

Oakwoods
A play by
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Oakwoods

By Mark Cornell

Characters:

ELLIS, 40, male, black

MR. CARLSON, 80, male, white

MRS. CARLSON, 80, female, white

SCOTTY, 30s, male, white

OREN, 30s, male, hispanic

JAMES, 58, male, white

Unlisted:

MEGAN, 15, female, white

MARY, 15, female, white

Place:

A dirty maintenance office.

Time:

Now. July.

Act One

Lights up on the small, cluttered office of the maintenance and landscaping department of Oakwoods homeowners association in the suburbs of Sacramento, CA. It's morning. Summer time. Posters of Yosemite, the Golden Gate Bridge, and Oakland Raiders football players color the walls. Tool belts, loaded with tools, hang on hooks. Other hooks hold hats - dirty Oakwoods ones and a Raiders one. Shovels, rakes, and other tools, including a jackhammer, lean into a corner. A broken AC unit taped with an "X" across its face sits in a window. A five-gallon water cooler is in a corner. Some old paint cans and a quart of acetone are against a wall. There is a file cabinet, piled with junk. A messy desk. Frankly, there is shit everywhere. ELLIS is attempting to get coffee out of an old coffee maker and put it into a traveling thermos and he's making a mess. He's in his 40s, broad-shouldered, and unshaven. He's in jeans and a short-sleeved t-shirt which says "Oakwoods" on the left-breast pocket. Across the desk is MRS. CARLSON, a sweaty, cranky octogenarian. By the door is her husband, MR. CARLSON, same age, hunched over wheeling an oxygen tank. A hose works its way up to his face and under his nose. He's struggling to stand. He's sweating.

MRS. CARLSON

Of course my husband can use a jackhammer!

ELLIS looks over at the sad sight of MR. CARLSON, who rips a fart.

ELLIS

I'm not saying he can't use a jackhammer, Mrs. Carlson, obviously, he's a man among men, I'm saying homeowners can't use our tools. It's policy.

MRS. CARLSON

Policy? I'm board president of this association! And a president's authority is total!

MR. CARLSON

I like bunnies.

MRS. CARLSON

The jackhammer is sitting right there, Ellis. All you have to do, is pick it up and bring it to my house.

ELLIS

I'm not going to do that, Mrs. Carlson.

MRS. CARLSON

Yes, you are! My word it's hot in here! Are you trying to murder us, Ellis?

ELLIS

No, I'm not.

MRS. CARLSON

Old people die of heat stroke every year and they're not all accidents!

ELLIS

(gesturing to the broken AC unit)

My AC is busted, Mrs. Carlson. A new unit is coming in tomorrow. Listen to me, we don't need to jackhammer your front walkway.

MRS. CARLSON

There's a giant footprint of paint on it!

ELLIS

It's *your* foot, isn't it Mrs. Carlson?

MRS. CARLSON

My funny boy artist grandson stupidly dropped a tube of "Prussian blue!"

MR. CARLSON

I wonder what I would look like if I were a molecule.

ELLIS

We can take up the paint with some acetone, which I have right here, if you fill out a work order.

MRS. CARLSON

I'm giving you the order now!

ELLIS

I don't take the work orders, Mrs. Carlson. Betty up at the front office does.

MRS. CARLSON

I know that, Ellis. Do I look like some kind of drooling half-wit?

ELLIS

No, you don't.

MR. CARLSON

I was a middleweight champ in Vietnam during the war! 239th Infantry Regiment! Undeclared! Except for that Irishman.

On the desk, ELLIS'S cell beep-beeps a text. He grabs his cell.

ELLIS

Excuse me.

(talking into the phone)

"A sleepover is fine period. Maybe she'll be happier away from me period."

He sends the text and puts down the cell.

ELLIS (cont'd)

Listen, Mrs. Carlson, I got a long list of other work orders from other residents that Betty has sent me that I gotta get to, so in order to be fair, I have to...

MR. CARLSON coughs hard. Keeps coughing. Louder.

ELLIS (cont'd)

Is he going to be...

MRS. CARLSON

It's this God blessed heat!

SCOTTY enters, stressed out. He's in the same outfit as ELLIS, only his clothes are a lot dirtier.

SCOTTY

I need to talk to you right now. Christ, it's hot in here.

MR. CARLSON'S coughing turns to gasping.

MRS. CARLSON

Robert, I'm going to give you more oxygen!

His wife attempts to turn up the oxygen output for his tank. He gasps more.

MRS. CARLSON (cont'd)
Oh, jeepers! Wrong way! Sorry!

SCOTTY
We have a major situation going on.

ELLIS
(gesturing to the Carlsons)
Yes, we do!

SCOTTY
No, not that. He'll be fine. This happens every day.

MR. CARLSON tries to talk, but can't
get enough air.

ELLIS
Maybe you should take him home, Mrs. Carlson.

MRS. CARLSON
I'll decide when to take him home, and I've decided to take
him home.

SCOTTY
Ellis, I have something important to tell you.

ELLIS
Hold on, Scotty.

ELLIS tries to escort them out. MR.
CARLSON is in full panic mode.

ELLIS (cont'd)
Call Betty when you get home, OK?

SCOTTY
Hello?!

ELLIS
Just a second!
(to the Mrs. Carlson)
Is he going to be OK?

MRS. CARLSON
He's gonna be fine. He's as tough as they come!

MR. CARLSON
I need to pee.

MRS. CARLSON
Just go, honey. You have your catheter on, don't you?

MR. CARLSON
My what?

MRS. CARLSON

Catheter!

MR. CARLSON

Oh, I haven't been a passenger on a plane since the war!
Planes go down!

MRS. CARLSON turns to ELLIS as she and
her husband exit.

MRS. CARLSON (cont'd)

You haven't heard the last of us, Ellis!

ELLIS closes the door.

ELLIS

(turning to Scotty)

Have a heart, would you, Scotty? The guy's in his last days.

SCOTTY

Oooh, how terrible. Nobody gives a shit, man. The two of
them bilked a kids' charity for like four decades. Fuck
them.

ELLIS

Come on, who did you hear that from, and why aren't they in
prison if they-

SCOTTY

Lawyers, man. What else?

ELLIS

What do you want, Scotty?

SCOTTY

Do you know who Vic Rawlings is?

ELLIS

Vic Rawlings? No.

ELLIS finishes the coffee adventure,
screwing on the top of the thermos.

SCOTTY

Are you culturally brain dead? He's all over the internet.

ELLIS

I don't go online anymore. It's fucking depressing.

SCOTTY

You don't watch TV?

ELLIS

When football is on, sure.

ELLIS comes around the desk and takes off his tennis shoes and puts on work boots, which are on the floor next to a chair he sits in. All this happens as:

SCOTTY

God, you are a sad, shallow man.

ELLIS

What do you want, Scotty?

SCOTTY

Vic Rawlings is a high school biology teacher in Michigan and he abducted one of his students a couple of months ago and is on the run.

ELLIS

That's riveting. Aren't you supposed to be pruning the cherry trees on San Jacinto right now?

SCOTTY

Shut up for a second and let me talk. Vic Rawlings was last seen in Reno at a gas station heading west.

ELLIS

So?

SCOTTY

Yeah, well, you need to get more involved with who Oren hires, because the new guy in maintenance is Vic Rawlings.

ELLIS

I thought the new guy's name was James.

SCOTTY

That's what he says it is, yes. But I am absolutely convinced he's Vic Rawlings.

ELLIS'S cell rings. He quiets it.

ELLIS

Scotty, for fuck's sake, man, I gotta get up to the retreat pool, OK, somebody took a big shit in the skimmer and-

SCOTTY

Fuck the retreat pool! There's a pedophile-slash-kidnapper working the maintenance crew!

ELLIS rises and closes the window next to the broken AC unit, looking out to see if he sees anyone as:

ELLIS

Are you serious with this right now?

SCOTTY

Dead serious.

ELLIS

Do you have to shout it to the fucking moon?

SCOTTY

Let me pull up a picture of Vic Rawlings online, so you can see for yourself.

SCOTTY retrieves his cell from his pocket.

ELLIS

I don't got time for your bullshit this morning, Scotty.

SCOTTY

Oh, my bullshit?

ELLIS

You're a meddler. You meddle. In every goddamn thing-

SCOTTY

Nobody's gonna pull any shit on me, OK?

Rising out of the chair, ELLIS grabs his keys, his cell, which he pockets, and the coffee thermos off the desk and starts to the door.

ELLIS

You have two seconds, one, two-

SCOTTY

Here, you impatient fuck! Look at this.

SCOTTY shows ELLIS his cell.

ELLIS

Vic Rawlings is your cat?

SCOTTY

What?

(he looks at the phone)

Fuck. No. Hold on. Here. Here is Vic Rawlings.

SCOTTY shows him the phone again.

ELLIS

There is a slight resemblance.

SCOTTY

A slight resemblance? He looks just like this James guy!

ELLIS

Why? Because they both got beards?

SCOTTY

Beards, glasses, slightly balding, same eye color, same basic head shape. *It's so obvious! There's a maniac in our midst, man!*

ELLIS

Would you calm down? Fuck, you are high-strung.

SCOTTY

You don't think this is him?

ELLIS

No.

SCOTTY

Why not?

ELLIS

First of all, there are 512 houses in this homeowners association. If this Vic guy is actually walking around, why is it no one here has noticed?

SCOTTY

Most of the residents here are fucking prehistoric. They're lucky if they recognize their own children.

ELLIS

That's really kind-hearted, Scotty.

SCOTTY

Oh, come on. You know I got a big cuddly spot for all the crusty, old, feeble-minded fucks that live here.

ELLIS sighs.

ELLIS

My point is someone would've noticed if this Vic Rawlings dude was out mowing their fucking lawn.

SCOTTY

James's in maintenance, not landscaping, so he wouldn't be out mowing a lawn, would he?

ELLIS

I'm saying someone would've noticed him, man. James's been here two months already.

SCOTTY

Six weeks, you stupid bitch.

ELLIS bristles at being called a "stupid bitch." There is a momentary stare off.

ELLIS

OK. So why did it take you six weeks to notice him?

SCOTTY

Because you got me over-fucking-worked and I'm running around all the time. But yesterday, I got a real good look at him when he came around the back of the tool shed where I was bleeding my lizard.

ELLIS

For God's sake.

SCOTTY

And then this morning, as I was driving in, pow, the whole thing hit me like a wet dream.

ELLIS

Scotty, for the 10 billionth time, stop pissing outside in broad daylight like a goddamn animal.

SCOTTY

I piss where I want, when I want, fuck you.

ELLIS

You know, you got a big mouth for a guy who weighs a buck thirty-five.

SCOTTY

Oh, I got a big mouth?

ELLIS

Yeah, you got a big fucking mouth and if you weren't my brother-in-law, and your sister and I hadn't made a deal, I would kick your ass right now and then fire you.

SCOTTY

Yeah, well, I am, and you did, so you can't, can you?

SCOTTY gives ELLIS a big toothy grin.

ELLIS

(simmering)

No, I can't.

SCOTTY

You're about to lose your temper, aren't you?

ELLIS

(pulling back)

No, I'm not.

SCOTTY

Janie asked me to tell her whenever you lost your temper.

ELLIS

I know the deal, Scotty. I'm not losing my temper. I'm calm. You're pushing every last goddamn button I got, but I'm calm.

SCOTTY

You don't look calm.

ELLIS

I am.

SCOTTY

You look like you're about to blow.

ELLIS

I'm not.

ELLIS grins at SCOTTY. It's fake.

SCOTTY

You still seeing that anger management guy? The one into the QAnon shit?

ELLIS loses the grin. OREN enters fast. He's dressed just like SCOTTY and ELLIS. His clothes are more worn out, with various stains, mostly paint.

OREN

Ellis, are you gonna answer your cell?

ELLIS

Sorry. Shit's going on. I know all about the skimmer situation.

SCOTTY

Close the door, Oren.

OREN

Some old surfer dude took a huge dump into the skimmer at the retreat pool.

ELLIS

I just fucking said I know all about it.

OREN

Half of it wandered out of the skimmer and bumped into Mrs. Mallory's sofa float.

ELLIS

I KNOW ALL ABOUT IT!

SCOTTY

Close the door, Oren.

OREN

Mrs. Mallory's in hysterics.

SCOTTY

Close the goddamn door, Oren!

OREN turns to SCOTTY.

OREN

You close the goddamn door, Scotty.

ELLIS

Forget the door. We're all leaving.

OREN

Wow, it's hot in here. Why's it so hot in here?

ELLIS

The AC unit is busted.

OREN

Why's the window closed?

ELLIS

It doesn't matter.

OREN

Supposed to be like a hundred and five out today. This place is gonna be sweltering. Someone could die in here, dog.

ELLIS

So let's get outta here. Scotty, get over to San Jacinto. Oren, let's go back up to the retreat pool and-

SCOTTY

Oren, your new guy James is actually Vic Rawlings.

ELLIS

OK, I'll get the fucking door.

ELLIS closes the door.

OREN

James is actually Vic Rawlings? I got no idea what that means.

SCOTTY

Wow, you two are idiots.

ELLIS

You're not gonna let this go, are you, Scotty?

Not a chance.

SCOTTY

ELLIS sets down his keys and coffee thermos, resigned.

SCOTTY (cont'd)

Do you watch the news, Oren?

OREN

Yeah, I follow shit, smart guy.

SCOTTY

Yeah? So what's the war that's going on right now in Syria?

ELLIS

Come on, Scotty.

OREN

It's the war between suck my cock and lick my nuts.

ELLIS

All right, listen, Oren, Scotty thinks the new guy you hired is actually a pedophile on the lam.

OREN

So?

SCOTTY

So?!

OREN

Half of your people in landscaping are illegal immigrants, Scotty.

SCOTTY

How is a guy trying to make a better life for his family the same as fucking around with kids?

OREN

Well, Jesus, when you put it like that...

SCOTTY

Your guy is all over the news, Oren. He's a high school biology teacher and he kidnapped a student of his a couple months ago out of Grand Rapids.

OREN

That's it?

SCOTTY

That's it? He's 58 and the girl is 15.

OREN

Oh. Those aren't good numbers.

SCOTTY

He was last seen in a PDQ outside Reno buying KY jelly and toothpaste.

OREN

Ew.

SCOTTY

Yes, ew! Big ew!

OREN

But how do you know for sure that this sicko is James?

SCOTTY

(showing Oren his cell)

Here's a photo of him. Look familiar?

OREN

This is troubling.

SCOTTY

You work with him, Oren. Has he said anything to you to indicate he is who he is.

OREN

Like what?

SCOTTY

Has he mentioned Michigan or a 15-year old girl or his love of personal lubricants?

ELLIS

Can we please, for the love of God, not make cracks about child abusers?

SCOTTY

I'm not making a crack, man! In fact, I am the only one here who is actually up-fucking-set!

OREN

Well, he has talked about having a young wife.

SCOTTY

I knew it!

OREN

He says she's 24.

SCOTTY

My smelly ass she's 24.

OREN

He also mentioned that they're currently living in a hotel because their apartment had a fire.

SCOTTY

See?! See?! See?!

ELLIS

OK, hold on, Scotty. What does that prove?

SCOTTY

It proves he's in transition. That he don't got a permanent place.

ELLIS

And that makes him Vic Rawlings?

SCOTTY

Yes!

ELLIS

That's a big leap, man.

SCOTTY

Don't you find it strange that he calls himself James Smith?

ELLIS

Why would I find that strange?

SCOTTY

According to Google, do you know what the most common full name in America is?

OREN

No. What?

SCOTTY

James Smith, dumb shit!

ELLIS

Take it easy, Scotty.

SCOTTY

He's obviously trying to disappear. We need to call the police.

ELLIS

No.

SCOTTY

Why not?

ELLIS

Because if you're wrong, Scotty, how's that gonna look?

OREN

Excellent point. Plus, James would probably quit, and then I'd be left with just Marcos on pool duty and he's totally mental. He literally doesn't know his left from his right.

SCOTTY

I'm not wrong.

ELLIS

What if you are?

SCOTTY

What if I'm not? You OK with the idea there's some nut job here, and he's got some girl held captive somewhere, and the three of us are just standing around fingering our prostates?

OREN

I had a massage therapist do that once.

ELLIS

Oren, Jesus.

OREN

Last summer, when I went back to Oaxaca. She said it was a medical procedure.

SCOTTY

No one cares, man!

OREN

It helps to release excess seminal fluid.

SCOTTY

Shut up!

ELLIS

OK, where is James now?

OREN

He's at the retreat pool with Marcos.

ELLIS

Why don't we get him to come up to my office here and we ask him a few questions?

SCOTTY

Like what? Do you dig underage girls?

ELLIS

Of course not.

OREN

I don't want any trouble. I'm about to get married.

SCOTTY

I think we should call the cops.

ELLIS

No. No police. We don't wanna unnecessarily freak out the homeowners with a bunch of cop cars, and the FBI no doubt, and the U.S. Marshal's probably, and whoever the fuck else.

OREN

Exactly. Sirens and pacemakers do not mix.

SCOTTY

Oh, please. Ambulances are here all the time. And most of the people here can't even hear the fucking sirens.

ELLIS

I'm not making a goddamn scene! Let's just sit him down and talk to him.

OREN

What if he clues into what we're doing? And shit goes down, which it will. *I'm about to get married.* I say we wait it out.

SCOTTY

Wait it out?

ELLIS

If some young girl's in danger, Oren...

OREN

Valid. Valid. Can we just wait until after my wedding on the twelfth?

SCOTTY

Nine days from now?

OREN

It'll fly right by.

SCOTTY

What if this girl is chained to a wall or blindfolded in a dumpster some place?

OREN

Again, Scotty, valid. But, you see, in nine, teeny-weeny days-

ELLIS

What the hell does this have to do with your wedding?

OREN

If we confront this guy, and I get majorly fucked up, we'll have to cancel the wedding and *the caterer made it very clear she don't give refunds.*

ELLIS

With all due respect, Oren, fuck the caterer.

OREN

That's the problem. I did fuck the caterer, OK, in her van, and now she's threatening to tell Penelope unless I agree to a whole bunch of shit, *including no refunds.*

ELLIS

Seriously?

SCOTTY

We gotta care what happens to children, Oren. Children, old people, women, handicapped people, dumbshits, dogs, trees, the water, *everything.*

OREN

I ain't gonna deny you're making valid points here.

SCOTTY

I vote we call the police right now.

OREN

No police!

SCOTTY

Banging the caterer is colossally stupid, but it's not illegal.

OREN

I know, it's just that, uh, there is a sort of a, kind of a, little bit of a warrant out on me.

ELLIS

What?

SCOTTY

It's pot related, isn't it?

OREN

No, and I'd rather not get into the specifics.

ELLIS

Oren, Jesus, man, I can't have my maintenance supervisor with a fucking warrant.

OREN

You can, actually, because you have been for the last nine months.

ELLIS

This is turning into a banner fucking day.

SCOTTY

Why haven't the cops picked you up?

OREN

The warrant's only ever gonna come into play if something insane happens, like we invite the calvary to Oakwoods.

SCOTTY

Is the warrant something pussy-like, like parking tickets?

OREN

No, I don't drive anymore, and fuck you.

SCOTTY

You two got absolutely no moral compass.

OREN

This from the guy who recently said "fuck church?"

SCOTTY

Oh, are we gonna talk religion now? Because you're an Easter-only-Catholic-hypocrite who lets his dick run wild even though he's about to get married.

OREN

I go to mass on Christmas, too!

ELLIS

Guys, *enough*.

OREN

You're unbelievable, dude. You come waltzing in here a couple of months ago swinging your balls everywhere-

SCOTTY

I don't wanna hear this shit again-

OREN

-all superior, even though you don't know a thing about landscaping-

SCOTTY

Like it takes a genius to scatter fucking mulch.

ELLIS

(booming)

CAN EVERYONE SHUT THE HELL UP?!

SCOTTY and OREN freeze.

I'm telling Janie.

SCOTTY

There is a knock at the door and JAMES, 58, enters, leaving the door open. He's shaved his beard. He's dressed like the others. He has a Saran-wrapped tray in his hands. They all turn and stare at him.

Sorry. Am I interrupting?

JAMES

James?

ELLIS

You shaved?

SCOTTY

SCOTTY looks at ELLIS and OREN.

Yeah, this morning. Ooh, it's toasty in here.

JAMES

We know.

ELLIS

Close the door, Oren.

SCOTTY

You close the door, Scotty.

OREN

I'll get the door. James, can we talk to you for second?

ELLIS

ELLIS closes the door. Doesn't lock it.

Absolutely. My wife came by the retreat pool just now with some assorted homemade donuts. Wanted to share them.

JAMES

That's...that's really nice.

ELLIS

Your wife came to Oakwoods?

OREN

Yeah. Just now. You have to try these donuts. They are amazing. All different kinds in here. Glazed, maple bars, lemon-filled.

JAMES

JAMES puts the tray down on ELLIS'S desk. ELLIS peers at the donuts.

ELLIS

How's Mrs. Mallory?

JAMES

Great. Try the old fashioned. They will rock your world.

Removing the Saran wrap, ELLIS takes one, and a bite.

OREN

Last I saw Mrs. Mallory she was convulsing on the pool deck screaming "poopy, poopy, poopy!"

JAMES

Yeah, she calmed down. I held her hand and we talked, and then I walked her home.

ELLIS

(mouth full of donut)

Oh, my God, this is awesome.

JAMES

Right?

JAMES takes a donut. Moans in pleasure as he eats.

JAMES (cont'd)

(mouth full of donut)

Dig in, guys. Oren, try the one with sprinkles. It's ridiculous.

OREN

Oooh, I love sprinkles.

OREN goes and gets one. Bites.

OREN (cont'd)

(mouth full of donut)

Holy crap.

JAMES

Knocks your pants off, doesn't it?

OREN

Your wife made these?

JAMES

Yeah, she's an incredible baker.

ELLIS

You guys want some coffee? Fresh this morning.

ELLIS moves to the coffee maker, still half-full.

JAMES

Love some.

OREN

Me, too.

ELLIS pours into two paper cups.

ELLIS

This isn't that hipster shit, either. This is Folger's. This is real coffee.

OREN

Folger's is real coffee?

ELLIS

That's right. It's not a fashion statement.

JAMES

Couldn't agree more.

OREN

You got any cream or sugar? Or are you still weird about cream and sugar?

ELLIS

Coffee is black, Oren. I like it black.

OREN

And yet you married a white woman. Go figure.

ELLIS

Fuck off.

OREN

It's coffee, Ellis. No reason to get all Malcolm X about it.

ELLIS moves to his thermos and opens it, drinking. They all eat and drink. Except for SCOTTY, who steams.

ELLIS

Coffee and donuts. A little slice of heaven.

SCOTTY

Ellis.

ELLIS turns to SCOTTY, who glares at him.

ELLIS
Right. (beat) So...uh...James...uh...you enjoying the job?

JAMES
Oh, yeah. The homeowners are great. Love being outside. Always enjoy working with my hands.

ELLIS
We don't usually hire guys your age. How is it you found yourself looking for work?

JAMES
Layoffs. Times are tough.

ELLIS
You new to the area?

JAMES
Yeah.

ELLIS
Where're you from?

JAMES
Midwest.

ELLIS
Whereabouts?

JAMES
All over.

ELLIS
Any place in particular?

JAMES
Too many to say.

ELLIS
Can I have a second donut?

JAMES
Of course!

ELLIS
I didn't get breakfast and you said something about a lemon-filled when you walked in.

JAMES
Oh, yeah, right there.

JAMES points to it. ELLIS grabs it.
He eats. Moans.

ELLIS
(mouth full of donut)
Your wife should open up a shop. Blow Dunkin' Donuts to
Kingdom Come.

JAMES
Thanks.

ELLIS
Do you mind if I save one for my daughter? She loves donuts.

JAMES
Absolutely. These your kids?

JAMES gestures to two photos on the
desk as ELLIS wraps a donut.

ELLIS
Yeah. Megan and Michael.

JAMES
Megan. And Michael. Cute kids.

ELLIS
Mostly. Megan's going through a bit of a phase. The I-want-
nothing-to-do-with-dad phase.

JAMES
That's too bad.

ELLIS
She's discovered makeup and boys and a four-letter words. 15
has been a helluva a year.

JAMES
Ah, I think 15's a great age. Seeing young girls come into
their own.

ELLIS
Come into their own?

JAMES
Becoming who they are meant to be. Megan will come around.
You watch.

ELLIS
You have kids?

JAMES
Me? No. Still hope to some day.

OREN

Can I have a second donut?

SCOTTY

(suddenly)

Is your real name Vic Rawlings?

ELLIS

Jesus, Scotty.

JAMES

Pardon me?

SCOTTY

I think it's time we stop fucking around. Are you Vic Rawlings?

OREN

Come on, Scotty. The dude brought donuts, man.

JAMES

I don't think we've met. Officially. I'm James.

JAMES offers his hand. SCOTTY doesn't take it.

SCOTTY

Scotty.

JAMES

Nice to meet you, Scotty. You're the landscape supervisor, aren't you?

SCOTTY

Yeah.

JAMES

Love the ornamental grass you put in along the trails by the creek. Is that Siskiyou Blue?

SCOTTY

Probably.

JAMES

Are you into apple fritters? Because there's one here and it's deadly.

SCOTTY

Fuck the donuts. You are Vic Rawlings and don't you fucking deny it.

ELLIS

Take it easy, Scotty.

JAMES

OK, OK, you got me. I'm Vic Rawlings. Who's Vic Rawlings?

SCOTTY

Oh, for fuck's sake. Don't pretend to be stupid like these two. You know goddamn well who Vic Rawlings is. You use the fucking internet, don't you?

JAMES

Not lately. I lost my cell and my computer when my apartment burned down.

OREN

I told you about the fire, Scotty.

SCOTTY

That's a bullshit story.

ELLIS

All right, all right-

JAMES

Have I done something to upset you?

SCOTTY

You're goddamn right you have. You kidnapped a 15-year old girl out of Michigan and you're on the run.

JAMES laughs, then stops when he realizes...

JAMES

Oh, gosh. You're serious?

SCOTTY

And this girl, who you claim to be your wife, was a student of yours. Am I right?

JAMES

I met my wife at church.

SCOTTY

That's a bullshit story, too.

ELLIS

Scotty.

SCOTTY

What's your wife's name?

JAMES

Mary. Mary Smith.

SCOTTY

That's a bullshit name.

OREN

Scotty, come try the apple fritter.

SCOTTY

That's a bullshit apple fritter.

OREN

What? No, it isn't. Come on. You love donuts, man. You're a donut nut.

JAMES

Hey, you know, maybe I should go. Temperature is running a bit high in here, in a couple ways. Oren, I'll grab Marcos and we'll get started cleaning the main pool, OK?

OREN

Sounds good. Sorry things got weird.

JAMES

No problem. I'll just leave the donuts and let Mary know that you enjoyed them, and I'll get back to work.

He starts out. SCOTTY blocks his path.

SCOTTY

Yeah, that's not gonna happen.

JAMES

Whoa.

ELLIS

All right. Calm down, Scotty.

JAMES

Are you OK, pal? Because you look like you're going to pop a blood vessel.

SCOTTY

Why did you shave today?

JAMES

Because it's supposed to be blazing out today and my beard gets itchy in the summertime. Oren, what is going on?

OREN

Well, see, there's this maniac, and Scotty's gotten a little paranoid because you kinda, sorta, kinda look like him. A little.

SCOTTY

A-fucking-lot. Here.

SCOTTY shows JAMES his cell.

JAMES

Wow, yeah, it does kind of look like me. Except for the beard.

SCOTTY

He was last seen in a PDQ outside Reno buying KY jelly and toothpaste.

JAMES

Ew. And now you all believe I'm him?

OREN

I would say Scotty believes. Me and Ellis are waffling.

SCOTTY

Show me a picture of your "24-year-old wife."

JAMES

I told you. I lost my cell in the fire.

SCOTTY

Every man keeps a photo of his wife in his wallet, am I right, Ellis?

ELLIS

I would, but Janie hates having her picture taken.

SCOTTY

You don't have a wedding photo in there?

ELLIS

No. We never got the wallet-sized pictures printed.

SCOTTY

Oren, when you get married, put a photo of your wife in your wallet!

OREN

I don't use a wallet anymore.

SCOTTY

You two are fucking hopeless!

JAMES

I should really go. The main pool isn't going to clean itself-

JAMES moves hard to get past SCOTTY, but SCOTTY suddenly hits him in the face, knocking him back. JAMES trips and falls. It's not much of a punch, though it is intended with fury.

ELLIS
 Scotty, holy shit.

SCOTTY
 He was trying to run!

JAMES
 (grabbing his nose)
 Ow. That hurts.

ELLIS helps JAMES to his feet.

ELLIS
 Oren, help me get him in a fucking chair.

OREN grabs a chair against the wall,
 and he and ELLIS help JAMES into it.
 JAMES pulls his hand from his nose.
 It's bleeding.

JAMES
 My nose is bleeding.

ELLIS
 Shit. Here...

ELLIS grabs Kleenex off his desk.
 Hands it to JAMES who puts it to his
 nose.

ELLIS (cont'd)
 Lean your head back.

JAMES does.

ELLIS (cont'd)
 You OK, James?

JAMES
 My nose is probably broken.

ELLIS
 I doubt it's broken. He barely tapped you.

JAMES
I'm bleeding.

ELLIS
 You got a sensitive nose.

JAMES
 I'll probably have two black eyes!

ELLIS

Let's not get hysterical. Keep your head back.

ELLIS turns to SCOTTY.

ELLIS (cont'd)

Scotty, for fuck's sake, man. Do you think this helps?

SCOTTY

You are gonna thank me later.

ELLIS

Do you want a lawsuit? Janie and I putting up bail money for you is one thing, but this is where I draw the line.

SCOTTY

Bail money? I paid you back and that was two years ago and you know goddamn well that radio dude was putting nurses at risk with his bullshit propoganda-

ELLIS

OK, OK, never mind.

SCOTTY

Bring that shit up? That loudmouth asshole had to be dealt with.

ELLIS

I know, but you fucking blew up his car!

SCOTTY

I blew up a car, not *his* car! I fucked it up!

ELLIS

Why does it feel like right now you're about to blow up the wrong car again!?

OREN

Dude, you blew up a car?

SCOTTY

No one got hurt! Why are we talking about this?!

ELLIS

Because sometimes you get an idea in your head and without thinking things through you fuck shit up!

SCOTTY

That radio dude was-

ELLIS

Yes, I know, he's an asshole, but you can't listen to assholes!

SCOTTY

Well, some people do and then they grab torches and the next thing you know-

ELLIS

How is what you did any better?!

JAMES

Scotty, have you ever been diagnosed with any neuropsychiatric conditions?

They all turn and look at JAMES.

ELLIS

See, man, you say shit like that I start thinking you're not just some dumb ass on a maintenance crew.

SCOTTY

Sounds like a teacher, don't he?

JAMES

I like to read. It's not a crime to be semi-educated.

SCOTTY

Is his application here? We could go through it with him and see if it adds up.

OREN

Maybe check his references.

SCOTTY

You didn't check his references before you hired him?

OREN

Who checks references?

ELLIS

They keep all the applications up at the front office.

SCOTTY

You hired him, Oren. Don't you remember what was on the application?

OREN

My memory isn't what it used to be.

SCOTTY

You pot head. You're only 31 years old. Lay off the fucking weed.

SCOTTY approaches JAMES, threateningly.

SCOTTY (cont'd)

You are gonna talk to us and you are gonna talk to us right now.

ELLIS grabs SCOTTY.

ELLIS

Scotty, sit down.

SCOTTY

Talk, fucker!

JAMES

About what?

SCOTTY

Oh, just kill the charade, you fucking dirt bag!

ELLIS

SIT DOWN!

Pushing SCOTTY away...

ELLIS (cont'd)

NOW!

...he forces him to sit on a five gallon bucket.

JAMES

Ellis, you're the boss, and I don't want to tell you what to do, but I think you should fire Scotty.

ELLIS

I can't fire him, James.

SCOTTY

That's right. Last fall, during an all-important Raiders game, Ellis here hurled his TV through his living room window.

ELLIS

And to make good with my wife, I had to hire Scotty, who is her younger brother, and agree to never fire him.

SCOTTY

And I am to report back if he loses his shit at work.

ELLIS

My wife has a soft spot for him because he can't keep a job, and I think you can see why. There, are we all up to fucking speed on that?

JAMES

My head is killing me. Do you have a Tylenol or an Advil?

ELLIS

In my desk. Oren, there's some Tylenol in the top drawer. Can you get it?

OREN goes to the desk as ELLIS retrieves JAMES'S coffee.

SCOTTY

Why are you babying him?

ELLIS

It's a Tylenol, not a lollipop.

OREN finds a bottle.

ELLIS (cont'd)

Here, take it with your coffee.

ELLIS hands JAMES his cup. OREN gives the pills to ELLIS, who shakes two pills into JAMES'S hand.

JAMES

Thanks.

Pulling the Kleenex away from his nose, JAMES downs the pills with the coffee.

ELLIS

Has your nose stopped bleeding?

JAMES

I think so.

ELLIS

Here.

ELLIS holds the trash can in front of JAMES, who drops in the Kleenex. ELLIS'S cell beep-beeps a text. He pulls it out of his pocket, looks at who texted, then stuffs the phone back into his pocket.

ELLIS (cont'd)

All right, James. We're all a little wiggled out at the moment. Would you please answer me this. Is it true that your wife is 24-years-old?

JAMES

(groggy)

Is my wife 24-years-old?

SCOTTY

Oh, don't get all "is my wife 24-years-old" like that question makes no sense.

JAMES

I'm a little stunned at the moment. Someone just hit me in the face.

Rising, SCOTTY charges him.

SCOTTY

And I'll do it again if you don't answer the question!

JAMES recoils, covering himself. ELLIS intervenes, pulling SCOTTY away.

ELLIS

No more hitting!

SCOTTY

(pointing at James)

Answer the question!

JAMES

OK! OK! Yes! My wife is 24! So?!

SCOTTY

How did a 58-year old dude, who's not exactly George Clooney, no offense, and who makes 12 dollars an hour, land such a young wife?

JAMES

Some women love what's on the inside of a man.

SCOTTY

Oh, the fuck they do. You abducted her and you know it.

JAMES

I didn't abduct her.

SCOTTY

Where is she right now, you twisted fuck?

JAMES

After she dropped off the donuts, she went to get her nails done.

SCOTTY

Get her nails done? What a crock of shit. She's fucking handcuffed to a sewage pipe some place, isn't she?

JAMES

What?

SCOTTY

And she's not 24. She's 15, isn't she, you fucking creep?

ELLIS

You know, Scotty, if she brought donuts to Oakwoods, then she probably isn't handcuffed to a sewage pipe.

OREN

Unless she carries the pipe around with her. But that would be silly. Cast iron is super heavy and-

SCOTTY

Shut up, Oren!

OREN

What if she wanted to run away with him? What if her home life was shitty and this guy's the only person who's ever been nice to her?

SCOTTY

I would file all that in a folder titled "It Doesn't Fucking Matter." She's 15-years-old, Oren.

JAMES

Boy, it's hot in here.

JAMES gets more Kleenex and wipes his sweaty face.

ELLIS

CAN EVERYONE STOP HARPING ABOUT THE GODDAMN HEAT SITUATION IN HERE?!

JAMES

I don't feel well. I want to go home.

SCOTTY

You're not going anywhere.

SCOTTY lunges for JAMES. They wrestle in the chair.

ELLIS

Scotty!

ELLIS and OREN separate them. Then ELLIS and OREN put JAMES back in the chair. SCOTTY comes out of it with JAMES'S wallet, holding it up.

SCOTTY

Aha! Now we'll see what's-what and who's who!

JAMES

Give me that!

JAMES lunges for SCOTTY, but ELLIS and OREN hold him back, and force him back into the chair as SCOTTY goes through the wallet.

JAMES (cont'd)

I heard you were a meddler, but this is ridiculous!

SCOTTY

Let's see here. Chuck E. Cheese Gift Card. Subway Sub Club member. Denny's free Grand Slam breakfast coupon. Visa. James Smith. Driver's License. James Smith. 447 Los Olivos Street, Carmichael, CA. 95608.

OREN

Damn.

SCOTTY

This is bullshit!

SCOTTY throws the wallet and the contents at JAMES, hitting him. They scatter on the floor.

JAMES

Can I go home now?

SCOTTY

No!

JAMES

You can't just keep me here.

ELLIS

Technically, you're still on the clock.

JAMES

On the clock? I'm quitting. As of right now.

OREN

I knew this would happen. Jesus, Scotty. Now I'm stuck with Marcos. Marcos has a steel plate in his head, man!

The door opens suddenly, and MR. and MRS. CARLSON slowly work their way in.

MRS. CARLSON

Hey, numnuts, we're back!

MR. CARLSON

Oh, it's a beautiful day!

MRS. CARLSON

We've brought the work order!

They freeze as they see the situation.
The men freeze as they see the
CARLSONS. Then...

JAMES

Help! Heeeeeeeeeeeeeeeelp!

ELLIS and OREN grab JAMES'S mouth and
subdue him. He screams muffled through
their hands, struggling to get free.

MRS. CARLSON

What in Samhain is going on in here?

JAMES tries to break free, but ELLIS
and OREN hold him down.

ELLIS

Scotty, get them out of here!

Approaching, SCOTTY blocks them from
seeing JAMES.

SCOTTY

Mr. and Mrs. Carlson! Let's move along, shall we?

MR. CARLSON

Isn't cantaloupe yummy?

MRS. CARLSON

Is that that wonderful man, Mr. Smith?

SCOTTY

He's having a breakdown. You all need to leave.

MRS. CARLSON

Breakdown?

SCOTTY

Yes, the man is deranged.

JAMES works his way to his feet. ELLIS
and OREN grapple with him.

JAMES

I need help!

SCOTTY

See? He's admitting it. The dude is insane.

ELLIS and OREN take JAMES to the floor,
hard. He screams.

JAMES

Oh, my back!

ELLIS and OREN cover JAMES'S mouth.

SCOTTY

(trying to push the Carlsons
out)

Now his body is breaking down. Come back tomorrow.

MRS. CARLSON

We have the work order, Ellis!

ELLIS

Leave the work order and go, Mrs. Carlson!

MRS. CARLSON

No!

ELLIS

Leave it!

MRS. CARLSON

I'm not moving an inch until you promise to get on it!

SCOTTY

Give me the fucking work order, old woman!

SCOTTY snatches it out of MRS.
CARLSON'S hand.

MRS. CARLSON

Hey!

SCOTTY

Now get the hell out of here! Both of you!

MRS. CARLSON

You can't talk to us this way!

SCOTTY

I just did!

MR. CARLSON

I was undefeated! Except for that Irishman.

SCOTTY

Suck my dick, old man!

MRS. CARLSON gasps.

MRS. CARLSON
What did you say?

MR. CARLSON
What did he say?

SCOTTY
OUT!

MR. CARLSON
It sounded like he wanted me to suck something.

MRS. CARLSON
I need a promise about the sidewalk, Ellis!

ELLIS
I promise I'll get on it!

MRS. CARLSON
Within the hour or we are coming back to get the jackhammer ourselves!

MR. CARLSON
I was in Vietnam! You cannot force me to suck anything!

SCOTTY
Out! Out! Out!

Their voices trail off as SCOTTY leads them out.

ELLIS
Now lock the door!

SCOTTY does. ELLIS and OREN get JAMES off the floor and put him back in the chair.

ELLIS (cont'd)
Jesus, Mrs. Carlson is gonna spread this all over Oakwoods like wildfire.

OREN
What do we do now? I'm beginning to suspect that maybe James is not Vic Rawlings.

SCOTTY
Yes, he is!

ELLIS
Let me think for a minute.

JAMES

I need a doctor. The Tylenol is not working. I have a searing headache. And now my back is-

SCOTTY

You are milking this victim shit for all it's worth, man!

ELLIS

Hold on, everyone!

The office phone rings. SCOTTY immediately unplugs it.

ELLIS (cont'd)

What is wrong with you? I still have a job to do!

SCOTTY

Leave the phone off!

OREN'S cell rings.

SCOTTY (cont'd)

Goddammit!

OREN

It's Penelope. I gotta get this.

He pulls the phone out of his pocket. It's in a sock.

SCOTTY

You keep your phone in a sock?

OREN

Socks are soft and clean. My pockets are not. Fuck you.

He peels the phone out of the sock and answers.

OREN (cont'd)

Penelope, sweetie, now is a really bad time. (beat) No, no, I do wanna be involved in the wedding planning. I do. But- (beat) Sweetie, don't be mad. (beat) Sweetie, I think you working with all those mean lawyers isn't having a good effect on you. (beat) No, don't send the invitations yet to my parents. (beat) Because, I haven't told them I'm taking your last name and- (beat) I haven't found the right time, that's why. (beat) My parents are very proud old country Mexicans, you know that, and I don't wanna- (beat) I need to go, OK? We have- (beat) I need to go. (beat) Please, let me go, sweetie. Please. (beat) Please. Please. Pl-

He looks down at the cell. She's hung up.

SCOTTY

Are you seriously taking your wife's last fucking name?

OREN

Maybe.

SCOTTY

Why don't you change your first name or your middle name?
You bitch about them all the time.

ELLIS

Scotty, let it go.

OREN

I don't wanna upset my father, Scotty. He named me Orenthal James because he loved O.J. Before, you know, O.J. turned into a homicidal maniac.

ELLIS

You must have gotten killed on the playground.

OREN

Yes! I'd come home crying and my father would say, "I knew O.J., miijo. Your mother worked in Protrero Hill where he grew up when we first came to this country. He was a hero to all of us."

ELLIS

Some hero.

SCOTTY

I just don't understand why you let everyone walk all over you, dude.

OREN

It's called selflessness, Scotty. It's called charity. And kindness.

SCOTTY

It's called pussiness, Oren.

ELLIS

Guys, I think we gotta let James go.

JAMES

Sounds grand.

SCOTTY

(hysterical)

We're not letting him go!!

ELLIS

OK, Scotty, I'm gonna decide what we do, OK?

NO!

SCOTTY

SCOTTY gets overcome. Fights tears.

ELLIS

Ah, fuck, what are you doing?

OREN

I think he's crying, dog.

ELLIS

I can see that, Oren! (beat) Scotty? What's going on?

SCOTTY can't talk. He collapses against a wall, and falls to a sitting position on the floor.

ELLIS (cont'd)

Scotty? (beat) What is it, man?

SCOTTY cries. ELLIS turns to OREN.

ELLIS (cont'd)

(to Oren, referring to James)

Watch him.

ELLIS sits down on the floor with SCOTTY.

ELLIS (cont'd)

Hey, man. (beat) Hey. What's wrong?

SCOTTY slowly pulls it together.

SCOTTY

You know, there are some nights I can't sleep at all. My head is on fire.

ELLIS

Hey, man, you can call me. Or call Janie. She'd talk to you. She knows what you're going through. She's going through it, too.

SCOTTY

Janie's not like me. She has you. She has the kids. I got nobody.

ELLIS

Yeah, but I'm saying you got us.

Beat.

SCOTTY

I used to believe in God, Ellis. I used to. When my Mom was alive. But now I just can't do it no more. Not in the world that I know.

ELLIS

What happened to your Mom was a freak accident, Scotty. Freak.

SCOTTY

Was it? Was it really?

OREN

I thought your mother died in a car wreck.

SCOTTY

She went to visit my grandmother, in the care facility, in Rocklin, and she gets there finds her face all bruised up, then they accused my mother of doing it, threatened to turn her in. My mom called Janie on the way home, but she was so upset, that she...she went off the road.

OREN

Jesus.

SCOTTY

The God I grew up with, the one my mother loved and prayed to all her life, that God wouldn't have let this happen. (beat) Sometimes I think peace and kindness are abnormal. Look around, man. Look-the-fuck-around. It's fucking insanity. People abandon dogs on the side of the road. Rapes on college campuses. Wall Street dudes robbing people blind. And the politicians? They get worse and worse.

Beat.

SCOTTY (cont'd)

I saw online there was this guy jerking off on an American Airlines flight. In his seat. And no one did nothing. A couple of women complained. Where are the men? Are there no real men left? How come no dudes got up, walked over, and kicked the fucking shit outta this guy?

ELLIS

You gotta get off the internet, Scotty. Seriously.

SCOTTY

You know, sometimes I'll go on message boards at night, and just spend hours losing my shit at people.

SCOTTY turns to OREN.

SCOTTY (cont'd)

Oren, don't you ever get mad about things? The way things are? The shit that's happening? The *lying*? Don't you ever just get furious?

OREN

Not really. You know me, Scotty. Non-confrontational. I like to stay out of shit.

SCOTTY

Shit doesn't bother you?

OREN

Maybe sometimes.

SCOTTY

You've never wanted to chop Tucker Carlson's dick off?

OREN

Unlike you, I don't sit around thinking about Tucker Carlson's dick.

SCOTTY

Well, you're thinking about it now.

OREN

Yeah, thanks to you!

SCOTTY

Yes or no, do you want chop his dick off?!

OREN thinks.

SCOTTY (cont'd)

You're not sure?!

OREN

I'm not like you, man. I tend to like things. Penelope. My friends. Good weed.

SCOTTY

But how can you just stick your head in the sand?

OREN

I'm not sticking my head in the sand right now, am I? And how's it working out?

SCOTTY turns to ELLIS.

SCOTTY

Ellis, you know what I'm talking about, right?

ELLIS

I'm not mad at the world, Scotty. I just get mad sometimes. I can't help it. It's in my DNA. My father was the same way.

SCOTTY

You lose it over a football game, but not this?

ELLIS can't respond.

SCOTTY (cont'd)

You're the one with the daughter, man. You should wanna rip this guy's face off.

ELLIS

I'm trying to be good. For Janie. For Megan and Michael, too.

SCOTTY

Imagine, though, this Vic guy took your daughter. I know Megan's being kind of a salty beast right now, but you wouldn't be out for blood?

ELLIS

Sure I would. Sure.

SCOTTY

OK, then. This girl has a father, too. You can't only care about shit except when shit happens to you.

ELLIS

But he's not the one, man. He not the guy.

Beat.

ELLIS (cont'd)

Let's let James go, Scotty. We can plead stupidity. Or we say the heat has us stressed out. Maybe we won't go to jail.

JAMES

I promise not to press charges. But you sure won't get anymore of my wife's donuts.

ELLIS chuckles. The mood lightens.

OREN

Come here, Scotty.

SCOTTY

What?

OREN

Come *here*.

What?

SCOTTY

OREN
I'm going to give you a hug. You need a hug.

SCOTTY
This isn't a gay thing, is it?

OREN
No, it's not a gay thing, you homophobic fuck.

SCOTTY
I don't want a hug.

OREN
You need a hug.

SCOTTY
If I did want one, I wouldn't get it from you.

OREN
Well, your mother is gone and Emily Ratajkowski is unavailable.

OREN hugs him. SCOTTY doesn't respond immediately.

OREN (cont'd)
It's going to be OK.

Beat. SCOTTY gives in.

SCOTTY
This isn't as bad as I thought it was going to be.

OREN
It never is.

OREN lets go.

ELLIS
I'm sorry, James, that this happened. Scotty's going through a rough time.

JAMES
Aren't we all? May I go now, please?

OREN sees something on the floor at JAMES'S feet.

OREN
What's that?

OREN bends down by the scattered mess that is JAMES'S wallet, and finds a small photo.

OREN (cont'd)

Who is this?

JAMES

It doesn't matter.

SCOTTY

Everything fucking matters.

Getting off the floor, SCOTTY goes to look.

ELLIS

(getting up, too)

Who is she?

SCOTTY

Mother fucker! It's this guy's real wife!

ELLIS

It is?

SCOTTY

Yes! I told you assholes that men keep photos of their wives in their wallets!

ELLIS

Let me see.

OREN holds up the photo to ELLIS.

ELLIS (cont'd)

Who is she, James?

JAMES

It's not my wife.

SCOTTY

The hell it isn't! It's the wife! I saw her on TV pleading with you to come home!

SCOTTY gets out his cell.

SCOTTY (cont'd)

Here. I'll show you.

SCOTTY searches.

JAMES

You can't trust the internet.

SCOTTY

You would say that, wouldn't you, you piece of shit?

(he finds something)

Aha! I told you guys! I told you! Didn't I tell you?!
This fucker is Vic Rawlings!

He holds the cell out for them to see.
SCOTTY, ELLIS, and OREN look, crowding
around the cell. The cell plays a
video:

THE WOMAN

(weeping)

Vic, I beg you to bring that girl home...

OREN

There is a significant resemblance.

ELLIS

You aren't kidding.

SCOTTY

Oh, Scotty's going through a rough time! Oh, Scotty has a
neuropsychiatric condition! Fuck all you stupid shit heads!

Behind them, JAMES rises and slowly
starts to sneak out. ELLIS catches
him.

ELLIS

Hold on there!

ELLIS grabs JAMES. OREN and SCOTTY
help out. JAMES fights them.

JAMES

Let go of me!

ELLIS

Back in the chair!

They force him back into the chair.

JAMES

Ow, my back!

ELLIS

Scotty, there is an extension cord on the floor next to the
file cabinet. Can you get it?

As OREN and ELLIS hold JAMES down,
SCOTTY gets the cord.

All the while, the video on SCOTTY'S cell of the wife pleading for Vic to come home has not stopped playing.

ELLIS (cont'd)

And can you turn that woman off, please?

SCOTTY hands ELLIS the cord. As SCOTTY shuts off his cell, ELLIS and OREN work together to tie JAMES to the chair.

JAMES

Ow! (beat) Ow! (beat) Ow!

SCOTTY

Shut up!

JAMES

You're wrenching my shoulders!

SCOTTY

Nobody cares!

JAMES

This is a huge mistake!

SCOTTY

Shut up, pedo!

JAMES

That photo is not my wife! My wife is here! In Sacramento!

SCOTTY

Shut up, pedo.

JAMES

Stop calling me that!

SCOTTY

It suits you, pedo!

JAMES

Does it? You said she was 15! Technically, I'd be an ephebophile, which is sexual interest in post-pubescent children, or even a hebephile, which is interest in pubescent children, if you want to stretch the definition, but *not a pedophile*, which is interest in pre-pubescent children, like under age 11, you uneducated neanderthal!

Beat. The men stop. Look at JAMES.

OREN

What...the...*fuck*?

JAMES

But I'm none of those things!

ELLIS

Scotty, there's some gorilla tape in the second drawer of the desk.

SCOTTY searches the desk, grabs it.

SCOTTY

Got it.

He hands it to ELLIS, who starts to wrap it around the cord, and around JAMES, and around the chair.

JAMES

Wait a minute!

SCOTTY

Fuck you!

JAMES

That's too tight!

SCOTTY

That's too bad!

JAMES

My shoulders!

He moans in pain.

ELLIS

He'll never get out of this.

ELLIS tosses the tape roll aside.

JAMES

I am not Vic Rawlings and that woman is not my wife!

ELLIS

Then who is she? Some random person who just happens to look exactly like the wife of Vic Rawlings?

JAMES

She's my sister!

ELLIS

Oh, for fuck's sake.

SCOTTY

You're grasping, *e-phe-bo!*

JAMES

Oren, look at the photo again.

OREN does.

JAMES (cont'd)

Look at the birthday cake she's holding.

SCOTTY

Don't listen to him, Oren!

OREN

What about the cake?

OREN looks.

SCOTTY

Oren!

JAMES

The cake says "Happy birthday, Linda."

OREN

So?

JAMES

The woman holding the cake is Linda. Linda is my sister. Linda is not the name of the wife of Vic Rawlings.

ELLIS and SCOTTY look, too.

JAMES (cont'd)

My wife Mary made the cake and Linda is showing it off!

SCOTTY

How many bullshit stories are you gonna tell?

JAMES

It's true!

OREN

But James, isn't it weird that you kinda, sorta, a little bit look like Vic Rawlings and there's a photo in your wallet of a woman who kinda, sorta, a little bit looks like Vic Rawlings's wife?

JAMES

You guys are just seeing what you want to see.

JAMES moans in pain, squirms, hurting.

JAMES (cont'd)

You have this tape too tight!

ELLIS

(calmly)

How do you know the name of Vic Rawling's wife?

Beat.

JAMES

What?

ELLIS

You said a moment ago that Linda is your sister and that Linda isn't the name of the wife of Vic Rawlings. How do you know Linda isn't her name? You said earlier you didn't even know who Vic Rawlings was until Scotty told you. So if you don't know who Vic Rawlings is, then how do you know his wife's name isn't Linda?

JAMES

(confused)

What are you talking about?

OREN

Wow, I am so confused.

SCOTTY

You lying little slime ball. You've just been found out for sure now.

JAMES

That was complete gibberish!

ELLIS'S cell rings.

ELLIS

Hold on!

He looks at it.

ELLIS (cont'd)

It's the front office.

SCOTTY

Ignore it.

ELLIS

I don't wanna arouse suspicion by being one hundred percent unreachable.

SCOTTY

Then pick it up and tell them to fuck off and call you back later.

The ringing stops.

ELLIS
I missed it.

SCOTTY
Perfect.

ELLIS'S cell beep-beeps a text.

SCOTTY (cont'd)
Who the fuck is this now?

ELLIS
(looking at his phone)
It's Janie, texting me. Again.

He doesn't read the text or respond.
He puts away the phone.

OREN
What do we do now, guys?

SCOTTY
Let's beat the shit out of him and then call the police.

ELLIS
We're not gonna beat the shit out of him.

SCOTTY
Why not? Haven't you guys ever wished you had the opportunity to rip one of these sick fuckers to pieces?

OREN
No.

SCOTTY
That's because you're a pussy, Oren. The rest of us have dreamed of this moment.

ELLIS
I would not say I have dreamed of this moment.

SCOTTY
I have, and we need to make a goddamn example outta this guy.

ELLIS
For who?

SCOTTY
For all the other bullies, and assholes, and wife-abusers, and killers, and demented racist fucks. We need to let these freaks know that we aren't gonna stand for no more vile shit. That there is a price to pay.

ELLIS

Scotty, we aren't on a crusade here.

SCOTTY

Yes, we are! You know the number one reason the Nazis were able to annihilate the Jews?

OREN

How many guesses do I get?

SCOTTY

Apathy is the number one reason. Too many Germans stood around playing diddle me a riddle while their neighbors were being dragged out of their homes.

OREN

Diddle me a riddle?

ELLIS

Please don't blame me for the fucking Holocaust because I'm not out every weekend looking to slaughter anyone I see with a swastika or a confederate flag or-

SCOTTY

But you're a black man, Ellis.

ELLIS

Meaning what?

SCOTTY

Meaning you of all people should be standing up for injustice everywhere.

ELLIS

Oh, really? Because my people have been fucked I should spend my life making everything unfucked?

SCOTTY

Something like that, yeah.

ELLIS

Ellis Montgomery, Superhero for the Fucked?

SCOTTY

Sounds good to me.

ELLIS

So I don't get to live my own life? I gotta walk around all day with the weight of the world strapped to my shoulders?

SCOTTY

Yes, you do. So should Oren, honestly.

OREN

Me?

ELLIS

Let me tell you something, Scotty. I'll decide when and where I'm gonna get jacked out of shape, OK, and whether it's some asshole saying no to me at a bank or it's me taking down the Klan or fuckin' Nazis, I'll decide, me, OK?

OREN

Why does it always come back to the Nazis?

SCOTTY

Because Nazis are the standard for bad. Can we agree Nazis are bad?

OREN

I guess.

SCOTTY

You guess?

ELLIS

Yes, Nazis are bad.

SCOTTY

And yet we allow them to walk among us.

ELLIS

What do you wanna do? Round them up and execute them? How would that make us any better than Nazis?

SCOTTY

What did we just agree on? Nazis are bad. They're bad. We need to get rid of the bad.

ELLIS

But who gets to choose who is bad and who isn't?

SCOTTY

Did we just not all fucking agree that Nazis are bad!?

ELLIS

Yeah, but-

SCOTTY

No! No buts! Nazis are bad! Pedophiles are bad! Liars, cheaters, scammers, bad, bad, bad!

ELLIS

OK, but are tailgaters bad? Are people who re-gift Christmas presents bad?

SCOTTY

Oh, come on, Ellis!

ELLIS

Where do we draw the line?

SCOTTY

I don't know! But if drawing a line gets you to man-up and start kicking some ass, then let's start drawing some lines right fucking now!

OREN

We are talking about scary shit, Scotty.

SCOTTY

The world *is* scary, Oren.

OREN

But that's not the world I wanna live in, man! I want nice stories. And people being good to each other. Isn't shit bad enough right now? Do we have to make it worse?

SCOTTY

You can't beat evil with a hug, Oren.

OREN

Have you ever tried? Maybe we can.

SCOTTY

Don't be stupid.

OREN

I'm serious. What if everyone in the whole world did like a simultaneous hug with someone else and we all discovered that, boom, there was no more evil? I think it's worth a shot. I could make a Facebook event page.

SCOTTY

You can't beat evil with a fucking hug!!

Beat.

OREN

Well, you sure can't beat evil with more evil.

SCOTTY

So we just wring our hands, and shrug our shoulders, and make memorials, and feel bad, and write to our congressmen? You can't write to your congressman if your congressman is the fucking problem! (beat) Every time some mental case shoots up a school, we pray. And we keep praying. When are we going to realize that GOD ISN'T LISTENING!?

Beat.

SCOTTY (cont'd)

I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired.

ELLIS

So what do you wanna do?

SCOTTY

I wanna tear this fucker apart! You guys give me 10 swings.
No, 15 swings, and then we call the police.

Blackout.

End Act One.

Act Two

Lights up. We pick up moments before we left for intermission.

ELLIS

So what do you wanna do?

SCOTTY

I wanna tear this fucker apart! You guys give me 10 swings. No, 15 swings, and then we call the police.

ELLIS

No.

SCOTTY

Eight swings.

ELLIS

No.

SCOTTY

Five. Five is as low as I'll go.

ELLIS

No.

SCOTTY

One swing! One lousy swing!

OREN

I think you proved earlier there is no way you're gonna tear him apart with one swing.

SCOTTY

Blow me, Oren! At least I'm man enough to take a swing!

OREN

Try living your whole life as O.J. and see how you turn out, asshole!

SCOTTY

Try finding your mother's body in a goddamn ravine and see how you turn out!

OREN

Dude, yeah, OK, I'm sorry, that's terrible, it is, but all this fucking rage towards some shitty child abuser you don't even know because of your mom?

ELLIS

And the internet.

OREN
I mean, did something happen to you when you were younger?

Beat. Everyone turns to SCOTTY.

SCOTTY
What do you mean?

OREN
You know.

SCOTTY
No, Oren, I don't.

OREN
This guy digs kids. I mean, when you were a kid, did...you know...

SCOTTY
What?

OREN
Did any shit happen to you?

SCOTTY
No. It didn't.

OREN
Because if it had, all this would make perfect sense.

SCOTTY
Nothing happened to me.

OREN
I'm just saying I would understand if it had.

SCOTTY
Nothing fucking happened to me!

OREN
OK.

SCOTTY
And fuck you for suggesting it.

OREN
Sorry.

Beat.

OREN (cont'd)
Wow, everything suddenly got really weird.

JAMES just starts screaming.

JAMES

Rape! RAPE! RAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAPE!

ELLIS puts a hand over his mouth.
SCOTTY grabs a Oakwoods t-shirt from
the top of the filing cabinet and gags
JAMES, tying it in the back. JAMES
fights them, screams into the shirt.
Quiets.

SCOTTY

Let's just roll this fucker in a goddamn tarp and put him in
my trunk and just *drive* him to the police station and hope he
suffocates on the way over.

ELLIS

Yeah, because in the light of day, no one will notice that at
all.

SCOTTY

Who gives a shit if anyone sees us?

ELLIS

I give a shit. We're gonna carry him in a fucking body bag
down the trail and right out onto La Mirada to our cars? How
many homeowners do you think will misread that scenario?

SCOTTY

Who gives a shit what they think!?

ELLIS

I DO!

OREN

And I'm not going anywhere near a police station, or a police
car, or a police *man...or woman-*

SCOTTY

Oh, for Christ's sake!

OREN

All I gotta do is say my name is Orenthal James and they're
gonna run a check on me-

SCOTTY

You're being paranoid.

OREN

How do you think Penelope is gonna respond to me having a
warrant?

SCOTTY

She don't know about the warrant?

OREN

Not exactly, no. I haven't told her.

ELLIS

Why not?

OREN

To be honest, I'm a little scared of her.

SCOTTY

She's like five-two, dude.

ELLIS

You gotta tell her these things, Oren.

OREN

Do you tell you wife everything?

ELLIS

I learned a long time ago to be up front immediately because she's gonna find out one way or another because women are a billion times smarter than us.

SCOTTY

Remember that Applebee's waitress I dated? The one who said she was a mind reader? Let me tell you, she fucking *was*.

ELLIS

Sometimes, Oren, women pretend like they don't know what's going on, to torture us, but, believe me, they know.

OREN

Yeah, well, I'm not telling Penelope about the warrant.

ELLIS

You can't hide this forever.

OREN

Don't gotta do it for forever, dog. Just until I'm dead.

SCOTTY

What did you do, Oren? It's time to come clean.

He turns away.

SCOTTY (cont'd)

Oren? Spill it.

Beat.

OREN

I missed a court date.

SCOTTY
For...?

OREN
A paternity case against me.

SCOTTY
Fuck.

Through the gag, JAMES laughs bitterly.
They all look at him.

OREN
(to James)
You're in no position to judge, man!

ELLIS
Is it the caterer girl?

OREN
No. It's just this chick I met playing laser tag.

SCOTTY
Can't keep it in your pants, can you, Oren?

OREN
It isn't like that. OK, it's a little like that. I had just met Penelope and it hadn't been 100 percent established we were exclusive. But the kid isn't mine. I swear.

ELLIS
How do you know?

OREN
Because I can't have kids.

ELLIS
How do you know that?

OREN
My testicles didn't descend until I was 25 and by then they had stopped producing sperm.

SCOTTY
Wow, we're learning a lot about you today.

OREN
Fuck off, Scotty.

ELLIS
So if you can't have kids, fight the paternity suit.

SCOTTY

Give over your DNA or whatever. Stop fucking rolling over all the time.

OREN

Sure, I do that and A, Penelope's gonna know I hooked up with another girl while we were dating, and B, she's gonna know this girl's accusing me of fathering her child, and C, she's gonna know I can't have kids, and she wants kids.

ELLIS

You haven't told her you can't have kids, either?

OREN

Nope.

Another bitter laugh from JAMES.

OREN (cont'd)

You aren't helping, man!

SCOTTY

Dude, you gotta start facing the music on shit, and I mean right fucking today.

OREN

I'm not really a music-facer.

SCOTTY

Call her and throw yourself at her mercy.

ELLIS

How are you managing to keep this warrant from catching up to you?

OREN

Penelope is the only one on the lease. I don't use credit cards no more or got any kind of I.D., which is why I don't have a wallet or drive. And I asked Betty to take me off the payroll and pay me in cash, which I don't put in the bank because I don't have a bank account. I'm a ghost right now.

ELLIS

This is crazy, man.

SCOTTY

But this whole thing, Oren, is a house of cards. It's gonna come tumbling down.

ELLIS

The moment you buy anything with Penelope, it's pretty much over.

SCOTTY

Or get on a plane. Or cross a border. Or any number of other things.

OREN

Hey, I've managed this for a year and a half, so...you know, we'll see how it goes.

ELLIS

I thought it was nine months.

OREN

Oh. Yeah. No. It's a year and a half.

ELLIS

Fucking-A, Oren.

OREN

OK, I'm lying, it's two years. (beat) Two and a half.

SCOTTY

You're pathological, dude.

ELLIS

Two and a half years you've had a warrant out on you?

OREN

Three.

ELLIS

TELL ME THE GODDAMN TRUTH!

OREN

It's three.

ELLIS

Is it?

OREN

Yes.

ELLIS

Don't bullshit me.

OREN

It's three, I swear.

SCOTTY

Penelope is committing her life to you, man. She deserves to know the truth.

ELLIS

And better you tell her before she finds out on her own, which she will. Remember, they are smart, we are dumb.

ELLIS'S cell rings again. He looks.

ELLIS (cont'd)
It's the front office again. Fuck, I need another Ativan.

SCOTTY
Forget the phone, Ellis.

ELLIS
I can't keep ignoring the front office, Scotty. I'm at work.

He answers the cell.

ELLIS (cont'd)
Yeah? (beat) Hey, Betty. Sorry. (beat) No, the office phone is acting up.

JAMES starts screaming "help" through the gag towards the phone. ELLIS covers the phone. SCOTTY gets right in JAMES'S face and points, threateningly. JAMES stops screaming. ELLIS uncovers the phone.

ELLIS (cont'd)
What's up, Betty? (beat) I know they want to jackhammer the sidewalk. But we aren't doing that. (beat) You put it on the work order? (beat) Betty, I'm not doing that. (beat) No. (beat) No. (beat) NO! (beat) I'm sorry I yelled at you. I need to go, Betty. (beat) I'm sorry, OK? Goodbye.

He hangs up.

ELLIS (cont'd)
OK, enough of this shit. We're calling the police, OK? I'm putting an end to the madness.

He searches his messy desk.

ELLIS (cont'd)
Oren, I'm sorry, I gotta do this, so if you need to take off, I'm not going to stop you. And we aren't beating James up, Scotty. Got it?

SCOTTY
His name is Vic Rawlings, not James.

ELLIS
Where the hell is my Ativan? Here.

He fishes out a pill bottle, opens it, pops a pill, and downs it with his thermos. He grabs his cell again.

ELLIS (cont'd)

(to James)

And no bullshit out of you when I'm on the phone!

ELLIS calls.

ELLIS

Hi, I'm calling because I wanted to report that I got Vic Rawlings tied up at my office. My name is Ellis Montgomery and I am the maintenance and landscaping supervisor at Oakwoods Homeowners Association in Citrus Heights. (beat) Vic Rawlings. (beat) He's that fugitive on the news. The one who took the girl. (beat) No, we don't got *her*, we got *him*. (beat) Yeah, I don't really watch the news, either. (beat) V-i-c R-a-w-l-i-n-g-s. (beat) Oakwoods Homeowners Association. It's at the corner of Auburn and Greenback. (beat) Ellis Montgomery. (beat) No, it's two l's. E-l-l-i-s. (beat) No, not f. S, as in Sam. E-l-l-i-s. (beat) Great.

ELLIS hangs up.

ELLIS (cont'd)

They're on their way.

OREN

Doesn't sound like it.

ELLIS

They are.

Beat. Everyone sits. Waits. SCOTTY grabs an apple fritter off the donut tray, takes a big bite, and then slowly drags a chair in front of JAMES. SCOTTY sits in it, facing JAMES, eating. He looks at JAMES, considers him a long time before speaking.

SCOTTY

This is a really good apple fritter. Funny thing is, though, I know this apple fritter. I've had this apple fritter. From Sweet Dozen on Greenback. Practically around the corner from here. Been there many times. (beat) See, you can't fool me, man. Even with donuts.

SCOTTY pushes the rest of his uneaten donut into JAMES'S face.

ELLIS

Jesus, Scotty.

SCOTTY

If you've hurt this girl in any way, I will make it my life's purpose to see you die in prison.

JAMES starts breathing heavily into the gag. He tries to talk, panicked.

ELLIS

What, James? What is it?

He is screaming "I can't breathe" into the gag, but they can't understand him.

OREN

What is he saying?

SCOTTY

Who cares?

JAMES

(muffled)

I can't breathe!

OREN

Sounds like he's saying "I love me."

SCOTTY

Why would he say that?

OREN

I'm not sure.

ELLIS

What are you saying James?

JAMES

(muffled)

I can't breathe!

OREN

See? "I love me." Although it's more like "I love *me*." Not "I love me." But "I love *me*." He's stressing the "me." Wonder what he means by that.

SCOTTY

That's not what he's saying!

JAMES

(muffled)

I CAN'T BREATHE!

JAMES is really fighting for air now.

OREN
 Shit. I think you're right, Scotty. It's not "I love me."
 Say it again, James.

JAMES
 (muffled)
 I can't breathe!

OREN
 I...what?

JAMES
 (muffled)
 Can't breathe!

OREN
 I can't...what?

JAMES
 (muffled)
 Breathe!

OREN
 I still don't know what he's saying.

ELLIS
 Goddammit!

ELLIS removes the gag.

JAMES
 Breathe! I can't breathe!

He gasps.

JAMES (cont'd)
 My nose is stopped up with blood!

OREN
 Oh.

ELLIS
 I don't like this, Scotty!
 (to James)
 You OK?

JAMES fights for air. After a bit, he calms.

JAMES
 You could have suffocated me.

SCOTTY
 Well, wouldn't that be a goddamn shame?

JAMES

You have to undo the tape. My shoulders are going to dislocate.

SCOTTY

I don't give a shit.

JAMES

Please, guys. I'm in terrible pain.

SCOTTY

Which shoulder is worse?

JAMES

My left.

SCOTTY

Your left?

SCOTTY grabs his left shoulder and squeezes with both hands. JAMES screams.

ELLIS

What are you doing?

SCOTTY lets go. JAMES whimpers.

ELLIS (cont'd)

Leave him alone, Scotty. And leave the gag off.

JAMES

I'm not Vic Rawlings, and as soon as the police get here, you'll understand that, and then I will go free.

OREN

Can I just say that it makes me nervous when he says shit like that?

SCOTTY

He's just fucking with us, man. Ignore him.

ELLIS

What're you gonna do, Oren? You gonna run, you gonna stay?

OREN

I don't know. Stop pressuring me.

JAMES

Please cut the tape, guys.

SCOTTY

Shut up.

JAMES
I can't feel my hands anymore.

SCOTTY
So what?

JAMES
Cut the tape!

SCOTTY
Shut...UP!

JAMES
Oren? Cut the tape. Please.

OREN
Not after you laughed at me twice, man. *Twice.*

JAMES
You not being honest with your girlfriend was surprising to me.

SCOTTY
It was?

OREN
Shit like that hurts, man.

JAMES
I'm sorry. I am. Please cut the tape.
(moaning)
My shoulders...

SCOTTY
Your head, your face, your nose, your back, your shoulders!
Shut the fuck up!

JAMES
I'm in pain!

SCOTTY
We've given you Tylenol!

JAMES
I need something stronger!

SCOTTY
No one cares!

JAMES
The cops show up and see me like this, you three will suffer the consequences. Getting fired is the least of your worries. You're going to jail.

SCOTTY

Do you ever shut up?!

JAMES

Assault. Holding someone against their will-

SCOTTY

Well, if that isn't the fucking pot calling the kettle black I don't know what is!

OREN

They'd arrest us? For tying him up?

JAMES

It's a crime what you're doing!

SCOTTY

Again, if that isn't the fucking pot calling the-

JAMES

Cut me loose, Oren. Come on. I'm not going to run. You *know* me.

OREN

I do?

SCOTTY

One more word, I swear to God.

JAMES

Please. Oren, if you cut the tape, I won't tell anyone you were here. And you can run like the wind.

SCOTTY grabs the quart of acetone on the floor.

SCOTTY

OK, then. It's acetone time.

ELLIS

Scotty...

SCOTTY unscrews the top and turns to JAMES.

JAMES

Hold on-

SCOTTY pours the acetone on JAMES'S head. JAMES screams.

ELLIS

Scotty!

SCOTTY
Are you going to shut up?!

JAMES screams. ELLIS pulls SCOTTY
away, grabbing the acetone.

JAMES
My eyes!

ELLIS
Are you out of your fucking mind?!

SCOTTY
Fuck this guy!

JAMES
It's burning my eyes!

ELLIS grabs the five-gallon water jug,
pulls it out of the dispenser, and
pours it briefly on JAMES'S head. It
looks like he's drowning.

ELLIS
Oren, grab the gag! Wipe his face!

OREN does. JAMES is still hysterical.

JAMES
It burns! It burns!

ELLIS pours more water. OREN wipes
JAMES'S face again.

SCOTTY
If I hear another peep out of you-

JAMES
I don't deserve this!

SCOTTY
Sounds like a peep to me. Peep, peep, peeeeeeeeeep!

SCOTTY grabs a five gallon bucket in
the mess and puts it on JAMES'S head.

ELLIS
Come on, Scotty, Jesus. Where are we? Fucking Iraq?

SCOTTY
Nobody touch the fucking bucket!

JAMES
Get this off of me!

JAMES squirms and the bucket comes off and rattles on the floor. SCOTTY goes for the gorilla tape, also on the floor, and putting the bucket back on...

JAMES (cont'd)

This is inhumane!

...JAMES coughs. ELLIS intervenes.

ELLIS

The fumes from the fucking acetone, Scotty! Take the bucket off!

ELLIS wrenches the bucket away.

SCOTTY

Put it back on!

ELLIS

What is wrong with you?! He'll choke to death!

SCOTTY

Put that bucket back on or I'll tell Janie you took a swing at your anger management doctor.

Beat.

ELLIS

How do you know about that?

SCOTTY

I know about shit, OK?

ELLIS

You meddling mother fucker.

OREN

Hold on. I thought Janie knew everything?

ELLIS

Not everything.

OREN

Are you kidding me? What about all that shit about being up front immediately and they are smart and we are dumb?

ELLIS

That's still true.

SCOTTY

What's it gonna be, Ellis?

ELLIS
You piece of shit.

SCOTTY
I'll take that as a yes.

SCOTTY uses the gorilla tape and tapes the bucket on to JAMES'S head. JAMES coughs and coughs.

ELLIS
Jesus Christ, Scotty.

OREN
He's gonna die in there.

SCOTTY
He'll stop coughing. Watch.

They do. JAMES'S coughing gets worse, then better, then gone.

SCOTTY (cont'd)
See?

OREN
Is he dead?

SCOTTY kicks JAMES.

JAMES
Hey!

SCOTTY
No.

SCOTTY grabs a pen off the desk and taps it hard against the side of the bucket. It makes a loud "ping" sound.

JAMES
Stop!

SCOTTY
Every time you speak, you get the pen against the bucket.

JAMES
I get the what?

SCOTTY taps the pen again.

JAMES (cont'd)
Ah! That's loud!

SCOTTY
Then you best be quiet then! Talk and I tap the bucket!

JAMES
This is crazy!

SCOTTY taps it repeatedly.

JAMES (cont'd)
OK! OK! OK!

ELLIS
You're torturing the guy, man!

SCOTTY
This isn't torture! What that girl and that girl's family is going through is torture! This is a fucking vacation! Isn't it, asshole?

JAMES doesn't respond.

SCOTTY (cont'd)
Isn't it, asshole?!

JAMES
I thought I wasn't allowed to speak?

SCOTTY
You're not!

SCOTTY taps the pen.

SCOTTY (cont'd)
Pen against the bucket! Pen against the bucket!

JAMES
Ahhhhhhhh!

ELLIS
Goddammit, Scotty!

OREN
This is seriously stressful. You guys wanna ride the dankasaurus?

ELLIS
What the hell does that mean?

SCOTTY
You mean pot? You wanna smoke pot?

OREN
Yeah.

ELLIS

Don't we got enough going on that we don't need to add drugs to the mix?

OREN

You took Ativan.

ELLIS

Ativan is not marijuana!

OREN

I think we all seriously gotta take the edge off.

SCOTTY

You're acting like you got the pot on you.

OREN

Well, uh...

ELLIS

Fuck, Oren. That's a little risky for a guy with a warrant, isn't it?

OREN

It isn't on me. I'm not *that* dumb.

SCOTTY

If it isn't on you, where is it?

OREN

Well, uh...

ELLIS

Is it in here? In my office?

OREN

How do I answer that without you getting pissed?

ELLIS

(booming)

YOU DON'T!

OREN

Then I choose not to answer.

ELLIS

You hide pot in my office, Oren?

(looking around)

Where is it?

OREN

You wanna get baked, too, Ellis?

ELLIS

No, I don't wanna get baked! Why don't you keep your shit in the tool shed? Or at home?

OREN

I do keep it in the tool shed and at home. And here. And at my mom's place. And at-

SCOTTY

Is there any place you don't keep pot?

OREN

I don't keep it up your ass.

ELLIS

Do you think so little of me, Oren?

OREN

What? No, I think highly of you.

ELLIS

Hiding pot in here says otherwise.

OREN

It does? Feels like it says "we're pals" to me.

ELLIS

Have you been smoking in my office?

OREN

A little.

ELLIS

What is wrong with you? Why are you using my office?

OREN

Because that's where the pot is.

ELLIS

How did you get a key?

OREN

I've always had a key.

ELLIS

Where is it? Where's the pot?

SCOTTY

How is it you haven't seen it or smelled it, Ellis?

ELLIS

Do you see it? Do you smell it?

SCOTTY

Chronic sinus infections have destroyed my sense of smell.

ELLIS

Where's the fucking pot, Oren?

OREN

It's right there. On the filing cabinet.

ELLIS goes to the cabinet. The top of the cabinet is a mess.

ELLIS

Where? Where is it?

OREN

It's in the jug of Goo Gone Wipes.

ELLIS

It's right out in the open!

OREN

The best place to hide anything is in plain sight. I learned that in Catholic school.

ELLIS grabs the container of wipes. Opens it. Looks inside. Closes it.

ELLIS

Why would you put it in the Goo Gone?

OREN

You're a pig. I knew you'd never touch a jug of wipes.

ELLIS tosses it in the trash.

OREN (cont'd)

Hey!

OREN goes for the trash. Grabs the Goo Gone. ELLIS grabs it, too. They struggle.

ELLIS

Leave it!

OREN

It's good weed!

ELLIS

I don't care!

OREN

At least give me the pipe back!

No!

ELLIS

ELLIS shoves OREN back. OREN starts breathing heavy.

Oren?

ELLIS (cont'd)

OREN starts panicking, on the verge of tears. ELLIS dumps the Goo Gone back in the trash.

Oren?

ELLIS (cont'd)

OREN doesn't respond.

JAMES
(the bucket still on his head)

What is it? What's going on? Why is everyone so quiet?

SCOTTY taps the bucket with the pen.

SCOTTY

None of your goddamn business, fuckwad!

JAMES

Hey!!

ELLIS

Oren, what's wrong?

SCOTTY

You shoved him, man. You know he's a pussy. I mean, pacifist.

ELLIS

I'm sorry I shoved you, Oren.

OREN

It's OK.

ELLIS

What is it? What's wrong?

SCOTTY

Is Penelope blue-balling you again?

ELLIS

Scotty.

OREN

I just realized...Penelope doesn't know about the marijuana, either.

ELLIS

She doesn't?

OREN

No. I didn't tell her because I was afraid she'd tell her parents and they're from Kentucky and they already think I'm part of some Mexican cartel because I happen to know a little about cartels and I'm Mexican and given that the only fucking thing they seem to know about Mexico is the cartels, I thought if they found out I smoke pot then they'd probably think I'm some kind of cartel kingpin.

SCOTTY

Wow, man, it's like your whole life is a lie.

ELLIS

Scotty!

OREN

You're right. My whole life is a lie.

ELLIS

She knows *some* things, right?

OREN

IT'S ALL ONE BIG LIE!

ELLIS

She knows your birthday, right?

OREN

No, I told her it was February 28th, when actually I was born during a leap year, so it's the 29th.

SCOTTY

You're out of control, dude.

ELLIS

That one doesn't count!

OREN

Scotty is right! I gotta tell Penelope the truth! About everything!

He pulls out his cell. And peels it out of the sock.

SCOTTY

Jesus, the fucking sock.

ELLIS

Wait, hold on, Oren. You gotta do this now?

OREN

Earlier, Scotty said, "Dude, you gotta start facing the music on shit, and I mean right fucking today."

SCOTTY

I didn't mean right this second when we are knee-deep in other shit.

OREN

You said, "Call her and throw yourself at her mercy."

SCOTTY

I know what I said. You don't gotta repeat it back to me.

OREN

I'm calling her.

OREN punches some buttons, puts the phone to his face.

OREN (cont'd)

(he breathes heavy again,
panicked)

Hey, baby. (beat) I just wanted to talk. I miss you.
(beat) No, I'm fine, really. (beat) OK, I'm not fine. I
gotta tell you some things. I gotta be completely honest
with you because I love you.

SCOTTY

This is gonna be absolutely hideous.

OREN

Here goes. I got a warrant out for my arrest because I failed to appear in court for a paternity case with a girl I slept with once like three days after I met you but the case is bogus because there's no way I'm the father because my testicles didn't descend until I was 25 and by the time they did drop they were no good.

SCOTTY

Jesus H. son of God.

OREN

And I'm also a pot head. And my birthday is actually February 29th. And I lied, I have done anal before.

SCOTTY

I'll never unhear that.

OREN listens for a long time, and the longer he listens, the more he cries tears of joy.

OREN

Really? (beat) Really? (beat) You still wanna marry me?
(beat) You do? (beat) Oh, my God, I love you so much.

He's blubbering all over the place now.

SCOTTY

This is worse than I thought.

ELLIS

You pushed him into it, Scotty. Shut the fuck up.

OREN

No, I'm at work. Right now, I'm in Ellis's office with Ellis and Scotty and a guy we think is a pervert on the run. We've got him tied up. Scotty has hit him once. Sort of. The guy's in agony because he says we tied him up too tight.
(beat) No. (beat) OK. (beat) OK. Oh, mi amor, I love you so much.

He hangs up.

SCOTTY

That was really sweet, Oren.

OREN

I need a hug.

SCOTTY

I already did my duty.

OREN looks at ELLIS.

ELLIS

Fuckin-A. Come on.

They hug. After a moment:

OREN

Isn't this nice?

ELLIS

Yeah. Great.

OREN

(sniffing Ellis)

Do you use AXE Body Wash?

ELLIS comes out of the hug.

ELLIS

OK, OK. Hug over.

OREN

Penelope says I gotta untie James.

JAMES

(still with the bucket over his
head)

Thank God.

SCOTTY

What? Why?

OREN

She says since we weren't in any danger ourselves, that this isn't a self-defense situation and we can be charged with aggravated assault.

JAMES

I told you.

SCOTTY taps the bucket several times.

SCOTTY

Shut up in there!

JAMES

Ahhhhh!

Turning back to OREN:

SCOTTY

Look, I know Penelope works for an attorney, but that's bullshit.

OREN

She says if I don't untie him, she isn't gonna marry me.

ELLIS

The ultimatums are the best, am I right?

SCOTTY

And how did she feel about the warrant, and the pot, and your testicles, and raw dogging another girl?

OREN

She was fine with it. Mostly. She says she needs time to work through it. Ellis, you got any scissors or a utility knife in here or anything?

ELLIS

A utility knife is in that tool belt there on the wall.

As OREN grabs the knife...

SCOTTY
You're going along with this?

ELLIS
I told you. I wanna be good.

Knife in hand, OREN turns to JAMES.
SCOTTY blocks his path.

SCOTTY
No way in hell are you letting him free.

OREN
Step aside, Scotty.

SCOTTY
Fuck you.

OREN suddenly kicks and punches the air
near SCOTTY, MMA style. It's not
terribly skilled, but it is
enthusiastic.

OREN
Back off, Scotty!

SCOTTY backs away.

SCOTTY
What is this shit?

OREN
I train two times a week at Warrior MMA off Arden.

ELLIS
Since when?

OREN
Since three weeks ago when they hired this new instructor who
is absolutely smoking. Now everyone take two steps back!

SCOTTY
Oren, don't do this. Don't set him free.

OREN
Look at him. Look what we've done. Are we one of those
assholes that you're talking about?

SCOTTY
Who speaks for my mom, Oren? Huh? Who speaks for her?

ELLIS

You gotta figure out how to forgive the people at the care facility, Scotty. The same way Penelope forgave Oren, and Janie forgave me.

SCOTTY

Forgave you? All you did was toss a TV through a window, Ellis.

ELLIS

It wasn't just the TV.

SCOTTY

It wasn't?

ELLIS

After I threw the TV, Megan came downstairs to see what'd happened. She looked at the mess, and then looked at me and said "you're pathetic." Her face was all made-up, you know, like she was trying to look 35, and between the game, and her insult, and all her makeup, I just snapped. And I slapped her. *Hard.*

OREN

Jesus.

ELLIS

Michael and I have always been kinda hot and cold. But she and I clicked from the beginning. And then around 13 she just suddenly went AWOL on me. And now? I feel like I've lost her forever.

OREN

Fuck, there is a lot of shit coming to light today.

SCOTTY

That sucks, Ellis, it does, but forgiveness isn't gonna change what's already happened.

OREN

But it might change what happens next.

SCOTTY

Who cares, Oren? Forgiveness won't bring back my mother.

OREN

But maybe it would make you a little less angry.

SCOTTY

Maybe I like being angry, Oren.

OREN

Do you?

Beat.

SCOTTY

So is forgiveness is the answer to everything? Forgive Ted Bundy? And Jim Jones? And all the fuckheads behind 9-11? "Don't worry about it, Sandy Hook shooter, whatever the fuck your name was, those little children up in heaven forgive you! So do their parents! After all, we all make mistakes!"

OREN

I'm not saying that.

SCOTTY

Well, then what the fuck are you saying?

OREN

I'm saying you being the psycho angry guy is not making the world a better place.

After a moment, OREN cuts the bucket off JAMES'S head. JAMES breathes heavily, but freely.

JAMES

Ahhhhhh! Thank you.

OREN

You're welcome.

JAMES

It was really hot in there.

OREN starts cutting JAMES loose from the chair. He works in silence a moment.

JAMES (cont'd)

Thank you, Oren.

ELLIS

Please don't do nothing stupid, Vic.

JAMES

Wouldn't dream of it.

JAMES is now completely free. He rubs his shoulders, his hands, his wrists. Wipes the sweat off his face. OREN puts the knife on the desk. JAMES notices. Beat.

ELLIS

Where are the goddamn police? I go jogging, they bring out the helicopters, but a pedophile kidnaps a young girl, hey, who has the time?

OREN

Maybe Scottie should have called the police instead of you, Ellis.

ELLIS

Why?

OREN

Because you're black, dog. Cops ain't gonna help you with shit.

SCOTTIE

He didn't Facetime them, Oren. How could they know Ellis was black?

OREN

Oh, like they can't tell?

ELLIS

You're saying I sound black?

OREN

Don't you? Hello?

SCOTTIE

Fuckin' A, Oren.

OREN

And I'm saying this, you know, as a minority myself.

SCOTTIE

The more you talk, the dumber you sound.

OREN

I'm on his side! Cops are racist fucks! Although all the ones I know are kinda cool. Not that I know that many because, you know, I've been avoiding the police a lot lately because of the situation with the warrant-

ELLIS

SHUT UP, OREN!

Beat. Silence. They all look at each other and don't say anything. ELLIS'S phone beep-beeps a text. He looks, ignores it. They wait. It's all very quiet. JAMES stretches, eyeing the knife. Stillness again. They all look at each other.

ELLIS'S phone beep-beeps another text.
He doesn't look at it.

SCOTTY

Is that my sister?

ELLIS

Yes.

SCOTTY

Are you gonna respond?

ELLIS

No.

They wait. ELLIS'S phone beep-beeps
another text.

SCOTTY

She obviously wants to talk to you.

ELLIS

Ignore it.

They wait. ELLIS'S phone beep-beeps
again.

SCOTTY

My God, man! Call my sister!

ELLIS

What happened to no phone calls?

SCOTTY

It's my sister!

ELLIS snatches the phone. Punches some
buttons. Puts the phone to his face.

ELLIS

Yes, Janie? I already said the sleepover is fine. You don't
need to text me every single detail. (beat) Well, if the
girl is in her twenties, then it isn't a sleepover, is it?
(beat) A hotel might be kind of fun for Megan. Probably got
a pool. She can treat it like a vacation. (beat) I'm not
being dismissive. (beat) Well, it's summertime, if Megan
wants to meet up with this girl early at the mall to get her
nails done, fine. She's growing up. These aren't problems.
(beat) What about the father? (beat) All right, then go
with Megan to the hotel if you're feeling funny about the
guy. (beat) Wait, is he this girl's father or her husband?
(beat) Well, exactly how old is-

ELLIS stops. He turns slowly to look at JAMES.

ELLIS (cont'd)
 What's the girl's name again? (beat) And she and her father live in a hotel? (beat) I'll call you later.

ELLIS hangs up. He looks at JAMES. Cold, demented, suppressed rage.

ELLIS (cont'd)
 A sleepover?

JAMES says nothing.

ELLIS (cont'd)
 Where did you and Mary meet her?

Beat.

JAMES
 At the donut shop.

ELLIS
 Did you touch my daughter?

Beat.

JAMES
 (near tears)
 She loves me. I know it. Both girls do. They're like daughters to me. Isn't that nice?

JAMES turns and snatches the utility knife OREN had left on the desk. SCOTTY lunges for him. JAMES comes out of the chair and twists SCOTTY arm around, putting the knife to SCOTTY'S neck.

JAMES (cont'd)
 Nobody move!

He backs himself and SCOTTY into the door. OREN steps forward, in MMA fighting position.

OREN
 Duck, Scotty!

OREN spins, flies through the air, screaming, attempting to kick JAMES.

He misses by a mile and lands with a thud on the floor. He lets out a painful "awwwwwwww!"

JAMES

I said, nobody move!

OREN

No problem.

OREN gets up. ELLIS ignores JAMES'S request, goes straight to his tool belt and removes a hammer. ELLIS approaches them wordlessly and swings the hammer. He hits JAMES in the side of the head. SCOTTY screams, twisting away. JAMES staggers halfway across the room, falls, dropping the knife. OREN pounces on the knife.

SCOTTY

Are you crazy! You could've hit me! And he could've slit my throat!

Groggy, JAMES, on his knees, tries to stand, using the desk. He turns to ELLIS.

JAMES

You all talk about forgiveness. Can't you forgive me?

ELLIS hits him again across the head. JAMES falls face first behind the desk, half-hidden.

OREN

Ellis, don't.

ELLIS doesn't listen, pouncing on JAMES, hitting him over and over. We can't see the blows behind the desk, only feet and arms, and the hammer coming up high and going down. Blood flies.

SCOTTY

Ellis, stop!

He doesn't stop. Until he is done. And JAMES is dead. ELLIS rises up, in bloody clothes. He backs away, and puts the bloody hammer back into his tool belt. Long pause. OREN and SCOTTY look on in shock and horror.

Oh, my God. SCOTTY (cont'd)

Jesus. OREN

Oh, my God. SCOTTY

Jesus. OREN

Oh, my God. SCOTTY

Beat.

OREN
(frightened)
I don't think the Ativan is working, dude. You just killed somebody with a hammer, dog. That's slasher movie shit.

ELLIS
(sinister)
He deserved it.

SCOTTY
I just wanted to beat him up, not cave in his head.

ELLIS
You told me that if he went after my daughter, I "should be out for blood."

SCOTTY
Why do you guys like to fucking quote me?

ELLIS
(intimidating)
Did you not say that?

SCOTTY is afraid to answer.

SCOTTY
You're scaring me a little right now, Ellis.

ELLIS
Am I? Am I scaring you, too, Oren?

OREN
I would say so, definitely, yes.

Beat.

OREN (cont'd)

You're not gonna murder us, too, are you, Ellis?

ELLIS laughs low.

ELLIS

Of course not.

SCOTTY

What's with the psychotic fucking laugh, man? You could've just said a simple, straight forward "of course not." Instead, you gotta add that (he imitates the laugh) shit?

ELLIS

Calm down, Scotty. I'm not gonna murder you. I've already put away the hammer.

ELLIS goes to a mini-fridge and grabs a beer. He snaps it open and chugs. He puts the cold beer to his face to cool down.

SCOTTY

(quietly)

I told you guys he was Vic Rawlings.

OREN

I told you guys bad shit was gonna go down.

Beat.

OREN (cont'd)

My wedding is fucked.

Beat.

OREN (cont'd)

Are we just gonna leave him over there like that?

They turn to ELLIS.

ELLIS

Yes.

Beat. OREN looks at SCOTTY.

SCOTTY

Ellis?

ELLIS

Yeah?

SCOTTY

I don't want to upset you or anything, but we, mostly you, are in kind of a quandary.

ELLIS

Are we?

OREN

Yeah, we can't just leave him over there like that.

ELLIS

Why not, Oren?

ELLIS stares at him. OREN freezes up.

OREN

I had a reason, but my mind just went blank.

SCOTTY

We can't leave him over there because if we do, we will all go to prison, and you, Ellis, you will fry.

ELLIS

It was self-defense.

OREN

Uh...it wasn't self-defense.

ELLIS

He had my utility knife. I was protecting Scotty.

OREN

You were protecting him at first. *At first.*

SCOTTY

Then, you went a tad bonkers.

ELLIS

You wanna hide the body and say what when the police arrive? That he got away?

OREN

I don't know!

ELLIS

Where would we hide him? In the desk? At the bottom of the retreat pool? In the Goo Gone?

OREN

I don't know!

ELLIS

There's no time.

OREN

So we're doing nothing?!

ELLIS

Well, at least there's one less creep in the world, right, Scotty?

ELLIS turns to SCOTTY, coldly.

ELLIS (cont'd)

Right, Scotty?

SCOTTY

(scared)

Right, right, Jesus Christ right!

OREN

But this is a shitty trade-off, isn't it? One dead creep and three guys go to prison? Shouldn't it be one dead creep and zero guys go to prison?

SCOTTY

How are you gonna explain this to Janie, Ellis? And Michael? And Megan?

ELLIS

I'll figure something out. But I gotta tell them. I gotta tell Janie. She'll find out one way or another. She always does.

OREN

Not always!

SCOTTY

The dude was moving in on your daughter. He's not a man. He's one of the dicks. You should not go to prison for the rest of your life for getting rid of one of the dicks.

ELLIS finishes his beer, crushing the can, and tossing it into a pile of junk.

SCOTTY (cont'd)

Come on, Ellis. We get rid of the body and the good guys win. We go to jail and we lose.

OREN

Actually, I think it would be more of a tie. The dude is dead after all.

SCOTTY glares at OREN.

OREN (cont'd)

I'm not trying to fuck up your scorekeeping thing, I'm just saying-

SCOTTY

Shut the fuck up, Oren.

SCOTTY looks at ELLIS.

SCOTTY (cont'd)

Think of the kids, Ellis. Think of Janie.

ELLIS

Right. The kids. Janie. Get me another beer, would you, Oren?

OREN hurries to the fridge, gets a beer, and opening it, gives it to ELLIS.

ELLIS (cont'd)

Thank you.

ELLIS drinks, one, two, three, four, five swallows. Beat. They wait for him to speak.

ELLIS

I wanted to be good.

SCOTTY

You tried. You did.

ELLIS

I did try, didn't I?

SCOTTY

Yeah.

ELLIS

Didn't I try, Oren?

OREN

Yes, yes you fucking tried! (beat) Sorry I screamed, don't murder me.

ELLIS takes a big swallow of beer.

ELLIS

How would we get rid of the body?

SCOTTY

You won't regret this, Ellis.

OREN

Let's saw James up and...and put him in the the mini-fridge.

SCOTTY

What?

OREN

Or we get, like, six or seven five-gallon buckets and, maybe, put the head and neck in one, and then-

SCOTTY

Are you really that stupid?

OREN

It's just temporary! After the cops leave we take him someplace else!

SCOTTY

Those are terrible ideas!

OREN

Do you know magic?

SCOTTY

What does that mean?

OREN

Unless you can make him disappear, he's gotta go somewhere! You wanna put him in the coffee maker?

SCOTTY

We gotta lose the hammer.

OREN

The hammer. Of course.

OREN grabs the hammer, holding like something foul and disgusting, and dumps it into the filing cabinet.

OREN (cont'd)

The tool belt has blood on it, too.

OREN grabs it and hands it to SCOTTY, who stuffs it into the filing cabinet.

SCOTTY

The pot! We gotta get rid of the pot!

SCOTTY digs the Goo Gone from the trash and dumps it into the file cabinet.

OREN

What about the body?!

SCOTTY

We can't see it up!

OREN

Why not? I'm good with hand saws.

SCOTTY

Let's Google it.

(typing into his phone)

"How to get rid of a body?"

ELLIS

The fucking internet...

SCOTTY

(reading)

"Feed it to pigs. Dissolve it in acid. Wood chipper--"

OREN

Those are all impossible! Why don't we just burn this place to the ground?

SCOTTY

Goddamn, holy shit, that's a great idea! We got enough combustibles in here to blow this place sky-fucking-high!

ELLIS

And how do we explain the fire?

SCOTTY

Who gives a shit?! Dude had a flame thrower, he tossed a Molotov cocktail at us, it doesn't matter!

OREN

Maybe the cops won't actually show up. I mean, it's been like 30 fucking minutes since Ellis called.

Just then, sirens, faint, distant.

OREN (cont'd)

Ah, shit.

SCOTTY

Fuck it! Oren, grab his feet! Let's put him in the file cabinet!

OREN

What?

SCOTTY

DO IT!

OREN and SCOTTY pull out the cabinet's drawers and toss them down, scattering lots of files.

OREN

Can we at least cover his head?! I can't look at it!

SCOTTY grabs a large sack and covers JAMES'S head.

SCOTTY

Happy?

OREN and SCOTTY drag the body to the cabinet, and then shove the body inside of it. It's awkward and JAMES doesn't fit. His legs stick out.

SCOTTY (cont'd)

Turn him towards the wall!

They do, but his legs keep getting caught. They try to push them in, but they won't go in.

SCOTTY (cont'd)

Fuck!

OREN

What do we do?!

SCOTTY

Let's put some tarps over it!

SCOTTY and OREN grab a couple of tarps. They cover the cabinet, and JAMES. It looks ridiculous. OREN and SCOTTY look at each other's clothes, now covered in blood.

OREN

Our clothes!

SCOTTY

Fuck!

They take off their shirts and pants. OREN has white briefs with big red hearts.

OREN

Let's wipe up the blood!

With their clothes, they wipe up the blood. Then they shove the bloody clothes under the tarp. The sirens rise. OREN and SCOTTY stand back and look at their work.

OREN (cont'd)

How'd does it look?

ELLIS

Suspicious.

SCOTTY

We're fucked.

OREN and SCOTTY look at each other, now in their underwear.

SCOTTY (cont'd)

Look at us!

OREN

Oh, my God, I'm gonna be on the news like this.

They look at ELLIS.

OREN (cont'd)

Ellis, you've got blood on your shirt.

SCOTTY

You have to take it off.

OREN

Please.

ELLIS takes off his shirt.

SCOTTY

And your pants.

ELLIS takes off his pants.

OREN

I don't want to tell you to hurry off with the pants because that's very weird, but could you speed it up a little?

ELLIS looks up at OREN.

OREN (cont'd)

I mean, take all the time you need.

He finishes and they toss his clothes under the tarp. They look around.

SCOTTY

What about all his wallet crap on the floor?

OREN

Oh, shit!

They all scour the floor getting all the contents, tossing it all into the hole.

SCOTTY

Is that everything?

They look, quickly.

OREN

What do you think?

SCOTTY

We suck at this. (beat) Nice underwear, Oren.

OREN

It was a gift from Penelope.

Beat.

OREN (cont'd)

I was just thinking, why would James lie about his wife making donuts?

SCOTTY

Because that's what liars do. Big or small. They can't help it.

OREN

But he had nothing to gain by it. Not really. I mean, why bring the donuts at all?

ELLIS

Sometimes I think these guys, subconsciously, want to be caught.

SCOTTY

Or they just start to feel invincible. So they end up doing stupid shit.

The sirens arrive nearby.

ELLIS

They're here.

OREN

I love you guys. And I know saying that in my underwear is weird. But I mean it.

SCOTTY

I'm sorry for being such a dick to you, Oren. I don't wanna be one of the dicks. And I'm sorry Ellis for being such a shitty brother-in-law.

OREN

I'm sorry for hiding and smoking pot in your office, Ellis. And for lying so much.

ELLIS

I'm sorry I killed James. Although, you know, it was also strangely invigorating.

SCOTTY

Yeah, that's unsettling.

Beat.

OREN

I was just thinking, how are we gonna explain why we don't have any clothes on?

The door knob rattles. Then there is a hard knock at the door. The three men look at each other.

ELLIS

Who's gonna open the door?

They look at each other.

ELLIS (cont'd)

I guess it's me.

ELLIS goes to get it. Opens the door. In come the CARLSONS.

MRS. CARLSON

Time's up, Ellis! We want the jackhammer!

SCOTTY

Now is really a bad time, Mrs. Carlson!

Once inside, MR. and MRS. CARLSON see the men, all in their underwear.

MRS. CARLSON

Oh, dear.

OREN

This isn't what it looks like.

MR. CARLSON

I remember spending many nights in the jungle in my skivvies.

MRS. CARLSON

What's going on in here?

SCOTTY

We heard the sirens. We thought you were the police.

MR. CARLSON

You thought we were what?

MRS. CARLSON

Police!

MR. CARLSON

I never wear fleece in the summer. Who would?

MRS. CARLSON

This is how you greet law enforcement?

OREN

Not usually.

MRS. CARLSON

The sirens are for Sean O'Malley.

MR. CARLSON

The old champ finally kicked the bucket! I am now the official number one ranked middleweight fighter of the 239th regiment!

MRS. CARLSON

Welterweight.

MR. CARLSON

What?

MRS. CARLSON

And you were in the 254th.

OREN

What happened to Sean O'Malley?

MRS. CARLSON

He dropped like a bag of frozen fish sticks in his kitchen. Heart attack. Why are you men in your underwear?

SCOTTY

Because...because it's hot in here. What's with the shopping cart?

MRS. CARLSON

We want the jackhammer!

ELLIS
 (sinister)
 You can't have it.

OREN
 (getting scared)
 Oh, shit, here comes Bad Ellis.

SCOTTY
 I'm telling you people, this is a *really* bad time.

MRS. CARLSON
 I said within the hour on the sidewalk. It's been an hour and, Ellis, you've done nothing! The jackhammer is ours!

She goes towards the jackhammer.

SCOTTY
 You can't use our tools, Mrs. Carlson!

MRS. CARLSON
 I am the board president and my authority is total! Honey, grab the other handle bar.

He does and they try to lift it into the cart.

SCOTTY
 Are you two crazy? That thing weighs 90 pounds!

MRS. CARLSON
 We can get it! Lift, sugar plum!

SCOTTY
 Stop!

SCOTTY tries to stop them.

MRS. CARLSON
 Do not put your hands on me!

SCOTTY
 Oren, can you help me with these maniacs?!

OREN grabs MRS. CARLSON.

MR. CARLSON
 Do not put your hands on my wife!

OREN
 Let go of the jackhammer!

MRS. CARLSON
 No! We want it!

You can't have it!

SCOTTY

They fight.

ELLIS

STOP FIGHTING!!

Everyone stops. ELLIS looks at them, rising.

ELLIS (cont'd)

Didn't you tell me, Scotty, that the Carlsons bilked a kid's charity for 40 years?

MRS. CARLSON

Bilked?

ELLIS

Bilked.

OREN

What does bilked mean?

MR. CARLSON

I haven't milked a cow since I was a kid in Iowa.

SCOTTY

That's right, Ellis. 40 years these fuckers stole money.

ELLIS

40 years?

ELLIS moves in the direction of a tool bag on the wall.

OREN

Bad Ellis alert!

MRS. CARLSON

We've done nothing of the kind!

OREN

It wasn't the Carlsons who stole from that charity. It was the Buchanans. Off Rancho Mirage.

ELLIS stops.

ELLIS

The Buchanans?

MRS. CARLSON

Yes! They're horrible people!

MR. CARLSON

Horrible. Loud. And her bundt cake is dry and tasteless.

SCOTTY

Oh.

OREN

Ellis, step away from the tool bag!

SCOTTY

Looks like I fucked that up.

OREN

Don't do it, Ellis!

MRS. CARLSON

What's going on?

OREN

He's going for another hammer!

ELLIS

I'm just getting my coffee, Oren. Jesus.

ELLIS grabs his thermos and drinks.

OREN

Not caffeine! Not *caffeine*!

MEGAN, 15, enters in a backpack.

ELLIS

Megan?

MEGAN

Dad, why are you...? Why are they...? Jesus, Dad, are you gay? Like, *oh, my God*.

ELLIS

What?

SCOTTY

We had a spill.

OREN

A big, messy spill. Lots of fluids involved.

SCOTTY

Lots of combustible, non-organic fluids.

MEGAN

That sounds like a lie.

ELLIS
It's not...it's...what are you doing here?

MEGAN
We're looking for Mr. Smith.

ELLIS
We?

MEGAN
We, me, it doesn't matter.

ELLIS
Are you...are you OK?

MEGAN
Where is Mr. Smith?

ELLIS
Are you hurt? Are you-

MEGAN
(booming, like his father)
STOP ASKING QUESTIONS!

Beat.

OREN
You know, your dad saved you a donut, would you like a donut?
It's right here.

OREN starts to go for it on the desk.

SCOTTY
Oren, forget the donut.

OREN
(stopping)
OK. I'm sorry. I'm nervous.

In walks MARY, 15.

MARY
Is he here?

They all turn to MARY.

MEGAN
I don't think so.

ELLIS
Hi. Can I help you?

MARY takes in the men in their underwear.

SCOTTY

There was a spill.

MARY

I'm looking for James.

ELLIS

And you are?

MARY

I'm Mary.

OREN

Mary?

MARY

Yeah.

SCOTTY

His wife?

MARY

Do you know where James is?

One by one they all turn to ELLIS for an answer.

ELLIS

Oren? He's on your crew. Do you know where he is?

They all turn to OREN.

OREN

He's...he's not far.

MARY

He was going to come home at 9. He said he was going to clean one of the pools and then come home.

There is a faint hint of something hard and emotional bubbling beneath her.

SCOTTY

Are you all right, Mary?

MARY

No.

ELLIS

Why would he work an hour and a half and go home?

MARY

We're going away for the weekend.

OREN

Oh, yeah, James did ask for the time off today. I blanked on that.

SCOTTY

Jesus, Oren.

MEGAN

You don't have to tell them anything, Mary.

ELLIS

What happened to the sleepover?

MEGAN

I am sleeping over. Sort of.

ELLIS

Where are you going?

SCOTTY

I thought you were getting your nails done.

MARY

That's at 10. You guys ask a lot of questions.

ELLIS

I'm Megan's father.

MARY

Yeah, I figured.

OREN

We know who you are.

SCOTTY

We know who he is. Was. Is.

SCOTTY

You're safe now, Mary.

ELLIS

You're both safe.

MARY

Safe?

SCOTTY

From him. (beat) You're 15-years old. We have to look out for you.

MARY
We? Who is we? You?

SCOTTY
The whole world.

She looks each one of them. In their underwear.

MARY
Well. Good thing I have men like you looking out for me.

They look at themselves, embarrassed.

MR. CARLSON
My catheter is loose.

MRS. CARLSON
Not now, Robert.

MR. CARLSON
But I have to pee.

MRS. CARLSON
Just hold it, sweetie!

ELLIS
I'm sure people at home will be happy to see you, Mary.

SCOTTY
See that you're safe.

MARY
I'm never going back home.

OREN
You're not?

ELLIS
Megan, what is going on?

MEGAN
Nothing.

ELLIS
Why do you have a backpack?

MEGAN
I'm going away with them for the weekend. Hello, Dad?

ELLIS
You can't go with them, Megan.

OREN

It's not really a "them" anymore, is it?

ELLIS

Can we all shut up about the pronouns!

OREN

Them is at least gender neutral.

MARY

Where is James?

ELLIS

The weekend trip is cancelled.

MARY

Where is James?!

MEGAN

Dad, what did you do? You always do something.

MARY

Meagan, let's go.

MEAGAN and MARY exit, quickly.

ELLIS

Wait! Megan!

ELLIS chases after them.

SCOTTY

Ellis!

SCOTTY exits fast.

OREN

Guys, you can't leave me here! I'm not taking the hit for this! I'm getting married!

OREN leaves, too.

MRS. CARLSON

Madness. (beat) Can we sit for a moment? Before we take the jackhammer? I need to rest.

MR. CARLSON

Take the desk chair, honey.

They walk over. She sits.

MRS. CARLSON

Much better.

Beat.

Wow, it's hot in here. MRS. CARLSON (cont'd)

Beat.

Sure is. Vietnam was hot, too. MR. CARLSON

I know. MRS. CARLSON

Hot and pointless. MR. CARLSON

True. But some things are worth fighting for. (beat). Like a jackhammer. MRS. CARLSON

Beat.

You look very handsome today, by the way. MRS. CARLSON

I showered. MR. CARLSON

Maybe tonight we go to McGinley's for dinner. MRS. CARLSON

I like the salmon. MR. CARLSON

I know. MRS. CARLSON

Beat.

Blackout.