

Oakwoods
A play by
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Oakwoods

By Mark Cornell

Characters:

ELLIS, 40s, male, black

MR. CARLSON, 80, male, white

MRS. CARLSON, 80, female, white

SCOTTY, 30s, male, white

OREN, 30s, male, hispanic

JAMES, 58, male, white

Place:

A messy maintenance shack.

Time:

Now. July.

Act One

Lights up on the small, cluttered shack 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 crap everywhere. ELLIS is at his desk attempting to pour coffee out of an old pot into a traveling thermos. 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!

MR. CARLSON rips a fart. ELLIS and MRS. CARLSON look over at the sad sight of the man.

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.

They look over at him again.

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 artsy 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! Undefeated! 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, Ellis. Christ, it's hot in here.

MR. CARLSON'S coughing turns to gasping. MRS. CARLSON goes to her husband.

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 Saigon!
Planes get shot at!

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. 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 finish. 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?

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 Taylor Swift?

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.

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 all the conspiracy 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?

SCOTTY
Not a chance.

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.

ELLIS

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, dumbshit!

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, morons, 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.

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 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.

JAMES
Sorry. Am I interrupting?

ELLIS
James?

SCOTTY
You shaved?

SCOTTY looks at ELLIS and OREN.

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

ELLIS
We know.

SCOTTY
Close the door, Oren.

OREN
You close the door, Scotty.

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

ELLIS closes the door. Doesn't lock it.

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

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

OREN
Your wife came to Oakwoods?

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

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.

JAMES

Scotty?

SCOTTY just glares at him. 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 trendy. This shit is freeze-dried and hard-assed. It never goes bad.

OREN

Sounds tasty.

JAMES

My parents loved Folger's. Always reminds me of home.

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 four-letter words. 15 has been a helluva a year.

JAMES

Ah, I think fifteen'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 retreat 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

This is fucking hopeless!

JAMES

I should really go. The retreat 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 propaganda-

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 his 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!

Pulling SCOTTY away...

ELLIS (cont'd)
NOW!

...ELLIS 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, pushing 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, Scotty, 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 at JAMES, hitting him. The contents 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 nose to nose with Viet-Cong! 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! And so do
you!

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 Potrero 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?

SCOTTY

NO!

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.

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 and 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 don't go on Twitter or Facebook and want to chop some asshole's cock off?

OREN

I'm only ever online for the chicks.

SCOTTY

You've never seen or heard one single thing that made you want to chop a cock off?

OREN

I don't think about chopping cocks or cocks in general.

SCOTTY

Well, you're thinking about them now.

OREN

Yeah, thanks to you!

SCOTTY

Yes or no, is there a cock out there, in an ocean of cocks, that you would like to see chopped 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*.

SCOTTY

What?

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 Sidney Sweeney is unavailable.

SCOTTY gets up. 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.

SCOTTY

But don't you tell a goddamn soul we hugged. Or that you saw me cry. You, too, Ellis.

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.

What's that?

OREN

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

Who is this?

OREN (cont'd)

It doesn't matter.

JAMES

Everything fucking matters.

SCOTTY

Getting off the floor, SCOTTY goes to look.

Who is she?

ELLIS
(getting up, too)

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

SCOTTY

It is?

ELLIS

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.

Who is she, James?

ELLIS (cont'd)

It's not my wife.

JAMES

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.

Here. I'll show you.

SCOTTY (cont'd)

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

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 a bunch of 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.

SCOTTY

And Penelope isn't suspicious of all that?

OREN

She's very trusting. And I can explain things away. It's a gift.

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.

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 up James, 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.

OREN

He lied about the donuts?

SCOTTY

Yup.

OREN

I don't get it, man. Why lie about your wife making donuts?

SCOTTY

That's what liars do. Big or small. They can't help it. And the more they lie and get away with it, the more invincible they feel.

OREN

I don't know. I've gotten away with shit, and all it did was make me a fucking head case.

ELLIS

You're not like this guy, Oren.

SCOTTY

No. This guy is garbage.

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.

Your left?

SCOTTY

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

What are you doing?

ELLIS

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 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.

He'll stop coughing. SCOTTY Watch.

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

See? SCOTTY (cont'd)

Is he dead? OREN

SCOTTY kicks JAMES.

Hey! JAMES

No. SCOTTY

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

Stop! JAMES

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

I get the what? JAMES

SCOTTY taps the pen again.

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

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

This is crazy! JAMES

SCOTTY taps it repeatedly.

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

You're torturing the guy, man! ELLIS

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!

ELLIS
No!

ELLIS shoves OREN back. OREN starts breathing heavy.

ELLIS (cont'd)
Oren?

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.

I told you.

JAMES

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 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?

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?

Yes.

ELLIS

Are you gonna respond?

SCOTTY

No.

ELLIS

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

She obviously wants to talk to you.

SCOTTY

Ignore it.

ELLIS

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

My God, man! Call my sister!

SCOTTY

What happened to no phone calls?

ELLIS

It's my sister!

SCOTTY

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) What's so weird about the girl being in her twenties? (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) OK, they live there, so what? (beat) If Megan wants to meet up with this girl at the mall to get her nails done, fine. How is that a problem? (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? And the father's name? (beat) And they 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'S 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.

SCOTTY (cont'd)

Oh, my God.

OREN

Jesus.

SCOTTY

Oh, my God.

OREN
Jesus.

SCOTTY
Oh, my God.

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
Stand up against the evil, isn't that what you said?

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 poke the bear here or anything, but we, mostly you, are in kind of a quandary.

ELLIS

Are we? Am I?

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

You think hiding the body will save us?

SCOTTY

It might! I know what *won't* save us! Standing next to Vic's corpse as the police come rolling in here!

ELLIS

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

SCOTTY

I don't know!

ELLIS

There's no time.

OREN

There's time. I think there's time.

ELLIS

His blood is everywhere, his DNA is everywhere, we're surrounded by evidence, there's no way out of this.

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

What's to explain? The dude was moving in on Megan. He's
not a man. He's one of the dicks.

SCOTTY

That's right. He is. And 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
have a chance to win. We don't, and 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.

ELLIS

We're going to jail, Scotty. No ifs, ands, or buts.

SCOTTY

We have to try and not to. Even if it's hopeless, which it
isn't, but even if you think it's hopeless, we have to try to
save ourselves.

ELLIS

What about facing the music?

SCOTTY

Jesus, you two! Forget I ever said that!

SCOTTY looks at ELLIS.

SCOTTY (cont'd)

Think of the kids, Ellis. Think of Janie.

ELLIS

Right. The kids. Janie.

SCOTTY

They're not gonna want to live the rest of their lives without you.

ELLIS

No. (beat) 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.

SCOTTY

The cops are gonna be here any second. We have to do something right now. Don't just give up. Wouldn't you rather make an effort to save yourself and fail, then not to make an effort at all?

OREN

Didn't someone say that about love once? Better to have loved and lost than-

SCOTTY

Shut the fuck up, Oren!

Beat.

SCOTTY (cont'd)

Ellis?

Beat.

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 do you think we should 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 this 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 saw 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?"

OREN

What does it say?

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 the cabinet!

ELLIS throws them 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.

Our clothes!

OREN

Fuck!

SCOTTY

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 does it look?

SCOTTY

It's...it's not terrible.

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

OREN

Oh, my God, we're 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.

ELLIS takes off his shirt.

SCOTTY (cont'd)

And your pants.

ELLIS takes off his pants. He tosses his clothes under the tarp. They look around.

SCOTTY

His wallet crap on the floor.

OREN

Oh, shit!

They scour the floor getting all the contents, slinging it all under the tarp.

SCOTTY

Is that everything?

They look, quickly.

OREN

What do you think?

SCOTTY

OK, OK, OK. I think we got it.

OREN

Do we?

SCOTTY

I don't know!

Beat.

SCOTTY

After they leave, we one hundred percent blow this place sky high.

Beat.

ELLIS

How do we explain why we're in our underwear?

SCOTTY

It's hot.

OREN

Hot? No. I wonder if we do a gay thing.

SCOTTY

What does that mean?

OREN

Like, we get some music going and as they come in, and we're, like, grinding on each other? I mean, we don't have to be enjoying it or anything-

SCOTTY

I'd rather do nothing.

ELLIS

How do we explain why Vic is not here? I told the cops we had him here.

SCOTTY

He ran off.

ELLIS

And after he left, we got naked?

SCOTTY

We're not naked!

The sirens arrive nearby.

ELLIS

They're here.

The reality sets in.

OREN

I'm sorry about the pot stuff, Ellis. And for lying to you.

SCOTTY

OK, let's not get into a thing where we all start apologizing for shit. We all have regrets. No one is perfect. Saying I'm sorry isn't going to do one goddamn bit of good. We all know we're sorry.

Beat.

ELLIS

You know, sometimes I don't know what I'm supposed to be. What my wife, what my kids, the homeowners, hell, what the world wants from me. I feel like I zig when I'm supposed to zag.

Beat.

SCOTTY

That wasn't technically an apology, but fucking hell, Ellis, what was that?

ELLIS

I'm just saying that life is too hard when you're constantly a disappointment to people.

Beat.

OREN

Actually, that doesn't sound like that's what you were saying.

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. Why are you men in your underwear?

SCOTTY

Because...because it's hot in here.

They wait for the Carlsons to respond to that. They don't.

SCOTTY (cont'd)

And we had a spill.

OREN

A big, messy spill. Lots of fluids involved.

SCOTTY

Lots of combustible, non-organic fluids.

MRS. CARLSON

That sounds like a lie.

SCOTTY

It's not...it's...what's with the shopping cart?

MRS. CARLSON

It's for 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!

SCOTTY

You can't have it!

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! We're not thieves!

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 the hammer!

ELLIS grabs a chainsaw and fires it up. He turns towards the four of them. They scream and run out. ELLIS kills the chainsaw, and tosses it down. He goes to the door and locks it. He grabs a five gallon bucket and puts it in the center of the room. He goes to a messy table top and gets matches. He goes to the trashcan and retrieves the jug of Goo Gone wipes. He sits on the bucket and strikes a match, dumping it into the jug. Smoke billows. He puts the jug at his feet and just sits there taking in the smoke. He smiles. He giggles a little.

At the door, the knob rattles. Then, hard knocks.

SCOTTY

Ellis?! What are you doing in there?! Have you put away the chainsaw?!

Now pounding.

OREN

Ellis?!

ELLIS starts coughing from the smoke.

OREN (cont'd)

Oh, shit. Do you smell that?

Pounding.

OREN (cont'd)

Ellis?! How can you smoke pot at a time like this?!

SCOTTY

Open the door!

Grabbing the Goo Gone, ELLIS turns and tosses it behind the mountainous tarp. Almost immediately it catches fire. Smoke and flames rise. Seeing it, he grabs the acetone and throws it on the fire.

SCOTTY (cont'd)

Ellis, don't make us knock down this door!

ELLIS hacks harder as the room gets smokier and smokier. He takes a gas can and throws it on the fire.

SCOTTY (cont'd)

Ellis?!

They beat on the door. ELLIS starts to swoon. He throws everything he can at the fire, until he falls over, passing out. OREN and SCOTTY hit the door hard.

SCOTTY (cont'd)

Ellis?!

OREN

Let's bust the door down!

Boom! They ram into the door. Boom! Again. Finally, they burst through on the third try, knocking the door off its hinges. They burst into the smoke.

OREN (cont'd)

Whoa. Let's party.

SCOTTY

Ellis?!

They go to ELLIS.

SCOTTY (cont'd)

Grab an arm!

OREN does. SCOTTY takes the other one. They lift him up and put his arms around their shoulders. And they carry him out.

The flames rise. Suddenly...KA-BOOOOOOOOM!

Lights go out as the building explodes.

The sound of burning and falling debris. The whole stage is washed in blacks and reds.

In front of the stage, OREN and SCOTTY appear with ELLIS, who is coughing.

SCOTTY

You dumb son-of-a-bitch, Ellis. What were you trying to do?

OREN

You all right, man?

ELLIS

I think so.

They turn, in their underwear and look at the "wreckage."

SCOTTY

What a morning.

OREN

Yeah.

Just then, sirens behind them. They turn around.

SCOTTY

That's for us for sure.

OREN

How can you tell?

SCOTTY

The three policemen running towards us, you dumb fuck.

OREN

Fuck you, Scotty.

SCOTTY

Fuck me? Fuck you.

ELLIS

Would you two shut the fuck up?

Lights slowly fade out.

THE END