

1968
BY CURT STRICKLAND

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TITLE: 1968, CHARACTER BREAKDOWNS

STAN: White male, 45 years old, foreman at the factory

ARTHUR: White male from the south who believes in White Supremacy. 58 years old.

BOBBY: White male, mid-thirties, works on the line at the factory.

WALTER: White male, around 50, who owns a small manufacturing company.

PHIL: Afro-American male, around 45, an employee of the factory.

RACHEL: Afro-American woman, married to Phil, around 40, who is an executive at a corporation.

JAMES: Afro-American, Rachel's and Phil's son, 18 years old, politically astute.

NANCY: Arthur's wife, around 45.

DEBBIE: BOBBY'S WIFE, AROUND 35.

UNION CHIEF SULLY: White male, around 50

UNION MEMBERS I-IV: Various ages, could be just voices performed by other actors.

There are four main sets: the practice tee; the 19th hole or bar; the living rooms of the characters, one living room can serve as the living room for all; and the break room at the factory. The spotlight shifts from set to set as the play progresses.

ACT I, SCENE 1

Doctor's office. STAN is waiting in a chair when the DOCTOR comes in. There is a bottle of Poland Spring water on the doctor's desk.

DOCTOR
Hello Stan.

STAN
What's with the bottle?

DOCTOR
Bottle?

STAN

Bottle on your desk. It says Poland Springs.

DOCTOR

It's water.

STAN

You bought water?

DOCTOR

Yeah, why?

STAN

It's 1968 and companies are selling water?

DOCTOR

I guess they are.

STAN

I hate to be the one to break it to you, but water is free, comes right out of your tap.

A beat.

DOCTOR

Well, you're not here to talk about the water. We're gonna take your blood and do some scans today, try to nail down where the fatigue and headaches are coming from.

Looking at his file.

And the weight loss. What can you tell me about that?

STAN

Just haven't felt hungry lately, but I needed to lose some weight. Silver lining. Should I be worried?

DOCTOR

These are all routine tests. You're forty-five years old. Let's not get ahead of ourselves.

A beat.

STAN

Seriously, why you buying water?

A beat.

DOCTOR

That's just me. Don't read anything into it. But I have to say, the water department has been conducting tests, and they asked me to help them analyze the data.

STAN

What kinda tests?

DOCTOR

On the drinking water.

STAN

And the data tells you not to drink the water?

DOCTOR

We haven't finished our findings.

STAN

So they tested the drinking water?

DOCTOR

The town should be releasing their findings soon. The factory scientists also got involved, maybe why it's taking so long.

A beat.

STAN

Factory scientists? Those are two words that should never be side by side. Is that your finding?

A beat, referring to a spiral report sitting on his desk.

DOCTOR

Preliminary.

STAN

What aren't you telling me doc?

A beat.

DOCTOR

Listen, we're gonna find the source of your fatigue and your headaches. These tests will show us a lot. I'll have my secretary call as soon as the results come back.

A beat, looking at a report on the Doc's desk.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

You can have that copy if you want,
but you didn't get it from me.

STAN

Sure Doc. Not sure why they are
wasting time studying the water. If
there was something wrong with the
water, the town would of done
something about it.

DOCTOR

I don't know about that.

STAN

Well, I do. This is special town,
with good people. I know you didn't
grow up here but in this town, we
take care of our own.

DOCTOR

OK Stan. And you're right: this is
a good town with good people. I'll
see you in a couple of weeks. Wait,
how much water do you drink a day?

STAN

Just what I drink from the fountain
at work. Why?

DOCTOR

Maybe not do that anymore.

STAN

Nothing I should be worried about,
right Doc?

DOCTOR

You're forty-five years old. See
you in a couple of weeks.

Lights fade.

ACT I, SCENE II

*Practice range of a golf course. Stan, ARTHUR, and BOBBY are
all warming up, stretching, swinging their golf clubs. There
are buckets of golf balls next to each one.*

*They aren't hitting any balls, just practicing their swings.
There is a water fountain next to them.*

STAN
Bobby, taste this water.

BOBBY
Why?

STAN
Just taste it.

Bobby walks over and takes a drink from the water fountain.

STAN (CONT'D)
Well?

BOBBY
Well what?

STAN
Does it taste funny to you?

BOBBY
It tastes like fuckin' water.

STAN
Doesn't taste weird?

BOBBY
It's water. It tastes like fuckin' water.

STAN
Arthur, you taste it.

Arthur walks over and takes a drink.

STAN (CONT'D)
Well?

ARTHUR
I'll tell you what it tastes like.

STAN
What?

ARTHUR
Water.

STAN
It doesn't taste funny to you?

BOBBY
You working for the water department now? It tastes the way it has always tasted, shitty.

ARTHUR
Why you asking?

STAN
My doctor buys his own water, won't
drink from the tap.

BOBBY
That's fuckin' weird. One thing I
will never do: buy fuckin' water.

A beat.

ARTHUR
What your doctor say about your
fatigue?

STAN
Waiting for the scans to come back,
but he seemed to imply I shouldn't
drink the tap water at work.

ARTHUR
(Looking him over deeply)
What the fuck does that mean?

STAN
I don't know. He didn't elaborate.

ARTHUR
You gotta cut this doctor loose.
Find a doctor who doesn't buy his
own fuckin' water.

*Arthur just stares at Stan, trying to read him. A couple of
beats.*

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Listen, I don't know what that
doctor said to you. When you're
ready, you can tell me. But I want
you to know this: whatever you
need, and I mean anything, you let
me know. I wanna make sure you
understand that.

STAN
I appreciate that.

ARTHUR
I didn't forget what you did for
me. You got that? Anything!

STAN

Thank you.

ARTHUR

Hey, who's this new guy you invited into our golfing klan? You're suppose to run this by the group first.

STAN

We running background checks now?

ARTHUR

I think we need to know if he's a major asshole before we invite him in.

BOBBY

I met the guy. He's all right. He works the line at the plant, the Dalton unit. Nice guy, nice family and he loves golf. Besides, we needed someone to replace John.

WALTER walks up carrying a small wooden wine box.

STAN

Walter, taste the water out of this fountain.

WALTER

I don't drink water.

STAN

What the hell does that mean?

WALTER

It means, I don't drink water.

STAN

What do you drink?

WALTER

I drink wine.

A beat.

STAN

What if you're thirsty?

WALTER

Wine.

STAN

So you're saying there's something wrong with the water?

WALTER

How the hell would I know? I never drink that shit. Hey guys, I paid your golfing fees today.

BOBBY

Fuck you Walter. I pay my own way.

STAN

Thank you Walter, but not necessary. You're trying to hard.

Bobby shoves some cash into Walter's hand.

WALTER

Not necessary Bobby.

BOBBY

I'm not some charity case.

STAN

Accept Walters's gift Bobby.

BOBBY

Fuck no. My friendship's not for sale. You think you're better than me, don't you Walter?

WALTER

But Bobby, I am better than you. I own my own company.

BOBBY

You don't own your company; you inherited it. There's a difference. You won the gene lottery.

STAN

Where's your clubs Walter? Don't you need to warm up?

WALTER

You guys warm up all the time, take lessons, but you shoot the same shitty scores every weekend. Seriously, what's the point?

STAN

He does have a point. Ten years later and you guys are still horrible golfers...hey, here's Phil. Let me introduce you.

PHIL, an Afro-American, comes rushing up carrying his golf bag. He is dressed in a very loud, flamboyant golfing outfit. Arthur stands there stunned, unaware that Stan has invited an Afro-American into the group.

ARTHUR

What the fuck Stan!

STAN

Guys, I want you to meet Phil. Phil, this is Walter...Bobby...and Arthur.

They all shake Phil's hand, and then go back to warming up their swings.

STAN (CONT'D)

That's quite the understated golf outfit you got going.

PHIL

To much?

STAN

It's fine.

ARTHUR

Stan, can I talk to you a second?

STAN

Sure. Excuse me Phil. Go ahead and start warming up.

They retreat over to the water fountain, the rest of the guys in shadows, warming up, including Phil, the spotlight shining on Arthur and Stan.

ARTHUR

What the fuck!

STAN

What?

ARTHUR

He's a Negro.

STAN

I hadn't noticed. Thanks for pointing that out.

A beat.

ARTHUR

You don't see a problem here? Are you a commie now?

STAN

Because I invited a Negro to play golf?

ARTHUR

Martin Luther King's a commie.

STAN

Who told you that?

ARTHUR

He thinks we should get out of Vietnam, keeps making connections between poor Negro Americans and Vietnamese peasants. That's commie shit.

STAN

I don't know what the hell that means. He just wants to play golf. You're overthinking this.

ARTHUR

You should of run this by us. We can't just let anybody in.

STAN

He's in because I said he's in. End of discussion. He's just a guy who works the line, not looking to start a Black Panther field office, or date your daughter.

ARTHUR

What did the club say about bringing in a Negro?

STAN

I didn't ask. It's a public course.

ARTHUR

You really don't see a problem here?

STAN

Overthinking Arthur. Overthinking.

ARTHUR

And why are we letting Walter, a non-union asshole, play with us. He blocks us every step of the way when union reps try to talk to his workers.

STAN

He owns a small manufacturing company that is on the verge of bankruptcy. I'm not sure how long he is gonna be able to keep his doors open. He's never gonna be able to afford union wages. You need to cut him some slack. He's fighting for his life.

ARTHUR

He acts like his shit don't stink.

STAN

It's all smoke and mirrors. Walter needs our support right now. He's got a good heart; you just need to get to know him. We finished here? I gotta go warm up.

Arthur stares at him for a moment, and they both go back to the group. Arthur starts talking to Phil who is practicing his swing but stops after Arthur's question.

ARTHUR

You see Cassius Clay said he wasn't going in the service?

PHIL

You mean Mohammed Ali?

ARTHUR

No, I mean Cassius Clay. That's what his mamma calls him so that's good enough for me. I think he's a traitor. What do you think Phil?

PHIL

I think he should go. I fought in the war, why shouldn't he?

ARTHUR

They should lock his ass up.

PHIL

Well, he's gonna lose a shitload of money by not going. He could of spent his two years in the service giving exhibitions, like Elvis did, wouldn't of come near a bullet. Not sure what he's thinking. He's the heavyweight champion of the world. Could of made a boatload of money.

ARTHUR

It's stupid, leaving all that money on the table.

PHIL

I agree.

ARTHUR

Who you voting for Phil?

PHIL

(Surprised by the question)

Who am I voting for?

ARTHUR

Yeah, for President.

PHIL

Humphrey, why?

ARTHUR

Why not George Wallace?

PHIL

Why would I vote for someone who thinks I'm a second class citizen, and who lets seven year old kids walking to school be terrorized by a mob?

ARTHUR

I'll tell you why: Wallace is for the working man.

PHIL

The white working man.

ARTHUR

No, he's for the working man. He's for unions.

PHIL

Wallace doesn't believe in unions.

ARTHUR
Who told you that?

PHIL
Wallace did. He thinks the unions
are controlled by Communists. So
he's not really for the working man
now is he? Are you a Communist
Arthur?

ARTHUR
Are you a racist Phil?

STAN
OK, let't put a cork in this. Our
tee time is coming up. Phil, do me
a favor: taste the water in that
fountain.

PHIL
Sure.

Phil walks over and takes a long drink from the fountain.

STAN
Well?

PHIL
Tastes like shit.

STAN
Goddamnit. I knew it.

PHIL
It's always tasted like shit, ever
since I moved here.

STAN
So it's the same.

PHIL
Same shitty taste.

A beat.

ARTHUR
Stan, any news on our factory?

STAN
They're not moving.

ARTHUR
How can you say that?

STAN

The company is to profitable.
They've been here a hundred years;
they're loyal to this town, plus
they got a trained work force which
is irreplaceable. It would be
awfully fuckin' hard to replace the
level of skill we bring to the
table.

ARTHUR

But there's no unions down south,
or in Mexico. How do you compete
with people who work for pocket
change and who draw water from a
ditch? Why would they stay? GM and
the rug factory left and they were
both profitable. Profitability has
no fuckin' bearing as to whether a
company stays.

STAN

They stay out of loyalty. Their
roots are here. This town, this
factory is all about loyalty. We
don't bail on each other. Now stop
worrying; the company isn't going
anywhere.

BOBBY

We don't bail on each other, but I
can't say the same for a
corporation.

ARTHUR

Amen, but it can't bolt. I'm two
years away from my pension.

BOBBY

I'm fifteen years from mine and I
sure as hell ain't going to another
company and reset the clock.

WALTER

It can't leave. It's my best
customer, probably eighty percent
of my business.

STAN

Jesus Walter.

WALTER

Not something I like to broadcast.

STAN

Stop worrying guys. We're fine. This Company has always done right by us, just like the town who has always done right for us. They care about us.

ARTHUR

If you say so. Bobby, how's your daughter doing?

STAN

She sees the doctor next week.

ARTHUR

She's in my prayers every night. I want you to know that Bobby. Every fucking night.

BOBBY

Thanks Arthur. I appreciate that.

A voice backstage, coming from the starter.

STARTER OS

9:15 golfers, please report to the first tee. 9:15 tee time.

STAN

Gentlemen. Game time.

ACT I, SCENE III

A FACTORY SPOKESMAN enters and stands behind a dais to make an announcement. He is speaking to an invisible crowd.

SPOKESMAN

Thank you. I have here a check for \$10,000 which will enable our high school to purchase a new scoreboard for the football team. Our company, as it has for the past one hundred years, is dedicated to being part of the fabric of this community, and we look forward to another one hundred years of shared prosperity. This is our home, always has been, always will be.

ACT I, SCENE IV

Spotlight shifts to Walter's home and the dining room. Walter walks in totally drunk, unsteady. His wife, Liz, stares at him.

LIZ

Why you so late? I had dinner
already for you. You still want it.

WALTER

Sure. We stopped for some drinks
after golf.

A beat. She brings his dinner over, after removing the aluminum foil from the plate, and places the plate on the table before him.

LIZ

You want some water?

WALTER

Sure.

Liz leaves. He gingerly sits down at the dining room table. Walter slowly lowers his head onto the plate, which includes mash potatoes. Liz reenters with the water and sees him unconscious.

LIZ

I wait for you every night, alone,
praying I would hear your car pull
up. And when it did, I knew you
were alright.

A beat. Shouts.

LISTEN TO ME!

Walter raises his head, covered with mash potatoes, and slowly lowers his head back into the mash potatoes. She walks over, removes the plate from underneath his head and throws it against the wall. Walter looks up, looks around, and then slowly lowers his head down.

I sit alone, every night, waiting.
I don't know what's going on. I
don't know how to help you. I pray
you find peace, but I don't think I
can wait any longer. I love you but
you never talk to me. I don't know
what's going on. If I knew, maybe I
could help, but you never let me
in. I thought we would be partners
in the business, but you shut me
out a long time ago and it hurts.

(MORE)

LIZ (CONT'D)

I know the pressure you are under.
Please tell me how I can help you,
because if I can't help, I don't
know what meaning my life has.

Walter pulls his head up, looks around, and then lowers his head back onto his plate.

ACT I, SCENE IV

Bar at the golf course. Stan, Bobby, Walter and Arthur are standing at the bar, all drinking. Stan and Arthur are in a corner, talking to themselves, the spotlight shining on them.

ARTHUR

You got a good wife Stan.

STAN

I know I got a good wife.

ARTHUR

She doesn't deserve this.

STAN

Deserve what?

ARTHUR

Do I have to say it out loud?

STAN

It's none of your fuckin' business.

ARTHUR

I'm just saying.

STAN

And I'm just saying: it none of
your fuckin' business.

A beat.

ARTHUR

Ok.

A beat.

STAN

Arthur, I know you're right but I
can't stop. She gives me
something...a joy. She looks at me
like I'm something special. Nobody
looks at me like that anymore.

(MORE)

STAN (CONT'D)

She fills me up, makes me forget I work in a factory all day doing the same goddamn thing.

ARTHUR

Your wife's a good women. That's all I'm gonna say.

STAN

I don't disagree. I just can't quit this woman.

ARTHUR

All I'm saying is you're hurting a good woman.

STAN

Arthur, I know.

A beat. Stan and Arthur walk over and join the group.

ARTHUR

Hey Phil, why are your people burning down 14th street now? I don't get it.

PHIL

My people? Am I the Negro spokesman now? But tell me why your people, are still hanging Negroes in the South for trying to vote or for looking at a white girl?

ARTHUR

Your people always have an excuse. What's the latest excuse for burning down their own property?

PHIL

Maybe it has something to do with the fact that a black fourteen year old kid was shot in the back twenty times by the cops. That's wasn't a shooting Arthur; that was an execution.

ARTHUR

What'd he do?

PHIL

He didn't do anything. His mother said he was running, training for the cross country team at school.

ARTHUR

He must of done something. They found a gun.

STAN

You mean they planted a gun.

ARTHUR

They didn't plant a gun.

STAN

Sure they did. I know too many cops; I know what goes down.

ARTHUR

I was told he had a gun.

STAN

A fourteen year old kid isn't carrying a gun. His mother said he was training. He runs cross country. I'll believe his mother before I believe the cops. Twenty fuckin' bullets. How do you tell a mother her fourteen year old son was shot in the back twenty times?

A beat.

ARTHUR

Well, he had to have done something.

PHIL

You ever hear about a white kid being shot in the back 20 times by cops.

ARTHUR

I'm sure they had a reason.

PHIL

When blacks are executed by police they usually don't have a reason.

ARTHUR

I'll tell you what the reason is: they're doing something illegal.

PHIL

Most of the time they aren't.

STAN

He's right Arthur.

ARTHUR

You always take the side of
Negroes.

STAN

No, I always take the side of the
cross country runner.

WALTER

Arthur, I agree with you. He must
of done something. You have no idea
what I have to do in dealing with
them.

PHIL

Them? They're fuckin' people
Walter.

WALTER

People who are always trying to rip
me off. I got cameras now.

STAN

Walter, you pay them below minimum
wage. What do you expect would
happen. These people have to feed
their families, and most of them
are working two jobs.

ARTHUR

We're not talking about Negroes
like you Phil. Don't be so
sensitive.

PHIL

You did say 'your people' Arthur.

ARTHUR

I'm not prejudice Phil, if that's
what you're implying.

PHIL

I'm not implying Arthur. I'm saying
it out loud. But hey, I must have
been misinterpreting everything
you've been saying. I bet you even
have a Negro friend.

ARTHUR

Why is everything about race with
you?

PHIL

Because it is.

SULLY, the union rep walks in.

SULLY

Hey guys.

ARTHUR

Sully, our favorite union rep:
what's happening with the
negotiations?

SULLY

We keep making concessions, but
then, two days later, they want
more. It feels like we're begging,
not negotiating.

STAN

They're playing you Sully.

SULLY

They're not playing me. They push
back anymore, I'm calling a strike.

ARTHUR

That's suicide. Give them what they
want. I can't lose my job, or my
pension. I'll work for less.

BOBBY

Me too.

SULLY

It's a matter of principal.

ARTHUR

Fuck the principal. A principle
won't put food on my table. I need
two more years to get my pension. I
just need one more contract and I'm
home free. Don't blow it Sully.

PHIL

Don't sell us out.

SULLY

Who the fuck you think you are?
You're lucky you're in the union.

PHIL

I know I'm lucky because Unions
never let us in. We are qualified
to be strike breakers but aren't
qualified to be in the white boys'
club.

SULLY

Hey, you should be bowing down in gratitude that you're in the union.

PHIL

And I'm suppose to kiss your ass for that. I'm your fuckin' token; I know why I'm in the union. You need me when the company bids on federal contracts.

SULLY

God damn right we do. There use to be an order to things. People knew their place.

PHIL

The good old days when Negroes knew their place.

SULLY

You said it; I didn't. You can't get a government contract anymore without a fuckin' Negro.

PHIL

Fuck you Sully.

SULLY

No fuck you. The factory has scabs all lined up if we strike, and they're all fuckin' niggers.

A beat.

PHIL

What you say?

SULLY

You heard me.

Phil tries to hit Sully but Stan and Bobby intercede, but Phil breaks away and gets to Sully before Arthur and Bobby can stop it.

PHIL

Fuck you Sully. They are scabs because the union won't let them in.

SULLY

Any niggers that crosses the picket line is a dead man.

Phil goes after Sully again. Bobby and Arthur grab him after he gets in one punch.

BOBBY

Calm the fuck down Phil.

STAN

It's time you let them in Sully,
and not just for the shitty jobs.

SULLY

You think I got all these fuckin;
jobs lying around? I gotta appease
all the union executive fucks and
their fuckin' sons, nephews,
brothers, uncles, or their goddamn
girlfriends who has a son who can't
find a job. Some of these guys are
so fuckin' dumb that all they can
do is push a broom, but I have to
put them on the payroll because
they are some relative of the union
execs. There's only just so many
jobs to go around, after I fill the
jobs with the brain damaged kids of
the execs.

PHIL

Well Sully, you finally said it out
loud, something we knew about you
for a very long time.

SULLY

Hey, you need to wait your turn.
That's what we did.

PHIL

We've waited long enough. How you
let this happen Stan?

STAN

What are you talking about?

PHIL

You stand there silent when the
nigger talk starts.

STAN

Hey, I'm your best friend here. You
need to show some respect. You have
no idea the shit I took just to
have you golf with us?

PHIL

And I'm suppose to be grateful for that, kiss your ass, the white knight. All for letting me swing a golf club with a bunch of rednecks? Fuck that. You gonna let me eat at your shitty lunch counters now?

STAN

Fuck you Phil.

ARTHUR

It must be Phil's time of the month.

STAN & PHIL

Shut the fuck up Arthur.

A beat.

BOBBY

Look at us. Why we fighting each other? We should be talking about stopping the company from moving. I'm scared guys. There's no goddamn unions in the south. I see all these homeless people on the streets and I see myself living in my car with my five kids.

STAN

Don't go there Bobby. It's gonna be fine.

SULLY

That's why I'm recommending we strike. Play our cards. They need us.

ARTHUR

The truth of the matter is: they don't need us. They got southern communities offering them all kinds of tax breaks, infrastructure incentives, and no fuckin' unions. We have no fuckin' cards Sully. Why does everyone know that but you?

STAN

It's true. They don't need us. But the factory has always been loyal to this community. They just donated 10gs for a new scoreboard at the football field.

BOBBY
Big fuckin' deal.

STAN
That's not something a company
thinking of leaving would do.

BOBBY
We go out on strike, that's the
match that sends the factory south.
What aren't you telling us Sully?
You know they would bolt if we go
out on strike. Why call a strike
unless you're in bed with the
factory suits. What the hell they
promise you Sully?

SULLY
You're out of line.

BOBBY
We're not striking. Close the
fuckin' deal Sully. I got five kids
to support.

STAN
Guys, we've been down this road
many times before--there's nothing
new to these negotiations, just the
usual posturing.

Stan goes into a coughing fit.

BOBBY
You OK?

STAN
I'm fine.

BOBBY
You've been coughing a lot lately.

STAN
I'm fine, just can't shake this
cold I have.

BOBBY
I hope you're right about the
factory, but it sure doesn't feel
like the usual posturing.

ACT I, SCENE V

Arthur enters. His wife NANCY is sitting in a chair sipping a drink.

ARTHUR
Where's dinner?

NANCY
This is happy hour. Why don't you
fix yourself a drink and freshen up
mine.

ARTHUR
How many drinks have you had?

NANCY
We're counting my drinks now?

ARTHUR
I see why dinner isn't ready.

NANCY
Are you confusing me for the maid
we don't have?

A beat.

ARTHUR
No, I'm confusing you for a
housewife.

NANCY
Fuck you. I'll fix my own drink.

Nancy gets up and starts making herself a drink.

ARTHUR
You fixing dinner?

NANCY
It's cocktail hour.

A beat.

ARTHUR
You need to get yourself some help.

NANCY

Angry.

No I don't. I just need to forget.
That's all I'm trying to do--
forget!

ACT I, SCENE VI

The factory spokesman comes out and stands behind the lectern.

SPOKESMAN

I have been getting a lot of inquiries about how the negotiations are going for the new contract. We are confident that we will be able to craft a deal that is beneficial to all parties. We are committed to these negotiations, and look forward to another decade of mutual prosperity. On a more sobering note, our President and CEO, Mr. Sherman, lost his heroic battle with cancer at the age of 46. The flag will be at half mast for the rest of the week. Funeral arrangements will be posted on the message boards.

ACT I, SCENE VII

Stan walks into his Doctor's office. His doctor sits behind his desk.

DOCTOR

Have a seat Stan.

STAN

So what's the good news? I'm good right?

A beat as the doc brings out some microfilm.

DOCTOR

Let me show you these scans Stan.

He brings them out and holds them up for Stan, who leans over to look.

STAN

What am I looking at?

DOCTOR

See this area here, the dark spots.

STAN

Doc, cut to the chase. I don't care about this shit. Just tell me.

DOCTOR
I'm so sorry Stan. You have stage
four pancreatic cancer.

Long pause.

STAN
You sure?

DOCTOR
I'm sorry.

A beat.

STAN
I'm forty-five years old. How the
hell does a forty-five year old man
have cancer?

DOCTOR
The medical community is still
researching the cause.

STAN
But I feel fine except I'm tired
sometimes, but I work a very
physical job. I think there's been
some kind of mistake. Doc, I feel
fine.

DOCTOR
I understand. I wish you had come
sooner. I wish a lot of the factory
workers had come to see me sooner.

STAN
Most of them can't afford
insurance. that's why you never see
them for checkups.

A beat.

STAN (CONT'D)
I'm forty-five years old. This
can't be happening. Why doc? Why?

DOCTOR
The medical community is still
doing research on the causes.

STAN
Well, what do you think?

DOCTOR

We'll start you off on a very aggressive regimen.

STAN

That's not what I'm asking. You just told me I won't see my son graduate, or walk my daughter down the isle. This town is my little slice of heaven Doc. I need a reason. Why does a forty-five year old man get cancer?

DOCTOR

The scientific community doesn't know.

STAN

Is there something wrong with the water? Is that why you buy drinking water? What will the report say?

DOCTOR

It will say it meets every federal and state regulation.

A beat.

STAN

So what do you say?

DOCTOR

I can't say anything. I signed an NDA when I was asked to work on the project.

STAN

So what are you fuckin' hiding? It's about the water, isn't it?

A beat.

DOCTOR

Listen, I want to start treatment on you as soon as possible. I can't talk about anything else.

A beat.

STAN

Doc, just tell me: is there was something wrong with the water? If there was, I believe the town would of done something about it.

(MORE)

STAN (CONT'D)

You saw the press conference; the company scientist said the water is fine.

DOCTOR

No, what he said was that there is a safe level of carcinogen. And guess who determines what the safe level is? The factory scientists. All the chemical companies are doing that now, promoting there is some safe level of carcinogen exposure.

STAN

The factory has always taken care of us, had our back. If they say the water's fine, I believe it.

A beat.

DOCTOR

I'm not suppose to tell you this, but the company you work for is killing you Stan. They are responsible for all this. I want you to read the report I gave you.

STAN

But the company scientists said the water's fine.

DOCTOR

Just read my report.

A beat, angry.

STAN

I'm a forty- five year old company man. The factory and the mayor would never lie about something as important as this. We're all from the neighborhood.

DOCTOR

I don't know what to say. I would just encourage you to read my findings.

A beat.

STAN

...I'm gonna sit here for a bit.

DOCTOR
OK. I'll have my secretary contact
you about the first treatment.

STAN
OK Doc.

A beat.

Hey doc. How long?

DOCTOR
Hard to say.

STAN
Ballpark.

DOCTOR
Six to eight months.

Doctor quietly leaves. Stan breaks down, crying heavily.

ACT I, SCENE VIII

Phil enters his living room where his wife is sitting in a chair reading. Phil goes over to the sink and fills a glass of water. He walks over to Rachel and hands her the glass.

PHIL
Taste this.

RACHEL
Why?

PHIL
Just taste it.

RACHEL
OK.

Rachel drinks from the glass.

PHIL
Well?

RACHEL
Well what?

PHIL
Does it taste funny to you?

RACHEL
It has always tasted a little
funny. Why?

PHIL

Something Stan said, one of the guys I golf with.

RACHEL

You think something's wrong with the water?

PHIL

I don't know. I always wondered about how the company just dumps it's waste into the river.

RACHEL

It's probably nothing. I mean, we drink well water so we're fine. Besides, white people would never allow this to happen in their community. Contaminated water? No way.

PHIL

Yeah. Well, that's what I think too.

RACHEL

How was golf? How are the guys?

PHIL

Stan's alright, not sure about the other guys, but I'll play their game so I can get my promotions.

RACHEL

Just don't be their house nigger.

A beat.

PHIL

What'd you say?

RACHEL

You heard me. They're not your friends. You're the token they parade up and down as an excuse not to bring blacks into the union.

PHIL

Every year more and more blacks get in.

RACHEL

It's a trickle and you know it. And mark my word, if the factory moves south, blacks will be the first ones to be let go.

PHIL

You don't know what you're talking about. Factory's going nowhere.

RACHEL

I just want you to be realistic.

JAMES, their son, has entered the room. He stands and listens to his parent's conversation.

PHIL

For the first time in my life, I am being realistic, so realistic that we are gonna buy a house in the Oakville section.

RACHEL

That's the white section.

PHIL

Goddamn right it is.

RACHEL

What are you saying?

PHIL

I'm not only gonna get that promotion I've been denied, we're gonna move into their goddamn neighborhood. It's our time.

RACHEL

That scares me honey.

JAMES

Why do you keep torturing yourself? Once they see your face, any house you want will no longer be available. You know this.

PHIL

I got connections. Why do you think I play golf with these guys? It's all about connections, and get this: one of the guy's wife is a realtor.

JAMES

These connections are worthless, and they're not your buddies. How can you be talking about golf when Detroit is literally burning. You can see the smoke from here and you're going on about golf. I don't know why you think you need to play the Uncle Tom all the time. They don't care what kind of connection you think you have; they're never gonna let you into their club, much less their neighborhood. And why would you? Why would you want to live where you're not wanted?

PHIL

Because it's my right, as a citizen of this country.

JAMES

You think the suburbs are some utopia where all your dreams come true? They're red-lining us.

PHIL

What are you talking about?

JAMES

Bankers are drawing red lines around neighborhoods and denying mortgages to Negroes in that loop. They're never gonna let you in Dad. You don't understand the forces you are up against. These people are scared.

PHIL

You have no idea what I'm trying to do.

JAMES

I know exactly what you're trying to do. You're trying to assimilate, thinking the white man's American Dream is gonna set you free. Only problem is, it's a false dream and it don't allow no niggers.

PHIL

We'll see about that.

JAMES
 Stop playing the Uncle Tom...It's
 hard to watch.

PHIL
 Get out. Now!

James starts to leave.

RACHEL
 Wait, you got this letter. It looks
 like it's from the Draft Board.

James walks over, takes the letter from his mother, reads it and then rips it up and throws the ripped pieces on the floor. He storms out. Rachel and James exit as Debbie and Bobby enter. Lights fade.

ACT I, SCENE IX

The spotlight shifts to Stan as he walks into his living room. His wife, Alice, is sweeping the floor.

ALICE
 You're home early.

STAN
 I saw the doctor this morning so I
 clocked out early.

ALICE
 What the doctor say about your
 fatigue?

A beat.

STAN
 I am so sorry, I have stage four
 cancer, and I don't know why.

A beat.

ALICE
 That doesn't make any sense.

STAN
 He confirmed it.

ALICE
 My god. You're forty-five years
 old. I don't understand.

STAN

I know, and I am so sorry.

Stan begins to break down. I'm terrified...I went from looking forward to Charlie's game on Friday to thinking about dying.

Alice comes over to comfort Stan, putting her arms around him.

ALICE

We can beat this.

STAN

You don't beat stage four cancer. I am so sorry. You don't deserve this.

ALICE

There's nothing to be sorry about.

STAN

It's all so sudden. It makes me realize all the gifts I took for granted, all the blessings I am surrounded with. Alice, it was all staring me in the face and now it's too late. I want more time.

ALICE

I know.

Pleading.

STAN

I need more time!!!!

A beat.

I need to tell you something...
It's over. I told her.

Alice stops, and looks on Stan with hope, sadness, emotions starting to simmer.

ALICE

How do I know it's over?

STAN

Cause I said so.

ALICE

And you expect me to forgive you?

STAN

No.

ALICE

So why now?

STAN

It was time. I will spend the rest of my life making it up to you and the kids. I need more time. I forgot what a blessing it is to live in this town, where everyone takes care of each other. I forgot who I was...and now it's to late.

A beat.

I need more time.

ALICE

You said it was over six months ago. Why should I believe you now?

A beat.

STAN

The other day Jamie asked where I was going, that he never gets to see me. And he wanted to know why I missed his little league game. I could see he was fighting back tears. And I couldn't give him an honest answer. It was at that moment that I finally saw what I was doing to the kids, to you, and I just couldn't do it anymore.

A beat.

ALICE

You really hurt me.

STAN

I know. You didn't deserve that.

ALICE

You tell the whore?

STAN

Please don't call her that. But yeah, I told her.

ALICE

For two years I sat in that chair, waiting for you to come home.

(MORE)

ALICE (CONT'D)

Two years I waited. I sat there empty, betrayed, shamed, but it was the loneliness, of waiting. I would of left but I had nowhere to go, and it killed me making excuses to the kids every night, to our friends, as to why you were never home. I lied for you for two years.

A beat.

You hurt me, and now you walk in here and want forgiveness? I don't think I can give it.

STAN

I don't expect you to. With whatever time I have left, I want to be surrounded by my family.

Long pause as Alice walks toward Stan. She starts to break down and starts hitting Stan.

ALICE

No you don't understand. If you did, you wouldn't of done this to me...YOU BASTARD! I have been so humiliated and shamed. What makes you think you can just walk right back into our lives? I'm in pain and you did this. YOU DID THIS!

Stan pulls her into himself, which stops her flailing. She breaks down, sobbing deeply, while Stan holds her.

ACT I, SCENE X

The golf clubhouse, three months later, otherwise known as the 19th hole. There are a few tables setup where the guys are having drinks, tired after their round. Bobby is adding up the card.

STAN

This is the 2nd month you've played. Are you feeling the love yet?

PHIL

They just like the fact that I'm an even worse golfer than they are.

STAN

You're not that bad.

PHIL

Really?

STAN

No, you're horrible Phil. I've never seen anything like it. You have absolutely no athletic skill.

PHIL

Well thanks for sugar coating it.

STAN

There's no filters here.

PHIL

Yeah, Arthur has made that clear.

The spotlight shines on the whole group. Stan goes into a coughing fit. The men stare at him until it ends.

ARTHUR

You OK?

STAN

I'm fine.

ARTHUR

You get the scans back?

STAN

I told you I'm fine.

ARTHUR

You sure?

STAN

Yeah I'm sure. I would fuckin' know wouldn't I?

A beat.

ARTHUR

Remember what I said.

STAN

I'm fine.

ARTHUR

I mean anything.

STAN

Thank you.

ARTHUR

I heard your son will be starting at quarterback Friday night.

STAN

Can't wait--Friday Night Football and my son is the starting quarterback. I'm gonna pick my wife up; we're gonna eat at Angelos, and I'm gonna watch my son play quarterback. It doesn't get any better than that gentlemen. I relish these moments now.

A beat.

ARTHUR

Why now?

STAN

Arthur, stop analyzing everything I say.

ARTHUR

All right, but remember what I said.

STAN

Yes. I appreciate that.

BOBBY

Sometimes I think my life peaked back in high school football, the last time I felt real joy. That's the thing about sports: they keep score and at the end of 60 or 40 minutes, you know where you stand. No excuses; you either won or lost. You're not thinking about the past or the future. In my life, I can't see past today. I loved those Friday night games. I still think about that night we beat those bastards from Westside. For that one brief moment, nobody could look down on us. We were winners. And we left that stadium so full of pride, not only for us, but for the whole town.

STAN

I saw that game. They were better than you, had more talent, bigger, but on that night you guys played like gladiators, lifted the whole town up. It was glorious. The whole town walked around with pride. We were more than just factory grunts. We were winners.

A beat.

I love this fuckin' town. We got a little slice of heaven right here gentlemen.

ARTHUR

I wish we could go back twenty years. Things were simpler then; there was a certain order to things, people knew their places. You didn't have to worry about the factory closing, or going on strike. Every Friday you knew you would get paid, and eventually you had a down payment to buy a house. Your kids went to good schools, had friends over, got into mischief, but it was never to bad. Boys being boys. This town was a good place to raise a family.

PHIL

This utopia you speak about sure didn't include black people. We were kept out of the union, kept out of your neighborhoods, had the worse schools, were given the worse jobs in the factory. Your so-called idyllic good old days were nightmares for us.

ARTHUR

We can never talk about good things around you can we Phil?

PHIL

I'm just giving you a history lesson. I'm sorry if that inconveniences you.

ARTHUR

OK Malcolm. Hey, but isn't your son on the team ?

PHIL
No, he quit.

ARTHUR
Why'd he quit.
(Pause)

PHIL
All due respect Stan, he should of
been the starting quarterback. He
won the position. Instead, they
wanted him to be a receiver, like
he somehow wasn't smart enough to
play quarterback.

ARTHUR
That's no reason to quit.

PHIL
Yeah, it is. He said he'll play in
college. He beat him out Stan.

A beat.

STAN
Phil, your son may or may not have
beaten out my son. I don't
disbelieve you when you say that.
But I'm gonna enjoy Friday night.
For that one night, I'm gonna root
for my son and ain't nothing better
than that.

PHIL
I understand.

A beat.

STAN
Guys, I wanna run something by you.
My doctor seems to think our
drinking water is contaminated.
He's been running a study with the
health department for the past few
years and he's saying the water we
drink is toxic.

ARTHUR
Water's fine. And why the fuck is
your doctor poking around about the
water? What's he trying to do?

STAN

He's not trying to do anything. I'm just wondering if we should be drinking the water?

ARTHUR

Fuckin' doctors. If there was something wrong with the water don't you think the town would of done something about it? This is a good town and we take care of our own here. Your doctor doesn't know what the fuck he's talking about.

STAN

But he said there are scientific reports from the health department where they've been running water samples for the past two years. The reports say there is a direct link to cancer because of the contamination.

BOBBY

Fuck the reports. Science isn't fact. Reports like that are job killers.

STAN

Science isn't fact?

BOBBY

There's nothing wrong with the fuckin' water, otherwise the town would of done something.

ARTHUR

Are you anti-business now Stan? You wanna shut down businesses?

STAN

I'm just wondering if we should be drinking the town's water? That's all I'm asking. But I agree: if there was something wrong with the water the company and the town would of done something about it.

ARTHUR

Then why you wanna bring this shit up? The water's fine. I ain't losing my job because of some bullshit report.

(MORE)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

I got two fuckin' years till my pension. No fuckin' way this is true.

STAN

But what if it is true?

ARTHUR

The factory moves to South Carolina before the sun fuckin' sets, and we all lose our fuckin' jobs. That's what happens if it is true.

STAN

I'm just telling you what the doctor said.

ARTHUR

Did you read the report?

STAN

No, not yet.

ARTHUR

If you haven't read the report, why the fuck would you start these rumors? Tell that doctor to mind his own fuckin' business. Jobs are at stake. Livelihoods are at stake. You think the factory is gonna stay in this town with contaminated water? They're fuckin' salivating over those southern states who have no fuckin' unions and no fuckin' doctors telling 'em how to run their businesses. Why you spreading this bullshit?

BOBBY

He should have his fucking license revoked. Where the hell am I gonna work if the factory closes. I got five kids and I'm already moonlighting.

ARTHUR

What do you think of all this Phil?

PHIL

Where I live, the water always tastes like shit. But who was gonna listen to us. Now if it were a white neighborhood, something would be done about it.

(MORE)

PHIL (CONT'D)

That's why I think the water's fine. White people would never do this to their own kind.

ARTHUR

There you go, Mohammad speaks.

BOBBY

But guys, if it closes, where would I work? There's no more union jobs in this town and I got five kids to support.

WALTER

I think its time to start thinking about a vasectomy Bobby.

BOBBY

Yeah, I'm not taking vasectomy advice from you Walter.

STAN

How'd we get onto the subject of vasectomies?

WALTER

We were talking about the factory pulling out-something Bobby appears incapable of doing.

ARTHUR

The factory did its own study and everything is fine.

BOBBY

There you go, everything is fuckin' fine. Why we even discussing this?

PHIL

I don't mind drinking a little dirty water if it saves our jobs, saves our pensions.

ARTHUR

That's the smartest thing I've heard you say Phil.

STAN

I do worry about our pensions.

BOBBY

I thought pensions were guaranteed.

STAN

You're living in a fantasy world.
I'm hearing these rumors that our
pension money is funding casino
construction in Vegas for the mob.

ARTHUR

I don't care about that. Water's
fine.

Arthur downs a glass of water from the tap.

STAN

I agree. The town would never let
this happen. They got our backs.
Bobby, how's the kid?

A beat.

BOBBY

It's back.

ARTHUR

Jesus. I am so sorry Bobby.

STAN

We all are Bobby. A five year old
kid doesn't deserve that.

BOBBY

I don't know what to do to ease her
pain. She doesn't deserve this. No
kid deserves this.

*A beat. Bobby starts to break down. They gather round to
comfort him, hands on Bobby's back.*

ACT I, SCENE XI

*Stan walks into Walter's office. Walter is behind his desk
and pouring whiskey into his coffee cup.*

WALTER

You wanna drink?

STAN

It's ten thirty in the morning.

WALTER

I never drink before nine.

STAN

Good to know. Otherwise I would of thought you were an alcoholic.

Stan places a check on Walter's desk.

Sorry this is so late. You really helped me out that day. I'll have the final payment next month.

WALTER

Don't worry about it.

STAN

I do. How's things?

WALTER

It's fuckin' hard being a small manufacturing company. Predators are always looking to shut me down.

STAN

How you stay alive?

WALTER

Creative bookkeeping, and the factory keeps me in business. The factory is 85% of my business.

STAN

That's not good.

WALTER

Tell me about it.

STAN

You should diversify.

WALTER

Really. Diversify to who?

STAN

You know, find another factory like ours.

WALTER

Oh thanks. I never fuckin' thought about that. There ain't no more factories like yours. What I need to do is buy this machine that will automate half of what I produce. If I had that, I would need half of my work force. I'd be profitable for the first time.

STAN

So why not get it?

WALTER

What a great fuckin' idea. I never thought of that. You wanna lend me fifty thousand dollars?

STAN

What about your bank?

WALTER

Those bastards aren't giving me new credit, their calling in my old credit, while making me pay 29% interest. They're fucking vultures.

STAN

What do your competitors do? Do they have that machine.

WALTER

My competitors are all down in South Carolina or in Mexico. They don't need the machine; they got fuckin' slave labor. You a business consultant now?...Stan, I don't know how long I can keep this thing going. I owe a shitload of money to the wrong fucking people and I'm running out of options.

STAN

I warned you about that.

WALTER

I had no fuckin' choice. The bank wouldn't give me any more loans. I've already refinanced my house four times, which my wife doesn't know about.

STAN

Jesus Walter.

WALTER

I wasn't gonna let anyone put me out of business.

Phone rings from his secretary. Walter picks it up.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Yes. Put him through. I'll just be a minute.

STAN
Do your thing.

Stan wanders over to the window.

WALTER
Yeah, I got your bill. The bill is bullshit. The product you sent was shit. You should be paying me to dispose of that shit...no it wasn't. It was total shit. I don't know who you think you're dealing with, but I only take high quality material. I don't know if you were just cleaning out your warehouse, and you thought you could pull a fast one on me...you absolutely did. I have a mind to ship that shit back to you, take your ass to court. I don't want the responsibility of getting rid of that shit...well, make me an offer...don't insult me...all right, 60% off. Check will go out Friday.

STAN
(Laughing)
Jesus Christ Walter, you got some big fuckin' balls. Is this how you handle bill collectors?

WALTER
David vs. Goliath.

A beat.

STAN
What are those big vats out there?

WALTER
That's for the waste.

STAN
What do you do with it?

WALTER
It goes in the river, why?

STAN
Are you shitting me?

WALTER
What?

STAN
Whataya mean what?

Stan goes into a coughing fit.

WALTER
You ok?

STAN
No, I'm not OK.

WALTER
Well, that's how we get rid of
waste. All the companies do it.
What's the big deal?

STAN
Goddamnit Walter. It contaminates
the water. We fuckin' drink that
water. Why would you dump your
waste into the river?

WALTER
Where the hell else would I dump
it?

STAN
How bout a safe place? How about a
waste treatment plant?

WALTER
You think I have money for a waste
treatment plant? If I did have
money, I would get that goddamn
machine, not a waste treatment
plant. Why you got a hair up your
ass about this? It's just waste.

STAN
Cause children are dying Walter.
And it's from the fuckin' water.

*Stan walks over to the desk, picks up his check, and tears it
into pieces. He storms out, Walter looking on dumbfounded.*

WALTER
What the fuck Stan? I need that
money!

ACT I, SCENE XII

*Bobby comes in his living room, a bit inebriated. His wife
greet's him, seething.*

DEBBIE

Where the hell you been?

BOBBY

Golfing. Where the hell you think I've been?

DEBBIE

It's nine o'clock. You left the house at 7:30. I've been home all day with five kids, and all I've been doing is refereeing. It's not fair honey.

BOBBY

I'm sorry. We stopped to have a few drinks.

DEBBIE

I can't do this alone.

BOBBY

I know that baby. I'm just trying to hold it together, but working eighty hours a week makes me feel like a zombie sometimes.

A beat.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Did you hear back from the doctor?

DEBBIE

She needs another round of chemo.

BOBBY

Ah!!!! Jesus Christ. What that child has endured. GOD!. WHY? WHAT GOD DOES THIS TO A FIVE YEAR OLD KID?

...Our priest told me to pray. Well prayers haven't done shit. He told me God has a plan. Fuck any plan that gives five year old kids cancer. I'm done with this fuckin' God.

DEBBIE

I know honey, but we can't let her see us like this. We have to be the model of positivity, not anger.

BOBBY

I know baby. It just gets to me,
how unfair this is.

DEBBIE

Lets do something special with her
tomorrow and we can tell her then.

BOBBY

I wish I could bring her peace. And
the worse thing: she always has a
smile, like she is trying to
protect us from her pain. Her
courage shames me...Has the
insurance been paying her bills?

DEBBIE

I have to fight every bill,
otherwise it ends up in
collections. They threatened not to
give this next round of chemo if I
don't pay the last bill.

BOBBY

Those bastards. Don't worry; I'll
figure something out. In the
meantime, here's two hundred.

A beat. Bobby hands her two hundred in cash.

DEBBIE

Where'd you get this?

BOBBY

Been doing a few side jobs for
Jimmy.

DEBBIE

That scares me.

BOBBY

No, Jimmy's changed.

DEBBIE

I doubt it. What does he do for a
living now?

BOBBY

He's an entrepreneur.

DEBBIE

That's what drug dealers call
themselves.

BOBBY

No, he's cool, not into that shit anymore, wants to help me out. Listen, I've known him all my life. I trust him.

DEBBIE

But where do you find time to work with Jimmy?

BOBBY

I quit my third job. It was minimum wage. I make a lot more with Jimmy, with way less hours. I can see Miles' games now, and help you out with the kids on the weekend.

DEBBIE

Just be careful.

BOBBY

Always.

DEBBIE

Any word on the factory? This town has been held hostage by that factory for the past ten years, always threatening to move.

BOBBY

Nothing new. I don't know who to fight. It feels like people are making decisions about my life and I don't know who they are or how to fight it. How do you fight something that is three thousand miles away? Listen, one day I'm gonna own my own carwash. I won't be working for someone else; people will be working for me.

DEBBIE

I know honey, but where are you gonna get the money? I'm just being realistic. I don't want you to be disappointed.

BOBBY

Jimmy said he would help. I'll figure it out. Let me ask you something: does the water taste funny to you?

DEBBIE
Why you asking?

BOBBY
Something Stan said about his
doctor saying there was something
wrong with the water.

DEBBIE
Well, it has always tasted a little
funny, but I think that is from
some chemicals they use to purify
the water. You think there's
something wrong with the water?

BOBBY
When we go to the hospital, I see
an awful lot of kids in the cancer
ward. I don't think you can call it
a coincidence anymore.

A beat.

DEBBIE
You think the water has something
to do with Stacey's cancer?

A beat.

BOBBY
I do...but I can't prove a thing,

DEBBIE
I doubt it's true. Otherwise the
town would of sent out a notice or
something. Now, you need to get to
bed. You got to be at work in three
hours.

BOBBY
We all take naps during the night.
I'm a security guard in an empty
office building; a statue could do
my job.

(Pause)

DEBBIE
It breaks my heart you have to work
so many hours.

BOBBY
I want you to know something: I
will do anything for this family,
and I mean anything.

(MORE)

BOBBY (CONT'D)

I'm not gonna be like my father.
I'll always be there for you and
the kids.

DEBBIE

I know that babe.

BOBBY

And I will own my own company.

DEBBIE

OK babe.

BOBBY

I'm gonna take a nap, and the only
thing that keeps me going is your
touch. I need your touch baby. You
wipe away everything with your
touch.

Debbie kisses Bobby.

DEBBIE

I know baby. Now take a nap and
before you have to go to work, I'm
gonna get in bed and and I'll make
you forget all about this for a
couple hours.

BOBBY

Whoa. I'm ready to go now.

DEBBIE

After your nap honey. You need to
sleep.

BOBBY

And you think I can sleep after
that proposal?

DEBBIE

All right. I'll get you to sleep.
I'll show you what it means to be
loved by a woman.

Debbie kisses Bobby.

ACT I, SCENE XIII

Phil's living room. Rachel and James are there.

PHIL

Where you think you're going?

JAMES

You know where I'm going.

PHIL

No, I don't. You never tell us anything.

JAMES

I'm going to the Anti-war rally. Dad, this war is being fought by the sons of the working class, and a whole lot of brothers, just so corporations can earn obscene amount of profits. The munitions industry is riding a wave and there ain't no stopping it. To many people are making to much money for the war to just stop. Their profits are obscene. Rich kids go to college, and the working class sacrifices their sons so rich kids don't have to fight. I'm not sacrificing my life for spoiled rich kids. And I'm not sacrificing my life for the munitions industry.

PHIL

In this town, men serve their country, as they have always done. It's their duty.

JAMES

We need to redefine what duty is. The best and brightest in this town are being led to their slaughter. I'm not gonna be one of their sacrificial lambs. I refuse to die in the rice patties of Vietnam, fighting a war that has no purpose.

James storms out.

ACT I, SCENE XIV

A bar. Stan is nursing a coke. A guy, BILLY, sidles up to him, carrying his drink.

BILLY
You're Stan, right?

Stan turns to him.

STAN
That's right.

BILLY
Don't look at me. Keep looking
forward.

STAN
Do I know you?

BILLY
I work at the factory.

STAN
What part?

BILLY
Research and medical
testing...Don't look at me. Now
listen, I'm gonna hand you an
envelope and I want you to
discreetly put it in your jacket.

STAN
What's in the envelope?

BILLY
You'll see.

Billy hands Stan an envelope discreetly under the bar.

STAN
How can I get a hold of you?

BILLY
I'll get a hold of you.

Billy stands up and exits.

ACT I, SCENE XV

The spotlight shifts to the break room at the factory. It is your typical factory break room: a table for eating, chairs, (both having seen better days), a counter with a coffee pot and posters stuck on the walls. Phil is sitting down drinking a coffee. Stan enters and pours himself a cup.

PHIL

Hey Stan.

STAN

What's up?

PHIL

Let me ask you something: I heard one of the guys' wives is a realtor. I was wondering if you could hook me up? I was looking to buy a house in the Oakville neighborhood.

STAN

It's Nancy at Spencer's Realty, Arthur's wife. She'll take care of you. Mention my name.

PHIL

I will, and thanks.

A beat.

STAN

Phil, you sure you want to do this? I know these people. I know what they're capable of.

PHIL

Then why haven't you done anything about it?

STAN

A beat.

That's not fair; I'm just one guy, and your biggest ally in this. I just think you don't know what you're stepping into.

PHIL

I know exactly what I'm stepping into. I've been stepping into it my entire life.

STAN

I'm telling you, you're putting your family at risk.

PHIL

Well, I'm tired Stan. I'm tired of living in second class neighborhoods with second class schools. My kids deserve better.

STAN

I hear ya, but I don't know if I would do that if I were you.

PHIL

Then do something about it.

STAN

I told you, I'm just one guy.

PHIL

You need to take sides Stan, get off the fence. You know right from wrong and this is wrong.

STAN

I won't have you judging me.

PHIL

I'll do whatever I want. You're a cowardly enabler Stan.

STAN

Fuck you. You're putting your family in harm's way. How could you do that?

PHIL

Listen, I'm moving into your neighborhood so you might as well get use to it. Your silence gives them permission to terrorize. So don't tell me you're on my side.

STAN

In case you haven't realized this, I'm your only friend here.

PHIL

We're not friends Stan. You ever invite my family over for a cook out? Your silence condones the violence, condones the nigger talk.

Stan sits there stunned. Phil exits and passes Arthur who is on his way in.

ARTHUR
What was that all about?

STAN
He's looking for a realtor. I told
him to contact Nancy.

ARTHUR
Why would you do that?

STAN
She's a realtor???

ARTHUR
That ain't happening.

STAN
What's not happening?

ARTHUR
I'm not letting my property value
be sabotaged.

A beat.

STAN
He has every right.

ARTHUR
Not on my watch.

STAN
What does that mean? This is 1968.
You need to move pass that shit.
This is a good man. I hate to be
the one to tell you this, but you
guys have a lot in common.

ARTHUR
He's a Negro. We have jack shit in
common.

*Phil re-enters and freshens up his coffee. Arthur stares at
him.*

ARTHUR (CONT'D)
Hey Phil, when are your people
gonna stop rioting? They're burning
down their own businesses now.

PHIL
The buildings that are being
torched are not Negro businesses.
(MORE)

PHIL (CONT'D)

They don't own them; we don't own anything.

ARTHUR

And why do you think that is?

PHIL

Because banks don't lend to blacks, and they don't issue mortgages to blacks. Should I go on about institutional racism?

ARTHUR

I don't know what the hell that is. I just don't understand why they are burning down their community.

PHIL

Black people are still being hung and murdered in the South, just for trying to vote. I don't understand why white people would do that.

ARTHUR

You act like it's 1865.

PHIL

In a lot of ways, it is. Let's say I wanted to move into your neighborhood. Would I be terrorized by the KKK?

ARTHUR

Why in the hell would you want to move into a neighborhood where you're not wanted, where everyone is different than you? That just doesn't make sense.

PHIL

Last time I checked, it's still a free country. I can live where ever the fuck I want.

ARTHUR

Well, let your people know that if they burn down all their homes, they're not welcome out here.

PHIL

We already knew that. Nobody's burning down their homes.

(MORE)

PHIL (CONT'D)

Predatory businesses in our community are what is burning. But am I the Negro spokesman now?

ARTHUR

People do better with their own kind. It's in the Bible.

PHIL

Is it now? You a God fearing man Arthur?

ARTHUR

I go to church every Sunday. Deuteronomy: "You shall not intermarry with them, giving your daughters to their sons or taking their daughters for you sons."

PHIL

Well Arthur, there is also Mark 12:36: " You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these..." Separate but equal. Is that what you're trying to say Arthur?

ARTHUR

Yeah, separate but equal.

PHIL

Well, the 1954 Supreme Court ruling in Brown vs. Board of Education struck that down.

ARTHUR

Struck what down?

PHIL

Study your history Arthur.

ARTHUR

I don't need to study history to understand the world.

PHIL

Clearly you do.

ARTHUR

I just don't believe in race mixing. That's what I believe and I won't apologize for it.

PHIL
But alas, gotta do what the Supreme Court says.

ARTHUR
I don't need the Supreme Court telling me what's right or wrong. The Bible teaches me that. I know right from wrong.

PHIL
Clearly you don't.
(Long pause)

ARTHUR
You're got a smart ass mouth Phil.

PHIL
Yeah, what are you gonna do about it?

STAN
GUYS!

Stan gets between them as they were slowly getting close to each other.

ARTHUR
Just don't be trying to move into my neighborhood.

PHIL
You threatening me Arthur?

ARTHUR
We take care of our own. That's all I'm saying. And one more thing: we got guns out here.

STAN
Arthur, get the fuck out of here.

ARTHUR
This isn't over.

PHIL
Yeah, well bring it, you motherfuckin' cracker.

STAN
Arthur, OUT! And don't bother showing up on Saturday; you're done.

ARTHUR
I'm not leaving.

STAN
Fine, just shut the fuck up.

*Stan takes out a bunch of papers and starts reading them.
Bobby walks in.*

BOBBY
What are those?

STAN
Water documents. The ones my doctor gave me. Listen Phil, if what I'm reading about the water is true, you shouldn't want to move into the Oakville section. The wells are all contaminated.

BOBBY
How would you know that?

STAN
That's what his report says.

BOBBY
Why you reading those documents?

STAN
Trying to understand the town's cancer cluster. My doctor said it was the water. When I was in the hospital the other day I walked by the pediatric ward. It's overflowing with kids with cancer.

ARTHUR
What are you saying?

STAN
I'm not saying anything. If there was something wrong with the water, I'm sure the town would of done something about it. I'm just trying to understand why this town has such a big cancer cluster.

ARTHUR
You need to burn that fuckin' thing. I don't know what the fuck you think you're doing, but I'm not losing my job over some bullshit report.

The spokesman from the factory walks in, just after Stan puts the report under his chair.

SPOKESMAN

Gentlemen.

Silence.

Stan, I need to ask you something:
do you have a copy of that report?

STAN

What report?

SPOKESMAN

You know what I'm talking about.
Your doctor's report about the
water.

STAN

I don't know what the fuck you're
talking about.

Spokesman sees Stan's briefcase.

SPOKESMAN

Is that your briefcase?

STAN

No.

SPOKESMAN

It's got your initials on it.

STAN

Not my briefcase.

SPOKESMAN

We gonna do this the easy way or
the hard way? What's it gonna be?

STAN

Not my briefcase and if it was, you
ain't fuckin' touching it.

SPOKESMAN

OK, if that's how you want to play
this. I'll be back.

Spokesman leaves and Bobby brings his duffel bag over.

BOBBY

Give me the report.

STAN

You sure?

BOBBY

Yes.

Stan unlocks his briefcase and gives Bobby the report. Bobby puts it in his duffel bag and puts the bag back in his locker. Spokesman comes back in followed by a security guard.

SPOKESMAN

You know the rules Stan. Anything brought into the factory is subject to inspection.

STAN

That's my personal property. You can't touch my personal property.

SPOKESMAN

Not only can I, but I will.

To the security guard.

SPOKESMAN (CONT'D)

Open it.

STAN

Kenny, if you just tell me what you're looking for, maybe I can help you.

SPOKESMAN

Shut the fuck up Stan.

STAN

Just trying to be of help.

Security guard tries to open the case but it's locked.

SECURITY GUARD

It's locked sir.

SPOKESMAN

What's the combination?

STAN

How would I know? It's not my fuckin' briefcase.

SPOKESMAN

Fuck you Stan. Just open it, use a screwdriver or something.

They all stare as he struggles to open the case, which he finally does, and everyone sees the briefcase is empty.

SPOKESMAN (CONT'D)

God damnit, where is it?

STAN

A better question: who's gonna pay me for a new briefcase?

SPOKESMAN

This isn't over Stan.

STAN

Hey, when are you gonna stop dicking us around and tell us the truth. The water's fucked and the factory's leaving. Just tell us the truth.

SPOKESMAN

A beat.

I need that report.

STAN

Get it from the doctor who wrote the fucking thing.

SPOKESMAN

He was fired.

STAN

He was fired?

SPOKESMAN

For spreading lies.

STAN

Where's the doctor now?

SPOKESMAN

He left the state.

STAN

What the fuck.

SPOKESMAN

I need that report.

The spokesman and the security guard storm out.

BOBBY

They sure do want that report. You mind if I read it?

STAN

Knock yourself out. I have another copy. And you might wanna start with the last two pages...Bobby, I think I know why your kid got cancer...

Stan goes into a coughing fit as the guys stare, unsure what to do or say.

ACT I, SCENE XV

Stan walks into the Mayor's office.

MAYOR

Hey buddy.

STAN

Thanks for seeing me.

MAYOR

Hey, any time for my basketball buddy. You still play?

STAN

Nah. Getting too old.

MAYOR

I hear ya. Well, what can I do for you?

STAN

Are you aware of this report, the one about the water?

MAYOR

Something about the water being contaminated?

STAN

Yeah.

MAYOR

So what's up?

STAN

I think its true.

MAYOR

What's true?

STAN

That our drinking water is contaminated because of all the waste that is dropped in the river.

MAYOR

Well, do you have a copy of the report?

STAN

Yes.

MAYOR

Who else has a copy?

STAN

Why?

MAYOR

I've heard about this report and I'm told it's simply not true. Furthermore, the more this report circulates, the worse off it will be for businesses. The business community is bullshit about the this.

STAN

People are getting sick.

MAYOR

What people?

STAN

Just go down to the pediatric ward and you can see for yourself.

A beat.

MAYOR

As a friend, I'm telling you to drop this crusade you're on.

STAN

But the water we drink is contaminated.

MAYOR

You don't know that.

STAN

Read the report.

MAYOR

The company scientists have read it and they say it's a bunch of unproven science written by a disgruntled employee.

STAN

Well, why don't you bring him in here and he can show you his charts and statistics.

MAYOR

We're not doing that. He was creating hysteria about the water and this town can't afford that. Businesses can't afford that. We work our asses off to keep companies here; your doctor's lies sabotages those efforts.

STAN

But what if it's true about the water?

MAYOR

The factory scientists made it very clear that our water is fine, meets all state and federal regulations. The health department confirmed this. Now I need your copy of that report and any copies you have made. If you don't, it's not gonna be good for you.

STAN

What the fuck does that mean?

MAYOR

You figure it out. You think we're gonna stand by and let this report destroy businesses, destroy the fabric of our community?

STAN

The truth is never a bad thing.

A beat.

MAYOR

I need those copies.

STAN

You know what, you were always an asshole on the basketball court, and I see now it carries over.

MAYOR

When can I expect those copies?

STAN

Fuck you. I won't participate in your cover-up.

Stan leaves and the Mayor goes to his intercom.

MAYOR

Hi, don't ever let that man into my office ever again.

ACT I, SCENE XVI

A realty office. Rachel and Phil come in the front door, greeted by Barbara who sits at the front desk. She is a bit surprised, greets them coldly, with condescension.

BARBARA

Can I help you?

RACHEL

Yes, I'm looking for Nancy.

BARBARA

I'm sorry, she's not in today. She had an emergency. Can I help you?

RACHEL

Yes, we spoke to Nancy on the phone. I'm Rachel and this is my husband Phil.

BARBARA

I'm sorry but Nancy isn't here.

RACHEL

As you stated.

PHIL

She was gonna show us some houses in the West Elm area, the ones built in the thirties, rock solid, craftsmanship written all over them.

Pause, with uncertainty, Barbara starts rifling through a folder.

BARBARA
Yes, the West Elm
neighborhoods...You said the West
Elm neighborhood, right?

RACHEL
Yes, West Elm.

Barbara continues to shuffle papers in her folder, like she is stalling for time. A beat.

PHIL
It was yesterday when we talked to
her.

A beat.

Everything OK Barbara?

RACHEL
No, she remembers. Don't you
Barbara? She just wasn't expecting
niggers to walk in the front door.
Ain't that right Barbara?

BARBARA
I'm sorry. This has been a crazy
day.

PHIL
And it just got crazier, didn't it
Barbara?

BARBARA
Let me look here.

She starts going through the folder. Phil finds a chair and puts his head down.

RACHEL
I think this is the point where you
tell us, unfortunately, those
houses were just taken off the
market. Isn't that right Barbara?
This ain't our first rodeo.

BARBARA
Well, it appears...

PHIL

Oh, it appears. Never like to hear that word Barbara--appears. What's appearing Barbara?

Barbara is shuffling papers in a folder. Whatcha looking for Barbara?

RACHEL

Let's get outta here.

PHIL

No, Barbara has some houses for us to look at, don't ya Barbara? Only problem is, it ain't in the West Elm area. Aren't I right Barbara?

BARBARA

Well, I am sorry, but those houses you talked about over the phone are no longer available.

PHIL

Didn't see that coming. Although, if my friend Stan was interested, I have a feeling those houses would be available.

BARBARA

I don't know what you're talking about, but I do have some nice houses in the Maplewood section.

PHIL

Barbara, we're not interested in the Negro section. (Raising his voice, menacing) Now I want you to go back to your folder and find us houses in the West Elm area. DO IT FUCKIN' NOW BARBARA.

(Pause)

BARBARA

Do I need to call the police Mr. Dorsett?

PHIL

I don't know Barbara. (Raising his voice) I WANT TO SEE HOUSES IN THE WEST ELM AREA.

BARBARA

OK that's it. I'm calling the police. (She picks up the phone, threatening to call the police.)

RACHEL

No need Barbara. We're leaving. Let's go hon. (She guides her husband toward the door.)

PHIL

THIS ISN'T FUCKIN' OVER BARBARA.

RACHEL

Honey, we need to go. I don't think this town is ready for us.

PHIL

I don't care. We need to move.

RACHEL

It's not the end of the world. We can wait.

PHIL

We're not waiting. We've waited long enough.

RACHEL

Why the rush?

PHIL

We need to move, before its too late.

RACHEL

What the hell does that mean?

They exit to the side of stage, Rachel pushing her husband out the door.

END OF ACT I

ACT II, SCENE I

The spotlight fades from the realtor office, and focuses on the company spokesman, who is behind the dais.

SPOKESMAN

Good evening. I called this meeting because there has been rumors about water quality in this town.

(MORE)

SPOKESMAN (CONT'D)

Our company is committed to running a safe and environmentally clean factory. We take seriously our responsibility to be a good corporate citizen in this town, a town we have staked our roots in for the past one hundred years. To that end, we had our scientists test the water extensively and I'm pleased to report that the water is safe. It meets every state and federal guideline as to safety. I want to thank Dr. Curry and his team for leading the study. Hopefully, this report will calm the hysteria that seems to be choking this town. Gentlemen, the water is fine.

He then pours himself a glass of water out of a pitcher and downs the glass.

SPOKESMAN (CONT'D)

Water's fine.

ACT II, SCENE II

The break-room. Stan enters and pours himself a cup of coffee. Arthur, Bobby, Phil and Dick stare at him silently.

BOBBY

Why do you keep going on about the water? Factory scientists said it was safe.

STAN

Of course they would say it's safe. They're factory scientists. Who the do you thinks pays their salary?

ARTHUR

You have any idea as to what you're doing? Going to the mayor, what the fuck was that?

STAN

People need to know the truth.

BOBBY

Fuck the truth. What do you think will happen when everyone is out of a job?

ARTHUR

You need to stop this crusade you're on. I will drink dirty water the rest of my life if it means I can still support my family, keep my home, keep my pension. I am willing to make that sacrifice Stan. That's what fathers do and you're trying to take that away from me. You had no right.

STAN

The water's contaminated. There's no question about that fact, but no one seems to want to hear it. The Osborns, your neighbors, just had two kids born with birth defects. The pediatric ward is filled with kids with cancer. The town wants to bury it; the company wants to bury it; and even the health department wants to bury it. People are dying Arthur.

ARTHUR

People die all the time.. This is exactly what the factory wanted: an excuse to bail. You're a fuckin' traitor to this town. You're screwing me out of my pension.

STAN

You'll all a bunch of hypocrites. Children are dying and all you guys can think about is your fuckin' pensions. And its not only the kids.

ARTHUR

What's that suppose to mean?

STAN

I got six months to live. That's what it fuckin' means! And Bobby, how the fuck you think your kid got cancer? Some act of God?

BOBBY

Don't you dare talk about my daughter.

STAN

I'm done here.

Stan storms out of the break room. Long pause as the guys digest what just happened.

ACT II, SCENE III

Stan is on the phone to a reporter of the local paper. You see Stan but not the reporter.

STAN

Did you read the report?

REPORTER

I couldn't put it down. This is amazing, and the company knew all along.

STAN

That's what pisses me off. The company knew.

REPORTER

This is why I got into journalism, to expose the truth.

STAN

When do you think they will publish it?

REPORTER

I'm hoping in the next few days. I just finished writing the article. Just waiting for approval.

STAN

I can't wait to see it. Keep me posted. This town won't know what hit 'em.

ACT II, SCENE IV

The spotlight fades on the bar and focuses on the company spokesman, who is behind the dais.

SPOKESMAN

Gentlemen. Due to a slowing of the economy and rising inflation, we are being forced to lay off around 100 workers. We do this with great reluctance, but this is needed to keep the factory viable and competitive.

(MORE)

SPOKESMAN (CONT'D)

Part of the reason for the lay-offs are the stifling regulations the Federal Government is forcing on businesses. There is presently a bill in Congress to create another monster bureaucracy called the EPA, Environmental Protection Agency, just another excuse for Washington to interfere with businesses. With our lobbyists, we are fighting tooth and nail to block this proposed job killer. We believe that the economy does best when it isn't saddled with job-killing regulations. In regards to contract negotiations, the company remains committed to this community, and will do everything in its power to remain, and to come to a satisfactory conclusion to the negotiations. Thank you.

ACT II, SCENE IV

The spotlight shifts to the bar at the golf course, where Walter, Arthur, Phil, and Bobby are having a drink.

ARTHUR

I heard Stan is talking to the press.

PHIL

The man has cancer. Cut him some slack.

ARTHUR

I don't care what the fuck he has. You don't sabotage your brothers like that. He just gave the factory a green light to move south. They're gonna fire his ass.

PHIL

The union would never let him be fired.

ARTHUR

I talked to Murphy; he's done. Besides, there's no truth to the report.

PHIL

How do you know? Did you read the report?

ARTHUR

Don't have to read it.

PHIL

I'm not even gonna respond to that.

WALTER

You guys are such hypocrites.

BOBBY

Yeah! When you gonna let the union come into your shop Walter? I thought you were a friend of the working man.

WALTER

Fuck you Bobby. The union sabotages small businesses.

BOBBY

You think you're better than us, don't you Walter?

WALTER

Of course I'm better than you. I'm the one that creates jobs; people like you work for people like me.

BOBBY

Walter, if you're so superior, why do you keep bouncing checks to your suppliers--word gets around town about shit like that.

WALTER

You're white trash Bobby. Don't you ever think you're my equal. You all sold out to those thugs that run the union.

BOBBY

Those thugs, as you call them, gave us decent pay.

WALTER

I'm not laying down for those thugs, even when they double my prices on supplies. I'm not going anywhere.

(MORE)

WALTER (CONT'D)

Good luck with your coverup. You're screwing a good man.

Walter storms out.

ACT II, SCENE V

The spotlight shifts to the waiting room of a police station. Phil is sitting on a bench. Arthur enters, surprised to see Phil.

ARTHUR

What the hell you doing here?

PHIL

My son. Arrested at the rally.

ARTHUR

Mine too. They say when they'll be out?

PHIL

Guy said shortly.

A beat.

ARTHUR

I don't know how it is for you, but he has no respect for me anymore. He's changed. Shits on anything I stand for, looks down on me because I work in a factory. I worked my ass off all my life just to provide for the family and he sits in judgement, like there is something wrong in doing factory work, owning your own home, raising a family, being a good Christian.

PHIL

I hear ya. I don't understand this generation. My son finds fault with everything I do.

ARTHUR

It's the judgement.

PHIL

Exactly. I respected my father, did everything I could do to be like him. My kid wants to be anything but me. It hurts Arthur. I use to want to hang around with my father.

(MORE)

PHIL (CONT'D)

It's painful for my son to be in the same room with me.

A beat.

ARTHUR

I hear you. I told him not to go to the rally.

PHIL

Me too.

ARTHUR

Now he'll have it on his record, which is what I warned him would happen.

A beat.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

My son's been drafted, suppose to report in two weeks for his physical. Says he is going to Canada.

PHIL

I'm sorry.

ARTHUR

I served in the war and this is just another slap in the face. Says he won't participate in the genocide. I don't know what the hell he's talking about. There's no genocide.

PHIL

Arthur, with all due respect, I'm not sure your son should go. This war is being fought by the working class, not the rich kids, and I'm not even sure why we are even over there, or what we are fighting for. I know my son can be a horses ass, but it would break my heart if he went over there and didn't come home.

A beat.

ARTHUR

I just think you support your country, no matter what.

PHIL

Well, I'm not sure I can do that anymore. I don't think the government is being honest. If my son is being sacrificed, I need to know he is sacrificing for something noble. That's what we had in our war--a noble purpose.

ARTHUR

To be honest, I'm not so sure anymore either. Friends of mine been losing their sons. They question the sacrifice.

PHIL

I question it too.
(Pause)

ARTHUR

Arthur starts to break down. I lost my son Phil. He killed himself while he was over there...I think about him every day. He wasn't a soldier but I bullied him into going. I'll never forgive myself for that. I lost a son and I don't know what to do.

A beat.

PHIL

I'm sorry Arthur.

ARTHUR

(Emotional)

We're not suppose to bury our sons Phil.

A beat.

We're not suppose to bury our sons.

Long pause.

PHIL

Yes Arthur.

A Beat.

ARTHUR

I told my son he was an abomination. And it's to late to take it back.

Arthur starts to break down, Phil uncomfortable, not sure what to say. Phil puts his hand on Arthur's shoulder.

PHIL

I'm sorry Arthur. This war makes us do crazy things...but where'd the abomination idea come from?

ARTHUR

My pastor. He showed me a passage in the Bible. I don't go to his church anymore.

A beat.

I miss him Phil. My heart breaks when I think about the pain he must of been in to kill himself.

A long beat as Arthur composes himself. James walks out.

PHIL

You OK?

JAMES

I just wanna go home.

PHIL

See you at work.

ARTHUR

Yes.

James and Phil exit, with Arthur looking out into space, filled with sadness.

ACT II, SCENE VI

Stan calls the reporter, using a pay phone. A receptionist answers the phone and Stan asks for the reporter.

RECEPTIONIST O/S

Canton Journal.

STAN

Jeremy Rutland please.

JEREMY O/S

This is Jeremy.

STAN

This is Stan. What's happening with the article?

(MORE)

STAN (CONT'D)

It's been almost a week. You made it sound like it would be the next day.

A beat.

JEREMY O/S

Stan, I'm sorry. They're not gonna print it.

STAN

Why the hell not?

JEREMY O/S

It's complicated.

STAN

No it's not. The report made it very clear.

JEREMY O/S

I agree with you. I pushed it as hard as I could. I didn't want to lose my job.

A beat.

STAN

What they say?

JEREMY O/S

Nothing. But factory executives came over the other day, and I found out later on that the factory was the number one advertiser for the paper. They couldn't afford to lose those advertising dollars. I'm sorry Stan, but I couldn't afford to lose my job. I got a wife and three kids.

STAN

We all got fuckin[wife and kids.

A beat.

JEREMY O/S

Stan, I would drop this if I were you. You don't know what you're up against.

STAN

I got six months to live. You think I care what I'm up against?

Stan hangs up the phone and stares into space.

ACT II, SCENE VII

Break room. Stan, Phil, Bobby, and Arthur are there. Sully walks in.

ARTHUR

What's the latest on the negotiations?

SULLY

We're almost there. There's one last thing: the company wants every employee to sign a document that states that the company is not liable for any illnesses related to the water.

A beat.

STAN

So they're finally admitting it?

SULLY

They're admitting shit. They have scientists who will testify that the water's fine. There is a safe level of carcinogenic particles and this town meets those standards.

STAN

There's no safe level of carcinogenic particles. It's fuckin' cancer. It's a cover-up Sully, and you're part of the cover-up. You're working for them now, aren't you?

SULLY

You caused all this bullshit. I'm just trying to save jobs, trying to keep the factory here. I don't know what the hell you're doing.

STAN

I'm trying to save lives Sully. It's too fucking late for me but not for the kids of this town. It's not right.

Stan stares at Sully and shakes his head.

SULLY

Don't listen to him. Come on guys,
it's one of the last sticking
points.

ARTHUR

I'll sign it. I'm not gonna lose my
pension.

SULLY

Thank you Arthur. They're not
backing down on that point. The
water's fine anyway, so what's the
big deal?.

STAN

The big deal is the fact that the
water isn't fine. I'm not gonna let
you cover this up.

Stan goes into a coughing fit.

ARTHUR

You need to bury it Stan. This is a
deal breaker.

STAN

Well, I'm not burying it, and you
shouldn't either.

SULLY

Fine. How long you think you can
keep your job?

STAN

The union will protect me.

SULLY

Keep telling yourself that.

BOBBY

I'll sign. I can't lose my job.

SULLY

I'm gonna make this crystal clear.
If anyone doesn't sign the
petition, the union can't protect
you.

STAN

Kids are dying Sully.

SULLY

We're all gonna die. I'm just here trying to save jobs.

STAN

At what fuckin' cost?

SULLY

Get the fuck out of here. You're done. The factory is gonna fire your ass and the union won't protect you.

Stan gets up and starts to leave.

STAN

I dare them to. I know too much. This town should be throwing me a goddamn parade. Just read the goddamn report.

SULLY

The report is bullshit. And one more thing Stan: you're gonna lose you health insurance if you keep this bullshit up. I'm warning you.

STAN

I don't care. The union will protect me so fuck you!

SULLY

They don't protect traitors.

Sully storms out.

ARTHUR

Stan, I'm sorry. I'm gonna pray for you.

STAN

Thanks Arthur.

A beat.

PHIL

Stan I'm sorry.

STAN

Thanks.

ARTHUR

Stan, are you sure? Do you need to get a 2nd opinion?

STAN

Scans don't lie Arthur.

ARTHUR

I don't understand how a forty five year old man gets cancer. I mean, what the hell's going on here? First the CEO, and now you.

A beat.

STAN

It's the water Arthur. The town was suppose to protect us but it didn't. The factory knew, and they did nothing to protect us.

A beat.

ARTHUR

Whatever you need. You getting chemo? Is that why you're so tired all the time?

STAN

Yeah, will get my third dose this week.

BOBBY

I'm sorry Stan.

STAN

It is what it is. When are you guys gonna read the report?

ARTHUR

I'm not reading the report, because if the report is true, we're all fucked. So as far as I'm concern, that report is a bunch of bullshit. I'm not losing my pension.

STAN

You can't just say something's not true.

ARTHUR

Anything that takes away my job is a lie. How the hell am I gonna support my family? And I don't care if I have to drink a little dirty water. I need two more years for my pension.

BOBBY

Let me tell you something. Do you know why I work in a factory that smells like a cesspool, that has water that tastes like toilet water? I do it for my kids, my family. If I had other job options, I would leave this hell hole in a second. I fought in Vietnam and came back looking for a job. I'm a high school drop-out and the factory hired me. No other company gave me a look. That means something in my book. But this is what you don't understand: I'm a father, and when you're a father, you do anything to make sure your kids have a better life than yours. And so you work in factories that you know are killing you, but I'll be goddamn if my kids don't go to college. I'll be goddamn if they don't have a better life than me. I work in this hell-hole so my kids don't have to. It's not about me Stan. That's what fathers do. So I can't believe the report. I won't believe the report.

A beat.

STAN

I'm sorry Bobby, but the factory knew, and they did nothing. They used us. And now I won't walk my daughter down the aisle, or see my son come home from Vietnam. It's the water Bobby, and it probably gave your daughter her cancer.

BOBBY

Shut the fuck up about my daughter.

STAN

I won't Bobby. They did this, not me.

BOBBY

You have no right.

Bobby storms out.

ARTHUR

How could you say that Stan?

STAN

How could I say that? Are you shitting me?...I just had a doctor's appointment, and afterwards I went down to the pediatric ward. It's overrun by kids with leukemia, just like Bobby's daughter. And it's mostly kids from the West Elm neighborhood. It's our neighborhood Arthur; it's our goddamn neighborhood. And the Anderson's, our neighbors, will spend the rest of their lives taking care of two kids that were deformed at birth.

ARTHUR

People get cancer all the time. There's no connection to the water. You should be concerned about your union brothers who could very shortly be kicked out on the streets jobless. You are an enemy to this union and this town. I'm not gonna let you destroy this town, our families, or our neighborhoods, or our goddamn way of life. Did you not see the consequences?

STAN

I am a consequence. I'm 45 years old and I got cancer. This wasn't suppose to happen. I AM THE CONSEQUENCE.

Long pause as everyone digests the information.

ACT I, SCENE VIII

Spotlight shifts to Stan's home. Stan enters.

ALICE

Why didn't you call? I had dinner all ready.

STAN

I'm sorry.

Just then, a rock comes through the window, the sound of a skidding car is heard.

VOICE O/S
 YOU FUCKING TRAITOR. WE'RE COMING
 AFTER YOU. YOU FUCKING JOB KILLER!

The phone rings and Stan picks it up.

STAN
 This is Stan...(angry) I don't give
 a fuck if you know where I live.
 Why don't you pay me a visit you
 fuckin' coward...I'll be waiting.

*The line goes dead. Stan hangs up the phone. A couple of
 beats and the phone rings again.*

STAN (CONT'D)
 Stan...well, I'll give you my kids
 addresses fuck face...Yeah, come on
 by. I got my own fuckin'
 guns...yeah, I'll be waiting, you
 piece of shit...you're the enemy.

ALICE
 It's been like this all day. I
 don't know how long I can take
 this.

Stan pulls the phone plug out.

STAN
 Problem solved.

ALICE
 Is it true?

STAN
 What?

ALICE
 You were fired?
 (Pause)

STAN
 Yes.

ALICE
 Why?

STAN
 They want me to sign a document
 stating the water is safe.

ALICE

Well sign it. We're swimming in bills.

STAN

Lies are killing this town,
literally killing its citizens.

ALICE

Who cares if they lied. It's not worth losing your job over. And I'm told it's not even true.

STAN

Oh it's true.

ALICE

That's not what the factory is saying. They're saying that report is a total falsehood, manufactured by some disgruntled employee. You lost your job fighting for something that wasn't even true.

STAN

Alice, please.

ALICE

Please what? I'm trying to keep this family afloat and all you're doing is sabotaging us and this community. It's hard not to agree with what they are saying about you. If you're gonna be a crusader, at least crusade on something that is true.

(Long pause, a weariness
sets in on Stan)

STAN

I'm not a crusader...I'm scared Alice.

Alice looks at him for a moment, walks over and hugs Stan.

ALICE

I'm sorry. I was just starting to forgive you and now this. And Tracy will be graduating in June.

STAN

I'll be there.

ALICE

And how am I gonna pay your medical bills now that you're fired?

STAN

I'm gonna appeal.

ALICE

You'll be dead by the time there's a hearing...I'm sorry. I shouldn't of said that. Listen to me: there is a union meeting tonight and I need you to go there and apologize, tell everyone that the report was a total fabrication. I don't care if you have to beg. You have to fix this.

(Long pause)

STAN

Did you not hear me? I have fuckin' cancer. I'm dying and I'm so sorry.

Stan starts to break down as the crushing reality hits him. Alice is shaken in seeing her husband so traumatized. She goes over and holds him, comforting him.

ALICE

I'm here honey. I'm here.

ACT II, SCENE IX

Spotlight shifts to Arthur's home. Nancy is sitting in a chair when Arthur walks in.

ARTHUR

Do you have any idea what you did?

NANCY

Defiant.

Yes.

ARTHUR

I'm not gonna let them destroy our neighborhood. .

NANCY

They're not gonna destroy our neighborhood. They want the same things we wanted. What are you afraid of?

ARTHUR

I'm just trying to preserve our way of life, when things were simpler, when there was an order to things. What's wrong with that?

NANCY

Our way of life? Our way of life is filled with hate and lies.

ARTHUR

People should stay with their own kind. That's what the Bible says.

NANCY

I don't think it says that. He's a union man. I thought you guys had each others' back.

ARTHUR

They don't know how to be home owners. They burn down their own neighborhoods.

NANCY

Their neighborhoods are filled with predators. They sell them houses for thirty thousand and after they move in, they find out the house needs twenty thousand worth of repairs, so don't tell me they don't know how to be home owners. They are the victims of drive by inspections. Not to mention the fact supermarkets have moved out; the banks have moved out. All that's left in those neighborhoods are convenience stores and check cashing places. So don't tell me they don't know how to be homeowners. They are under siege by predators.

A beat as Nancy takes a long draught of her drink.

ARTHUR

You did this to spite me.

NANCY

I did it because this couple deserves a shot at the American Dream.

Long pause.

I miss him.

ARTHUR

I know, but I'm not responsible for what happened. He was an abomination and I tried to save him.

NANCY

DON'T YOU EVER CALL OUR SON THAT. HE'S MY SON. You bullied and shamed him into going to Vietnam. He wasn't a soldier. You knew he was different.

ARTHUR

I was only trying to make a man of him. Leviticus 20:13: "If a man practices homosexuality, having sex with another man as with a woman, both men have committed a detestable act. They must be put to death, for they are guilty of a capital offense."

NANCY

You think that's comforts me?

ARTHUR

It's what the Bible says.

NANCY

Our son was a beautiful man. People use to tell me that whenever they spent time with him, they always felt better. He was special.

Nancy breaks down crying.

You led a lamb to his slaughter. I LOST A SON AND I DON'T KNOW HOW TO FORGET, OR FORGIVE.

A beat.

ARTHUR

I lost a son too, and I cry for him every night. I know you can't forgive me but I am hurting too.

NANCY

You put the gun in his hands, and that is unforgivable.

Nancy breaks down. She throws her glass and exits. Arthur quietly weeps.

ACT II, SCENE X

Bobby's house. Debbie is carrying a laundry basket. Bobby enters.

DEBBIE

How was work?

BOBBY

They want us to sign a loyalty pledge.

DEBBIE

What the hell is that?

BOBBY

To get a new contract, to keep the company here, they want us to sign a document that states the water is safe. They said their company scientists have already tested the water and that it was fine.

DEBBIE

So what's the problem?

BOBBY

The water isn't fine. I read the report last night. The water is contaminated.

DEBBIE

What are you talking about?

BOBBY

Read this. Start with the last two pages.

Bobby hands Debbie the report, with a page marked that she can open and read.

DEBBIE

What's this?

BOBBY

Report written by this doctor, documenting the contamination of our water supply.

(MORE)

BOBBY (CONT'D)

There's also documents from the company where they admit they knew the water was contaminated but they did nothing, hid the findings. They didn't want to spend the money on a waste treatment plant. And because they didn't, our daughter is dying from leukemia.

DEBBIE

You think its true?

BOBBY

It's internal documents, so it has to be true. They knew, and they choose to bury it. I can't sign that pledge.

A beat.

DEBBIE

We'll lose our medical.

BOBBY

If I sign that pledge, it's a slap in Stacy's face. They did this to her.

DEBBIE

Honey, think about this. We can't lose Stacy's healthcare. I know what you're saying, but we can't deny her the treatment she needs.

Breaking down slightly. A beat.

BOBBY

I know baby; I know. I'm just angry, and I don't know who to blame.

DEBBIE

I know babe, but you need to sign that document, otherwise its a death sentence for our daughter.

BOBBY

I can't.

DEBBIE

You have to Bobby.

BOBBY

They gave our baby cancer. I can't.

Bobby drops his head in grief, and Debbie comes over to comfort him.

ACT II, SCENE XI

The spotlight shines on Rachel's and Phil's living room. James is there. Their doorbell rings; Rachel answers the door and in walks Arthur.

PHIL

Hello Arthur. I was surprised to get your call. Come in. Arthur, this is my wife Rachel and my son James, who you already met.

ARTHUR

It's very nice to meet you Rachel. James.

RACHEL

Can I get you anything Arthur?

ARTHUR

No, I'm fine. Thank you all for seeing me. I was wondering Phil, how you speeded things up in order to get this house? Was it my wife? I don't understand the urgency. It would of been so much easier to work things out before you moved in.

PHIL

You wanna know my urgency?

ARTHUR

Just wondering.

PHIL

It was the toxic dump sites one hundred yards from our house. That waste has contaminated all the wells in that area, the Negro section. I couldn't have my family living there.

ARTHUR

If there was something wrong, the town would of done something about those wells. I think you panicked.

PHIL

I didn't panic. The south end of our neighborhood is a dumping site. That's why our water tastes like shit.

RACHEL

When you find out about the dump site?

PHIL

Two months ago. I got curious, climbed over the fence. It's hidden by a bunch of trees. But you could smell it. That's when I realized we needed to move. They figured they could dump waste in a Negro neighborhood and no one would notice. Well I did. So what's this all about Arthur? You seemed a bit vague on the phone. And what's this group you mentioned.

ARTHUR

It's called the Neighborhood Association.

JAMES

Oh, OK. I know what that is. I wondered how long it would take to get the house call.

PHIL

What are you talking about?

JAMES

Neighborhood Association is another term for Negro removal. Ain't that right Arthur? You drew the short stick on this one.

RACHEL

Lets just listen to what he has to say. I don't know what this association is.

ARTHUR

If I may...The Neighborhood Association is a committee from the neighborhood where you brought your house, that works to improve the neighborhood, everything from beautification projects, to fund-raising that benefits the schools, the parks, and the community. We try to maintain certain standards that will enhance the value of both the neighborhood and our homes.

RACHEL

It sounds like a wonderful thing.

JAMES

You haven't heard the punch line.

PHIL

Punch line?

ARTHUR

Let me explain, and what the Neighborhood Association is proposing will be a win win for everyone involved.

JAMES

Here we go.

RACHEL

(To James, telling him to shut up)

Please.

ARTHUR

The Association believes people do better with their own kind. There's no conflict, everyone gets along.

JAMES

You saying white people all get along with each other, something they can teach black people?

ARTHUR

Flustered by the question.

Well, I don't know about that. Let me continue. It just makes life easier, simpler.

(MORE)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

They have the same wants and desires for their kids, the same values they want to pass on.

JAMES

Well, my parents want me to have a better life than they have. Are you saying white parents don't want their kids to do better than they did?

PHIL

James, please. Let's hear what the man has to say.

ARTHUR

I guess you would say it's a question of harmony. And that's what the Neighborhood Association is all about--harmony. The Bible talks about that idea a lot. James3:18: "And a harvest of righteousness is sown in piece by piece by those who make peace."

RACHEL

I'm not sure what you're trying to say Arthur.

JAMES

Cut to the punch line?

Phil has retreated away from Arthur and starts to stare at him, as it's dawning on him what Arthur's purpose is for the visit. A beat.

ARTHUR

OK. In the interest of harmony, The Association is prepared to buy back your new home at a price that is twenty five percent higher than what you bought it for. We also have secured, if you desire, a house in the South Side.

JAMES

You mean the projects.

ARTHUR

Well, this particular house has a back yard. I am of the opinion that you just won't enjoy a neighborhood where the people are different. It doesn't result in harmony.

(MORE)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

I would think this would be best
for all concerned.

PHIL

(Confused, angry)
What is this?

JAMES

It's called Red-lining dad. We
talked about this--remember? It's
another way of keeping the niggers
out. Ain't that right Arthur?

PHIL

Wait a second. So Arthur, you want
to buy our house, the one we just
moved into?

ARTHUR

Yes, but at a twenty five percent
premium. How can we make this
happen?

(Pause, to Rachel)

PHIL

How do you like our new house?

RACHEL

I love our new house. I love
everything about it. Each of our
kids have their own room. But the
schools...I guess that would be the
best thing about it. Our kids would
get a superior education, wouldn't
be going to dilapidated,
underfunded schools they're in now.
I really like the house. I mean, I
really like it.

PHIL

(Pause)
Well Arthur. You heard her. Son?

JAMES

We have every right to live here.

ARTHUR

It's a fine house, but I have to be
frank: you won't be welcomed in the
neighborhood.

PHIL

I don't understand. What about all
the harmony you talked about?

ARTHUR

You need to know this: there are certain elements in the community that will fight to maintain harmony at all costs.

JAMES

And will commit violence to achieve that harmony. Do I have that right Arthur?

ARTHUR

I don't think you understand.

JAMES

I think we do understand. Let me break it down: they will use violence, or the threat of violence, to achieve that harmony, like when they fire bomb our house. Is that the harmony you are talking about? The harmony of firebombs?

ARTHUR

All I'm saying is that I think you would be happier with your own kind. There's no reason to bring this complication into the equation.

PHIL

Why don't you just fuckin' say it Arthur? If we stay in this house, we will be terrorized.

ARTHUR

Arthur suddenly stops, gets a faraway stare, and starts sounding like a robot, looking off into space, as if he was reciting a prepared speech.

It will upset the harmony of the community. I'm just saying you won't be happy here. There are some very enthusiastic citizens here and I can't predict what they will do.

PHIL

Tell me exactly what will happen.

ARTHUR

I don't know Phil. That's the point. I just don't know what your neighbors are capable of.

JAMES

Forget it Dad. You're talking to the Mafia. They never say out loud what they are gonna do.

PHIL

You like the house hon?

RACHEL

I love this house.

PHIL

That settles it. We're staying.

ARTHUR

You sure you know what you're doing?

PHIL

Never been more certain in my life.

ARTHUR

Well, if that's your decision, I can't help you. Some in the community might take it the wrong way, you moving in and all. I'm told you have 48 hours to accept our offer. And I highly recommend you reconsider your decision. I think you'll find it's the best for everyone.

PHIL

We don't need forty eight hours. Arthur, get the fuck out of my home.

A beat.

ARTHUR

OK.

Arthur slowly gathers his paperwork and then stops. Something appears amiss. Arthur looks around the room as if in a daze. Phil and his family quietly observe him.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. You mind if I sit down?

PHIL

(Concerned)

Sure Arthur...you OK? Your heart didn't seem like it was into that little speech you just gave.

A beat.

ARTHUR

(Appears almost in a
trance)

I think the factory is moving. I don't care anymore. They were always gonna leave; I was just deluding myself. I put forty years into that factory, and I have nothing to show for it. Phil, I don't know who I am if I don't have a job to go to. And I've spent the last two weeks humiliating myself at job interviews. Who's gonna hire a 55 year old factory worker? What about us? We made the steel that build this country, an we fought in their wars, and now we're left on the side of the ditch. We fought in their wars only to come home and have our jobs exported to the lowest bidder. I just had a twenty five year old kid tell me that I needed to go back to school so I could develop marketable job skills. He told me I should take courses in computer programing, or radiology, or hotel management. I'm 55 fuckin' years old; I'm not going back to school. I barely made it out of high school and this kid wants me to further my education. That ain't happening.

A beat.

I don't know what to do with myself. I look forward to the Association meetings, gives me something to do, something to be part of. But I don't think I'll be going back there anymore.

PHIL

You sure I can't get you some water?

ARTHUR

I'm fine. You know those good old days everyone likes to talk about? Well, I don't think those good old days were good old days anymore. I think they used us.

(MORE)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

We were all working in the same cotton field Phil. We were set up, and I don't even know who did it. That's how good they were.

Arthur gets up and looks out the window, Phil, Rachel and James quietly observing.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

Is that your daughter?

PHIL

Yes.

ARTHUR

How old is she?

PHIL

Twelve.

ARTHUR

My daughter's eleven. She reminds me of my daughter, the way she's playing out there...I can see you have a nice family Phil. And the house you bought is a good solid house, build in the 30's. They had real craftsmen then, built things to last.

(Pause)

My family left me Phil. My son hates me, puts down everything I believe in. (Suppressing his emotions)

PHIL

(Concerned)

You OK Arthur? Would you like to lie down?

ARTHUR

Today would of been my son's 30th birthday. I miss him Phil. God I miss him. And I regret the things I did. My minister said there was something wrong with him, that it was a curse. I don't think I believe that anymore. There's a bond between a father and son that can't be broken, can't be denied.

(MORE)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

He was my son, not a curse...When he was a kid he use to stand by the door, just waiting for me to come home from work so he could have a catch with me. He was a terrible baseball player but I realized later on that was his way of spending time with his Dad. He just wanted to be around his father.

A beat. I tried to change him Phil and I think that's what killed him, why he pulled the trigger.

PHIL

You can't blame yourself Arthur. I blamed myself when I lost my son but you have to move on, that's what our sons would of wanted.

ARTHUR

He would of been thirty today...and I miss him. It left a hole in my heart that won't stop hurting.

Arthur starts to break down. Phil comes over and puts his hands on his shoulder. Rachel and James stare, not knowing how to react. He comes out of it.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

You know, I don't even like those guys from the Neighborhood Association. They're a bunch of hot air thugs, always talking about shooting Negroes. They're cowards. They think owning a gun makes you a man. They'll even terrorize children. They don't care. They just sit around with their guns, talking about how big their guns are,

(Anger rising) Fuck it. I'm done with them. Phil, you stay in this house. It's a good solid house, and it's a good place to raise a family. You know, the union chief always told us to keep you down, that you were the enemy. I don't think I believe that anymore. I think we've been played, by the union, by the factory.

(MORE)

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

We all fell for the con, fighting each other, they were always threatening to bring Negro scabs in to take our jobs. The factory always made it clear to us that they had two hundred scabs ready to take our jobs. Two hundred for each job. It was all just a smokescreen. Phil, you stay. And listen, starting tomorrow night I'm gonna be sitting on your front porch with my shotgun.

PHIL

Arthur, you don't have to do that.

ARTHUR

You have no say in the matter. These guys are a bunch of cowards, and they're not very good at follow through. The first week will be the worse, and then they'll lose interest, move onto the next thing to terrorized. I'll see you through this.

PHIL

OK Arthur. And thanks.

Arthur gathers up his paperwork and exits. Rachel comes over to Phil.

RACHEL

What the hell just happened?

PHIL

I told you: white people are crazy.

A beat.

RACHEL

I have something to tell you...I'm pregnant.

Phil lights up. He picks Rachel up and trills her around.

PHIL

Thank you honey.

RACHEL

Maybe this can start to fill the void.

PHIL
Yes, we'll name him John.

RACHEL
John the second .

They kiss.

ACT II, SCENE XI

Spot light shines on a union hall where there is an emergency meeting with the union regarding the water.

Arthur, Bobby, and Phil are all entering the hall, pushing Stan in his wheel chair.

STAN
You sure you guys want to be seen with me?

ARTHUR
You're a horse's ass, but a friend is a friend, and friends don't bail.

BOBBY
We disagree with what you did, but the fact you are a dumb, treasonist asshole to the town doesn't mean we don't love you.

STAN
Well thank you guys. Somewhere in that personal denunciation I believe resides a compliment.

The head of the union takes the podium. Phil, Arthur and Bobby, and a bunch of extras, union men, face the podium. (This scene could be played without actors playing the union men, just voices from off stage, or it can double up actors such as Walter, who isn't in this scene.)

SULLY
(Shouts)
OK, lets bring this meeting to order.

UNION MEMBER
(Shouts)
Is the company gonna move?

SULLY
No, and stop spreading that poison.

UNION MEMBER

That's what was said in Aliquippa and the next day the moving trucks pulled up for South Carolina.

SULLY

Alright, we're not talking about Aliquippa. We're talking about the here and now, our company. Now there is a report out there that the water is contaminated, and contaminated by the factory. The factory has assured us that the water is fine. And that's good enough for me. This lie about the water was made by a disgruntled employee who is no longer under the employ of the town.

UNION MEMBER II

(Shouts)

It's fuckin' science. You can't deny science. I got two sick kids.

SULLY

That has nothing to do with the water.

UNION MEMBER II

Tell that to my kids.

UNION MEMBER III

I can't afford for the factory to leave. I got a mortgage, four kids, and a shitload of debt. I don't know about you, but I need this job. There's no plan B for guys like me.

UNION MEMBER IV

I got a kid in the hospital. You gonna pay his medical bills? If the factory leaves, I'm easily looking at one hundred grand in medical bills. Easily. So as far as I'm concerned, that report is bullshit.

UNION MEMBER

It's bullshit.

Union members start chanting:

BULLSHIT, BULLSHIT, BULLSHIT,
BULLSHIT.

SULLY

OK guys, calm down. We're gonna take a vote.

UNION MEMBER II

You can't take a vote as to whether something is true or not. It's either true or not true. You don't vote on truth.

UNION MEMBER III

I don't know what the hell he just said. Lets vote before anymore bullshit surfaces. I vote for keeping our jobs; I vote for keeping the company here. I don't care what it takes. The factory stays. The water is fine.

(He takes a glass of water and makes a show of drinking it.)

SULLY

OK, let's vote on the resolution.

Stan stands up in the back.

STAN

I need to speak.

UNION MEMBER III

That's the guy who sold us out, posted those flyers all over town. He can speak as long as its an apology.

STAN

I have a right to speak.

SULLY

Actually you don't. You are no longer a member of this union.

UNION MEMBER II

Let him speak. What are you afraid of?

Phil, Arthur and Bobby wheel Stan up to the front, assaulted with cat calls, threats and insults.

UNION MEMBER IV

Fucking traitor.

ARTHUR

Hey, fuck you.

UNION MEMBER III

Why you wanna take our jobs away?

UNION MEMBER II

We know where you fucking live. The water's fine.

He tosses a glass of water at him. Stan makes it to the podium.

SULLY

OK guys, calm down. We're gonna let him speak.

UNION MEMBER III

Don't give the podium to a traitor.

UNION MEMBER II

Let him speak. I want to hear what he has to say.

STAN

I have been reading the Health Commissioners report and it is clear that the river is toxic due to all the waste that has been dumped into the river for the past fifty years. Our drinking water has been contaminated. This is a fact gentlemen. You can threaten me, call me all the names you want but it doesn't change the fact that we are drinking contaminated water, and it is producing sick kids. We can't bury this. People are dying.

UNION MEMBER IV

Fuck the facts. We're not losing our jobs because of some bullshit report. This guy was fired. That should tell you all you need to know.

STAN

Just read the report, see for yourself. Children are dying. I'm forty five years old and I'm dying of cancer. The CEO dies. How much evidence do you need? This shouldn't be happening.

(MORE)

STAN (CONT'D)

You can do anything you want to me,
but it doesn't change the truth.

UNION LEADER IV

Shut him the fuck up.

STAN

The factory knew, and they choose
to cover it up. They knew
gentlemen; they knew. You can't let
them get away with it.

SULLY

Has nothing to do with the water.
We've heard enough.

STAN

This town can't survive on a
foundation of lies.

UNION MEMBER III

Shut him the fuck up.

Stan goes into a coughing fit.

*A factory representative comes to the podium. He whispers
into the Sully's ear.*

UNION CHIEF

The factory rep would like to say a
few words.

UNION MEMBER IV

Shut that traitor up. We don't
wanna hear his bullshit.

*The factory rep goes to the podium, and wrestles the
microscope from Stan's hand. Before he speaks, the factory
rep takes a glass of water off the table, drinks it, and
dramatically puts the glass down.*

FACTORY REP

Water's fine.

(A roar from the men)

Gentlemen, the CEO wants you to
know that extensive testing has
been done on the water and we are
in compliance with all Federal and
State guidelines. What this guy
wants us to do is shut down the
factory. Well, were not gonna do
that. This isn't about the water;
this is all about a disgruntled
employee with an axe to grind.

(MORE)

FACTORY REP (CONT'D)

The health inspector who wrote this report has been terminated. He has done severe damage to this community by creating this hysteria. Our company will continue to be a steward of the environment as evidence by our generous donations to the parks, ballfields, and playgrounds of this town. The owners of the factory are committed to staying but will not stand idly by to assaults to our reputation. I think you know what to do gentlemen.

*He drinks another glass of water.
Water's fine.*

He leaves amid applause. Stan pours himself a glass of water and throws it against the wall.

STAN

Water's not fine.

SULLY

We heard enough. Gentlemen, it's time to vote. All in favor of denouncing this report, say aye.

(A loud burst of eyes)

All oppose.

(A few shout no)

Motion's approved.

Stan sits down in his chair, exhausted, defeated. A couple of policemen arrive and go up to Bobby.

ARTHUR

Hey, what's happening.

POLICEMAN

I'm sorry Bobby. We have to take you in.

ARTHUR

What the hell's going on?

POLICEMAN

Bobby was involved in a robbery.

STAN

I'm sure you got the wrong man. He works 90 hours a week--he has no time for robberies.

POLICEMAN

We got him on tape, along with his buddy Jimmy. Bobby, I'm sorry. I know your mother. I don't wanna do it, but I have to take you in.

ARTHUR

His daughter has fuckin' cancer. Can't you cut him some slack?

POLICEMAN

Someone was shot during the robbery. Not sure she'll make it.

STAN

What did you do Bobby?

BOBBY

I fucked up.

POLICEMAN

He drove the car. Unfortunately, that makes him a accessory. I won't put the cuffs on, but I need to take him in.

The policeman and Bobby start to exit.

BOBBY

Please tell Debbie.

ARTHUR

We'll bail you out.

POLICEMAN

There might not be any bail, depending on if the kid makes it.

ARTHUR

Bobby, don't worry. We'll take care of Debbie and the kids.

BOBBY

Thanks.

ARTHUR

Don't worry. We take care of our own here Bobby.

The guys are stunned as they watch Bobby and the cop exit.

ACT I, SCENE XII

Factory spokesman comes to the dais.

FACTORY REP

It's with great sadness that I announce the factory will be closing. We went into the latest negotiations with an open mind, but the union continued to insist on these unreasonable demands and pressed into a corner, we had no recourse but to do what was best for our stockholders. Once the union went out on strike, that pretty much forced our hand, especially with the replacement workers, and the level of violence that ensued.

ACT II, SCENE XIII

Arthur's and Nancy's living room. Nancy is sitting in a chair, nursing a drink. Arthur comes in, stops, and looks at Nancy for a couple of beats. Nancy looks up.

ARTHUR

I am so sorry. I did this to our son, to our family, and I can never tell him I'm sorry, never tell him I love him. I cry for him twenty four hours a day, and I am so sorry.

A beat. Nancy comes over and hugs Arthur, breaking down.

NANCY

I have my own sins. I told him he should hide who he was. I was hoping he would grow out of it, but it's not something you grow out of. I can never forgive myself. I miss him Arthur; I miss him.

Arthur wraps her in her arms as she breaks down, Arthur welling up with tears.

ACT II, SCENE XIV

All the guys have come to Stan's house, Stan, sitting in a wheelchair.

ARTHUR

What's next for you Phil?

PHIL

I'm going to South Carolina to train my replacement. I had no choice. I wasn't gonna lose my house.

ARTHUR

Those bastards. It's not enough to screw the town, screw the workers, but they need to humiliate us too. But don't worry Phil, I'll be looking out for your family. Another Negro family just moved in, so they have another family to terrorize, take the attention off you Phil.

PHIL

Well, it will give me time to see what my next move is.

A beat.

WALTER

Hey Stan, can you do me this favor?

STAN

What Walter?

WALTER

A week ago, on the 29th, can you say I was with you all night?

STAN

You mean the night your business burnt down?

WALTER

Yeah.

STAN

And why would I do that?

WALTER

I'm asking as a friend.

ARTHUR

That's a big fuckin' ask my friend.

WALTER

With the factory closing, I lost 85% of my business. I don't know how I can keep it going.

STAN

You'll figure something out; you always do. So on the 29th, We were watching Monday Night football and you had too much to drink and ended up sleeping on my couch.

WALTER

Thanks Stan.

ARTHUR

You have anything to do with setting that fire?

WALTER

I was with Stan all night, watching Monday Night Football.

STAN

You need to memorize this: the Steelers lost to the Patriots, thirty-five to twenty-seven.

WALTER

Thirty-five to twenty-seven. Thanks.

STAN

What's next for you Arthur?

ARTHUR

I don't know. I got a little money saved up so I'll live on that for awhile while I figure things out. And I'll be taking care of my friend here.

STAN

The only way you get ahead in this life is to die--Alice is getting an insurance payment as soon as I'm buried.

PHIL

You don't get rich with any job in this town...they still blame you for the factory moving south?

STAN

Gotta blame someone.

PHIL

We have the highest cancer rate of any city in the whole state. And all they can say is it's a coincidence.

STAN

I wish I was wrong about the water. And I understand: it's a horrible thing to take away a man's job, telling him he can't support his family.

A rock comes crashing through the window.

VOICE (V.O.)

YOU FUCKIN' TRAITOR. YOUR AN ENEMY OF THIS TOWN.

STAN

Another visit from the Welcome Wagon. Don't worry Phil. It's good you are leaving the area and going to South Carolina where there is only peace and harmony among the races. Have they freed the slaves there yet?

PHIL

With me gone, you'll be the new nigger in town.

STAN

I'm taking that as a badge of honor.

PHIL

Ain't no higher praise my man; Ain't no higher praise.

They fist bump.

END OF PLAY