. That's another reason why jazz is dying. Let's go to the bar. *(He steers her to the bar.)*

TERRY. I'll have a Shirley Temple.

JONESY. Terry, you marry a musician, you're gonna have to learn to drink hard stuff. Start with a Tom Collins. *(Clifford serves Terry her first drink. She and Jonesy listen to the band.)* Gene sounds pretty good tonight.

TERRY. He told me never to tell anyone, but I think he sounds like Dizzy.

JONESY. In a way. Nicer tone than Dizzy. But he does those same long lines. Every solo has a beginning, middle, and end when he plays.

TERRY. Do you think he'll make it?

JONESY. Honey. He's made it. This is it. *(Terry looks around, lets this sink in. Then.)*

TERRY. What about that record he did ... with Charlie Barnett's band?

JONESY. He's a player Terry. He's not a hustler.

TERRY. But he played really well on it.

JONESY. Didn't he tell you what happened?

TERRY. No.

JONESY. Ask him about the review.

TERRY. *(To Clifford.)* I had a nice time dancing with Jonesy. And the Tom Collins tasted kind of sweet. He bought me a few more, but then he had to leave —

JONESY. Got to see a man about some horse. I'll be back in half an hour. *(Jonesy, who now needs a fix, has been compulsively scratching himself more and more throughout the scene. He walks out.)*

CLIFFORD. An hour went by, Charlie's was closing up, and Jonesy hadn't come back. Mom, who actually was a little psychic, told Gene: *(Gene enters; she goes to him.)*

TERRY. He said he was going to see some horse or something. But I don't think the race tracks are still open. Maybe something happened to him at the track —

GENE. Jonesy can take care of himself. *(Al comes by.)*

AL. Terry, best wishes. Genie, nice blowing tonight. *(Ziggy comes by now, with Patsy on his arm. Al tenses up.)*

ZIGGY. *(In Al's face.)* "Love ish lovelier ..."

PATSY and ZIGGY. "... the sheventh time around."

PATSY. Congratulations you kids.

TERRY. Have you guys seen Jonesy? I'm a little worried.

PATSY and ZIGGY. *(Sing.)* "If you knew Jonesy, like I knew Jonesy." *(Al is not having fun.)*

AL. Mazel tov.

ZIGGY. Geshundheit.

AL. Screw you. *(Al leaves. Ziggy looks at Patsy, she shrugs.)*

PATSY. That stage should be over by now. Good night everybody. Got to get home before the foot man wakes up for work. *(Patsy exits. The others now walk out of Charlie's too. End of the evening.)*

TERRY. *(To Clifford.)* When we got outside, there was a police car parked across the street. Lights flashing. In the back seat, hands cuffed behind his back, was Jonesy.

CLIFFORD. *(To audience.)* Mom spent the rest of her wedding night down in night court. Waiting. *(Gene, Ziggy and Terry watch and wait.)*

TERRY. How come they keep arresting Jonesy?

ZIGGY. Probably another bullshit crackdown caushe shome dealer misshed hish pay off. *(Gene signals Ziggy to shut up.)*

#10
Terry
Gene
Ziggy
↓ 100%

#10
10A
Terry
Gene
Ziggy

TERRY. What's that have to do with Jonesy?
GENE. Look, everything's going to be fine. We can post bail. I've got ... fourteen bucks.
ZIGGY. Bragger.
GENE. Terry, you don't have to hang around.
TERRY. *(Her feelings hurt.)* I'll stay. *(They stand and wait for a while.)* Jonesy told me to ask you about the Charlie Barnett review.
ZIGGY. *(To Gene.)* Try to bail a guy out, and he ratsh on you. *(Gene tries to shush Ziggy.)*
TERRY. What happened?
GENE. Didn't I tell you about this? I could have sworn I did.
ZIGGY. *(Trying to distract.)* You guysh shee what'sh going on in Budapesht? *(Terry glares at him, turns to Gene.)*
TERRY. What happened? And don't bullshit me.
GENE. This big French jazz critic, Henri Arnaud, reviewed the album. He said that while the band sounded great, the trumpet solos were the best in the last decade.
TERRY. You're kidding. Why didn't you tell me? We should make photostats of the review. Send them out to club owners. To managers. Maybe Gene could get someone to ... *(She notices they've gone silent.)* You were lying to me? You fuck. Why —
GENE. No I wasn't. Honest. They liked my playing.
ZIGGY. Liked it? They were nutsh about it.
TERRY. Why the fuck do you two lie to me like this?
GENE. No one's lying, Terry. They liked my playing. Only problem is, they didn't know it was my playing. The guy screwed the credits up. He saw Bernie's name and everybody over there knows Bernie, because he's recorded with Miles and Gil and everyone else ... It's no big deal.
TERRY. What's the magazine going to do about the mistake?
GENE. I don't think they even know about it. You know, Bernie's a great player, and he deserves a good review.
TERRY. NOT FOR YOUR FUCKING SOLOS HE DOESN'T.
GENE. LOWER YOUR VOICE. We're in a court for crissakes.
TERRY. YOU'VE GOT TO WRITE AND TELL THEM TO MAKE A CORRECTION.
GENE. Calm down! That's not how it works. People in the business know my playing. I can't embarrass Bernie with a letter

like that. *(Patronizing.)* What's the matter with you? *(She is embarrassed now. After a long awkward moment, Ziggy sees:)*
ZIGGY. Jonesy. There he ish. JONESHY.
GENE. JONESY!
TERRY. Oh my God! *(Waves to him.)* What's the matter with him?
ZIGGY. He probably needsh a fix, poor bashtard.
TERRY. What do we do?
GENE. We could call Leon.
ZIGGY. Leon? Nobody'sh shpoken to him shince he moved to Boshton.
GENE. He's a Harvard lawyer now. One call from a guy like that and the D.A. drops the charges.
CLIFFORD. Leon did what he could. It took two days because it was a weekend, but on Monday, Gene got in to see Jonesy. *(Gene face-to-face with a badly beaten, strung-out Jonesy. Clifford watches intently.)*
GENE. Anything I can do for you?
JONESY. Yeah, take my place.
GENE. I'm serious —
JONESY. I'm all fucked up, Gene.
GENE. What the hell happened?
JONESY. They wanted me to tell them who my dealer was. They said we'll give you a fix, if you tell us where you cop. They waved it in front of my face. I was dying for it. But I said, I can't trust you guys. Let me fix myself up first, then I'll tell you where I cop. So the bastards give me my stash, they'd already taken half of it for themselves, but I tie off, I shoot up, and I'm feeling no pain. OK wise ass, they say, tell us where this heroin comes from? I look them right in the eye and I tell them the truth: *(Pause.)* General MacArthur. *(Gene looks at Jonesy, shakes his head.)* Well, how the hell do you think this stuff gets into the country? Anyway, this fuckin' bull goes nuts. He smacks me across the face. The other guys let him wail on me for a while before they pulled him off. *(Jonesy opens his mouth, shows Gene his teeth.)* He broke three of my teeth Gene. *(Starts to cry.)* I don't know if I'll ever be able to play. *(Jonesy staggers off as Gene moves to the living room. Terry knits. Clifford hands a pregnant, cigarette-smoking Terry her drink.)*

10A
SKIP

CLIFFORD. *(To audience.)* They put him away ... for eight years.

TERRY. *(To Clifford.)* I wrote to him, I sent him care packages ... I never heard from him. *(Terry sits with Gene on the couch. She sips her Tom Collins. Clifford has, over the last few scenes, moved closer to the action. Now he stands in the living room and watches. To Gene.)* You lied to me. When Jonesy was arrested the first time, it wasn't disorderly conduct, was it? It was for junk, wasn't it?

GENE. I guess — I mean, he's not really a junkie junkie. More of an addict. He never misses a gig.

TERRY. He told me he doesn't have any gigs.

GENE. It's a little slow right now. No one works in September — the Jewish holidays.

TERRY. Patsy says it's all over. Elvis. TV. LA. Jazz is —

GENE. Patsy is just pissed off because she can't get Al or Bernie or Ziggy to quit so she had to go back to Stu who spends his day touching people's feet. Is that what you want me to do?

TERRY. That's the same Bernie who got credit for your solos, isn't it?

GENE. Most likely. So *what*.

TERRY. Why don't you send out those scripts you and Ziggy wrote?

GENE. They're not ready.

TERRY. Do you want me to help?

GENE. Honey, you can barely speak English; no one understands a word you say. How the hell are you going to help with the scripts?

TERRY. Fuck you.

GENE. What? Oh don't get upset. I'm just saying. Ziggy and I went to college. We know what we're doing. As soon as those scripts are ready — they're going out.

TERRY. Do you have a gig for tonight?

GENE. Not yet.

TERRY and GENE. Huh.

GENE. It happens. What's the big deal.

TERRY. It's Saturday night.

GENE. The Jewish holidays. No one's working.

TERRY. But it's Saturday night.

GENE. Terry, I've got my twenty weeks in, I subbed at the Copa twice last week, what's so goddamn important about Saturday

night. Jesus — a gig is a gig.

TERRY. You said if you ever weren't booked for a Saturday night, you'd quit the business.

GENE. Oh, come on. I never said that. *(She stares at him in disbelief, then anger.)*

TERRY. You lying motherfucker —

GENE. Terry — *(She walks away from him.)*

TERRY. You lying motherfucker — *(Terry doesn't see Gene as he moves toward her.)*

GENE. Terry, get a hold of your — *(He is suddenly next to her. She bats him away.)*

TERRY. Get your hands off of me, Dominic —

GENE. I'm Gene.

TERRY. I don't care who you are. All of you. Stay away. I can't take this bullshit. All of you lie. All of you fucking lie.

GENE. Stop it. Stop it. *(She snaps back to reality. Calms a bit.)*

TERRY. What time is it?

GENE. Nine.

TERRY. You have until midnight. If that phone doesn't ring, and you stay in the business, I'll fuckin' kill you. And I'll kill the baby. *(She takes her drink and walks past Gene and Clifford.)*

CLIFFORD. *(To the audience.)* This is it: the first moment in my life I needed to say something. To calm my mother down, to get my father to pay attention. I did what I could. I kicked. *(Looks at them.)* But nobody noticed. Ten years from now, everything will be different, and nothing will have changed ... Except, maybe, by degree.

TERRY. I swear to God, I'll kill you both. *(She slams the bedroom door behind her.)*

End of Act One

starts to sob. Stands over Clifford now.) Make sure I get a roommate who smokes, Clifford.

CLIFFORD. I'll see what I can do.

TERRY. I used to tell your father, it wasn't right, that you had to do this. You know what your father said: "That's why you have kids Terry, so they'll take care of you." You never should have saved me Clifford. I've been dead for thirty years anyway. *(Terry exits.)*

CLIFFORD. *(To audience.)* I went to work; I was two hours late. No one noticed. I spent the morning writing ads. At lunchtime, I went into a stairwell and cried. For the first time in twenty years. I finished the afternoon, like nothing happened. *(Clifford, now with Gene, who's more spaced-out than usual.)* Couldn't you tell that she was losing it, before she —

GENE. How can you tell? It's irrational.

CLIFFORD. You ran out of insurance. They want to send her upstate.

GENE. She'll talk her way out of it.

CLIFFORD. They won't let her come home if you're here.

GENE. You know, she drinks.

CLIFFORD. Really?

GENE. After she flipped out, I found bottles all over the place.

CLIFFORD. What?

GENE. Things just got ... the boozing, the flip outs — I just thank God it started after you left home.

CLIFFORD. Are you serious?

GENE. It didn't get bad 'til the last couple of years.

CLIFFORD. Dad, you're nuts. That's just not ... she's had a drinking problem since I can remember.

GENE. Clifford, I think I would know that.

CLIFFORD. I DON'T.

GENE. *(Changing the subject.)* So what do you want to do?

CLIFFORD. What do *you* want to do? She's your wife.

GENE. She won't talk to me when she's like this. She's completely irrational. You know that.

CLIFFORD. Why does it have to be up to me?

GENE. You're the son. She's your mother. Who else is there?

CLIFFORD. Dad, what the fuck is your problem, she's your wife. SHE'S YOUR WIFE and if we don't do something, she's gone. Do

you get it? DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT'S GOING ON? *(Gene spaces out.)* Are you listening to me?

GENE. There's no reason to get upset. You always figure something out. You're the Red Cross. *(Gene stares into space. There is a long, awkward pause.)*

CLIFFORD. OK, get your horn, you're out.

GENE. I'm sorry?

CLIFFORD. Get your fuckin' horn, and get out.

GENE. What are you talking about?

CLIFFORD. Dad, she can't live with you. She can't get a place on her own. I'm not letting them send her upstate. You're out. It's over.

GENE. Clifford.

CLIFFORD. It's over. As of tonight. Call Ziggy. Call Al. I don't give a fuck. Call someone. You're out of here. *(He packs the horn, gives it to Gene.)* Dad, she's coming, you're going. You two are done.

GENE. I don't think it's that bad.

CLIFFORD. You don't think, Dad. You don't know. YOU DON'T HAVE A FUCKING CLUE. *(He pushes the case into Gene.)* You don't have a fucking clue. *(Gene stares at Clifford, completely in shock. Gene walks out. Clifford steps forward. To audience.)*

Before that night, I had never yelled at my father. And yelling at him ... if my mom couldn't get through to him in thirty years, I wasn't going to either. That night, at midnight, I drove him over to Ziggy's. I don't think he had any idea what was going on. It was like moving a cat. In two weeks, Terry got out. I took her home, stayed with her the first couple of nights. After I left, she went right back to drinking. Meanwhile, Ziggy told me he and Gene were going at it pretty good down in Hell's Kitchen. *(Gene and Ziggy enter, face off.)*

ZIGGY. Did you get bananash?

GENE. No, I got hung up at the bank ... there was a line. Then by the time I went to move the car ...

ZIGGY. Why do you go to the bank at three P.M. on a Friday?

GENE. I always go to the bank on Friday.

ZIGGY. Fridaysh' payday, Genie. For shtraight people. It's a mob shcene.

GENE. Is that true? I always wondered why it was crowded, but — everyone gets paid on Friday?

CLIFFORD. My mom had a request.
AL and ZIGGY. "Just My Fucking Luck?"
CLIFFORD. Nope.
JONESY and PATSY. "Why Was I Born?"
CLIFFORD. Bingo.
ZIGGY. Fellash — Patshy — two tunesh in, your on. *(The guys head up onto the bandstand. Gene, the slowest, lags behind. Clifford stops him.)*
CLIFFORD. Dad ... *(They look at each other.)* It's been a while.
GENE. You're busy. Work. Your job's —
CLIFFORD. I quit.
GENE. You quit? Are you gonna be able to collect —
CLIFFORD. I'm gonna go west — work on the ... painting stuff. I was hoping you'd look in on her once in a while. *(Gene thinks about this.)*
GENE. You were always good with those collages you know. *(Clifford can't believe his father noticed.)*
CLIFFORD. Huh?
GENE. Not just me — your mother always thought that's what you were gonna do.
CLIFFORD. It's just cut and paste ... see how it goes. How've you —
GENE. You'll be fine — keep your nut small, pay your dues, as long as you have a place to paint ... *(They look at each other.)* How's she look?
CLIFFORD. OK, so-so ... she gave me some lasagne, to give you.
GENE. *(Thinks about Terry.)* Terry. She ... *(Gene is suddenly overwhelmed. An instant later he seals it up.)* OK kiddo. Thanks for ... *(They have an awkward choice: to hug good-bye or to shake hands. They stop. Start. Finally, Gene just turns and goes up toward the bandstand.)*
CLIFFORD. Dad — "Why Was I Born?"
GENE. I'll play it. Two tunes in. Good to see you kiddo.
CLIFFORD. If you think of it, call her in the morning, say thanks. *(Gene heads up onto the bandstand.)* He's not going to remember to call her. But I have to ask, same way I ask Mom to come and hear him play. *(Lights up on Terry in her bedroom doorway, smoking a cigarette, alone.)*

TERRY. Leave your poor old lady alone Clifford. I'm not going over there to hear that rat-bastard play. Thirty years he never took me out. *(She stops.)* And besides, if I go over there and hear him play — I get all ... *(She starts to cry.)* You go. Godspeed, caro figlio. *(Lights out on Terry.)*

CLIFFORD. So long, Ma. *(To audience.)* Like I said: no clean breaks. *(Clifford crosses to the bar, listens to Gene on the bandstand as he starts to play a slow-tempo muted ballad, like "It Never Entered My Mind." We see a silhouette of Gene playing behind a scrim.)* When he's up there, blowing, he's totally in touch with everything that's going on around him. Ziggy bends a note, he echo's it instantly. A car horn sounds outside, he puts it into his solo, or harmonizes under it, a second later. I used to wonder how he could sense everything while he was blowing, and almost nothing when he wasn't. Now I just wonder how many more chances will I have to hear him blow. If I have kids ... These guys are not even an endangered species any more. It's too late. There are no more big bands, no more territory bands. No more nonets, or tentets. No more sixty weeks a year on the road. No more jam sessions 'til dawn in the Cincinnati Zoo. When they go, that'll be it. No one will even understand what they were doing. A fifty year blip on the screen. Men who mastered their obsession, who ignored, or didn't even notice anything else. They played not for fame, and certainly not for money. They played for each other. To swing. To blow. Night after night, they were just burning brass. Oblivious. *(The lights come down on the Melody Lounge as the music comes up.)*

The End