

Mine Eyes

by

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DESCRIPTION

In this one-person play, the narrator tells a cautionary tale about his involvement with the American militia movement—as their P.R. person. Figuring that he, an out-of-work M.B.A. with an interest in advertising, could sell ideas just like any other commodity, he finds out the consequences of his actions ripple out farther than he ever thought.

CHARACTERS

ALBERT LAWRENCE TEKTON, late 30s, early 40s

SETTING

Run-down studio apartment in a city (can be furnished as the director desires). The apartment itself is kept neat, but it is clear it is not upscale. If there is an abundance of anything, it is books: the man has been reading for the last two years.

TIME

Present

TECHNICAL NEEDS

Military handgun

NOTES

The play is written to take place in a theatre where the actor can have direct and physical contact with the audience. The audience is a “reporter” who has tracked TEKTON down for an interview; the actor should talk directly to the audience.

The actor and director should also come up with some way to indicate the different “characters” TEKTON plays throughout the play: by adding a piece of clothing, using an object, and/or a physical gestures and movement. These devices should be natural, in that they use objects and motions found in TEKTON's environment and character. A change in lighting can also be used.

Whenever possible, movements that convey the narrative should be well--choreographed and economical, such as in the account of the fight between the two girls and the black man. Convey as much of the words through actions as possible.

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SCENE 1

Modest though run-down (but not decrepit) studio apartment in a city. A reading light stands next to a reading chair, and the light is on. At the back of the apartment is a window. The coloring of the window will change from late morning—say, 4 AM—to dawn. There can also be various items around which TEKTON can use: a loaf of bread, peanut butter, bottle of water, a box of plastic wrap, etc. Seated at a table is TEKTON, cleaning a firearm. On the table is a box for the gun.

Make you nervous? No? Sure? Good. Because this is—cleansing—for me. Ah, you got the pun. So shoot me. Metaphorically, of course. This— This is how I—focus during these long winter seminars called “my evenings alone.” How I remind myself, re-make my mind. Oop, no questions yet—all in the fullness of time, in a timely manner, time wounds all heels, etcetera. And no tape recorder—no, no. No, you will have to work without that net. You'll find it's invigorating!

TEKTON indicates the gun.

Sure? Not nervous? Just checking. Just checking your temperature.

I can't believe you tracked me down and exhumed me. All the real garbage in the world to dig through, and your editors stick you with Albert Lawrence Tekton, V.P.T. V.P.T. Very. Past. Tense. A has-been who never was. I haven't worked the Armageddon circuit in, what, a coon's age—I take it you've plowed through your newspaper's morgue—but apparently a coon's age is not enough time for my complete and utter deletion. I'm still findable—too bad.

All right—one question.

I have been doing honest work. I have earned my money and paid my taxes and at least not wasted too much of the earth's patience. I bag groceries. Very therapeutic. I clerk at a liquor store. Very refreshing. On weekends I clean office buildings—disgustingly insightful, that. I am the very model of the “working poor.” Very uplifting, all, yes, “good news” news—but hardly newsworthy. So, another question—a better question.

I let you in for company, that's why. Not many—no, not many at all—get to see me do this. And not many—actually, let's see—none—get to see me do this at 4 AM. Don't worry—no sexual innuendo about barrel size, caliber, whatever. Very literal these days—it's safer. And speaking of safety: Anyone know you're here? Good—set the escape plan! Rock on! That's what I'd do, too, if I were here with me, which I am every day—though no escape plan yet, you're ahead of me on that one. Oop—Simon says no more questions.

Sits there, flummoxed: What now? How can I get this back on track? How can I get the story? All about the story, getting the story—all about the product. All right—he decides

on a little pity—after all, she's come at his pre-dawn/post-darkest hour appointment time, on the verge of a new day's light. Who knows—perhaps you are an angel. Put the pad down. I put the gun down—you put the pad down. Good. Put the pen on top of it. Angle it a bit—a little more. There. You follow so well! We have now both abandoned our weapons. I am now going to feed you. And you will listen.

Something here, perhaps a lighting change, to indicate a change in TEKTON—some earlier incarnation of himself, though paler and more thinned out than it had been in the original.

You've heard the joke about Timothy McVeigh making Oklahoma City a “boom town”? Of course, I wasn't surprised about Oklahoma City—you shouldn't have been either. Many short fuses out there—

A few small explosive sounds punctuate the next words.

—and it's not will there be another, but when, because we've bred our own domestic jihad-makers. The militia movement, once named Montana, may have flushed itself down the toilet by stupidity and excess, but the American mind that made it once tick still ticks. Ticks. Ticks.

I want you to try to imagine something, my ink-stained wretch. Eyes closed—assume the imagination position. Completely closed! Now—you. This is you. Imagine you: a simple citizen, a hard-working if reluctant payer of taxes, not much money in pocket or bank. But your one great anchor, the thing that just July 4th's your heart, is that you are one of the “folks,” one of the “people,” as in “We. The.” In one of the greatest countries, this great country of ours!

But around you—it is all crumbling. Some retard burns a flag, and the courts? “No problem—artistic expression.” The cities? In meltdown. The schools? Free-fire zones. Your paycheck (if still have one)? Barely half the man it was 30 years ago. And the taxes! While CEOs gag on golden parachutes as companies “right-size” people into their graves and export our jobs to slaves willing to work for corn meal. Politicians—your government, the people you hired to care for your democracy—just a big bunch of fubars—eff'd up beyond all repair.

Don't be fooled by the post-9/11 message that the country now speaks with one voice, beats with one heart, ties one yellow ribbon 'round one old oak tree—that the axis of evil spins around a dark pre-modern Islamic heart. You know that's not true. Waco and the Branch Davidians, Ruby Ridge and the Weavers, Guatemala '54, Chile '73, Vietnam, Panama, Grenada—now chuck in Afghanistan and Iraq twice, Iran next, then on to Damascus—imprisonments without lawyers, your privacy in shreds—none of that's changed, it's still going on, it's all part of the same game: to steal pride and power from the common people and turn what is great and glorious into trash.

Moves in more closely with his voice.

So—American Dream? Hah! American Nightmare. Everything right and good now trashed and smithereened, sold to the highest bidder. And what do scribblers like you do about it? Pen mightier than the sword? Too busy pimping to pay attention, just pushing out the product and looking for the next rung up. I didn't tell you to open your eyes yet! You're still blind for me!

Eyes closed! You listen! The seethe, the bile, the pure anger of betrayal— What would you do with that in your gut? You might think—and brood—and search for answers. Not all of it by chance—has to be a rhyme to it. And then—yes! Of course! There is an US, the good US—You. Ess.—get it?—and there is a THEM—them—the Money Power or the elite or the politicians sucking corporate dick or the one-worlders at the U.N., the parasite multinationals and the gutless media, the hordes leaking through the borders—and suddenly, this lightbulb called “Conspiracy,” shining a constant and befriending light.

TEKTON picks up the gun; he must do something with it that indicates to the “reporter” that he has it in his hand. The following lines are said with gentle force, an ironic underscore to the vitriol. TEKTON might whisper the “bam”s once or twice in the ear of the “reporter.”

Once this “truth” emerges—this revelation—something makes sense—it demands action. I must protect the Constitution's Second Amendment to protect my country. Bam! I must study and learn so that the fubars won't fool me again. Bam! I must dig down, root out, to find how deep the rot goes. Bam! I must learn military self-discipline to protect myself. Bam! I must prepare myself for Armageddon for I have seen Waco and Iraq. Bam! I wait in the dark. Bam! “Boom town.” End of syllogism.

TEKTON puts the gun down.

Sense, yes? I don't care if you agree—just, make sense? I think it does. I think it hangs together. I think it is a philosophy, this bone-weary sadness at the loss of so much that is good. This ache for the answer. This desire to protect. I'll bet even you, professionally objective, have felt that. We all have some version of this hunger inside us, don't we? Hunger for justice. Hunger for peace—of mind, of heart, of gut. We're not that far apart. The militia, Montana and otherwise, maybe, just maybe, aren't quite the aliens we—you—make them out to be.

You may now open your eyes.

You may now pick up your sword.

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SCENE 2

Look at you write! Burns up the ink! However, I can't wait for you. I can't. Not now, so do your best. I am a little—ashamed at what I just did—a little ashamed to show you that's all—just that, that's all I would need to work in the wedge. Just enough truth for seasoning—demon politicians, cesspool of corruption, economic rape—I had my checklists—Column A, Column B—and the smoky mirrors did the rest. Selective truth equals the artistic lie. In other words, the efficient principles of marketing. And like all good marketeers, I would then trust the pain and loneliness and desperation of the listeners to do the rest of my deceiving for me.

Background you've got, right? A.L.T., the front person—the brand-tested face that spoke the speech and sold the party line. Just testing your study habits. I was tight with the Church of Aryan Nations, the White Aryan Resistance, the Freeman movement, the County movement, the Patriot movement, Posse Comitatus, Christian Identity—and a lot of other species ready to fly in from baling hay or bussing dishes to grab their God-blessed guns and bang out the Second American Revolution! Mon semblable, mon frère.

But— (*Paul Harvey voice*) —the rest of the story—what you don't know is how I entered that food chain, and that is a long and moist and very American story.

Scene: On the verge of adulthood, grad degree in “biz” management and marketing, minor in graphic design—but just couldn't snag the job, you know, the one vaguely—persistently—promised as I grew up. So I morphed into a “temporary contingent worker.” At an ad agency, someone asked me, on a whim, what to do with a certain client's product—you know, be kind to the handicapped? It was a fart detonator or eyebrow piercer or something equally useless. But I suggested, they liked, and they used it.

A few more questions, a few more suggestions—and it occurred to me that I had this—facility. This “marketable skill.” This dark—vein. To help people believe what they wanted to believe, even if they didn't know yet that they wanted to believe it.

Temp job ended, more temp jobs followed—years of them, actually—I began to like the freedom of “temp” and decided not to become “perm.” Note that—it seems to be a personal tic. So one day, on my daily constitutional, I tripped over this white supremacist group in the park barking out their mongrel theories, all pretty vague and spastic to me, but the crowd, about 100, seemed to suck it up readily enough. And at the end they sucked down a respectable sum into their passing hat.

I thought about that. A lot. Money in tripe—no different than doing the toilet bowl enamler or the eyeball plucker. It had a weird appeal to a lot of people, so maybe it would have a few coins for an ambitious clean-cut young man willing to rent himself out. Lightbulb. Dark vein.

So began my mobius journey as a freelance ultra-right-wing Mouth-for-Hire. I advertised in Soldier of Fortune and got calls from groups all over looking for a better way to massage their messages. These guys had their Popes who wanted the doctrinal line pure. But they also their Jesuit managers willing to dance with Caesar. And the Jesuits paid handsomely.

Didn't matter that most of the crap I spit into people's ears was mean-spirited and spooky—a hired gun shoots his mouth off wherever it's pointed.

TEKTON indicates the gun.

Had to pass a few stupid “manly” tests—a sad footnote for another time—but no serious injuries to body or soul—and a bank account like a fatted calf. No real damage. Or so this mouthy myth-making marketeer believed.

Digression—because this is my dime. Marketing—marketeeing—what I did—is exactly what Zeus did when he got a jones for the length and breadth of fair Leda's body. Maybe you don't know this story, but down drops the king of the gods in the shape of a swan—at first his beauty made gentle under her gentle hand—and then, when his grace had lulled her, deceived her—bam!—his strong wings crushing Leda close, hissing in her ear “this is will make you great!” while his Olympian cock— Zeus myth-making Leda for pleasure and power—that's the marketeer's coat of arms! The words out of my mouth, all lies, but tarted up in a downfall of white feathers to mislead by dazzle while the domination slid right up—right up!—and when the soul shivers and cracks, it then belongs to Zeus.

You think you can resist the Zeus-like swanfucker marketeers—the corporations, the government, the media—but, man, we bestride the world greater than the Olympians could ever have imagined. When Zeus has been all up inside you for years, believing whatever he hisses in your ear easily becomes your first and second nature. Once you've been tapped, it's not hard to make you believe that your violation feels like revelation.

You know what made me good? My seamless face and voice and body could hit from both sides of the plate. I could bat lefty with the pros and the PBS-ers and coat the poison in a sugared lingo that made it slide down easily—mellowfied swanfucking. My patrons were not Nazis or supremacists—they were patriots, descended from the originals. They were A-M-E-R-“I can” Americans.

As if speaking to such a group.

“Patriot—what a wonderful word. It means love of country, love of American values, love of Americans themselves—those Americans who still believe in hard work, in marriage, in family, in God, in freedom. Freedom—another wonderful word.” That sort of thing.

But right-handed—ooh, then it was just cutting away for center field! Some humid high school gymnasium or church basement to feed them the Word. That was when I flapped my lips like a pair of Zeus-white wings and fucked 'em into believing what they wanted to believe.

TEKTON changes again, different person, different time and place. Pretends that he is holding a microphone. Even a slight drawl if desired.

Good evening, fellow citizens, and welcome! Good evening, freedom-lovers! Good evening, patriots! Always good to hear the joyful noise of freedom ringing out. Let it ring! Let it ring!

I want to thank you for coming tonight. I know you're busy people—trying to make those ends meet that just won't seem to meet these days! But I also know that you are sick at heart, and that's why you're here—you're answering the call because we know that this great country of ours is in deep danger.

I want to begin with a truth, the truth: You are a victim—each of you. Did you know that? You are, because there is a culture war out there being waged against you. Did you know that? Of course you did because you wake up every morning and you hear the indictment loud and clear: Watch out, the elites gasp, watch out for the God-fearing, law-abiding, Caucasian, small-town, working-class, heterosexual Christian because not only do you not count, you are a downright obstacle to social progress! Frankly, mister, it would be great if you would just wise up and learn a little something from your new America—and until you do, would you mind shutting up?

That's what happens when the BUPPIES and YUPPIES and DINKS and BOBOS and NIMBYS decide that the America they live in isn't good enough anymore and needs a little more “diversity” to bring it into the New World Order.

Now, let's make it as simple as it really is, let's get back to basics. The Constitution was written to guide us by a bunch of “undiversified” wise old white guys who invented our country! White guys! So were most of the guys who died in our name defending our freedom. So why should anyone be ashamed of white guys? Why is “Hispanic Pride” or “Black Pride” or “Jewish Pride” or “Gay Pride”—why is that kind of knuckleheaded craziness considered a good thing, while “White Pride” brings up nothing but shaved heads and white hoods and not the long heritage of Western civilization—your civilization? I'll tell you why: because it's a war out there, and good people like you are losing the propaganda battle to the Jew media, the pudding-headed educators, the botox'd entertainers, and our rat-faced politicians—

Mock spits.

-- don't mind me if I clear my throat after having that word in my mouth.

So why even bother to drag ourselves out of our homes to hear what we already know? Why have we gathered together? I'm not gonna answer that—I'm not worthy to answer that. Instead, I'm gonna give you the words of someone who knows a lot more about this than I do: Isaiah. Now, here is a truth-teller! “Wash you, make you clean...before mine eyes...,” he says, “learn to do well...come, now, and let us reason together.” That's why we're here: to reason together about how to “do well” and make it “clean” again. Because if we don't, if we just lay back and criticize—and, boy, do we do a lot of that! And I'm the first in that line!—but if we don't—well, you don't need a weatherman to know which way the dark wind will blow if we don't.

But we're not like that, are we? Are we? We are patriots, and we will do what our patriot forebears did: take action! Take action now! Draw your sword to battle against the homothugs, the feminist man-haters and abortionists, the blacks and other mud-bloods who turn our cities into garbage dumps, the Hebrew rich who steal our money and laugh at us, the government that guts our rights and lies to us and steals from us and kills us off like swine. We have reached that point in time when our social policy originates on Oprah! It's time to tear it to the ground and start all over.

Like those patriots in Boston, who looked at the lamps in the church tower and saw the enemy coming. And like those patriots, we need to stand our ground against the whole stinking mess. This is our right. This is our duty.

Patriot—roll that word around the tongue—what a wonderful word—

I don't think I need to keep spitting out the bile for you. I even believed at one point that maybe I was calling forth some “better angels” from the great unwashed. Yeah—the look on your face—I'd swanfucked myself.

But not entirely—I knew there weren't no “better angels” dealt in this hand. They didn't want to “reason together”—reasoning just got in the way of getting down to the mayhem that would give their sour lives some momentary juice. One eye cocked on my bank account, the other nailed to the exit door, I knew. But I just didn't want to fold my winning hand yet.

And then I had the monster folded for me. Right here in this city, amanuensis. This city of dark awarenesses.

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SCENE 3

Oh, for a muse of fire, faithful reporter, because we have reached that muddy road down which slouches the rough beast of revelation. I do talk trash, don't I?

TEKTON acts out the next story with gestures and movements.

Right here, in this very city, interviewed for a knee-jerk documentary on violence in America. Interviewer, interview itself, polite, cerebral. On the subway, back to hotel, just humming along, mind geared neutral. In the next seats over, diagonal, two young girls in army camouflage, maybe sixteen, hair in crew-cut, heavy paratrooper boots. And because I know these things—steel toes.

Directly across from them—young black man, professional in his carriage, musing.

So clear and so cutting over the subway racket, to each other, you see, but obvious and loud for all to hear—especially him. “Coon. Niggers. It all means mud.” “Too bad we got rid of slavery.” “Time to send the fuckers back to Africa.” “Best nigger’s a dead nigger.” Arm patches right here: “White Is Right—Aryan Resistance,” the two curved around a lightning bolt in the dead middle.

Does his best, he does, but they’ve got lock and load in their voices. Finally, in this high fructose Southern slur: “If I could find myself a jungle bunny, I’d smack him upside the haid.” The man—want, want, want to tell him to stop, like this lit fuse in my throat—Don’t!—this man licenses himself: “Go ahead.” Shocks ’em for a moment out of the show they’ve been putting on.

“Go ahead.” Bluff called. I can see him checking as they come across—a practiced eye. People ooze away. Everything in itchy focus, all of us pried out of our self-inflicted cocoons.

The following action should be carefully choreographed.

One girl—a hitch—then bam, hits him. Then the other—vicious, open-handed slap. Then a pause—that VCR thing, the frozen scene shivering—and then the black man out of his seat, throws one down. Second one lands a boot to back of knee, he buckles, but he moves before another, by the leg and flips her down. Electrified in rage, he kicks them, deliberate, knowledgeable: he knows.

I do what I now consider stupid—I try to help—impulse from way below rational click. I put a hand on him, and he decks me with his elbow—white danger!—as I hit the matting he kicks me in the kidneys. One in the left—yin. One in the right—yang.

It feels like forever, but it isn’t. Train into the station, and there is this crystallized moment when the normal mates with the vicious as people get on and off. He bolts. The two amazons swagger/stagger to a seat, and I rise, bruised from jawbone to kidney. People evaporate, and not a single helping hand lends itself. I can’t see them very well, but I don’t want to. Next stop, not mine, but I am off.

Back to Very. Past. Tense. I would like to say that Saul turned into Paul right then and right there—but— The next train brought me to my hotel. I needed to get into my room—

hear the door click shut locked—before I could—otherwise— I closed the blinds, then sat unpeeling in a broth of hot, hot, hot water.

Very still. Floating. Pressurized. My flesh crawling with chills. I had to sit very still—otherwise— The after-images—his methodical aim, their smug chops when they hit, the way he knew they'd take his bait. Just that morning I'd sat in a studio—polite, cerebral, remember?—my tongue flicking, and now I had to sit, very still—very still—filling and re-filling, trying to flush off— In a darkly comic way that I could only appreciate later, my confessional kidneys—the bloody piss that came out for the next few days—became the conscience I had told myself I didn't have and didn't need. “If I could get caught in the blowback—” Once you start pissing qualms like that, your days as a mouthpiece are over.

So I got out—drop by drop, lie by lie. Nothing noble about it—just pure cover-my-ass get-the-heck-out-of-Dodge selfishness. I didn't have new eyes—just a frightened glance, like a tic. A tic. A tic. I drifted for a while—“temp” again—classic American response. I didn't read, I didn't write—I didn't want to think about how I had been un-thinking and not-thinking.

And so, dear teller of tales, here I am, sitting in the pale darkness, talking to—who? To whom. To youm. To you. To myself. To no one in particular.

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SCENE 4

Change: I haven't been able to sleep lately. At least well. Not dreams—just that—it's as if I'm waiting for something.

You know, things are falling apart—they are. But the rot at the core, the screams at the edges— If I could go back to those people in the bleachers, I'd start out by saying—no, I'd confess to them that I lied—real freedom, real justice, real patriotism will begin—

Do you smoke? Thought so. You're in the street, butt done—what do you do? Thought so—just a flick, right? Person opens a pack of gum, unwraps a new CD, finishes that vendorized hot dog cradled in a napkin—where does it go? Right. Another ounce of unconscious filth. So this is what has to do with that. If I could go back to those people in the bleachers, I'd start out by saying that real freedom, justice, patriotism will begin when we stop littering our streets. You smile—your first real one tonight! They wouldn't. They'd look at me goggle-eyed and give me a high-caliber enema to “git my mind straight.”

But litter—waste, garbage, junk, debris, rubbish, orts—call it what you will—it drives me crazy. I can't stand trash anywhere because it's only there through laziness, selfishness and stupidity.

Litter and revolution—so the connection ain't so obvious. But—but—Listen.

People say they're angry about a lot, and I'm not saying that what the poll takers report is wrong, but I don't think they dig out the really lower-down fuse-blowers. I've never seen a poll that asks, "Does it piss you off when people don't hold the door for other people?" Would you say yes to that question? I raise both my hands on that one. Here's another: "Does it really give you a spiritual wedgie when that asshole leans on the horn the nanosecond the light turns green?" Eh? Okay, this: "Does it really crack your coccyx when someone takes the dog out for a walk and does not pick up the poop?" I'd bet the pollster would find some high-quality irritation, if not outright fury, if he asked questions like these. (*self-mockingly*) Future career as a pollster?

The point. People—we—can actually do something about these insults. Not by packing heat or hate but—and here's the clincher, the idea that's been tossing me around on my not-sleeping nights—but by making a decision to act for the welfare of, not friends, not family, but—listen to me closely here, write this down, this is the nugget, this is the shot—but to act for the welfare of strangers. That's the key. Strangers. Mark it. Strangers. Me for you. You for me. Freedom will be won or lost depending on how well we take care of people we don't know two bits and a haircut about. Friends, family—they're easy. Who wouldn't go to the wall for them? It's making the way straight for strangers that really tests whether we have a soul in here or we're just a tub of guts constantly running out of time.

Thus, trash. If you deposit your trash in the proper receptacle—cleaner sidewalk for someone you'll never meet. If you clean the trash that's there, squawk to the politicians for more receptacles and get people jobs to empty them, do a block party clean-up day—see the point? People not living in trash might not feel a need to barricade themselves against filth. Unless we find ways to treat each other on this trash-level, we'll never get it right on any level. If we can't be kind to strangers, then we can't be kind, period. It's the strangers that make or break us as human beings.

Litter as revolution—yeah, it won't blow up the swanfucker systems that suck you dry and spit you out, but little pools of freedom, little harbors of civility—you and I can build 'em every moment of every day we're awake. It takes discipline—it takes mindfulness—but the higher consciousness begins in garbage. Any species that knowingly shits were it eats don't know shinola about freedom.

I admit—a low-budget redemption—and no real penance for the damage I did—pissant and precious and neck-deep sentimental, ain't it? But each day, scribe, low budget or not, I have been trying to commit one act of kindness for a stranger. Hold open a door and not expect a thank you, glad when I get one. I've taken to—reminding people who toss butts—so watch out for me! Say "Hello" to people if I can catch their eye—never fails to amaze me how surprised and pleased they look when someone actually acknowledges they exist. Big smile, opened face. When I bag at the supermarket, I toss in a smile with their weights and measures. At the liquor store, I put the change into people's hands, not on the counter—moment of contact, whether they buy top shelf or bottom. On the subway, I always wait for people to get off before getting on—and lately

I've been announcing before the doors open: "Let them get off first." People go bland on me—you know that look—

Which TEKTON imitates.

—but sometimes—sometimes—they also wait. And I can convince myself—I do convince myself—I am building my safe little harbors.

But sometimes—sometimes—our taste for inflicting pain seems bottomless—and then this litter thing feels small and stupid and selfish. I am sitting on the subway and a woman gets on with two black eyes—her story out there for everyone to know. I happen to catch her glance and smile at her. Smiles back, but tightly—wounded enough—and then stares straight ahead into the tunnel walls. She knows every eye is on her eyes. The perfect chance to love the stranger.

Two stops later she gets off, and as she does, two burly guys—hard hats, belts—get on, and she has to squeeze between them to move into the station. This ex-swanfucker, who supposedly has been bulking up his better angels with his little safe harbor-building project, should say to them, brassy and bold, "Stand to one side, please and just let her get off." But he doesn't. He doesn't. They sit, and one says to the other, "Takes a lickin', but keeps on tickin'." Laugh, laugh, ha, ha, onto another topic.

I can't describe the sudden rage I feel—the sudden Biblical rage. I want purge. I want utter devastation visited upon them. No "better angels"—I want in my hands that terrible swift sword mine eyes have seen!!

Makes some ineffectual comic fighting gestures.

Just scrape some of the hard-hat human muck off the face of the earth—and give the universe a rest! But—well—I didn't— "Made him sicken, but he's still a chicken." Lord, how intoxicating it can feel "to be right"! Kill 'em all—who cares who sorts 'em out? The seduction of the righteous! I know all about that. "Mine eyes have seen the poison / Of the man who thinks he's right"—and so instead, inkslinger—this—nausea—this sadness—takes up its perch here—and it watches and it waits. It waits for me to—

I am scared. The dawn is here, and I am scared. I'm scared every day because what perches here asks me to act bigger now—pokes me, whispers to me with sly affection, And what will you do today, Albert? Hmmm? How will you pay back the people you hurt? Just asking—when I don't know! Down among the protons and neutrons, in the minutes and hours, I do all of what I think is all I can do—bag groceries, give change in exchange—I can do that—I can do that—just a safe sanctimonious weirdo about litter, just talking, talking, talking, just littering words—I can do that. I just can't seem to do it up in the higher altitudes—I can't seem to travel in the whole universe again—two beefy guys on a subway and a missed chance, and suddenly I'm Armageddon Albert all over again and I can't trust myself to travel in the company of strangers—

This is about the time of day I begin to feel so—ghostly. Just air, just respiration, talking, talking—to you—to anything. Even back to them in that high school gymnasium.

In imitation of his earlier incarnation as the speaker in the gym. He makes believe he is holding a microphone. Light should be near dawn.

Good morning, litter-picker-uppers, and welcome! Good morning, door holders! Good morning, my prime mates! Always good to hear the joyful noise of courtesy breaking out. Let it ring!

Gets ready to leave.

Maybe we can all act like some guerilla Miss Manners, huh? An Etiquette Militia. The Courtesy Corps wants you! Yeah. Maybe. I have to go to work. I have to start turning this darkness into a day. So I guess we're done—that is, you're done, at least—unless you want to help me tackle the urinals, for atmospheric background?

Wait! Wait! Not really done, you and I. Not yet. Don't go. Still a—collusion—collision—here. You got a story, right? You got “human interest” that you'll cash into résumé and reward, yes? Right. So now, something for me. I can't—I can't let you go—without this. It might be my only— In this low gutter voice that seems mine, I have spoken up for you—I have cared for you like a stranger, I have given you warnings, I have tried to give you light, to make light. It's not much, what I ask—but I'm not going to let you go away thinking your loyalty goes to the objective and detached, to the product. That's swanfucker thinking. And I don't want you to turn out to be a swanfucker-in-training. Perhaps—perhaps in your own low voice, below “detached,” below “objective,” in those pages there, those alignments, you can speak for me. Yes? If we—you and I—get a murmur going, a kind of subsonic hum of “Pick up that butt!” and “Let them get off first!”, then perhaps we—you and I—strangers a little less now, right?—we can pump the volume a nudge to say, “Get off your butt” and “Let the last be first” and “To each according to his needs” and “Love thy neighbor” and nobody has to study war no more. That's what I think you owe.

Who knows? Who knows? Gotta go—my daily grind.

Takes a key out of his pocket.

You lock up—place key behind loose brick to right of defunct doorbell. Look at whatever you want—for the personal effects.

He looks at the gun on the table, then at the reporter.

It's a decision every day.

Looks. Waits.

"Gonna lay down my sword and shield"— This goes over there, on the shelf—would you put it away for me? I can trust you to do that? Good. Well, then—over. And, well, then—out.

TEKTON hesitates: looks at the door, at the audience, then leaves.

Lights go to black.