

SILO



A political allegory in two acts

by

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τὰν δ' ἄπληστον κακῶν
μήποτ' ἐν πόλει στάσιν
τᾷδ' ἐπεύχομαι βρέμειν.

Aeschylus, *Eumenides*

CHARACTERS

THE OWNERS:

RAE: Former prosecutor, then corporate lawyer. African-American woman.

HEIDI: Untenured professor of literature. Rae's spouse. Eight months pregnant.

PALOMA: Rae's daughter from an earlier relationship. Early teens.

REX: Successful real estate developer. White. Overweight.

SHAWN: Tech entrepreneur. Single, socially awkward.

SCROGGS: Retired natural gas speculator. Eccentric. In his seventies.

DUNG: Scroggs' much younger Vietnamese spouse.

TONY: Mid-level Wall Street financier. Reserved the smallest living unit.

THE SECURITY:

JESSE: Stocky white man in his early thirties. Former Army NCO. Shaved head.

THE REFUGEES:

JOSÉ LUIS: Husband. Tattoos on neck.

ADRIANA: Wife. Carries infant daughter in swaddle.

MIGUEL: Their teenage son.

SETTING & TIME

SETTING: A refurbished missile silo in Kansas. The silo has been converted into a luxury emergency shelter for wealthy survivalists.

TIME: The near future. A global pandemic has recently begun.

ACT I: Shawn's apartment.

ACT II, Scene 1: The infirmary.

ACT II, Scene 2: The basement.

SILO**ACT I**

(We are in SHAWN's apartment, one of the more luxurious living units. Classical music plays. All of the OWNERS are present except for REX. Most of them hold drinks. PALOMA sits on a couch, playing a game on her phone.)

HEIDI

Honey. Paloma. Put away the phone.

(Pause.)

Paloma. Paloma!

PALOMA

(Sighing.)

Heidi.

HEIDI

Honey, that's enough screen time for today.

PALOMA

Screen time?

HEIDI

Yes, screen time. We have rules—

PALOMA

(To Rae.)

Mom. Seriously?

(RAE does not respond. She holds a drink and gazes blankly in front of herself.)

HEIDI

Yes, we have rules. And what are you even looking at? You know, the Internet is not coming back.

PALOMA

Like I don't know that!

Put it away.

HEIDI

Mom?

PALOMA

(RAE does not respond. PALOMA returns to her phone.)

Turn off the phone!

HEIDI

(Pause.)

Paloma! Paloma!

PALOMA

God! Who cares?

HEIDI

What do you mean who cares? I care! We have rules, and we've talked about this, and I'm not going to have this conversation again. Put away the phone. Put it away.

PALOMA

(To Rae.)

Mom?

(RAE turns to PALOMA, dazed.)

Do I have to put my phone away?

PALOMA

Huh?

RAE

PALOMA

Heidi said I have to put my phone away, but I don't get, like, why does screen time even matter anymore. I mean...

HEIDI

We need to keep following the rules. That's how we get through—

PALOMA

(Furious.)

It's not fair! All of you got to spend your whole lives—you got to enjoy *everything*. And now I can't even look at my phone? What difference does it make?

(After a pause, HEIDI starts to cry.)

RAE

If Heidi says you have to put it away, you have to put it away.

HEIDI

Oh, let her play with it. Let her... If it makes her happy.

(REX enters with JESSE, who turns off the music. All turn to them. JESSE wears fatigues and is carrying an AK-47. REX approaches SCROGGS and shakes his hand, then whispers something in his ear. SCROGGS chuckles. REX turns to the room.)

REX

Alright, let's get this started folks. I know we've all been through a lot these past few days, weeks. A lot of us have lost a lot. That's gonna take time. It's gonna take time. But we've got some decisions to make—

HEIDI

(Overlapping.)

Excuse me—excuse me. Where is Adriana? Where is José Luis?

REX

I'm gettin' to that. We've got some decisions to make—

HEIDI

Yeah, but they should be here. If we're making decisions, they should be here. They're stuck here just like the rest of us.

REX

(Pause.)

That is one of the matters under discussion, young lady.

(HEIDI scoffs. RAE takes another drink, impassive.)

REX

Now. We have all lost a lot in the last two weeks. I lost my wife Gail. Before that we lost our two sons, and five grandkids. My sister. I am the last one in my whole family, so I know what everyone here is going through. The last thing I want to be doing right now is holding court about who cleans up the garbage and whatever else we need to do to make this

work. But we are here for the duration. However long that is. We are locked in. So we need to lay down some ground rules.

SHAWN

If I could—just. I’ve actually been thinking quite a lot about this. I took the liberty of putting together a little presentation—

REX

Well, now, hold up there—

SHAWN

I think this is really crucial—

TONY

He said hold up.

(Pause.)

Let the man speak, okay?

SHAWN

I’m just trying—

TONY

Enough! Let. The man. Speak.

(JESSE steps toward SHAWN.)

REX

(Clears his throat.)

Folks, I know tempers are a little raw. Let’s just try to get through this, alright? Remember, we’re the lucky ones. We made it.

(SCROGGS lets out a sharp laugh. The others look at him.)

REX

This is what the whole goddamn thing was for. We made it. We’re here. In the silo. We’ve got enough food to last at least a year. Maybe more. Water from the well. Solar power, wind, emergency backup. Waste disposal. We’ve got air filters to keep out the bugs. We’re all—all of us are clean. We’ve got Jesse here and a whole shitload of ammo if anyone or anything tries to come at us—

HEIDI

Yeah, why does he have a gun right now? Why is he armed? No one else here is armed.

I'm armed.

REX

I'm armed.

TONY

(REX and TONY display their weapons.
HEIDI stares in disbelief.)

JESSE
The safety is on, Ma'am. There is no cause for concern. I'm a trained Staff Sergeant in the United States Army.

HEIDI
(Scoffing.)
That's supposed to comfort me? After all the things the military did—

JESSE
Ma'am, I am qualified as an expert marksman, and the first lesson taught to me in basic rifle marksmanship was muzzle awareness—

HEIDI
(To Rex.)
Why is he here, and Adriana and her family are not here?

JESSE
Ma'am—

REX
Hold up, Jesse, hold up. Heidi—it's alright if I call you Heidi? I understand your concerns. I appreciate what you're saying. So let's just try to get through this thing, okay? Everyone here signed the purchase agreement. And that means everyone here agreed to the bylaws.

HEIDI
I didn't sign shit. Sorry, Paloma.

(PALOMA shrugs.)

REX
Excuse me?

HEIDI
I didn't agree to anything. Rae did.

TONY

Well, now you're here, so.

HEIDI

So?

REX

You took shelter with your—partner. And you thereby agreed to abide by the rules of this place. The bylaws.

HEIDI

The fuck I did. Paloma, put your headphones on.

(PALOMA continues playing on her phone.)

REX

Rae? Is she always like this? Is this how it's gonna be?

RAE

It's true that she didn't sign anything.

TONY

Aw, fuck that. She's here. You're here. You don't want to play by the rules? You can leave. Good luck to you. Out there.

HEIDI

Oh, now you're going to exile me, like—some—I guess I'm *homo sacer* now, I guess I'm, like, the *outcast*—

TONY

(Overlapping.)

What the fuck are you saying?

HEIDI

(Overlapping.)

Because I was questioning? Is questioning not allowed here?

TONY

(Overlapping.)

No one knows what the fuck you're saying.

REX

Folks.

TONY

Homo what? Homo what-the-fuck?

REX

Folks.

TONY

(To Heidi.)

What did you say?

REX

Folks! Let's try to keep our eye on the ball here. I know we're all tired, we're all adjusting to the new—lay of the land. Everyone here has a lot of hurt. Let's not take it out on each other, alright? We need to lay down some ground rules, then we can all go back to our units and have some peace. I know that's what I want after all this. Some peace.

(Taking out some papers.)

Unless anyone has a better idea, it seems to me like the bylaws are what we have here. They're as good a starting point as any. Now, under paragraph 6, subsection D, every unit owner gets one vote, which sounds just about right by me. We can have a meeting every week in here if Shawn doesn't object—

SHAWN

That's one thing that, sure, but—

REX

Much obliged. And the first thing we need to do is elect a president of the Unit Owners Association. The president is responsible for chairing the weekly meeting, managing the agenda, conducting the votes. So I propose we go ahead and pick a president—

HEIDI

You propose.

REX

Excuse me?

HEIDI

Why you?

(Pause.)

Why do you get to propose what we do?

TONY

Jesus Christ.

REX

Heidi, I'm just trying to lay down some ground rules. If you have a better idea, there will be plenty of time for you to share it. But first we need—

SHAWN

I—if I could just—that's what I've been trying to say. I do have some ideas, and I think the first thing, really, is we need to talk about how to structure *this* conversation. The conversation *about* the conversation—

HEIDI

(Overlapping.)

Excuse me. Excuse me! He was talking to me. Why is it only the men who are allowed to talk here?

TONY

Here's a ground rule. Fuck this. It's Rex's building, okay? They're his bylaws.

HEIDI

(Pause.)

What does that have to do with anything?

TONY

He owns the place, he sets the rules.

HEIDI

Ah, okay. So Rex is, like, our *monarch*, because he was the one who—because he's the *founder*. He built this place, so he gets to set the rules, is that the idea?

TONY

Rex. Come on—

HEIDI

But wait! You know what, I just remembered something. There is no divine right of kings, or whatever. There are just people. Us. And José Luis and Adriana. So why are they not here?

TONY

They're not here because they're not owners! It's in the fucking bylaws!

HEIDI

Who cares about the bylaws? It's just *us*. It's up to us—

TONY
(To Heidi.)

You wanna run the show?

HEIDI
(Overlapping.)

It's up to us if we want to have—

TONY
(Overlapping.)

You wanna run the show? You? Who are you?

HEIDI

Did I say I wanted to run the show? I want a *democracy*—

TONY

Whatever, whatever. Fuck this. I can't deal with this shit right now.

HEIDI

I didn't say I wanted to run the show. But that doesn't mean the show should be run by the same kind of assholes that got us into this mess.

(HEIDI gestures toward REX.)

REX

Pardon? I thought I was the asshole whose shelter you're in right now.

HEIDI

We wouldn't need a shelter if people like you hadn't created the virus in the first place—

TONY

Jesus Christ. Here we go.

HEIDI

And declared a state of emergency that doesn't even exist—

REX

I didn't declare any states of emergency.

HEIDI

Who did you vote for in the last election?

(REX is silent. RAE laughs and takes another drink.)

SCROGGS

The last election. That's right. 'Cause there ain't gonna be another one.

(SCROGGS laughs. RAE lifts her drink toward SCROGGS, who reciprocates.)

HEIDI

My point is, instead of all of us sitting back and listening to the big man who calls me *young lady*, maybe it's time to try something a little different. Maybe we have a chance to do things a little differently here.

SHAWN

Exactly! Yes. That's what my presentation is about.

HEIDI

(Ignoring him.)

Maybe we have a chance to have a *real* democracy here. Maybe we can do things right this time.

SHAWN

Okay—great—everybody. Can I just—can I take, like, forty-five—or—like, fifteen minutes and give a condensed presentation? I've got the slides—

HEIDI

(Ignoring him again.)

Because if we're going to be a democracy, a *real* democracy, then everyone needs to have a voice. I mean, this could be a real moment of natality, in the real Arendtian sense—in the sense of, like, a new birth of freedom. This moment we are in just now is so rare, and it would be such a—a *devastation*—if we did not bring it to fruition, you know? We have an opportunity to give life to something new, something none of us could have imagined. It's like we're on the Mayflower, and now, right now, *this* moment, *this* is the moment when we sit down to come up with the Mayflower Compact. Which is why it's so important that everyone has a chance to be heard, including Adriana and José Luis. They're going to be bound by whatever we decide, so they have a right to have their voices heard. A right to have rights, and that means a right to have a voice. If we start silencing voices now, that silence is going to reverberate down through—forever. It's like we're sitting, right now, in one of the revolutionary soviets, or a popular council in Paris, and we have a chance to decide our own fates, to rule ourselves—like a true democracy, *demos-kratia*, the rule of the people by the people—a real, radical, *direct* democracy arising from constituent power, instead of the kind of sham democracy where a handful of voters make the decision to elect a dictator every four years, or whatever—and I say this as someone, you know, I've

been an organizer. I organized my graduate program—if—I guess, what I need to say first is—whatever, whatever, forget it—but what I’m talking about is *participation*. Participation, you know?

(As HEIDI speaks, she seems increasingly panicked and disoriented. RAE is unsure whether to intervene.)

HEIDI

(Continuing.)

Participation—in a diverse *community*. What is more alive in life, more vital, than to appear in a space of freedom and be heard and seen in word and deed—and yes, I am being completely Arendtian here, I know, which has its own—but it’s like—creating a new life of freedom as we debate how to rule ourselves, right? Instead of the politics of biopower that got us into this fucking mess—which isn’t even really a politics at all, in the sense of, you know, the political. It’s politics, but it’s not the political, so—I know I’m being very technical, but—I’m sorry, sometimes difficult ideas, difficult language, you know? What I’m trying to say—what I’m saying is—let’s move beyond, or if we can’t move beyond—because I’m not saying there’s, like, an *outside*—from the past, or whatever—then let’s at least, I guess, *sublate*, or—I’m sorry, but there’s no way without the technical. Fuck. Let me just start over—let’s say, let’s just *resist* the governmentality of bare life, reducing everything to bodies without politics. I mean, we all saw the camps. Everyone saw the camps.

(Pause.)

Of course there were camps. I mean, that was—that was where the whole mechanism of the whole fucking thing, the territorial state, or the state of population, or whatever, was headed from the start. Docile bodies in the camps, right? I saw the fucking quarantine. I saw the bodies. No, no—I know—you don’t know. A politics—a biopolitics without reserve, what the fuck, you know. But. You know, but—

(She stops as her panic continues to grow.)

Oh God...

(She shakes her head.)

Oh God. We’ve seen so much death.

(HEIDI lets out a sob. RAE approaches and guides her to the couch, where she sits next to PALOMA, who hugs her.)

RAE

They know. It’s okay. It’s okay.

(HEIDI sobs on the couch, comforted by RAE and PALOMA. After a long pause, TONY steps forward.)

TONY

And that—whatever the fuck that was—is why we don't put women in charge. Can I get some tissues for you, you fucking psycho?

(With rising fury.)

I'm sorry, but I'm supposed to shut up and take orders from some—from some you-know-what having a nervous breakdown. I'm supposed to put *her* in charge? Because—why? Really, why? I don't get it. No. Here's my democracy vote: fuck no. I say we stick with the bylaws, every owner gets one vote, and—no offense—that means everyone else can shut the fuck up or get the fuck out.

REX

Let's cool it for a minute, alright?

TONY

Cool it? She has a fucking twenty minute menstrual meltdown, and you ask me to cool it? Fuck you, Rex.

(JESSE steps forward, hand on his rifle.)

TONY

Why don't you tell your fuckin' goon to back off. Why is he even here? He's not an owner.

(To Jesse.)

Shouldn't you be back at Rex's place, getting ready to polish his cock? Warming your knees up—motherfucker.

JESSE

Watch it.

TONY

Watch you suck off Rex every night? Why would I do that?

REX

Folks, we're getting sidetracked.

SCROGGS

I like it.

(Pause.)

Most fun I've had since the whole shithouse came down.

REX

Rae, can you help me out here? You're a lawyer. What's the legal resolution here?

SCROGGS

A lawyer. Shit. I knew you sons of bitches would make it out. Just like the cucarachas. Here's to it.

(SCROGGS offers another toast while RAE gets up, tired from hours of drinking. After several false starts, she begins.)

RAE

Sometimes I tell my clients: the law is whatever your judge says it is. And if you don't like it, you can try to go to a higher judge. But at the end of the day, the last judge in your case decides the law. What the judge says is what the law is.

(Pause.)

Right now, as far as I know, there are no judges. The courts are closed, or they're a bunch of rubble. The judges are gone. I guess that means there is no law. Because there's no judge to say what it is.

(They all wait for more.)

RAE

We don't have law. But we still have—I don't know, negotiation. Maybe.

TONY

(Pause.)

That's it? That's all you got? What's your hourly rate for that?

RAE

This one's pro bono.

TONY

I call bullshit. The law is right there. In the bylaws. Black and white. Only owners get a vote. Case closed.

RAE

Who says?

TONY

Enough. Let's make the decisions we have to make and be done. I'm tired.

RAE

Contract is just a piece of paper unless there's some way to enforce it.

TONY

Enough with this shit. What do we even need to decide about? Let's just—everyone back to their own rooms. Units, whatever the fuck. I'll see you when the whiskey runs out.

SHAWN

Where should the refugees go?

TONY

The refugees?

SHAWN

José Luis. His family.

TONY

With them.

(Pointing at Heidi, Rae, and Paloma.)

They're the ones who brought 'em in. Easy. Next?

SHAWN

How do we divide up the food and water?

(A long pause.)

HEIDI

We should make decisions by consensus. It's the only fair way. We should bring in José Luis and Adriana and decide by consensus.

TONY

When in the history of ever has it ever made sense to hand over power like that? To just give it away to a bunch of strangers. They don't have anything to do with this.

HEIDI

They're here.

TONY

Alright, okay. Let's have a vote. Just the owners. We vote on whether to bring 'em in.

HEIDI

No. That's already excluding them.

TONY

What?

HEIDI

You're already excluding Adriana and José Luis and Miguel if you have a vote without them.

TONY

What the fuck?

SHAWN

No, she's—it's actually a very interesting paradox. How can we decide who gets to decide on the community? How do we vote on who gets to vote? Right? It's like—how does the community decide who is in the community, if the definition of the community is itself in question? What the what?

(All look at SHAWN for a moment, then continue.)

HEIDI

They're in the community. Because they're here.

TONY

Can you not read? It's in the fucking bylaws! They're not owners! They're not owners!

REX

Folks, we're going in circles. Why don't we just go ahead and take a straw poll to see where we stand.

TONY

Finally.

REX

Who here does *not* want us to follow the bylaws?

(HEIDI and SHAWN raise their hands.)

HEIDI

Rae?

(RAE stares blankly ahead, then slowly raises her hand.)

REX

And who here wants to follow the bylaws?

(REX, TONY, SCROGGS, DUNG, and
JESSE raise their hands.)

REX

We can always change ‘em or throw ‘em out later.

HEIDI

You—the security guard.

JESSE

Staff Sergeant Wilcox, Ma’am.

HEIDI

Okay. Why do you want the bylaws? You’re not an owner. You won’t
have any say.

(JESSE collects himself for a moment, then
begins.)

JESSE

Ma’am, when I enlisted in the Army, I swore an oath. I swore to support
and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies,
foreign and domestic. And that is what I intend to do.

HEIDI

(Pause.)

What?

JESSE

Ma’am, I’m a Christian first, a Constitutionalist second, and a
Conservative third. That means I believe in the rule of law, to include the
bylaws of this silo.

HEIDI

The Constitution?

(She looks at the others in disbelief.)

The *Constitution*?

JESSE

Yes, Ma’am.

HEIDI

You know, I guess—I guess I hoped that after all this... I guess I had hoped that at the very least, at the very *least*—I wouldn't have to listen to anyone praising *America* after all of this... The country that just *caused the end of the world*.

(Pause.)

But maybe that was too much to ask for.

JESSE

Ma'am?

RAE

Heidi.

HEIDI

No, no. I understand. It's not his fault. He probably doesn't even know what I'm talking about.

RAE

Heidi, this is—

HEIDI

I mean, okay, set aside all the obvious stuff, I'm not talking about the fact that the Constitution was written by a bunch of slaveowners, everyone knows that—

JESSE

(Clearing his throat.)

I—I will not stand here—

REX

Folks, we're getting sidetracked again.

HEIDI

A bunch of genocidal oligarchs who raped the children they owned and sold off the babies on the slave market. I mean, set that aside, and set aside the genocide of indigenous peoples over hundreds of years, that was all a long time ago—

SCROGGS

This one is a firecracker.

HEIDI

That's right! I am a Fourth of July firecracker. And excuse me if I *explode* when—when I hear someone acting like we should just forget, because they were white men—so who cares, right? I mean, that's the benefit—

JESSE

Ma'am!

(To Rex.)

Sir, permission to speak freely.

(REX gestures uncertainly.)

JESSE

(To Heidi.)

I will not stand here and listen to you disrespect the flag—

HEIDI

The flag? I don't give a fuck about your flag—

JESSE

You can disgrace yourself all you want by using your filthy tongue in front of your daughter. You can disgrace your heritage, your—your heritage—but I will not stand here and listen to a *civilian* who has sacrificed nothing drag the flag of my country through the mud. I will not stand here while you insult the memory of the patriots that died for that flag, Ma'am, and the ones that died to save us from the consequences of your unholy actions.

HEIDI

I didn't even—wait—what?

(Pause.)

My unholy actions?

JESSE

We are here because the Lord is punishing us for our sins.

(Pause.)

Don't you see that?

HEIDI

(Pause.)

Woah.

REX

Folks, I don't want to beat a dead horse, but we're gettin' off track. Let's try to focus—

HEIDI

(Pointing at Jesse, addressing the others.)

He should not have a weapon. This man is a fanatic—

TONY

What, because he's a Christian, he can't carry a firearm? He's a believer.
So what?

HEIDI

I am not comfortable with someone having a weapon in here who believes
that his God is punishing us—and—and wants us to die.

TONY

He didn't say that. Right?

JESSE

I don't know the Lord's plans.

TONY

See—

JESSE

All I know is what's plain for anyone with eyes to see.

RAE

What's that supposed to mean?

REX

Jesse, before you answer that—

JESSE

(Clearing his throat.)

We broke the covenant, Ma'am. We violated our oath. We welcomed the
law of the infidel into our land. Encouraged fornication, pornography.
Defiled the sacred bonds of marriage, the proper role of man and woman,
husband and wife. We—we allowed abominations. Men lying with men,
sodomy, the mixing of—what is unnatural in the eyes of the Lord. We
allowed the genocide of our unborn children. The eighty million. Their
blood crying out from the soil. And now we face His retribution.

HEIDI

(To Tony.)

You trust him with your life?

REX

Jesse, what I think she's saying is—

JESSE

There is a plague outside this silo. A plague. Are you all blind? This is word for word what's in the Bible. The Lord is starting over. He's starting over.

(Pause.)

And this is his ark.

HEIDI

I am not comfortable with him having a weapon of war.

TONY

This is bullshit. You want to talk about who's dangerous? Let's talk about your friend José Luis.

HEIDI

What about him?

TONY

Cut the PC bullshit. You know exactly what I mean.

HEIDI

No, I don't.

TONY

Come on. He's got fucking neck tattoos.

HEIDI

So?

TONY

He's got fucking neck tattoos!

REX

Heidi.

(Pause.)

Let's be realistic here.

HEIDI

Realistic about what?

TONY

Realistic about his fucking neck tattoos.

HEIDI

You keep saying that like it means something.

REX

I think what Tony's sayin' is—this is not a situation where we can call 911. If we need to call 911, it's already too late.

HEIDI

Too late for what? José Luis *saved* us. He saved our lives. There were men—they murdered Rae's son!

REX

That may be, that may be. But now he's used you to get in the silo. Now there might be different factors in play.

HEIDI

What? What factors?

REX

You want me to say it?

HEIDI

Say what?

SHAWN

Rex, if I could just—Heidi. I mean, come on. I think what everyone's saying is just—now is not the time for political correctness.

JESSE

Yes! Thank you. Political correctness is what got us into this mess—

SHAWN

Jesse, please—let me.

(To Heidi.)

All I'm saying is, there are some luxuries that we don't have anymore. And sometimes justice is a luxury too. It has a cost, and we need to weigh that cost against competing interests.

HEIDI

What?

SHAWN

In this silo, if we miscalculate the risk, there might not be a chance to update our priors for the next time. There might not be anyone around.

HEIDI

What does any of this have to do with José Luis?

SHAWN

Heidi, I'm talking Bayesian statistics. I'm talking—there is a reason why people prefer to be around people who are like themselves—

HEIDI

Like themselves in what way?

SHAWN

I mean, come on, this is just scientific—I mean, why do you think racism is so common?

RAE

Woah there.

SHAWN

I'm not talking—just—hear me out—I'm not talking about you, Rae, I'm saying when you don't *know* someone—it's like, we evolved as a species to distrust people who look different.

RAE

“We”?

JESSE

(Nodding enthusiastically.)

Hooah, Sir. Hooah.

SHAWN

No, no, you're not—just. What I'm saying is, there was a *reason* why our ancestors evolved to distrust unfamiliar people—and we're back in that situation in many salient respects. It's like we're on the African plains again—

TONY

(Imitating someone shoveling, amused.)

Diggin' a hole, keep diggin' that hole.

SHAWN

People! This is not controversial. These are evolutionary facts, this is neuroscience, I'm not even—I'm just saying that we have to make use of the information we have, even if it would be arguably overinclusive under ordinary circumstances—even if it would be, you know, unjust.

(Pause.)

Trust me, I'm not a racist.

Oh, okay. RAE

I work with people of all ethnicities. SHAWN

I thought he was a racist, but he says he's not. RAE
(To Heidi.)

Mom? PALOMA
(Finally looking up, angrily.)

Yeah. RAE

Can I go back to our room? PALOMA

What's the matter? You feeling okay? HEIDI

He saved us—I don't know why— PALOMA

It's alright, honey. You can go back. You don't need to listen to any of this. None of this matters. RAE

(RAE kisses PALOMA, who gives HEIDI a hug and then leaves.)

This isn't about race. We have to be careful. That's all. REX

Exactly. We have to be careful, and that means using all available information. SHAWN

Sir, hooah. In a tactical situation, you need to trust your instincts. JESSE

Your racist instincts. RAE

JESSE

If that's how you stay left of bang, hooah.

REX

This is not about race.

TONY

This is about *neck tattoos*.

HEIDI

Who doesn't have a tattoo these days? Every barista in every coffee shop has a tattoo. Had a tattoo.

TONY

And if they were here, and I didn't know them, I would fucking shoot them.

REX

Well, I don't know about that—

SHAWN

I just think we should be open to the theoretical possibility that José Luis being a Mexican is a relevant variable, statistically speaking.

HEIDI

He's not Mexican! They're from El Salvador.

TONY

El Salvador?

REX

Folks.

TONY

El Salvador?!

HEIDI

We wouldn't be having this conversation if José Luis were white. Or non-Hispanic white, or whatever. He'd be here with us right now. This is pure bigotry.

TONY

He is a fucking gang-banger!

JESSE
(Stepping forward.)

Alibi. Alibi.

HEIDI

What?

JESSE

I have an alibi for the group.

HEIDI

An alibi? What?

JESSE

Look, let's just apply the Constitution. And under the Constitution, refugees are not entitled to vote. That is a fact.

(RAE laughs.)

REX

I don't think we're going to settle this one today.

(Pause.)

Can we—at this point, can we all agree that for the time being, we follow the bylaws? Shawn, what's it going to take?

SHAWN

Let me do my presentation. Hear me out. If you still want to use the bylaws, I won't object.

HEIDI

I'll still object.

REX

But, all due respect, Heidi, if all of us except you—

HEIDI

And Rae.

REX

If all of us except you and Rae support following the bylaws, that's a majority no matter what the refugee family says. It's six to four, five if we count the boy.

HEIDI

We should decide by consensus.

REX

That's not the way it works.

(Pause.)

Alright, let's take five. Shawn, you do your presentation.

(While SHAWN exits into a side room,
RAE turns to HEIDI.)

During their conversation, REX talks quietly with JESSE. TONY tries to join their conversation, standing close by and nodding profoundly. SCROGGS continues to drink with DUNG at his side.)

RAE

Boo, it's not unreasonable. It's one side or the other, and we're the minority.

HEIDI

Boo, I'm talking about consensus. I'm talking everyone agrees.

RAE

But if the majority doesn't want to go by consensus...

HEIDI

What about the rights of the minority?

RAE

What rights? Where? The disagreement is about what the rights are, okay? And you're saying the minority view of the rights should win, instead of the majority? It doesn't make sense.

HEIDI

Why not?

(Pause.)

Are you on my side?

RAE

It doesn't matter what side I'm on. Of course I'm on your side, but it doesn't matter whose side I'm on. They have the majority. They have the right to decide on the rules, and unless we want to leave, we have to go along.

HEIDI

It doesn't sound like you're on my side.

RAE

I'm just saying take a step back and view it from their point of view.

HEIDI

Why should we take a step back? Maybe it's time for them to take a step back and see our point of view.

(Pause.)

People like them are the ones that did this. It's because of them we're here. It's because of them that... everything. Everything.

RAE

Don't.

HEIDI

They made the virus. They built the camps. They set the fires. Boo, look around. Look around at where we are.

RAE

I'm not getting into this again.

HEIDI

Anthropocide. This is it. We cannot let them do it all over again.

(Pause.)

It's time for something new.

(RAE shakes her head.)

RAE

Look, I don't want to argue. What's the point of arguing? None of this...

HEIDI

I'm talking about what just happened. This is billions of dead bodies. This is—

RAE

This is one shelter.

HEIDI

This is the end of *everything*, maybe, if we don't do this right.

RAE

(Speaking slowly.)

Boo, it already happened. It's not up to us anymore. There isn't anything for us to save.

(Pause.)

We're at the end. Everything ends.

HEIDI

That's not true. There are people. There are other people like us—

RAE

Sure, sure. There are other people, somewhere. And one day they'll step out of their shelters. And they'll die.

HEIDI

You don't know that.

RAE

It was always going to end sometime. We just happened to be here for it.

HEIDI

What is "it"?

RAE

Extinction.

(Pause.)

It was always going to happen. I mean, it was always going to be something. If it wasn't a virus, it would've been bombs. Sun dying. Something.

(Pause.)

We just happened to be here for it.

HEIDI

You don't know that.

RAE

My world already ended. My world.

(Pause.)

I'll stick around for you and Paloma. I don't want to hurt you. But I'm done.

HEIDI

You don't mean that.

(Pause.)

I can't do this without you.

(Pause.)

Come on. Let's talk to Dung. We need allies.

(HEIDI pulls RAE up by the hand and leads her toward DUNG and SCROGGS, then stops to discuss her plans further.)

Meanwhile, DUNG continues to stand by SCROGGS, sometimes refilling his glass. Neither talks.

REX and JESSE have finished their conversation. When JESSE steps away, holding his rifle as though standing guard, TONY approaches REX.)

TONY

Some crazy shit, am I right?

(Pause.)

Hey. I want to say. I respect what you did here. People don't say that enough.

(REX nods.)

TONY

A lot of people don't appreciate how much risk there is in real estate. Especially in a deal like this. It took a lot of balls to set this place up.
(Placing his hand on Rex.)

I respect that.

REX

You were a Wall Streeter, right?

TONY

That's right, man.

REX

What bank you work for?

TONY

It was a boutique. Pittsfield Capital.

REX

(Pause.)

A boutique.

TONY

Yeah, well—

REX

You work in the front office?

TONY

Oh, yeah, yeah, I was a hundred percent front office. A salesman. I mean, hey, look at me—natural born salesman. That was my job—hook the big fish.

(Leaning in.)

Hey, you ever think you'd spend the end of the world surrounded by fucking dykes? This shit is crazy, right?

REX

(Pause, looking at Tony coolly.)

How you liking your unit?

TONY

Oh, it's great. Solid.

REX

We had to put a smaller-size toilet in your unit. Because of the size.

TONY

Sure.

REX

Your unit is the smallest one. Full-size toilet wouldn't fit in the bathroom.

TONY

Right.

REX

You get what you pay for.

TONY

Hey, works for me.

REX

(Placing his hand on Tony.)

Just try not to shit all over the place.

(Pause.)

Excuse me.

(REX exits.)

While HEIDI and RAE talk with DUNG, TONY finishes another drink and pretends to consult his phone. JESSE continues to stand stoically to the side.)

HEIDI

(Approaching Dung, ignoring Scroggs.)

Dung? Is it Dung? Nice to meet you. I'm Heidi, and this is Rae.
Can we talk with you for a second?

(DUNG glances instinctively at
SCROGGS.)

HEIDI

Just us, I mean. Is that alright with you, uh—Scroggs? Is that—is Scroggs
short for something?

SCROGGS

Scroggs.

HEIDI

We just wanted to get to know Dung a little better. Since we haven't really
had a chance to talk yet.

SCROGGS

We haven't talked. You wanna get to know me?

(Pause.)

I'm an interesting fellow.

HEIDI

(Laughing.)

Oh, we look forward to getting to know everyone—

SCROGGS

Dung and me, we don't have any secrets. Let's all talk together. What do
you want to talk about?

HEIDI

Oh, just to get to know—we don't even know—where are you—where is
your family from, Dung?

SCROGGS

What makes you think she's not from here?

(Pause.)

I'm just screwing with you. She's Vietnamese.

HEIDI

(To Dung.)

Oh, were you—born in Vietnam?

SCROGGS

Ho Chi Minh fuckin' city, if you believe that. But we met in New Orleans.

HEIDI

I'd love to talk with Dung herself, if you don't mind. Does she—
(To Dung.)

You do speak English?

DUNG

Yes.

HEIDI

Oh, thank God—I... So, is the rest of your family still in—well, I guess the
rest of everyone's family isn't... really...
(Long pause.)

RAE

(To Dung.)

How long have you two been together?

DUNG

(Glancing at Scroggs.)

Three year. We are married since two year.

HEIDI

(To Dung.)

Can I talk to you—in private about something?

SCROGGS

The fuck is this? I mean it.

HEIDI

Excuse me. She can answer for herself.

SCROGGS

Yeah, and she can answer right here.

HEIDI

What are you afraid of?

SCROGGS

Afraid?

(To Rae.)

How do you put up with this shit?

HEIDI

Okay, I've had just about enough of this. If we're talking about how our futures are going to be organized, then this should be a safe space—where everyone should feel safe to open her mouth—without facing threats—

SCROGGS

No one's threatening anyone.

HEIDI

If Dung wants to speak with me, with another woman, in private, she has a right to do that.

SCROGGS

Why would anyone want to speak with you?

DUNG

Is okay. I go speak.

SCROGGS

The fuck you will.

RAE

What?

SCROGGS

(To Dung.)

You don't have to do what she says.

DUNG

Is okay—I go speak. Five minute—

SCROGGS

Nah. I don't like this.

HEIDI

Now I'm really starting to wonder—about what's going on here.

SCROGGS

Quit your bitchin'. Christ.

HEIDI

Dung, are you here voluntarily?

RAE

Heidi.

HEIDI

Did this man sex-traffic you? You can say it. He does not have power over you here. You're safe.

DUNG

Sex traffic?

SCROGGS

(Laughing.)

She probably thinks—she probably thinks it's about driving.

DUNG

(Laughing.)

What is sex traffic?

SCROGGS

It's when cars bump into each other. Make sex traffic jam.

(SCROGGS laughs uproariously at his joke.)

HEIDI

This is not a joke! This is—this is how it happens, one little snide microaggression at a time, one little put-down after another, day in and day out—and the women step back. This is how we ended up here. Huh-unh. Huh-unh. I am not going to let this be reproduced here.

SCROGGS

You don't know us. You don't know what we've suffered.

HEIDI

But you *caused* it. You still don't get that, do you? Your whole—

RAE

Heidi, I don't think—

HEIDI

They built a world based on structural violence. An economy of war. And it almost destroyed us. This cannot happen again. Dung, you need to know that we are all equals here. You have power. You have agency. You are his equal, and he cannot tell you what to do. You control your body. Do you understand? Do you understand what I'm saying?

DUNG

(Waiting, then glancing at Scroggs.)

Me? Is question?

RAE

(To Heidi.)

Boo, let's just try this some other time, okay?

HEIDI

There is no *later*—

(HEIDI looks around at the others. She takes a deep, calming breath.)

HEIDI

Okay. What I am feeling—this is not healthy for the baby. We need to go.

(HEIDI slowly stands.)

RAE

(Reaching out to help Heidi.)

Boo, you know I'm always on your side.

(HEIDI refuses RAE's help and exits.)

RAE

(Looking after Heidi.)

She's...

(Pause.)

I think I set her off.

SCROGGS

(After a pause, turning to Dung and reaching out to hold her hand.)

You know... You know I couldn't live a day without you, sweetheart.

DUNG

(Smiling and kissing his forehead.)

Yes.

SCROGGS

(To Rae.)

Day I met her was the luckiest day of my life.

(RAE lifts her glass to them.)

RAE

Here's to love.

(SCROGGS lifts his glass in return.)

RAE

(To Dung.)

Do you drink?

DUNG

Oh, no.

RAE

Too bad.

SCROGGS

I drink.

RAE

What are you drinking?

SCROGGS

Bourbon. Brought a few cases.

(Pause.)

What kind of law did you practice?

RAE

Technology contracts. It made money. Enough money to get us in here.

(Pause.)

Before that I was a prosecutor. That was my dream job. Cook County.

SCROGGS

I was a shale driller.

(SCROGGS glances around.

TONY stands up and stretches.)

SCROGGS

(Quietly, to Rae.)

You ever get the feeling something's not right here?

RAE

What do you mean?

SCROGGS

I got a feeling. Like we still aren't safe. Not even here. There's something—

(SCROGGS stops as TONY approaches.

TONY reaches out his hand to RAE.)

TONY

(To Rae.)

Hey, listen. No hard feelings about all that, alright?

(RAE looks at TONY's hand.)

RAE

All what?

TONY

You know. Me and your lady. What can I say, I'm from Brooklyn. I speak my mind.

(RAE slowly stands up, still not shaking TONY's hand.)

TONY

(Lowering his hand.)

Don't get me wrong. I love women. And respect them. You know what they always used to say about Ginger Rogers. She did everything Fred Astaire did, except with a brain half the size, and a uterus making her act like a fucking nutjob.

RAE

Let me ask you something. This is going to sound like a joke, but I'm dead serious. Are you on drugs? Did you bring drugs in here?

(The lights dim. Ethereal music rises as visuals begin to play on one wall. Then a light rises on SHAWN. He wears an earpiece with a microphone. At some point during the presentation, REX returns. At another point, PALOMA returns and sits beside RAE.)

SHAWN

Path dependency. Have you ever wondered why the computer keyboard is laid out the way it is? The first keys. Q. W. E. R. T. Y. You can feel them in your fingers. Why QWERTY? Why not go in alphabetical order? A, B, C, D, E. It'd be easier for students to learn. But that's not the way things are. Why?

(Pause.)

Well, we looked back at the history of the keyboard, and we found that the creators of early typewriters *did* try putting the keys in alphabetical order. But people ended up typing so fast that the typebars—you guessed it—jammed. So they rearranged the keys to avoid jams.

(Pause.)

Of course, we don't use typewriters anymore. We use computers, and computer keyboards can't jam. Your smartphone doesn't even have a physical keyboard. Why don't we switch to putting the keys in alphabetical order?

(Pause.)

The answer is path dependency. The transaction costs for rearranging the keyboard at this point would be too high. Everyone who already knows how to type would have to relearn. All the keyboards on existing machines would have to be replaced, or people would have to learn how to switch back and forth between using the new and old layouts. If we were starting over from scratch, we would never arrange the keys the way they are on the modern keyboard. But so long as we're not starting over, we're locked into a suboptimal equilibrium. The rational choice is to continue on our current path, even if from a macro perspective, net-net, it's not what we would have chosen. Path dependency.

(Pause.)

What lessons can the QWERTY keyboard teach us about our situation, here in the silo? You might be surprised. Today, in our little republic of the silo, we *do* have an opportunity to start from scratch. We aren't yet locked into the suboptimal political equilibria of the last fifty, hundred, or even five hundred years. The decisions we make today will set us on a new path. What should that path be?

(Pause.)

Freedom. Innovation. Liberty. We have two big decisions to make. What is going to be our political hardware? And what is going to be our political software? Just like in the real world, there are a lot of options on the shelves, or we can try to manufacture our own console with our own secret sauce. And just like in the real world, our choice of hardware is going to affect what options we have on the software front, and vice versa. What are the leading options in the political marketplace? Liberal. Conservative. Libertarian. Marxist. Fascist. Theocracy? Look, like Rex said, we're not going to reach an agreement on those kinds of questions any time soon. So let's concentrate on what we can agree on: Freedom. Freedom is a kind of capital. What are the technologies for optimizing our capital investment? Let me propose a few elements.

(Pause.)

Number one: crypto-currency. Let's start fresh. Let's design our own currency, for use inside the silo. Free from governments, untraceable, blockchain security. Number two: networked preference aggregation. Why depend on representatives to make our decisions for us, when communication is just a click away? If a decision comes up, a ping on

your phone. Open the app, vote. Transparent, low transaction costs, eliminate agency problems. No more representative agent, no more capture. Number three: civic engagement dividends, social credits. You do the dishes, you get the tip. Want something done? List it in the marketplace. We use a social network to price contributions. How do we avoid cartels? New rule: you scratch your back, I scratch mine. More on that later. Number four: a negative interest rate on every crypto-currency account. Use it or lose it. No hoarding. Need more currency? See number three. Help out. Engage. Pay attention to price signals. Number five: a revolving basket of securitized insurance obligations. I'm skipping ahead... Number seven: secure intranet architecture... universal encrypted peer-to-peer protocols... bioengineering... Okay. Final slide. Freedom. No one would ever have wished for what has happened. No one. It was a tragedy. But now that it has happened, shouldn't we make the best of it? Big government is gone. We are starting from scratch, with a baseline of perfect freedom. Let's not build up big, oppressive government bureaucracies again. Let's lay the foundation for a world of individual freedom, innovation, and unlimited technological progress. It's time to believe... in the impossible.

(The lights rise. There is a long pause.)

TONY

Okay. I'd like to nominate myself to be association president under the bylaws.

SHAWN

Wait—what? Am I the only one—I mean—?

TONY

Don't get me wrong. It was a great presentation, Scott.

SHAWN

Shawn.

TONY

I really think you should set us up some securitized internet protocols for us, you know. But first things first, right? Now, some of you may know where I'm from. Some of you may not. I'm a Brooklyn boy, no surprise there, am I right? Went to Queens College, got a business and finance degree. I've spent my career on Wall Street, doing God's work, growing assets, making sure that capital goes where it needs to—

RAE

Before you keep talking, I'd like to nominate someone else. I nominate Rex. All in favor of having Rex as the association president?

(RAE, REX, SCROGGS, and JESSE raise their hands.)

RAE

All in favor of Tony?

(No one raises a hand.)

RAE

Any other nominations?

(Pause.)

Okay, Rex is president. Tony, you want to keep talking?

TONY

Well, congratulations to our new president. A fine choice. And I look forward to working with you, Sir.

SCROGGS

(Raising his glass.)

A toast to the president.

RAE

(Raising her glass.)

To the republic... of the silo.

TONY

(Pause.)

If you'll excuse me, gentlemen. Where's the shitter in here?

SHAWN

(Pause.)

Back there.

(TONY exits toward the bathroom.)

REX goes to SCROGGS and has another warm, quiet conversation with him while DUNG stands nearby.

SHAWN fixes himself a drink and then paces, thinking and talking to himself.)

PALOMA
(Quietly.)

Mom.

RAE

Yeah?

PALOMA

I need to get out of here.

RAE

I know, honey. I know.

PALOMA

No, I mean, now. Really. I'm freaking out. I can't—I can't stay trapped in here any longer. I need to go. We need to get out. Now.

RAE

We're safe in here.

PALOMA

But maybe if we go outside...

RAE

If we go outside, we die.

PALOMA

But they said on the news there was going to be a cure. Or a vaccine or something.

RAE

It spread too fast, honey.

PALOMA

We can't—just stay and never leave. I mean... Are we just going to stay here until we die?

(Pause.)

You think we're going to die.

RAE

I think I'm lucky for every minute I have with you. I love you so much.

PALOMA

(Pause.)

What if there's, like, a government lab somewhere, underground, and they sent the scientists down to work on a cure, and one day they're going to

come out and save us? We could—I'm sure they'd put something on the radio. We can keep listening to the emergency radio.

RAE

(Pause.)

I think it all just happened too fast.

(Pause.)

But what do I know. Maybe I've accepted too much.

(She swallows the last of her drink and starts to go to get another.)

PALOMA

Mom?

(Speaking quietly.)

Could you please not drink any more today?

REX

(Stepping forward.)

Folks. Alright. I think we're almost done here. We got the bylaws. It'll be my pleasure to serve as your president as long as you'll have me. Now, before we start having the weekly meetings, let's get back together in here tomorrow, same time, same place. I'm gonna get to work on double-checking the inventory—

(HEIDI enters with JOSÉ LUIS, ADRIANA, MIGUEL, and PALOMA.)

REX

Hello, Heidi. Would you like to introduce your guests?

HEIDI

You know my guests.

REX

And to what do we owe this pleasure at the owners' association meeting?

HEIDI

It's called constituent power. The rules are whatever the majority decides, right?

REX

We already went through this. You don't have a majority.

HEIDI

I do with the three of them and Paloma.

REX
 She's—how old? Fourteen?

HEIDI
 Twelve. She's old enough.

(REX looks at PALOMA, and then at MIGUEL.)

REX
 How old's that one?

PALOMA
 I have something to say.

RAE
 Honey.

SHAWN
 This is absurd.

PALOMA
 Please. Just listen, okay?

HEIDI
 Let her speak!

PALOMA
 I think they should be here. José Luis saved us. We'd be dead if he hadn't been there.

(Pause.)

None of you even know. There was, like, a gas station—in Missouri—and we saw a truck coming down the highway with these, like, men in uniforms, who—we thought they were soldiers, but when we waved them over, they pointed their guns at us. They tied up our wrists and...

(Pause.)

They shot my baby brother. In front of us. And they could have done anything to us. *Anything*, okay? But José Luis killed them. He killed them, and he saved us. We can trust—

REX
 Hold up—does he have a gun?

PALOMA
 Yeah, I think so. I mean, he had a gun. So?

(REX starts to fumble with his weapon in its holster. JESSE hesitates, looking at REX.)

JESSE

Boss?

PALOMA

Yeah, I mean—he had a gun. Yeah. So what?

RAE

(Overlapping)

Rex. Rex!

(As REX fumbles with the holster, JOSÉ LUIS draws his handgun and points it at the floor, gesturing with the other hand for REX to calm down.)

JOSÉ LUIS

Por favor. No—no—

(JESSE raises his hands.

To the side, TONY returns from the bathroom, rubbing his nose. He stops in the hallway, frozen, unseen by anyone.)

JOSÉ LUIS

(Forcefully, to Rex.)

Señor.

RAE

Rex! Stop!

(REX finally succeeds in removing his handgun from its holster. As soon as he begins to lift the weapon, JOSÉ LUIS fires several shots into REX, who jerks backward and collapses to the floor.

JOSÉ LUIS turns his aim to JESSE.

REX lies still while the infant in ADRIANA's arms shrieks.)

JOSÉ LUIS

(To Jesse.)

Baja el arma. Down. Down.

(ADRIANA tries to calm her child. HEIDI sits down on the couch, breathing rapidly and holding her belly.

JESSE slowly removes the shoulder strap of the AK-47 and places it on the ground.

ADRIANA whispers something in JOSÉ LUIS's ear. He replies defensively. They have an animated, barely audible exchange in which she seems to criticize him and he seems to defend himself. He keeps the gun loosely pointed at JESSE and the others throughout. HEIDI begins to cry. MIGUEL stands to ADRIANA's side, paralyzed, looking at REX's corpse.

TONY recovers from the shock of the gunfire. No one has seen him in the hallway that leads to the bathroom. After a moment, he draws his own gun from its holster and walks forcefully toward JOSÉ LUIS, apparently trying to pull the trigger.

But the gun does not fire. Before reaching the end of the hallway, TONY stops. He looks down at the gun and turns it back and forth. Finally, he notices the safety and flips it off.

JOSÉ LUIS and ADRIANA continue to argue, not seeing TONY.

TONY walks toward JOSÉ LUIS, less forcefully, but with the gun still raised, and he fires. JOSÉ LUIS turns, in shock, and pushes his wife out of the way as TONY fires several shots at him in rapid succession. JOSÉ LUIS falls to the floor as MIGUEL cowers.

No one moves. The only sounds are ADRIANA's and her baby's shrieking. MIGUEL slowly looks up.

RAE goes to JOSÉ LUIS and checks his pulse.)

RAE

(To Tony.)

He's dead. That wasn't...

(As the infant continues to shriek, RAE goes to ADRIANA and holds her, turning her away from JOSÉ LUIS's corpse.

DUNG starts to walk to RAE, but SCROGGS holds her back.)

RAE

(To Adriana.)

Shhh... *Cálmese. Cálmese. Ya se terminó. Está seguro. Cálmese.* Shhh...

(Eventually, ADRIANA exposes her breast and the infant latches. The room is quiet.)

HEIDI

(Holding her belly.)

Oh, God. I was so scared.

(RAE looks at HEIDI.)

HEIDI

(To Tony.)

Thank you. Thank you for protecting us.

(HEIDI begins to sob, holding her belly.)

ACT II

Scene 1

(The silo's infirmary. A hospital bed in the center of the room.)

JESSE and MIGUEL enter, carrying a large storage container. While they talk, they unpack the container and prepare the room for the arrival of HEIDI.

JESSE no longer has his rifle. He has grown a beard, but his head remains shaved.)

JESSE

I'll tell you this, it wasn't a decision I took lightly. A lot of my friends thought I was crazy. But the fact is, they didn't understand what I knew was coming. I remember when I first told my brother, he just looked me in the eye and didn't say a word. Just shook his head. Finally he says, why? Why betray your traditions? And I said, I already explained it to you, bro. The AK is just more reliable than an AR-15. Not to mention half the price. He called me a commie, shit-for-brains, all kinds of names. But I'll tell you this. If it's close quarters, urban warfare, if we're talking a no-shit urban race war, and the only thing standing between my family and some gang of thugs is a rifle that's been through who knows what since the shit hit the fan, I don't want to be worrying about—did I use the right lube? When I traded out the buffer weights, did I get the right variation? Is this motherfucker going to jam on me while I got some gorilla charging down on my wife with a switchblade—

MIGUEL

Where is your wife?

JESSE

My wife?

MIGUEL

I thought you said you have no family.

JESSE

I mean if I had a wife. Talking hypothetically. I couldn't start a family, knowing what I knew. I've known this shit was coming for years.

MIGUEL

The bugs?

JESSE

The time of sorrows. Man against beast. “And in those days men shall seek death, and won’t find it, and it’ll flee from them.” It’s all right there in the scriptures.

(Pause.)

I feel like I can trust you, Miguel. I mean, some people talk bad about Mexicans. Wetbacks, rapists. But you guys are Christian. Half-European at least. You got the heritage. You’re more Aryan than the Japanese, and everyone knows the Japanese are honorary white.

(Pause.)

You smell that?

MIGUEL

Smell what?

JESSE

I swear... There’s a fucking smell... Like rotting beef. It was in the basement too... You don’t smell that?

(Pause.)

Fucking nasty.

(MIGUEL stands in front of a box of supplies.)

MIGUEL

Should I take out all the things in the box?

JESSE

Fuck if I know. I never delivered a baby. That was not part of the Combat Lifesaver course.

MIGUEL

You were a doctor? In the Army?

JESSE

Nah. CLS, it’s all about stopping the bleeding. I was a 31 Bravo. MP. Military Police.

(Pause.)

I always knew something like this was coming. I knew there was gonna be dark times. Hell, that’s why I joined the Army. Training. I was gonna get all the training I could. Ranger School. Maybe become a long-tabber. Real high speed. Because I knew there would be a time when the dark and the

light would be joined in righteous battle. It's my calling to be in the fight. I've always had... a way of seeing.

(Pause.)

But my nigger first sergeant wouldn't let me go. Saw me reading something. I think he saw me. You ever read the Turner Diaries?

MIGUEL

No.

JESSE

You got to read it, son. Got to get yourself educated. The forces of darkness, the two beasts. The war we're in right now. It's *niggers* versus *us*. Point blank. *Niggers* versus *us*. *Niggers* versus *us*. That's what it's all about. Everything. Everything. White genocide. That's the line of operations. That's the center of gravity. I mean, you just look at them. They look like fucking apes, right? They're from the jungle. You can smell it. And they're trying to breed us all down... Of course, you got the affirmative action babies like Rae. They're the most dangerous ones of all.

(Pause.)

I had a girl cousin did a year as a missionary in Africa.

(Pause.)

Africa. A whole nigger continent. Can you imagine?

(HEIDI enters with TONY. He supports her as she walks slowly, breathing painfully. TONY wears a large firearm in a holster strapped to his leg. He seems more confident than he did before, even physically larger.)

TONY

It's gonna be alright, baby. Just breathe. You gotta breathe.

HEIDI

That's right. Just breathe.

TONY

(To Jesse.)

Hey, where's the fucking step stool?

JESSE

Roger.

(TONY starts to walk away, but HEIDI seizes his hand. JESSE searches for a stool.)

HEIDI

I need you to stand by me. Tell me everything is going to be okay.

TONY

It is.

HEIDI

Say it.

TONY

Everything's gonna be okay.

HEIDI

The baby's going to come out when it's ready. The head is going to come out first. And the umbilical cord... And it's going to be a healthy baby—oh shit—

(HEIDI crouches and groans.)

HEIDI

Contraction.

TONY

When did it start?

HEIDI

I don't know.

TONY

Is it still going?

HEIDI

(Standing.)

It stopped. It stopped.

TONY

(Looking at his watch.)

Okay, okay. So that was about... When was the last one?

HEIDI

I want to lie down.

TONY

(To Jesse.)

Hey—give me a hand.

JESSE
No step stool, boss.

TONY
Just give me a hand.

(TONY and JESSE help HEIDI onto the medical bed.)

TONY
Miguel, get me a pen and some paper.

(MIGUEL does not move.)

TONY
(Gesturing.)
Pen. Pen. Paper. Vaminos.

(MIGUEL nods and starts to search for a pen and paper.)

HEIDI
We're not going to need a C-section. There isn't going to be bleeding. Everything is going to be okay.

JESSE
Ma'am, if you start to bleed out, we got plenty of equipment here.

HEIDI
What?

JESSE
I'm a trained Combat Lifesaver. We've got disinfectant, gauze, thread for—you know, what's it called, sewing you up—

TONY
Stitches?

JESSE
Yes, Sir. That was not part of the course, as such, but we were taught—we received a lot of tactical training for the proper management of battlefield casualties, to include gaping wounds.

TONY
Jesse?

JESSE
Yes, Sir.

TONY
Jesse, I need you to shut the fuck up.

HEIDI
(Eyes closed.)
Please make it be a healthy baby. Please.

(HEIDI groans.)

TONY
Is that another one? Already?

HEIDI
I don't know. It's—

(HEIDI groans again.)

TONY
(To Jesse and Miguel.)
Okay, assholes, no more fucking around. It's time to get your heads out of your asses and into the game. Miguel, get me a fucking pen. Jesse—

(HEIDI groans loudly.)

TONY
Babe. Is that a contraction? Is that a contraction?

HEIDI
I can't tell. It's—there's something tight. I can feel it in my lower back.

TONY
Tell me what you need. Babe. Tell me. We're here for you.

HEIDI
I need a woman.

TONY
Rae?

HEIDI
Not fucking Rae. A woman. I need a woman here. You don't understand.

TONY
Help me understand. I want to understand.

HEIDI
Shh...

TONY
What am I not understanding, babe?

HEIDI
Don't talk.

TONY
But I want to understand. What do you want a woman—

HEIDI
Shut. Up.

(Pause.)
Bring Adriana.

TONY
Okay. Okay.
(To Jesse and Miguel.)
You heard her, monkeys. Fetch. Get Adriana.

JESSE
Both of us?

TONY
I don't fucking—yes, yes, both of you.

JESSE
Roger, we're tracking.

(JESSE exits, pushing MIGUEL along with him.)

TONY
Those fucking goons.
(Leaning in to Heidi.)
How you feelin', jellybean?

HEIDI
You're my jellybean.

TONY
I love you.

HEIDI
I love it when you say you love me.

TONY
We're gonna get through this. Together.

HEIDI
Are you sure?

TONY
What do you mean?

HEIDI
Are you sure we're going to be okay? Tell me we're going to be okay.

TONY
Of course. This is how it starts. This is how we rebuild the world.

HEIDI
What?

TONY
Having babies. Me and you.

(HEIDI moans.)

HEIDI
Okay, that's not—what I meant.

(We hear the sound of RAE's voice approaching from offstage, singing a slow, mournful song.)

TONY
You want me to get rid of her?

(HEIDI does not respond. RAE enters with PALOMA. RAE is very drunk. TONY glares at them.)

TONY
(To Rae.)
Now is not the time.

RAE

Huh? This is the perfect time. This is the only time. The time is *now*.

TONY

I want you to leave.

RAE

I'm here for the birth plan. We had a birth plan, right?

TONY

Rae, let it go. She doesn't want you here.

HEIDI

Let them stay.

RAE

Is that alright, Tony? Or are you gonna get out your big gun. Show everyone who's the alpha dog. Big boss-man.

TONY

Cut the shit, Rae. Sorry, Paloma.

PALOMA

I really don't care.

RAE

Boo, you need anything? Ice?

HEIDI

(To Rae.)

Come here. Hold my hand. Tony, get me some ice.

TONY

(Pause.)

You sure about this?

HEIDI

Yes. Go.

(TONY leaves. RAE walks to the side of HEIDI's bed and holds her hand.)

RAE

How you feeling?

Scared.

HEIDI

RAE

You know everything's going to be alright. You got this.
(Pause.)

Your body knows just what to do.

(HEIDI tenses up. She groans. RAE waits until HEIDI relaxes.)

RAE

How long you been having those?

HEIDI

Maybe an hour. Two hours. I can't remember.

RAE

How far apart?

HEIDI

Every few minutes now.

RAE

Boo, you're going to have a baby. A beautiful baby.
(Stroking her hair.)

That feel good, or you want me to stop?

(HEIDI sniffs.)

HEIDI

Are you drunk?

RAE

Course I'm drunk.

HEIDI

Jesus, Rae.

RAE

Just breathe.

(HEIDI closes her eyes and takes deep breaths. RAE holds her hand.)

RAE
That's right. You're doing great.

(While continuing to hold HEIDI's hand, RAE pulls a flask from her pocket and tries to unscrew the cap one-handed.)

PALOMA
Mom.

RAE
What?

PALOMA
Mom.

RAE
It's alright. Let me—boo, I could check and see how dilated you are.

HEIDI
Don't you need a speculum?

RAE
No, it's just the fingers. They check with the fingers. I think—I think I could do it. Just need to sterilize my hands.

HEIDI
Why did you have to be drunk today?

RAE
(Pause.)
I'm not too drunk to be here. I want to be here with you. Paloma, look and see if they got any rubber gloves.

(PALOMA begins to search. HEIDI moans, then gradually stops.)

HEIDI
When did you become such a fuckup?

RAE
You knew who I was.

(Pause.)
I think I deserve a little gratitude.

HEIDI

For what?

RAE

For gettin' us here. I got you here safe.

(Pause.)

You remember? You were all, that's a waste of money, we're never gonna use that... But I knew. I knew. You didn't understand, 'cause you—you always lived safe. But I knew.

HEIDI

You reek. Every time you open your mouth.

(Pause.)

Is it because of me and Tony?

RAE

Is what?

HEIDI

Why you have to drink—

RAE

I don't have to drink.

(HEIDI tenses up and groans. When she relaxes, RAE continues.)

RAE

The one thing I'll say about that slick motherfucker is if I was still a prosecutor, he'd be in prison.

HEIDI

He was defending us.

RAE

Huh-unh. No. We been through this. That was not self-defense, boo. That shit was a murder. Maybe I'd plea him down to manslaughter. But that shit was not self-defense.

HEIDI

He's a good man. You should hear him—he's different when we're alone.

RAE

Now José Luis shooting Rex—*that* was legit self-defense.

Please—don't—
HEIDI

(HEIDI tenses up, but mostly holds in her breath while RAE speaks.)

RAE
It's alright. I'm not saying your man should be charged. There are no laws here. There's no justice anymore. Adriana living alone, Miguel growing up without a father. There's no justice for them. There's just Tony. Because y'all decided he should be the one with the gun. Whatever he says, that's what justice is now.

HEIDI
Please stop. Please just stop.

RAE
It's alright. Who cares about Adriana and Miguel and whatever the baby's name is anyway? They're just brown-skinned illegals anyway, right? They're just refugees.

HEIDI
I can feel another one starting.

(RAE stops and waits. HEIDI groans.)

RAE
You want to try a different position?

HEIDI
Are you going to stop?

RAE
I'll stop. Yeah. I'm done.

HEIDI
Help me get on my knees.

(RAE helps HEIDI slowly turn onto her knees on top of the bed. HEIDI moans and rocks.)

HEIDI
Rub my back.

(RAE rubs HEIDI's back.)

Lower. Lower. There.

HEIDI

(RAE continues rubbing HEIDI's back.
With her other hand, she takes out the flask
and tries to take another drink.)

Mom.

PALOMA

It's alright. I'm alright.

RAE

I think you're jealous. You wish you were a leader. Like him.

HEIDI

A leader? Being a leader is—you lead by making sacrifices for the people
you love. What sacrifice did you ever make?

RAE

Mom, she's in labor!

PALOMA

I never forced you to quit...

HEIDI

Bullshit.

RAE

Could you please stop arguing? Please.

PALOMA

You liked the money... The prestige...

HEIDI

(RAE scoffs.)

Such bullshit. Listen—

RAE

Will you both please stop fighting?

PALOMA

RAE

I know, I know, honey. She's—she's doing this on purpose. Settling scores because she knows if I say anything, I'm the bad guy.

(RAE has another drink while HEIDI groans again and tenses up. PALOMA goes to her and places a hand on her back.)

HEIDI

Not now!

PALOMA

Sorry.

(After a few more seconds of breathing, HEIDI relaxes.)

HEIDI

Now.

(PALOMA rubs HEIDI's back.)

HEIDI

Why don't you... just say it... You blame me...
(Pause.)

You blame me.

RAE

(Pause.)

Don't.

HEIDI

You think it was my fault. But it wasn't my fault. I will not accept...
(Pause, breathing painfully.)

Paloma, help me lie down. I want to lie down before the next one comes.

(While PALOMA helps HEIDI turn over onto her back, RAE stares at HEIDI coldly.

HEIDI moans again, then stops and seems to relax.)

HEIDI

There was no way I could've known.

RAE

We had no protection! I told you—I *told* you. We shouldn't trust *anyone*. I *told* you—

HEIDI

It was your decision to stop at the gas station.

RAE

My decision?

(Pause.)

You're a fucking monster. You've always been...

(TONY enters carrying a cup of ice,
followed by JESSE and MIGUEL.)

PALOMA

She's in labor. Can't we all just—

RAE

She knows exactly what she's doing.

TONY

Hey—Heidi, you okay?

HEIDI

I'm fine.

(Pause.)

I do not apologize.

RAE

He would be alive. He would be alive.

TONY

Hey! Shut it. What the fuck?

RAE

My baby.

TONY

Now is not the time!

RAE

(To Heidi.)

Say his name. Say it. Say his name.

HEIDI

(Overlapping.)

Oh, that's right. Let it all come out—

TONY

(Overlapping, to Heidi.)

You want me to make her leave? You just say the word, I can get rid of her.

RAE

(To Heidi.)

They left him to die in the dirt. Like meat. I'm going to be sick—
(She bends down.)

HEIDI

(To Tony.)

Tony, she's frightening me. Make her go.

PALOMA

Mom, let's go.

RAE

I will say whatever the fuck I want to say!

PALOMA

Mom!

(HEIDI moans loudly, silencing the others.)

RAE

(Standing.)

Let's go. Paloma.

PALOMA

I want to stay.

HEIDI

(Recovering.)

That's alright, honey. Rae, you can go back and drink by yourself. Paloma can stay.

RAE

(Pause.)

You win, Heidi. You always win.

(RAE leaves as HEIDI moans again.)

TONY
(To Heidi.)

Hey. I got you the ice.

(HEIDI looks around.)

HEIDI

Where is she.

TONY

Who?

HEIDI

Adriana.

TONY

They said she's still feeling sick.

HEIDI

Fuck. Fuck.

TONY

What can I get you, jellybean.

HEIDI

Drugs.

TONY

What kind of drugs?

HEIDI

Anything.

TONY
(To Jesse.)

What kind of pharmacy we got here?

JESSE

Combat medicine. Morphine, ketamine. Epinephrine.

HEIDI

Morphine.

TONY

Can you take morphine? Won't it—what about the baby?

HEIDI
Bring me fucking morphine! I can't...

(HEIDI moans.)

JESSE
It's still in the basement.

PALOMA
Do you want some more ice?

HEIDI
Fuck off.

(HEIDI throws a pillow off the bed.)

HEIDI
Get me that pillow!

(PALOMA picks it up and tries to tuck it under HEIDI, who throws it on the floor again and moans.)

TONY
Jellybean, I really don't think—I don't think you wanna mix up a baby with morphine. I mean, I've never heard of that.

HEIDI
When have you heard of anything?
(Groaning.)
You don't know anything...

TONY
Let's just breathe—

HEIDI
Morphine!

(MIGUEL clears his throat.)

MIGUEL
Miss? I have drugs.

(All turn to MIGUEL. HEIDI moans.)

My father had drugs. MIGUEL

 What drugs? TONY

 For selling. MIGUEL

 He was a drug dealer? TONY

 No, no. To protect us. Outside. MIGUEL
(Pause.)
 For buying things.

 Where are the drugs? TONY

 In a backpack. MIGUEL
(Gesturing.)
 In the basement.

(HEIDI groans.)

 Something's not right—I can feel it— HEIDI

(HEIDI groans.)

DUNG approaches and begins massaging
HEIDI and whispering.)

HEIDI
(Gasping.)
 I need to get it—out of me—

TONY
(Pointing to Jesse.)
 You. Go with the boy and get the drugs. Go.

HEIDI
 Morphine. Morphine.

TONY
(To Jesse.)

Fucking move!

JESSE
How about you show me a little respect?

(TONY hesitates.)

(HEIDI starts to yell again. DUNG tries to soothe her.)

HEIDI
Please... Please... I can't...

TONY
(To Jesse.)
Get the morphine, you fucking meathead!

(JESSE does not move.)

MIGUEL
I can get it.

JESSE
No.

HEIDI
Something is wrong! I can feel...

(HEIDI screams, then quiets down and continues breathing. DUNG gently opens her legs and looks between them.)

TONY
(To Dung.)
Is the baby coming out?

(DUNG shakes her head.)

TONY
(To Jesse.)
The fuck are you still here for! I told you to go! That's an order.

JESSE

(Pause.)

Why do you get to order me around?

TONY

Because I give the orders here, because I'm the one that used my gun after you fucked up. After you showed that when the chips are down, you're a coward. That's why I give the orders.

JESSE

Fuck you.

(HEIDI moans on and off throughout the growing conflict between JESSE and TONY. DUNG and PALOMA try unsuccessfully to help her.)

TONY

Do your fucking job!

HEIDI

Stop yelling...

TONY

I'm sorry, jellybean. I'm sorry.

JESSE

You need to show me some respect.

TONY

Shut! The fuck! Up! You want to see respect? Respect my fucking gun. I've got the gun, I've got the keys, I've got the woman, and you've got fucking nothing. Because I keep people safe. That's why I have the gun and you don't, you skinhead nutjob. Now I decide who eats, who drinks, who takes a shit, who stays, who goes, and if I ask you to kiss my fucking ring, you kiss my fucking ring. You do what I tell you. Now go get the fucking morphine. And the backpack.

JESSE

I'm not your gofer.

MIGUEL

I'll get it.

JESSE

No.

(DUNG peers between HEIDI's legs.)

TONY

Excuse me?

MIGUEL

Let me get it.

JESSE

No. This needs to get settled.

DUNG

(To Tony.)

There is blood. No baby.

TONY

(Drawing gun.)

Get the morphine. Now.

JESSE

(Pause.)

Watch yourself.

TONY

Is that a threat? Say that again.

JESSE

Watch yourself.

TONY

You don't think I'll do it?

JESSE

No.

TONY

Try me, asshole.

JESSE

Maybe I will.

(HEIDI, who has been silent, lets out a laugh.)

TONY

(To Jesse.)

You hear that? She's laughing at you. You fucking joke.

HEIDI

Not at him... At both of you...

(TONY looks at HEIDI.)

HEIDI

Men...

(TONY musters his courage and points the gun at JESSE.)

TONY

Alright. End of negotiation. Get the fucking drugs. Go.

JESSE

Or what?

(HEIDI tenses up and lets out a sharp groan.)

HEIDI

No... I'm...

(HEIDI turns, trying to cover herself. She struggles for a moment, then relaxes.)

HEIDI

Dung, I need you to clean me up. I had an accident. Down there.

PALOMA

I can do it.

HEIDI

No, she can do it...

(Taking a sharp breath.)

She cleans up... after the old man...

(DUNG does not answer.)

TONY

(To Jesse.)

Get the drugs.

JESSE
Why should I?

TONY
She's in pain. Isn't that enough?

JESSE
What do I care about some kike bitch in pain.

(HEIDI takes in another sharp breath, then sits up slightly.)

HEIDI
Tony. Tony. Don't—give him the gun. Tony. Listen to me. Don't...

(HEIDI lies back and writhes in pain.)

TONY
What is this?

JESSE
You're being relieved of command.

TONY
Enough. You take the kid and get the drugs, or I cut off your food. One week, no food.

JESSE
Give me the gun.

TONY
Fuck you I'm gonna give you the gun. You think I'm a fucking idiot?

HEIDI
Don't—don't—

TONY
I'm not giving him the gun.

JESSE
It's alright. Just give it to me.

(Pause.)
This doesn't have to escalate. No one has to get hurt.

TONY

Okay. Here's the deal. Miguel. I want you to—I want you to tie up Jesse. We don't have time for this shit right now. Get a roll of tape, and I want you to tape up his hands and his feet together, okay? Now.

(JESSE holds up his hand toward MIGUEL.)

JESSE

(To Tony.)

You're not his master.

HEIDI

Don't give him—the gun—

TONY

Dung. You do it. Tape him. I'll give you and Scroggs double rations.

JESSE

No one is going to obey you, Tony. No one is afraid of you. Give me the gun.

HEIDI

Don't... Don't...

(JESSE starts to walk toward TONY.)

TONY

I'll shoot you. I swear to Christ, I will fucking shoot you.

JESSE

Then shoot me.

HEIDI

Shoot him! Do it! Don't—

(HEIDI groans. TONY keeps the gun pointed at JESSE, but does not shoot.)

TONY

Hasn't there been enough death?

(JESSE walks up to TONY and takes the gun from his hand.)

That's right. That's right.

JESSE

You fucking idiot...

HEIDI

(JESSE checks to see that there is a round in the chamber, then holds the gun to TONY's forehead.)

JESSE

Get down on your knees.

TONY

You're not gonna fucking shoot me.

(JESSE fires a round into the floor and then returns it to TONY's forehead.)

JESSE

Get down on your knees.

TONY

(Pause.)

Fine. Whatever.

(TONY starts to lower himself to his knees.)

JESSE

Look at you, you fucking faggot.

TONY

Jesse.

(TONY starts to move, and JESSE shoots him in the head. His body collapses to the floor.)

HEIDI

Oh God... Oh God...

(JESSE stands over TONY's body. He thinks for a moment, then shoots TONY repeatedly in the chest and skull.

HEIDI groans.)

No. No. No. No.

HEIDI

(JESSE walks to HEIDI and shoots her in the head.

PALOMA begins to scream.

RAE enters. She looks around.)

Paloma. Paloma! Come here.

RAE

(RAE walks over to PALOMA and holds her, trying to quiet her and guide her out of the room. RAE avoids looking at JESSE. When they are near the door, JESSE speaks.)

Stop.

JESSE

Everyone stays here.

(Long pause. Exhausted.)

ACT II

Scene 2

(In the basement storage area. RAE sits in an otherwise empty storage cage.)

MIGUEL lies on the floor outside the cage. He wears warpaint on his face.

RAE sometimes struggles to speak. She is in pain.)

RAE

Where do you think he is right now? He could be with your mother. Your sister. Is your sister still alive? The baby? Or has he killed her? If I was you... I'd find a way to protect myself. Because he's going to kill you all. Eventually. You know that, don't you? You can't trust him. You can't trust him. He's not like you and me. He's sick. He likes to hurt people... It turns him on. You know that. But something stops you...

(Pause.)

Do you think you're like him? Did he make you think that? You're not like him, Miguel. I can see good in you.

(Pause.)

What you did to me, I forgive you. He made you do it. He's trying to make you his soldier... Trying to bring you into his gang, I saw that shit all the time when I was a prosecutor. It's basic shit... You make the new recruit get his hands dirty. Get jacked in. No turning back... But you can turn back. That wasn't you. You don't have to listen to him. It's not too late. If you help me, we can save them... You can save her. Your mother, your sister. Your baby sister. Think of her. Think of her smile. He will kill her. That's who he is. Unless you stop him. And I can help you. Together, we can stop him. We can end this...

(Pause.)

I bet he gave you some drugs too. Child soldier 101. He wants to get you hooked. Was it meth? That shit is poison. I could show you pictures. Makes people crazy. Paranoid delusions, sexual violence... I don't blame you, Miguel. I've seen this shit a thousand times. From the other end... He's closing the net on you. He's putting you in chains...

MIGUEL

Stop talking.

RAE

I'm not asking you to agree with me. I'm just asking you to think. Make up your own mind. Think about your mother. She loves you. It's not too

late for her... Get his keys. Next time he's passed out, get his keys. We'll open up the armory. We'll end it... Think about your sister's smile. The person she could be. It's not too late for her... What are you afraid of? You think if you help me, I'll turn on you? Is that it? Fine. You get the keys, you open up the weapons cage yourself... You take care of him. End it... But you don't have much time. He's just going to keep getting worse...

(Pause.)

You don't need to be afraid of me. What I'll do if you let me out. If I was a prosecutor—if there was a court here—I wouldn't even have charged you. Would've said decline to prosecute. Not just because you're a kid. It wasn't your choice... You can look at me. You don't need to be ashamed. You did it because Jesse threatened you. What you did to me, you did because Jesse made you. You did what you had to do to live. I don't blame you. You're a good kid, Miguel. I don't blame you... Think of your little sister's smile. And your mother. He is going to kill them, and you'll have to live with that forever.

MIGUEL

He's not going to kill them.

RAE

What makes you think that?

MIGUEL

He hates you because you're a black gorilla. Fuck you.

RAE

(Pause.)

You don't think he hates you, and your mother, and sister? He's a fucking Nazi. You're dogs to him... And the more of that meth he smokes, I promise you, the more he's going to look at all of you and see something he doesn't want around.

MIGUEL

We're Christians.

(RAE is silent.)

RAE

You want to talk about the Bible? Let's talk about the Bible. Let's talk Jesus, and what kind of a—

(A loud noise as SHAWN enters. He has shaved his head and eyebrows. Although he is mostly calm, occasionally some powerful anxiety or distraction seems to surface.)

SHAWN

Miguel. Jesse needs to talk to you.

(MIGUEL looks at SHAWN warily.)

MIGUEL

It's okay. I'll stay.

SHAWN

No, he said you need to go to him. Now. I'm supposed to watch her.

(After a moment, MIGUEL starts to leave.)

SHAWN

Be careful. I think he thinks you're holding out.

MIGUEL

Holding out?

SHAWN

He thinks you're hiding it. The meth.

(MIGUEL shakes his head and leaves.)

RAE

(Pause.)

I just don't get it. Why are you helping Jesse?

(Pause.)

You're smarter than any of us, but you let him order you around. Why?

SHAWN

You can save your breath. I'm not going to let you out of the cage.

RAE

I know you're not going to do that. I'm just curious. Why are you letting some dumb jock bully you, treat you like shit?

(Pause.)

Don't tell me you believe Jesse's nonsense too.

SHAWN

What nonsense?

RAE

The end-times. The ark. This is all God's retribution for the gay weddings.

SHAWN

Oh, he's far beyond that now.

(Laughing.)

He's way, way beyond that.

RAE

He's going to kill you. You know that, right?

SHAWN

He can't kill me. He needs me.

(RAE laughs.)

SHAWN

I fix things. The network. Without me, he couldn't run the silo.

RAE

You should be running the silo. Not him.

(Pause.)

I can help you.

SHAWN

You had your chance.

(Pause.)

If you had supported my proposal, none of this would have happened. You wouldn't be where you are.

RAE

Yeah, we should've done your plan. I always liked your plan. It's not too late. We could do it—together—I can help you—

SHAWN

Jesse is a disruptor. He's making something new. I respect that.

RAE

(Pause.)

He's going to kill you. Just like he killed Tony. And Heidi. And Scroggs.

SHAWN

I like having Dung all to myself.

RAE

But you don't have her. You don't. Not as long as Jesse is in control. He could take her away from you any time he wants. That's why you need to be in charge. To protect yourself. I can help you.

SHAWN

You must think I'm an idiot. If you think there's some combination of sounds that could come out of your mouth that would cause my body to stand up and let you out of the cage.

(Pause.)

It's like you think if you show me what Jesse is doing, I'll help you. But I know exactly what Jesse is doing.

(Pause.)

I'm a rational actor. I've always been a rational actor, we all are. But certain constraints on my preferences have now been removed. In the new order. I used to be inhibited. I falsified my preferences, even to myself. Now, in the new order, I no longer deny that my utility function contains a preference for a certain amount of violence. Domination. Not an unlimited amount. But at the margins, I prefer to see others in pain. Dung, for example. My goal is to arrive at an optimal level of violence.

(Pause.)

It's a fact that women, statistically speaking, care more about people, while men care more about things. And in many ways, I think we can agree, violence turns human beings into things. Turns what was a person into a thing, or something in pain—makes us—I lost my train of thought. Pain. Takes away speech. Like babies. Ultimately things. And the violent actor is a kind of thing. A force. What was I saying?

(RAE does not answer.)

SHAWN

I am a self-interested machine acting based on the calculation of my self-interest, subject to various behavioral biases. We all are.

RAE

Has it occurred to you, in your rational calculations, that your newly revealed preferences may have something to do with the meth you've been smoking?

SHAWN

What makes you think I've been taking meth?

RAE

Well, you shaved off your eyebrows.

SHAWN

(Pause.)

Yes, I found that I preferred to have no body hair. Body hair is dirty. But that has nothing to do with meth.

RAE

Aren't you worried that Jesse will use it all up? Or he'll keep it all, and he won't let you take any more.

SHAWN

I can see what you're doing, Rae, and—again—well done for trying to talk your way out of this—but I'm afraid you're misunderstanding. I'm not an addict. I'm not—dependent. I've taken it several times. As an experiment. I enjoyed it. But I don't need it. I'm not addicted.

RAE

But you enjoyed it.

SHAWN

I think of it. Sometimes. Perhaps not an optimal amount of the time. But that's natural. That's a natural response. And the use itself remains optimal, net-net... net... Given the quantity of—enjoyment. And not only that—it's opened...

RAE

Opened your eyes to the truth? You're starting to sound like Jesse.

SHAWN

Now you're twisting—my words. Like—I can see what you're doing. Trying to make it sound like the meth is—fucking with my head. But I'm not high now—I'm not—well, of course, I am thinking of it *now* because we're talking about it. Exogenous variable. But—what were you saying? You were saying something. You said something—about Jesse.

RAE

He could take it all for himself. And then there would be none for you.

SHAWN

He—wouldn't do that.

RAE

He'll take it all, and then there'll be none. And he'll laugh at you. Before he kills you.

(Pause.)

I can help you.

SHAWN

Even if I decided to act, I wouldn't need your help.

RAE

Two is stronger than one. I'm no genius like you, but I'm smart enough. You could be in command, and I could be your deputy. We could start over with your plan. Like you said—a fresh start. You could be free of him. And what's left would be yours.

SHAWN

Jesse is a means to an end.

RAE

Think about it. You're rational. Why share the meth? You could have it all. And I'm not gonna take any. I'm too afraid.

SHAWN

I'm not listening to you. I've had to put up with people like you my entire life.

(Pause.)

Do you know how old I was when I lost my virginity? I don't want to waste my time in bullshit power struggles with women anymore. And that's why it feels so, so good, so right, to be here now, with you in there, and to be able to say—I don't need anything from you. And you're nothing to me. You think you can trick me? Change my mind? Get me to turn? You don't have a clue. I don't want you out here. I don't want you to exist. Some women—not all women are like you. Dung isn't like you. She's—soft. What was I saying?

(SHAWN stops and listens.)

SHAWN

He's coming.

RAE

It's not too late.

SHAWN

If you say anything—

(The door opens and JESSE enters. His beard is longer, but his head remains shaved. He pulls PALOMA behind him on a chain. She crawls on all fours, heavily drugged. In his other hand, JESSE carries a plastic bag.

JESSE's skin is covered with scabs, and he sometimes scratches himself. He wears

TONY's firearm and holster strapped to his leg. He also wears a sheathed knife.

MIGUEL follows behind them with DUNG.)

JESSE

That smell.

(Pause.)

The rotting...

(JESSE moves and speaks as though in a daze. He turns to SHAWN, noticing him for the first time.)

JESSE

(To Shawn.)

You. I need to talk to you.

(Turning to Rae.)

First... feed the nigger-cage.

(JESSE drops PALOMA's chain and walks to RAE's cage. He takes out keys and opens the padlock on the cage door, then opens the door. He removes SCROGGS' severed head from the plastic bag and throws it into the cage. RAE does not react.)

JESSE

Jungle meat.

SHAWN

(Recoiling.)

I thought you said you put him in the incinerator.

JESSE

Most of him...

(SHAWN begins to retch.)

JESSE

(Pause.)

She's harder than you. Faggot.

(JESSE stares at SHAWN, waiting.)

JESSE
You.
(Pause.)
You lied to me.

SHAWN
What? When?

JESSE
Drugs.

SHAWN
I didn't take your drugs. No one took them. I keep trying to tell you—you used them. That's all.
(RAE stands at the edge of her cage.)

RAE
Shawn, you need to confess. Tell him what you told me.

SHAWN
What are you talking about?

RAE
Tell him.

SHAWN
(To Jesse.)
She's obviously trying to trick you. Don't listen to her.

RAE
Do I need to tell him?

SHAWN
This is absurd.

RAE
You can't keep doing this.

JESSE
Doing what?

RAE
Shawn. Tell him.

SHAWN

Don't listen to her. She's going to try to turn you against me. She's lying—

RAE

Shawn. It'll be better if it comes from you. Confess. Repent.

SHAWN

She's trying—

JESSE

(Silencing Shawn.)

No, no.

(To Rae.)

You tell me.

RAE

(To Shawn.)

He'll forgive you. It's not too late. Please.

JESSE

(To Rae.)

No. Tell me what he told you.

RAE

He's poisoning you.

SHAWN

Come on, you don't really—

JESSE

(To Shawn.)

Do not speak!

RAE

He put something in the drugs, Jesse. Some chemical. That's why—your skin. The scabs. It's a poison in the drugs.

(Pause.)

He's trying to kill you, so he can have the rest of the drugs for himself. He hid the meth, and he wants it all for himself.

(JESSE turns to SHAWN.)

JESSE

Is that true?

Of course it's not true.

SHAWN

(JESSE walks to SHAWN and places his hands on SHAWN's head, then tries to hold open SHAWN's eyelids with his fingers and peer inside.)

JESSE
I can see... your thinking... Can you... see mine?

SHAWN
(Pause, struggling to remain calm.)
Can I speak?

JESSE
The rot inside you... The stench...

(SHAWN breaks free from JESSE.)

SHAWN
Man, you're—the meth is fucking with your head. It's making you paranoid.

RAE
Shawn, he knows. He knows. Repent.

SHAWN
Shut the fuck up.

(JESSE takes his knife out of its sheath.)

JESSE
I was chosen... not you... Stop doing that... I can tell—I can hear what you're doing...

(JESSE starts to pace around the room.)

JESSE
I can hear what you're doing.
(Pause, waving the knife.)
No. Stop listening! Get—out... You will not... No! No! No!
(To Shawn.)
Everything is becoming digitized... You know the frequencies—stop!
(Clutching his head, he groans.)
I got rid of the bugs... Stop doing that!

(JESSE stops near PALOMA and waves his knife at SHAWN, clutching his head with the other hand.)

JESSE

Stop—that. Stop! Get out of my head! Get out! Get out of my head!

(PALOMA lunges toward JESSE's arm and bites it. JESSE screams and drops the knife, which PALOMA then grabs and uses to stab him in the stomach. They struggle, but PALOMA keeps a fierce hold on the knife, twisting it. JESSE collapses to the ground, spasming.)

FADE TO BLACK.

(The lights come up on PALOMA kneeling over JESSE, holding the knife. She breathes heavily.

No one else has moved.)

FADE TO BLACK.

(The lights come up on PALOMA stabbing JESSE in the chest and belly repeatedly, disemboweling him.)

FADE TO BLACK.

(The lights come up on PALOMA weeping, still holding the knife.)

RAE

Give me the keys, honey.

(Pause.)

The keys. Can you hear me? Paloma. Get me the keys.

FADE TO BLACK.

(The lights come up on RAE, outside of the cage, holding PALOMA while she sobs.)

FADE TO BLACK.

(The lights come up.

RAE is now standing and facing the others. She holds JESSE's gun at her side, pointed at the ground.

PALOMA remains seated, no longer sobbing.

A moment of stillness.)

RAE

Alright, let's talk.

(Pause.)

No more guns. Let's talk.

(RAE does not move.)

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF PLAY