CHARACTERS

DEV
JIMMY
MIKEY

ON THE LINE

ACT ONE

Scene 1

The factory is the unifying set where all of the locations in the play are contained. We begin at Dev's house. An alarm clock-radio goes off. We hear the voice of the local radio shock jock.

DJ #1. (Promo.) "WSNK, the Snake, classic rock radio where we still know how to shake, rattle and roll. We play the songs you love from yesterday, and tomorrow's classics today." (Dev enters stage left. He is half-dressed. Sampling of classic rock clips like: The Who, Rolling Stones, Lynard Skynard, U2, etc. ... into: Dev exits stage right. We can hear the sound of his peeing.) Good morning, kids. Danny and the morning crew here. It's just three past the hour and we're about to kick off thirty minutes of commercial-free radio you can drive to work to, or wake up to, or both, but first, a little bit of news. (A brief exchange between the DJ #1 and DJ #2 follows. It should be irreverent and slightly inappropriate, in the tradition of morning radio. It can be modified to reflect the times and/or local politics but should go a little something like this:) DJ #2. They make us.

DJ #1. They do. It says here, "Embattled Vice President Dick Cheney defended President Bush's economic policy against accusations from Senator Charles Schumer of New York that the President lacked an economic policy. In response, the Vice President called the Senator an f-in douchebag and then shot him in the face."

DJ #2. Wow, can he do that?

DJ #1. Apparently.

DJ #2. That's shocking.
DJ #1. Yeah.
DJ #2. He called him an f-in douchebag?
DJ #1. Can you believe it? But you know what, that's a man who stands by his convictions. "Neither the senator or Vice President Cheney had any comment but, uh, President Bush was quoted as saying, "That's just Dick." And I guess it is, Just Dick being Dick. And if there's one thing President Bush knows, it's Dick.
DJ #2. Anyone'll tell you Bush knows Dick.
DJ #1. We just did.
DJ #2. That's right we did. Bush knows Dick. So, the question you have to ask yourself is: Are you ready for the day?
DEV. (Offstage.) Fuck yeah. (He comes back on stage and begins to dress.) Every morning I get up, I know who I am. I know where I'm going, I know what I'm gonna do when I get there and I know who I'm gonna see. I got this sense of being a real goddamned person. I fit. Everything about me fits. Every day I throw on clothes that look just like the clothes I had on yesterday, I grab a quick coffee and I wait for Jimmy and Mikey to come pick me up. Or I jump in my truck and head over to pick them up depending on the week. And every day we stop at the same diner and order the same thing. I get pancakes, scrambled eggs and a side of bacon, coffee with cream; Jimmy gets sunny side up, egg toast and sausages, coffee black, French fries instead of hash browns; and Mikey gets poached eggs, English muffin with either a side of oatmeal or cream of wheat, he alternates between ham and sausage, never bacon, but sometimes he'll swipe a piece of mine. Coffee with skim milk. Why the fuck anybody would drink coffee with skim milk is beyond me.
And every day after breakfast we head to the plant, put in eight hours on the line, unless there's overtime to be had, then sometimes it's twelve or more. Depending on the night, we go out. Same places, same people. And every night I go home, lay my ass in bed, and thank sweet Jesus I get to do this shit all over again tomorrow.
Far as I'm concerned, soon as I hear that asshole on the radio at 6:30 in the morning I just won the goddamn jackpot, 'cause I get to be me for a whole 'motherf*cker day. It's not like I'm full of myself or anything. It's just I know who I am and there's a certain level of comfort in that. I guess I'm lucky 'cause I've had this frame of reference my whole life, this gauge to tell me who the hell I am and how far off I might be getting from being me. I've had the same two best friends since I was seven years old. How many of you can say that? You forget who you are they remind the fuck out of you.
Like that. (Dev turns upstage going to his locker, the lights change and suddenly he is in the factory.) My first day of school, first grade, I get on the bus, and I'm walking down the aisle trying not to make eye contact with the older kids at the same time I'm looking for a seat ...
MIKEY. Dev, you telling that story again? Why don't you tell the story about how I got the highest score on our confirmation test? (Jimmy enters.)
JIMMY. I got the highest score on our confirmation test.
MIKEY. That's only 'cause I didn't want to copy your test exactly. Thought it'd look better if I got the extra credit wrong.
DEV. There's a special circle of Hell reserved for guys who cheat on their confirmation tests.
MIKEY. Yeah, the only question is whether I'll have to look up or down to find which circle you're in. (During the course of the story- telling the guys are getting ready for work. Dressing in coveralls, grabbing their helmets, eye protection, gloves etc. At some point they share coffee from a thermos. Everything they do should have the feel of ritual.)
DEV. So, I'm looking for a seat, and out of the corner of my eye I see Mikey. And, I swear to god he's got this look like, "Psst, hey buddy, looking for a seat? Over here." If he had a little trench coat I'd a shit in my hat. So I walk over, and already at seven years old I'm wondering what it's gonna cost me, and he goes, "Hey, I'm Mikey," MIKEY. And first thing he says, not "Hey Mikey," not "I'm Dev nice to meet you," not "Go fuck your uncle." First thing the little prick says is, "You're not from here."
DEV. You weren't. He wasn't. He talked funny. So the end of the first day, I'm worn the hell out. I didn't accomplish a goddamn thing. All of a sudden I got a cubbyhole, I got to nap on cue and I got to remember whose name comes before mine in the alphabet. I mean, come on. I got my own name pinned to my chest, I'm supposed to remember some kid's I never seen before. So, I get on the bus at the end of the day and I'm thinking, I'm gonna need some assistance with this cubbyhole situation, and then I see Mikey. So I walk over, slide into the seat and say ...
JIMMY. "Go fuck your uncle."
MIKEY. He goes, "Mikey, I'm gonna be your friend." Just like that. Like it's a law of nature or something. And we sat together every day after that.
DEV. And then I don't know when it started ...
JIMMY. It was still in the first grade.
MIKEY. It was still in the first grade. At recess we started looking for fights. For Dev. We were looking for kids to fight Dev, like organized. I guess we thought with my people skills and his rage we'd make a good fight team. And the thing was, Dev was freaking tiny. He was one of the smallest kids in our grade. So in no way were we any kind of bully. We never fought anyone who didn't want to fight.

DEV. Only thing was, there wasn't anybody who wanted to fight. I mean, there wasn't anybody.

MIKEY. After the first day of trying, it was like Dev's reputation spoiled any future takers. The thing was, Dev'd kind of get this look in his eyes that freaked all the other kids out.

JIMMY. And the kids started calling him “Devil” behind his back.

MIKEY. Right. So we're enjoying our new status, going through the motions of asking kids to fight.

DEV. Even though no one took us up on it.

DEV and MIKEY. Until Jimmy.

MIKEY. Now the other thing was, for some reason, Dev had no sense of his size in relation to the other kids. He figured whatever was the size of the kid he was looking at, was the size that he was. It was some kind of spatial relation retardation or something.

DEV. Until Jimmy.

MIKEY. Until Jimmy.

DEV. Jimmy was the biggest kid in the class and even I could tell that.

JIMMY. So I'm minding my own business, throwing dirt bombs underneath the monkey bars when these two kids come and ask me if I want to fight. I thought they meant the both of them so I said yeah, sure.

DEV. Then Mikey explains that he's just talking about me, and Steve Otten, one of the kids Jimmy's with, goes —

JIMMY. “That kid's the Devil.” Like he really was. Then Mikey goes to work. All of a sudden he turned into a forty-year-old man, like a carnival Barker, he climbs on top of the monkey bars —

DEV. And starts yellin' like it's the fuckin' rumble in the jungle gym. “Fight, fight, fight, the Devil and Jimmy, The Devil and Jimmy, fight, fight, fight.” Now everything stops.

JIMMY. Kids are jumping off swings in mid-swing, kids playing doctor in the bushes close the office...

MIKEY. The kids are chanting “devil, devil, devil, devil,” and then out of nowhere, from as deep inside a seven-year-old as you can get, Dev just lets out with this guttural “Jesus, Mary and Joseph!” and everyone shuts up, not a peep, and then he starts shaking, like he's possessed.

JIMMY. He was like that Irish warrior, that Irish warrior who fought the sea. What the fuck? I called him Cootie Lane, Meg's father had a fit. What's his name? Cuchulainn! I read about this guy. I thought of Dev. He'd get in such a frenzy that he'd start shaking and kill everything in his sight, even his own men. So, the Druids put a spell on him and got him turned towards the sea so he could fight the waves until he wore himself out. My father-in-law makes me read this shit. Says if I'm raising daughters of Ireland I better know where they come from. I said they sure as hell didn't come from Cootie Lane. Right, so Dev is fucking shaking and I know something isn't right with this kid. He was looking at me but didn't even see me. But I figure how bad can it be, I'm twice his size and it's too late to back out now, so let's get it over with.

MIKEY. So the fight starts, and Jimmy... just kicks the living shit out of Dev. It's over before it starts. It was like Tyson fighting that fat Irish mope when he got out of prison.

DEV. Mikey thought I could fight 'cause I talked about fighting all the time. I never fought before in my life. I just threw myself at Jimmy and he picked me up and dumped me on the ground.

MIKEY. And he gets up, makes a quick recovery and just throws himself at Jimmy again.

JIMMY. And I pick him up and dump him on his head, and he gets up and I dump him on his head, and he gets up, and I get him over my shoulder, spin him in the air and dump him on his head.

MIKEY. And he gets up.

JIMMY. So, now I gotta end this or I'm gonna look like an idiot. I get him up on my shoulders and I start running.

MIKEY. He looked like he was gonna shot put him or something.

JIMMY. I'm runnin', I'm runnin', I'm runnin'. I stop and I give him a heave and whshhht, I mean this kid, I don't know what he weighed. Forty-five, fifty pounds? What do you weigh in the first grade? Whatever you think it is divide it by half. He flew. I mean he fuckin' flew.

MIKEY. He did. There was definite hang time.

JIMMY. And as he's flying through the air, I'm following the arc of his descent and I realize he's headed for the rocket ship. Which is basically one long bar of metal, surrounded by rings of metal. They don't let kids near that shit today.

MIKEY. As Dev's getting closer and closer you could hear every
kid on that playground think whatever their first-grade version of "Oh fuck" was. For me it was, "Oh fuck." And when his head hit the metal fin it made this sound like —

JIMMY. Shwanglegg.
MIKEY. Then he bounced off and hit one of the rings and the whole ship shook like —
JIMMY. Shdangongongongong. And Dev just laid there. Nobody moved. And I was thinking, "Great. I'm not even out of the first grade and I just killed a kid." (Pause.)
MIKEY. And he gets up.
JIMMY. It was like fighting the undead. Nobody moved when they thought he'd been brained on the rocket ship, but once he got up, a good third of those kids just started running. And now he's coming at me, deliberate, steady, he's still got that squinty look in his eye, only now he's got a gash in his head and the beginnings of a knot that'd look like an orange by the end of the day. And for the first time in my life I was afraid of something that wasn't my father. And then the bell rang.
MIKEY. As soon as that bell rings, Dev spits in his hand and looks at Jimmy, so Jimmy looks at him for a second, spits in his hand and they shake.
JIMMY. And Dev turns around, doesn't say anything to anybody and walks through the crowd of kids back to class. He looked like Brando in the end of that movie; all beat up, trying to keep his feet.
MIKEY. In the history of fights nobody looked tougher getting his ass kicked than Dev did on that day.
DEV. And you'd think that would have been that, but it wasn't, 'cause this one here gets it in his brain that somewhere in all of this there's an angle that needs working.
JIMMY. He's not even eight years old yet and he's the town's criminal mastermind.
DEV. So Mikey makes it seem like a good idea to Jimmy that he should fight me again, only this time I should win. And after Mikey explains the advantages of having me win, Jimmy's all for it.
JIMMY. Mikey fixed the fight and made book. He told me he could get me a Reggie Jackson rookie card and at least a week's supply of Bubble Yum.
DEV. Mikey could sell ice in a desert.
JIMMY. To an Eskimo.
DEV. What?
JIMMY. Ice to an Eskimo.

DEV. What the fuck's an Eskimo doin' in the desert?
JIMMY. He's not in the desert. He's at the North fuckin' Pole.
DEV. Who's gonna buy ice at the North fuckin' Pole?
JIMMY. I'm gonna kill you.
MIKEY. Guys! So, right before the re-match starts, I manage to look every one of those kids in the eye, to reassure them that their Topps baseball cards, Charlie's Angels cards, Ding Dongs, Ring Dings, Sno Balls and Ho Ho's were all in good hands. So I give the signal for the fight.
DEV. And I take a run at Jimmy, screaming the whole way. And he drops. Boom —
MIKEY. Like a sack of shit, he just flops. Everyone knew they'd been duped. Dev looks around kind of guilty and apologetic and gives Jimmy a boot in the head as if to convince everyone. But it was too little, too late.
DEV. Mikey played it off as if I had won fair and square, but in the end the three of us were looking at this little sea of first graders, staring back at us in silence. We knew they knew.
JIMMY. And they knew we knew they knew. But nobody said anything. They just all slowly went away.
MIKEY. Next day at lunch, the three of us are sitting together for the first time, and Keith Donneghan comes up to our table and drops off a Reggie Jackson rookie card.
DEV. Then Dougie Hay walks up with a pack of Yodels and slides 'em across the table.
JIMMY. A few minutes later, we could have opened up a snack shop.
MIKEY. And that's when we knew.
JIMMY. That together we were every kid's nightmare.
DEV. A three-headed monster.
MIKEY. We were conniving, relentless and reckless.
DEV. This unholy trinity not of evil, but of what certain mothers would call "no good." (Dev takes out a small bottle of Jack Daniels, pours a shot into his coffee and passes it to the others.)
JIMMY. We weren't bad kids, we were just ...
MIKEY. "No good."
DEV. Which is the best possible thing to be called if you want to be respected by your peers.
MIKEY. At the moment of our realization, there was this collective shudder in the town.
DEV. Every teacher ...
JIMMY. ... every crossing guard ...
MIKEY. ... every bus driver ...
DEV. ... every coach ...
JIMMY. ... every cop ...
MIKEY. ... every librarian ...
DEV. ... every deacon, nun and priest ...
JIMMY. ... every person in the slightest position of authority ...
MIKEY. ... considered giving up their respective vocations for less demanding work.
DEV. They knew they were beat. That this town would roll over and show us its belly.
MIKEY. That separately we could be a nuisance.
JIMMY. But together we were like some miracle alloy that couldn't be broken. We had this unity. This unstoppable force, like a waterfall. You just had to watch it and hope.
MIKEY. Twenty-five fucking years. (Mikey holds up his right hand with his three fingers forming a W.)
JIMMY. People stopped calling us "trouble." I think we've been downgraded to "colorful," "a handful." (Jimmy holds up his right hand with his three fingers forming a W.)
DEV. But we're still the three same guys we always were. (Dev holds up his right hand with his three fingers forming a W; the three of them hold their coffee cups together and take turns dipping their fingers into the three cups — one finger in each cup — lick their fingers and swing the rest of the coffee. A whistle sounds and it's time to work in earnest.)

Scene 2

The guys prepare for the line to start.

MIKEY. Where are we going tonight?
JIMMY. What do you mean where are we going? We're going to Moody's, play some darts, where else are we going to go?
MIKEY. I don't know. Cuddy's has a pool table.
DEV. Moody's has a pool table in the back room.
MIKEY. Yeah, but it's not full size, you can't play a real game of pool on that table.
DEV. You can't play a real game of pool on any table. Besides,

Cuddy's is full of fucking college kids these days, no offense, Jimmy.
MIKEY. College kids, huh? What?
JIMMY and DEV. Forget it. No.
MIKEY. What?
JIMMY. You may not be too old to be chasing college pussy, but I'm way too old to be having friends old enough to be chasin' college pussy.
MIKEY. We're the same age, Jimmy.
JIMMY. The point is NO.
DEV. Moody's. (The line starts and it is loud. Pneumatic tools drop from the ceiling. The guys put on their ear protectors and the sound the audience hears is now muffled. They continue their conversation using their own brand of sign language: "You have to stop hitting that jail-bait" — "She was twenty-one" "Cops are gonna be after you," etc. They begin to work in a rhythmic pattern. They finish what the other has started until it is unclear who has initiated the movement. The movements are specific and precise ... They are completely entrained. Once the line starts and they are working in earnest even their sign language is lost. With no way to communicate to each other they retreat into their thoughts. These are the thoughts that they have every day on the line. They may have a million other thoughts on any given day, but for at least a little while every day they will run the following themes through their minds. It is what keeps them on the line and working. Spot light on Mikey as he breaks from the line. The other two continue to work, perhaps in half-time.)

MIKEY. I invented the world. When I married Lydia the world did my bidding. The sun shone when I told it to; if it rained it was only to break the monotony of an endless stream of sunny days. Everything I said was smart. Or funny. Everything I did was right. I always got the best parking spaces, never got a ticket when I passed a cop while speeding, and my picks for the over/under always paid out. Our lovemaking was mythical. Violent passion, it caused the earth's rotation to skip. North America, North America ... And then tenderness that would leave us weeping in each other's arms. Our hearts broken and mended a thousand times with each breath. Until suddenly I was subject to the laws of gravity like everybody else. I woke up, smelled the pavement and she was gone. It does too happen like that. Love can disappear, it can fade away, it can seep, it can burst into flames, blow away like a puff of smoke, or it can just vanish. So it did. She did. And she took my life with her. Emily. My daughter. Now I'm wandering around in this
Greek tragedy. Only instead of pushing a rock I'm chasing a skirt. I can't stop. I want to want more. For Emily. I want a family for her to come home to those three weekends out of the month. I'm just too much of a coward to be with any woman who'd be sorry to say goodbye to in the morning. (They work on the line again, regaining their rhythm until Jimmy steps out.)

JIMMY. I am married to the best person I know. She is good for so many reasons but one of my favorites is that she tolerates me. I come home and I feel like this savage thrust into genteel society. I'm Tarzan without the loincloth ... or the muscle tone. She and the girls make me feel like a stranger who's so welcome that he's part of the family. I love that they laugh at me. I love that chorus of female voices conspiring against me. Never in my life have I felt more human than when my wife and two girls are cackling with glee at some silly thing I've done. Meg wanted Irish names for the girls. Deirdre and Fiona. Deirdre and Fiona Patraglia. My mother says, "How am I supposed to teach a girl called Deirdre how to make sauce." I said, "Ma, she's four. Take your time." We're trying to have a son and I swear to god I'm calling him Pasquale just to balance the books. Vincent. Meg wants to call him Vincent too. After my dad. He got me to apply for the union scholarship and made me go to college and taught me everything I know about being a man. Which is why after graduation I started working on the line. He told me, "You see somebody who has what you want, you find out what they did to get it and you do that too." Vincent Seamus Patraglia. My son to be. (They work until after a moment Dev breaks from the line.)

DEV. I love legs. I'm not saying I'm a legman. That would be crass. But there is a power, a true and real power that a pair of beautiful legs wields over me. I can't breathe, my heart races, my palms sweat and I feel like I did right before I asked Alissa Liberati to the prom. On the verge. Suddenly the universe and its possibilities no longer escape me. In fact it's just the opposite. In the presence of physical beauty suddenly everything makes sense. I am here to bear witness. Yes it's true I have fallen in love with strippers but not the ones at the places where you're charged twenty bucks to get in, twenty bucks for some fruity fuckin' drink and they run a credit check if, god forbid, some girl should happen to wave her ass in your general direction. No. These girls work in places with no cover, no frills and no upward mobility. This is the last house on the block for these girls. And every once in a while there's this exquisite beauty, quiet, lonely, unobtrusive, you know, "Look at me if you want to, I'll be over here." And of course you can't look away. Because she served you coffee in the diner that morning, or she sat next to you on the bus, or checked your groceries or came to your door offering you a weekend with Jesus. She holds the irresistible lure of the attainable woman. It is love. It's as real as any other... Who's to say whose love is better than the next guy's. Love is love. (The machine Mikey is working with jams and the tool flies out of his hand. He is knocked backwards. Jimmy presses the emergency stop button and all the line stops.)

JIMMY. Holy fuck.

MIKEY. (Shaking out his hand.) I'm OK, I'm OK, I'm OK.

DEV. You OK?

JIMMY. You OK?

MIKEY. I'm OK.

JIMMY. Jesus Howard Christ, that scared the fuck out of me! (Suddenly all three men look at the supervisor, who is now out on the catwalk above them.) I did. I shut it down. (Pause.) Because there was equipment failure. (Pause.) There was equipment failure. It nearly took his hand off. (The supervisor responds and they take a step toward him together.)

MIKEY. What did you say?

JIMMY. There was no human error. It was equipment failure. Get engineering up here and they'll tell you.

MIKEY. I didn't do anything, asshole, it jammed!

ALL THREE. It jammed!

DEV. Wait, wait, wait, wait. Daniels, let me ask you something. Are you out of your fucking mind?

JIMMY. Dev.

DEV. Jesus, Mary and Joseph! You have modified parts on that machine ... shut up, Daniels ... modified parts because it's cheaper than buying new and you're askin' if it's human error? The goddamn thing practically mauled him. You pricks want to lower your payment to the welfare fund and put us at risk at the same time. I've never seen such an overeducated bunch of dumbfucks in my life. Fuck you, I'm writing you up, asshole. You know, it's shit like this is gonna make us walk out in October. Unfucking real. No, I'll see you in personnel, I'll race you. (Pulls out his cell phone ... Ordering a pie. Calling my union rep, dipshit. What do you think I'm doing? Jimmy, do me a favor, case I don't get through call the union. Mikey, you OK? (Dev goes.)

JIMMY. You all right?
MIKEY. I'm OK. I think Dev just got himself suspended though.

JIMMY. He'll be fine. He'll just get written up. The business agent
will come down and take care of it.

MIKEY. There's only so much he can get away with, Jimmy. It's
bound to bite him in the ass.

JIMMY. He'll be fine. Why don't you go to first aid? I'll wait for
engineering and I'll meet you at the cafeteria. It's gonna be a while
before we're up again.

MIKEY. Yeah, might as well. I gotta write the injury report
anyway. (Mikey exits leaving Jimmy on stage. Lights down.)

Scene 3

Two weeks until the strike. The plant cafeteria which doubles
as an auditorium. The guys are taking their seats and we hear
the sounds of a large crowd gathering. The lights dim and a
film starts. Flickering light plays over the three men as they
watch downstream.

VOICE OVER. The truth about strikes is that nobody wins. Not the
union, not the company and most certainly not you, the worker.
Because while certain strikes are legally sanctioned under
due process, companies are, of course, under no
obligation to pay striking workers. Or to offer them medical
insurance. But perhaps the most important issue we will cover today is the
fact that you may be permanently replaced.

DEV. That's what my ex-girlfriend said. Twice.

VOICE OVER. That's right. Companies have the right under the
law to permanently replace striking workers.

DEV. Never happen.

VOICE OVER.

In fact, since 1981 when
President Reagan replaced the air traffic
controllers after their union called an
illegal strike, incidents of permanently
replacing economic strikers increased
dramatically. So, unlike the game
of baseball, it can be one strike and
you're out.

DEV. It's gonna be one punch and you're out, you no-neck fuck.

VOICE OVER. And finally, we will show you that your job security
may not be the only thing at risk. Your personal security and
that of your family may be as well. The fact is that strikes can often
turn violent.

JIMMY. Yeah, so can mandatory video screenings! (The narrator
fades out but the film continues. We can hear part of the film as the
guys' comments, below, continue.)

VOICE OVER. And that violence rarely reaches employers or
union officials. No, the violence is usually directed at fellow workers.
Back in 1998 during the American Shipping Company workers' strike, Todd Blakely, an ASC driver who decided to continue to work
during the strike so that he could feed his family, was pulled from his truck,
severely beaten and stabbed with an ice-pick six times. The
perpetrators? Union militants who, after the brutal attack, returned
to the picket line. Now while this incident is not typical, it unfortunately
is not the worst case of strike violence either. The fact is that
strike violence has led to property damage, physical injury and even
loss of life.

JIMMY. These guys got some set of balls. This has got to be
against some Labor Practice laws, this is brainwashing. Next thing
they're going to do is prop our eyelids open.

MIKEY. "I'm singing in the rain, just singing in the rain."

DEV. Jimmy relax, nobody's taking this shit seriously.

JIMMY. No, it's just dirty pool, man. They shouldn't be scumbags
about it. Trying to scare people with this bullshit. I mean what are
we, children? (Mikey whistles a bit of "Singin' in the Rain.") What
the hell are you doing?

MIKEY. It's from the ... never mind.

DEV. I know what will make you feel better. (He stands up.)
Where's your fucking neck!! That's the only part I remember.
Anybody got a newspaper? Don't they throw hot dogs? Anybody
got a hot dog? Where's your fucking neck!!

ALL. Where's your fucking neck!! (The lights come on.)

DEV. I'm sorry, Daniels, is that you? I can't see with the light, you
just kind of blend into the walls ... I got confused. I thought it was
a different movie. There's no audience participation in this one?
Oh, I see, it's just company propaganda? ... Fine, but if you're
kickin' me out, I want my seven bucks back ... Good point, I am
getting paid, but there's some shit even a day's pay ain't worth. And
you're payin' me to watch this shit, not to buy it. Ladies and gentlemen, please, hold your applause to the end. I'm gone. *(He makes ready to leave.)* How come I feel like I'm getting sent to the principal's office?

JIMMY. 'Cause you never grew up and you are. *(Dev leaves.)*

MIKEY. Since when did Dev turn into such an activist?

JIMMY. Since he found something to fight for. Or against.

MIKEY. I'd say against.

JIMMY. It's good for him.

MIKEY. Yeah, but is it good for us? I mean if there is a strike in two weeks and we go out, when we come back are they gonna make it tough on the guys who made a lotta noise? And the guys they work with?

JIMMY. You're the one whistling Dixie over here.

MIKEY. I'm not getting sent to personnel three times a week. I just don't want it to come back and cause him trouble down the road. Or me.

JIMMY. Listen, let's not get there 'til we get there. First thing we gotta figure out is what to do about that memo.

MIKEY. What memo?

JIMMY. You didn't get one?

MIKEY. No, what memo?

JIMMY. I figured they'd send you one.

MIKEY. No. What is it? *(Jimmy reaches in his pocket, pulls out a folded piece of paper and hands it to Mikey.)*

JIMMY. You'll probably get one. They might be doing it alphabetical or something.

MIKEY. *(While reading.)* They're gonna offer you a job? Management's gonna offer you a job?

JIMMY. It's an interview. But yeah, they might offer me a job, eventually.

MIKEY. What are you gonna do?

JIMMY. I don't know. If I thought I could change things I might take it. I guess I'll see how the interview goes and take it from there. Can't hurt, right?

MIKEY. Yeah. Yeah. I guess that's the only thing to do.

JIMMY. I think so.

MIKEY. Does Dev?

JIMMY. No.

MIKEY. Are you gonna?

JIMMY. No.

MIKEY. Right.

JIMMY. When the time is right. Not now.

MIKEY. *(Still holding the memo.)* Right. Yeah, well, keep me posted on things.

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**Scene 4**

Friday. One week until the strike. The guys are on the line; it is at the end of their shift. They are entrained in their work again. The whistle blows and they immediately stop working. Dev runs to his locker and takes a swig of whiskey; Jimmy and Mikey are horsing around. Dev continues to put away tools, cleaning up the work area as Jimmy grabs a suit from his locker and slips out unnoticed by Dev. Mikey is getting changed into his Friday night clothes. Sharp.

MIKEY. Hurry up. I want to make sure we get our table.

DEV. Relax, nobody's gonna take our table.

MIKEY. I want to get there early.

DEV. Mikey, relax. You know you're gonna get plenty of pussy no matter what time you get there.

MIKEY. Yeah, but I want first crack. You wearing that? Aren't you gonna change?

DEV. Course I'm fucking changing. *(He pulls off his shirt, reaches into his locker, pulls out a clean version of the same shirt and puts it on. Music begins. They exit and immediately enter the bar.)*
MIKEY: This conversation is getting away from me. Dev. What's that monkey in the zoo? MIKEY: I am like that monkey in the zoo. He can't stop panicking the man. It's an expression. MIKEY: I don't think there's a particular monkey they're talking about and I don't think it's an expression, but I do think you've been living alone too long. MIKEY: He had that going there. Ivan's just covering his bases, so he doesn't offend anyone. MIKEY: What is he, Miss Mannish? Who's he gonna offend? When they ask you say, no thank you. Who needs a meeting after no thank you?

MIKEY: Jimmy. He's smart to go. If it were me, I'd go.

MIKEY: If it were you, you'd already have carpet burn on your ass. Right? Dev. MIKEY: No offense, but you get no fucking principles. Besides, I don't know if you would and if you did, I wouldn't have it. I'm still the new guy. MIKEY: (In the dark house. Speaks in a dark tone.) Speaking of which, next two

DEVI: Now, the other one. Where your wrists hurt all the time.

MIKEY: You got carpal tunnel from typing on your computer? MIKEY: You are being.

MIKEY: I'm up there in the morning every night looking at porn.

MIKEY: I'm like that monkey in the zoo. He can't stop panicking the man. It's an expression.

MIKEY: I don't think there's a particular monkey they're talking about and I don't think it's an expression, but I do think you've been living alone too long.

MIKEY: He had that going there. Ivan's just covering his bases, so he doesn't offend anyone.

MIKEY: What is he, Miss Mannish? Who's he gonna offend? When they ask you say, no thank you. Who needs a meeting after no thank you?

MIKEY: Jimmy. He's smart to go. If it were me, I'd go.

MIKEY: If it were you, you'd already have carpet burn on your ass. Right? Dev. MIKEY: No offense, but you get no fucking principles. Besides, I don't know if you would and if you did, I wouldn't have it. I'm still the new guy. MIKEY: (In the dark house. Speaks in a dark tone.) Speaking of which, next two
DEV. You gotta give me a handicap.
MIKEY. Fuck no. Not for self-inflicted wounds.
DEV. Fucking guy doesn't even tell me.
MIKEY. Dev.
DEV. That's just fucking backhanded, man. That's sneaky and con-
ning and something you would do. You tell him not to tell me?
MIKEY. He didn't tell me, how could I tell him?
DEV. If you did tell him, you wouldn't tell me. You didn't tell me.
You knew about it and didn't tell me.
MIKEY. I told you when you asked me.
DEV. Fuck the two of you.
MIKEY. He's got Meg and the kids at home. He went to college;
you think he wants to work on the line for the next thirty years.
Come on, Dev. Grow up a little bit. He can move up in the com-
pany, where's he gonna go on the line?
DEV. He wants to move up, let him work for the local. It's not a
dead end. For Christ sake, they can put their kids through college.
And you know why they can put their kids through college? 'Cause
the union busted its ass...
MIKEY and DEV. ... so we could make a living.
DEV. (Annoyed that Mikey is finishing his sentences.) They did. You
have to respect that, if you forget where you come from you're a
fucking scumbag.
MIKEY. Listen, I'm not saying the union's not great. But sometimes
no matter how much you have, if you know there's more to be had,
you're gonna want to get it. If you had kids you'd understand. You
want more for them than you could ever want for yourself.
DEV. I'm fucking sick and tired of people with kids telling me I
don't understand. Like if you don't have kids you're morally
decrepit. Half you fuckin' people can't even keep track of your kids,
or got 'em on a time share, and I'm supposed to kowtow to you
'cause what? Your sperm's got good aim? If I had a — fuck, not you
man. I don't mean you. You're a good dad; you're a fuckin' great
dad. Emily is a jewel and she adores you and she should. 'cause you
are a great father. Which completely proves my point through
inverse hypothesis or whatever, 'cause you are a moral fuckin'
cipher, so you don't have to be a good person to be a parent, or a
parent to be —
MIKEY. Dev, sometimes I marvel that you walk through this life
without getting your ass kicked at regular intervals.
DEV. Sorry.

MIKEY. Go get another pitcher.
DEV. I'm gonna go get another pitcher. Angel! Angel! Don't, no,
no, no, no, no, I saw you see me. I want two pitchers ready by the time
I hit the bar or I'm coming over. As the future mother of our future
children it's your duty to — (Jimmy walks in carrying a pitcher. He's
wearing a suit.) Ange, cancel that. Looks like this tall handsome
stranger just bought me a drink ... I don't know, you'll have to ask
him. Do you think I'm easy?
JIMMY. You look easy but I know better.
DEV. My condolences.
JIMMY. Yeah, it was unexpected.
DEV. Quick and painless I hope.
JIMMY. So far.
MIKEY. I wish to Christ I had somewhere to go.
DEV. What are you talking about? Friday night, out with your
best friends, a room full a women who in a few short hours are
gonna be drunk enough to ... well, fuck, they're gonna be drunk
enough. Right, Jimmy?
JIMMY. Sure.
DEV. So who'd want to go anywhere, right? Lighten up; don't you
think he should lighten up?
JIMMY. He seems pretty light already.
DEV. Well sure, to you, just coming from a funeral and all.
JIMMY. How come I feel like I've been fuckin' somebody else?
DEV. I don't know, you been fuckin' somebody else?
JIMMY. Who's winning?
MIKEY. I am. But only 'cause Dev's like that monkey in the zoo.
JIMMY. I'll take your word for it. It was only an interview and I
didn't tell you 'cause I knew you'd try to talk me out of it and I
promised Meg I'd go. So ease off a little.
DEV. Mikey thinks you should take it. Thinks the line is too lim-
iting for a man with a college degree.
JIMMY. For some I guess it probably is.
MIKEY. I said you were smart to go, keep your options open. So,
did they offer you the job?
JIMMY. They offered.
DEV. Fuck.
JIMMY. I told them I'd think about it.
MIKEY. Congratulations.
JIMMY. I didn't say I was taking it.
MIKEY. Well, congratulations for having the opportunity. This
life is all about opportunity, and people who can see one coming faster than the other guy, those are the winners.

DEV. How the fuck would you know? What have you won lately?
MIKEY. Most recently?
DEV. Yeah.

MIKEY. Donna Badigno and her little friend.
DEV. Oh yeah, congratulations to you. You're the one guy in the bar that can't see the neon sign hanging over her head that says "Psycho bitch who'll cut your little balls off if you try to leave her bed before breakfast." But she is hot, so good for you.

MIKEY. Your capacity for being a petty prick is astounding.
DEV. You're right I'm a prick, but fuck petty. 'Cause I'm not afraid to piss off my best friend when he's about to do something very fucking stupid? Going home with Badigno is very fuckin' stupid, don't do it. *(To Jimmy)* Don't take that job.

MIKEY. Who the fuck are you? I mean really who the fuck are you? You're like the loneliest fuckin' guy with the saddest little life doling out advice like you were fuckin' Solomon, when you go home every night and jack off to your computer and play video games 'til you fall asleep. What the fuck kind of life is that?

DEV. It's a phase.

MIKEY. He's got a chance to do something, Dev. He can build himself a better life, and if it means things are gonna change between you, then maybe you're not as good a friend as you think you are.

JIMMY. I'm taking the job. *(Beat.)*

MIKEY. Like I said, congratulations. To new beginnings. *(Mikey raises his hand with three fingers pointed up in a W. It is the beginning of a ritual. Dev and Jimmy join him and each raises his hand in the same W. Each man dips his three fingers in the three shots of whiskey [which have been placed in a cluster] and licks his fingers. After they have all completed this process they drink the shots.)*

DEV. To losing seasons. Management's softball team sucks.

JIMMY. All they need is pitching.

MIKEY. And a left-handed bat.

DEV. Pricks. You gonna move?

JIMMY. Not right away.

MIKEY. So they offered right away, huh?

DEV. Anybody keeping score here, or what?

MIKEY. Did they interview anybody else for the job, anybody else there?

JIMMY. It was actually my second interview. I managed to keep the first one secret 'cause I didn't have to wear the suit.

DEV. No wonder they hired you. Not even management yet and already lying to your friends.

JIMMY. I didn't lie, I just didn't tell you every —

DEV. Oh come on, I had this conversation with my dad when I was eight and I still got the strap, and he was right, it's a fuckin' lie. But that's cool, I understand why you did it, but let's not deny that you did, OK? Give me that at least.

JIMMY. Yeah.

MIKEY. You tell Meg yet?

JIMMY. Not yet.

DEV. I just didn't think you were that fucking stupid.

JIMMY. I get the feeling I'm about to be enlightened.

DEV. Look, our contract is up in next Friday. The plants don't sign we are definitely walking out. They want a guy from the line, a popular guy, to make whatever horseshit pitch about union givebacks go down easier. Who do you think's gonna be the one walking out to the line with management's messages? I hope you got more than the one suit, 'cause chances are it's gonna get a little messy out there. I know they make it sound so nice and clean. They start throwing around the 401k's, the extended health benefits, dental. Come on fucking dental? And this is my favorite: "Being a part of the team." Wow. I mean, who could resist being a part of the fuckin' team?

MIKEY. How the fuck do you know?

DEV. What?

MIKEY. How do you know?

JIMMY. Yeah, Dev. *(Pause.)*

DEV. All right, I had an accidental interview. You didn't know about it 'cause I don't own a suit. I went to personnel, I thought I was getting written up again and there were a couple of Biiffs and Dicks from management talking shit about this job and I said, "No thank you." Yeah, apparently you don't need a college degree to be part of the team. Know something funny? The last thing I said as I walked out the door was, "Go find somebody else to suck your ass," and they sure as shit did.

MIKEY. All right, that's enough.

DEV. The part I love is they do this every fucking time the contract comes up, and every fucking time there's some mope with short-term memory or just plain doesn't give a shit. And after
enduring the fucking humiliation of being the Dolans' bootblack, the shame of betraying your friends, the stares in town, people busting your windows, sleepless nights wondering did I do the right thing — after all that the kicker is, once the contract is signed and we're let back inside, the first thing management is gonna do is offer your balls on a plate as a sign of good faith. You want to talk about being alone? My friend, the town clock won't give you the time of day.
MIKEY. That's worst-case scenario, Jimmy, it doesn’t have to go like that.
DEV. That's not even worst case. Worst case is you wake up one morning and realize you fucked your friends, and that after all is said and done, all that can be said about you is that you're a worthless, filthy fucking scab. (Jimmy makes a move; they fight.)
MIKEY. Let 'em go, Bill; they're not hurting nothing. Back off and let 'em go. Bill, I swear I got it. They're fine. (Jimmy gets the best of Dev and has him in a headlock or is about to choke him.)
JIMMY. (Exhausted.) I didn't take the job. Didn't even go to the interview. I just wanted to see what the fuck you guys would do if I did, and now I know.
DEV. Hah! I fucking knew it. You fuckin' prick! And you! Stay the fuck away from Badigno.

End of Act One

ACT TWO

Scene 6

Monday, early October. Strike, day one. Mikey stands center stage in a new suit. He is addressing the strike line.

SHOUTS. No contract! No work! No contract! No work! No contract! No work! (Shouting continues.)
MIKEY. Okay. Okay … Are you done? I can stand here all day, people. Yes. Yes. I realize that's exactly what you do, and I'm trying to tell you that I sympathize. That Mr. Dolan sympathizes. See, what you people don't realize is that Mr. Dolan views you as part of his family. His extensive, sometimes hard to get along with family. Now, I used to think like the rest of you that Dolan didn't really care about the average worker on the line, that we were just donkeys putting in a day's work. But I'm here to tell you that is just plain untrue. The truth is we are all trying to ride through rough economic times. You, me, Mr. Dolan and the whole town. Now, this is the part where you have to believe that everything is being done to get you people back inside and working. (Jimmy enters. He is also wearing a suit and carries a clipboard; he stands aside and watches Mikey.) But we have to make sure that the contract is going to be good for the company as well as you and the union, because ultimately, ultimately what's good for the company is going to be good for you the workers. The only thing I ask is that you don't think of me as just another management suit but as your man on the inside. 'Cause every second that I'm in there I'm thinking about you guys out here. (The crowd shouts down Mikey.)
JIMMY. Whoa, whoa, whoa, people! Hey! As your new business agent, I have to tell you the union does not condone threatening management officials under any circumstances, people. But especially when those circumstances include a half dozen security cameras to catch your every move. And those hired guns management brought in for extra security are just that. Those bulges under their jackets aren't baloney sandwiches. So, let's thank Mr. Zottola for
his stirring speech so he can go back to work and we can get back to striking. (To Mikey.) Now'd be a good time to turn around. And if anyone throws a bottle or something, don’t look back. Not even if it hits you. (Mikey leaves,) I’m serious, guys. Be smart. You’re no good to us in jail or with a head caved in by a Maglite. Okay, now, I need the delegates to come up with the hours you’ve been on the picket for all members of your shift and your division, but no one who hasn’t been here is getting strike pay. I promise you that. You guys aren’t at a tea social for chrissakes. Make some noise. No contract! No work! No contract! No work! No contract! No work! (Lights fade on Jimmy.)

Scene 7

Later that night. Lights up on the bar. Jimmy sits at their table doing paperwork and Dev enters with a pitcher.

DEV. So?
JIMMY. We got something like ninety-five percent of the workforce walking out, but there were a bunch of new hires in the last few months, so Dolan was stacking the deck. The union can live with ninety-five.
DEV. What about the scabs?
JIMMY. Dolan was ready there, too. He’s got ’em stashed away at motels up and down the county. Word is he’s going to have a twenty-four-hour workforce to keep up the production. It’s like a war bunker down at the local. There’s charts and graphs and coffee all over the place.
DEV. What about the union scabs? Guys who crossed? When we go in they go out. Right?
JIMMY. Yeah. That’s the way it usually works, but management sometimes likes to leave room to negotiate on that.
DEV. Jesus, Jimmy, this one’s gonna last a while.
JIMMY. Think so.
DEV. We’re gonna win. I’ll be fucking goddamned if I let that spivey fuck take one cent out of my paycheck for healthcare. This company makes a profit. Everybody knows it.

JIMMY. Dolan’s spouting shit about responsibility to shareholders.
DEV. What shareholders? He’s the shareholder. I see that fuck at a red light, good night, Irene.
JIMMY. Dev, you ever hear that saying, “Cooler heads prevail”?
DEV. You listening to me? I have my plate full learning this job and trying to get yours back, so keep your nose clean ’cause I’m not gonna have time to wipe it.
DEV. Jimmy, I’m the guy’s gonna make sure this thing ends the way we want. It’s guys like me are gonna win this thing.
JIMMY. Well, if that’s true, we’re fucked. Where the hell we gonna find guys like you? (Mikey enters carrying three shots.)
MIKEY. I'd start with mental institutions and then work my way through the prisons. (Pause.) Bibbity bobbity boo. What the fuck guys. Say something.
JIMMY. You shouldn’t be here.
MIKEY. Where else am I gonna go? C’mon. To friends ... To living ... To ... Nuns and a priest walk into a bar ... (To Bill, offstage.) I paid for ’em, where the fuck you think I got ’em ... Bill, you been taking my money since I was sixteen, you’re gonna stop now? Just calm fucking down, I’m talking here.
JIMMY. Mikey, we’ll talk later, not here. C’mon man, what’d you think? You’re throwin’ salt in a wound, Mikey.
MIKEY. You think this was easy coming here? I’ve had knots in my stomach all day, knowing, C’mon. To us. — Fuck you, Moody. You’re a goddamn bartender, you don’t even work here, so shut the fuck up. To us. — Step over here, Moody, and I swear I’ll knock you into East Jesus.
JIMMY. Hey, hey! Enough! Moody put the bat down, you know you’re not using it, so put it the fuck away. Everybody calm the fuck down. Shut up, Bill! Don’t run your fucking mouth.
DEV. He’s leaving, you’re leaving. You think it was brave of you to come here tonight, don’t you, Mikey? I know you. And you know that if we weren’t here you’d already be a puddle on the floor. So you guessed right. This is your get out of jail free card. So get out. Cause you guessed wrong on the other thing. Mikey, whatever history we had, you just took a piss on.
MIKEY. It’s not as simple as you make it out to be, Dev. That’s always been your problem. (Dev goes after him. He is in full attack mode and it is all Jimmy can do to keep him off Mikey.)
DEV. Get the fuck out. How’s that for simple. My problem is get the fuck out!
JIMMY. Mikey, just go. Go! (Mikey leaves.)
DEV. You motherfucker! To us? You just killed us you fuck. ... 
Shut the fuck up, Moody! You don’t know what you’re talking about, so shut the fuck up! What?
JIMMY. Just another day in happy valley.

Scene 8

Thursday. Strike, week one. Banquet room at the Ramada Inn. Lights up on Mikey. He is standing next to a huge coffee urn with a cup of coffee. Jimmy enters.

JIMMY. Mike.
MIKEY. Jim.
JIMMY. Can you believe this place?
MIKEY. I know. We have two other suites just for us.
JIMMY. Us too.
MIKEY. I thought they were never going to start.
JIMMY. It was like old home week.
MIKEY. Everybody knows everybody, right down to the lawyers. I feel like we’re the ugly girls at a high school dance.
JIMMY. Nobody else to talk to.
MIKEY. Right.
JIMMY. Well, I don’t care what the hell happens, I’m not dancin’ with you, Mikey.
MIKEY. That’s OK. You never could dance.
JIMMY. So how long do you think this is going to go on?
MIKEY. Today?
JIMMY. No, the whole thing.
MIKEY. Depends. Right now it seems they’re not that far off.
JIMMY. Yeah. It seems like right now the sticking point is wage increases and the pension fund contributions. But is it me, or does it seem like their numbers are pretty close?
MIKEY. You guys want a five year at four, four, three, three, three, and we want a four year with a three percent bonus, then all fours. I gotta sit at home with a calculator to figure this shit out.
JIMMY. Me too. Have you seen that equation for how long they think we can sustain a strike?
MIKEY. You have that, too? Jimmy, I saw that, I almost cried. All of a sudden I was back in Mr. Parker’s geometry class, standing at the blackboard with his eyes burning holes in the back of my head.
JIMMY. That guy was a prick. You remember the time Dev told Parker that if he didn’t give him the key to the bathroom he’d take a dump on his desk?
MIKEY. Oh shit. I thought the guy was gonna have a heart attack.
JIMMY. He did.
MIKEY. He did?
JIMMY. Not that day. But eventually. He didn’t die or anything, he just retired.
MIKEY. Fuckin’ Dev.
JIMMY. Yeah. (Pause.) I had no idea they had food at these things —
MIKEY. He say anything?
JIMMY. Not really. He doesn’t want to talk to you. Or about you.
MIKEY. Yeah, I gathered that. He won’t return my calls.
JIMMY. Listen, Dev is Dev. What are you gonna do?
MIKEY. Yeah. Once this is over.
JIMMY. Yeah.
MIKEY. I’ll be in the doghouse for a while, but once this is over.
JIMMY. Yeah, I know he’ll be alright.
MIKEY. He doin’ OK now?
JIMMY. Yeah. He’s a natural for the strike line. It’d almost be a shame to put him back to work.
MIKEY. What are they having for lunch?
JIMMY. Stuffed turkey breast and loin of pork.
MIKEY. How’s he fixed for money?
JIMMY. He’s got savings. I’m telling you he’s thriving off of this shit. It’s like a vacation for him.
Scene 9

Strike, week two. The strike line outside the plant. Dev stands on a bench and bangs on a bucket as he sings a punk rock version of a popular union protest song, such as "Which Side are You On?" Jimmy enters.

DEV. Jimmy! Holy shit, gentlemen we're being honored this evening. Mr. Jimmy Patraglia, our favorite business agent from the local. Look sharp guys; let's put those bottles in the paper bags where they belong. J? unless you got one to offer Mr. Patraglia, put out that cigar.

JIMMY. You got a minute?

DEV. I know, Jimmy, but listen, you gotta give us a little more leeway at night. You tell them they can't have a nip every now and again, bodies are gonna be scarce out here.

JIMMY. It's not about that.

DEV. We got close to fifty guys out here tonight. It's like fucking Woodstock all of a sudden. We just need some hippie chicks flashing their tits, a little oye como va, and we're back in the garden, baby! J?, what the fuck are you smoking? ... Bullshit Cuban, that thing smells like it was up Castro's ass.

JIMMY. You got yourself a well-oiled machine here, Dev. You're a paragon of the workers' movement. Can I talk to you for a second?

DEV. Well then, they should make the midnight shift mandatory on a rotating basis if you're gonna hold us to the same rules as the dayshift.

JIMMY. You ever seen me out here at three in the morning?

DEV. We never see anyone from the union out here, Jimmy. Not after midnight.

JIMMY. It's not the drinking. No one cares about the drinking.

DEV. So what are you doing here?

JIMMY. I couldn't sleep, man. I've been lying in bed for five hours staring at the ceiling.

DEV. You want? (Offers a bottle.)

* See Special Note on Songs and Recordings on copyright page.
Scene 10

Strike, week six. Banquet room at the Ramada Inn. Lights up on Mikey and Jimmy.

MIKEY. Everyone in this room is full of shit.
JIMMY. You noticed that, huh?
MIKEY. It's like they've made up their minds to make it impossible to solve this thing. You guys have been at this for six weeks already.
JIMMY. Listen, it's not just us. You guys are shooting down everything we come up with.
MIKEY. No, no, I know. That's what I mean. I mean combination jobs? That's been a standard in every contract for the past twenty years and all of a sudden Dolan doesn't want the language in the contract prohibiting combination jobs. And it's just pissing the union off.
JIMMY. Yeah, but we're not making it easy either. "If there's a hair on the pickle."
 BOTH. "You take the olive."
JIMMY. Who's supposed to know what that means?
MIKEY. And your president starts throwing around the word "extortion." That doesn't make people happy.
JIMMY. I don't know, you think Dolan's trying to bust the union?
MIKEY. Then why negotiate at all?
JIMMY. To keep the NLRB out of it for as long as possible, maybe?
MIKEY. Maybe.
JIMMY. It seems kinda risky. I mean this is a union town. It could backlash on him.
MIKEY. It's been a union plant for fifty years. Why try to bust it now?
JIMMY. Maybe we're just in a room full of really bad negotiators? Shit. They're calling a caucus. You want to talk some more tonight?
MIKEY. Yeah, let's get a drink.
JIMMY. Mikey, there's nowhere we can go.
MIKEY. Fuck it. I want to get a drink, Jimmy. I'm sick of this shit.
JIMMY. There's no place to drink in this town. Just come over.

Late. Meg's been asking for you anyway.
MIKEY. Okay. In the meantime, I'll keep my eyes and ears open. See if there's anything I can figure out.
JIMMY. Okay. If I don't check in with you after this, I'll see you at ten.
MIKEY. See you at ten. (Jimmy leaves. Lights fade on Mikey.)

Scene 11

Strike, week twelve. The strike line. Dev is alone. He sits on an empty five-gallon paint bucket. He's been drinking again.

DEV. The first week, the first day was unbelievable. I was out here with three thousand of my brothers and sisters; with the sun, God and the head of the International himself smiling down on us. We came marching through town, we took up the width of Main Street; we had our flags, our banners, our signs and our leaders; we were like a conquering army. I felt like some kind a soldier going to liberate an oppressed people; only the oppressed people was me and everyone marching with me. I thought there is no way they can withstand the force of our determination, of our moral righteousness. We shall, we shall, we shall overcome. You're goddamned right.

That was the first week. Now? Now I'm out here in the middle of the night with four other mopers sitting on empty five-gallon paint buckets trying to keep our asses from going numb with cold. You ever sit on a bucket in twenty-degree weather for months on end? If you lit my ass on fire, I wouldn't know about it for a half an hour. You got management telling you one thing, the union telling you another; guys disappearing from the strike line, either working other jobs or scabbin on the inside — who the fuck knows? It's like being on the fucking Titanic, is what it's like. That's exactly what it's like; a slowly sinking ship.

Yeah, let's say you're on a cruise. A luxury liner. You got your routine; a little buffet, a little shuffleboard, a little pool time, a little casino. Day in. Day out. Life is great. Then one day, bam. You hit a rock or a reef or a ship in the night, and you start taking on water. The captain assures you that there is nothing to be panicked about.
Everything is under control. Meanwhile, everyone is panicking. The captain has abandoned ship and jumped into one of the life rafts, but by the time you get to them they're all full. There's some guy, some stowaway scab bastard sitting in your seat. He was hiding out in the Lido Lounge and using your pool towel and now he's got your goddamn seat. Then the Captain yells out that there's another life boat on the other side of the ship, but in order to use it you're gonna have to buy another ticket. So you throw your money at the captain, run to the other side of the ship only to see that somebody's set fire to the last boat. Of a sudden you hear this ffltt ffltt ffltt, you look up and see a helicopter, and you think "Oh thank god." Then in the helicopter you see Bob Dylan, Crosby, Stills, Nash, Sheryl Crow and Bono. And Bono yells down that although they support you and what you stand for and that they'd really like to help, they gotta split, but they'll be thinking about you during their concert in Maui. And wssshh — they're gone. And while you're trying to figure out what the fuck was all about you notice you've been in sight of the shore the whole time. So you grab a vest and jump overboard and just as you're about to hit the water you see the sharks, feeding on all your friends who jumped ship before you. Your life vest is worthless 'cause it was made of tissue paper in some sweatshop in Indonesia so you do the only thing you can do. You swim. You swim as long and as hard as you can, and somehow you avoid the sharks and fight the undertow and the shore is getting closer and closer and you're thinking I can do this, I can do this, I can do this, and you are, you're doing it, you're doing it, you're doing it, until you can't do it anymore. You just can't move — you don't have an ounce of strength left in your body. So you take one last look around and you see the wreckage from the ship, you see your friends eaten by sharks or going under for the last time, you see the captain, the crew and the owners of the liner standing on shore but they can't hear your cries for help 'cause they're still fuckin' talking, and you realize that you're about to drown in five feet of water 'cause you're too tired to stand up, and there's no lifeguard on duty! I want my job back. I just want my goddamn job back. These people got families. I want my life back. Give me my fucking job back.

Scene 12

January. Strike, week fourteen. The stage is black, and in the darkness Dev is yelling:

DEV. Hit him! Hit him! Hit him. Jesus Christ somebody fucking hit him. (Lights up. Jimmy and Dev are sitting at their spot at the bar. There is a glow of a television coming from downtown. There is a pitcher of beer and three shots sitting on the table. Much of the beer is gone. The shots remain untouched.) Come on! Oh shit. Fuck! I meant hard. Hit him hard, you pussies. They don't fucking tackle, they're going for the ball and they don't wrap em up. This is fucking fundamentals, guys. You gotta be kidding me.

JIMMY. They've been running that little dump to the flat all day.

DEV. Well, somebody tell them. Christ, it's like they never seen it before.

JIMMY. Whaddya expect. We never win in January. It's like we're in an abusive relationship with these guys, we keep coming back for more thinking this time it'll be different and we end up heartbroken and alone. They should build a fucking shelter for us.

DEV. It's not over. They got a shot.

JIMMY. Dev. It's as over as it's gonna get. They're up ten with three minutes left.

DEV. It's not over. (Beat.)

JIMMY. You bet this game? Dev, you bet this game?

DEV. Yes, Jimmy, I bet this game.

JIMMY. What's the spread?

DEV. Doesn't matter.

JIMMY. What do you mean it doesn't matter?

DEV. I didn't bet the spread. I bet 'em to win.

JIMMY. Dev, what are you, stupid? You had to have at least ten points. You didn't take ten points?

DEV. It was eleven, and I didn't take it, no. Wait. Go to the outside, Go to the outside, run, run, go, go, go, go, go, Yes Yes. Ha. What I tell you. What I tell you? One good return, a quick score and ... oh you fuck. Fuck. What flag?

JIMMY. Holding.
DEV. Fuck you, holding. Fuck. They're killin' me with this shit.
JIMMY. How much you bet?
DEV. Jimmy, you're puking bad juju all over this game. Go break a mirror under a ladder somewhere.
JIMMY. (Laughs.) Oh, this is my fault?
JIMMY. How much?
DEV. Five. Shut up.
JIMMY. Five hundred?
DEV. Of course, five hundred. I'm gonna place a bet with Jerry for five anything else?
JIMMY. You can cover that?
Time out ... Time out. Goddamnit, somebody call a time out.
Thank you.
JIMMY. Dev, if you need help.
DEV. I know.
JIMMY. Let me help you with this.
DEV. I'll be all right. Oh yeah, thank Meg for the casserole. I'll get the dish back to her. I feel like I'm dead she's sending so much food to the house.
JIMMY. She's worried about you.
DEV. It's your job to tell her not to worry.
JIMMY. I do. She doesn't believe me. She wants to see you with her own two eyes.
DEV. Oh Jesus, yeah. Keep running it up the middle 'cause that's been working so well and you got so much time.
JIMMY. You been drinking a lot?
DEV. Jimmy, if this is an intervention, can we do it after the game? Am I drinking a lot? Of course I'm drinking a lot. What the fuck else am I gonna do?
JIMMY. All right. Listen, I gotta ask. I just want to make sure you're alright. Before I could tell just by looking at you, now I gotta ask.
DEV. I am, Jimmy. I am alright. I understand what you're doing, and I'd do the same and I appreciate — Run, run, run, you fuck, run, run, you beautiful bastard.
JIMMY. Run, you son of a bitch —
DEV. You're gonna go, you're gonna go, I love you! Holy shit. Holy shit! Touchdown motherfucker!
JIMMY. Fuck yeah! Wooo0000000000oh! (Jimmy stands with his arms upraised during his long woop; Dev runs around like Jimmys the maypole and he's looking for a shortcut.)
DEV. Yes! Hail! Where's that defense now. You Fuck. Hey Moody!
Hey Moody! Where's that defense now! You — can't — stop — the — train! Jimmy, I got a feeling about this game.
JIMMY. You see that? He carried that safety ten yards on his back.
DEV. It was beautiful. Come here ... (He rubs Jimmy's head.) I think you're good luck. Keep asking me questions about how fucked up my life is.
JIMMY. Whatever worries I had about you just went out the window. If you weren't fucked up, I'd be worried. Listen, if you want to switch back to days on the strike line, let me know.
DEV. I'm likin' the nights. But it's good to know I got somebody in high places. You did the right thing. Your dad would be proud of you.
JIMMY. I don't know if it was good, bad, right or wrong. It's just what I did.
DEV. Well, I'm glad you did. The union needs some new blood. You guys gotta hold him here. No first downs. No stupid penalties.
JIMMY. Jesus Christ, Dev, you might have a shot.
DEV. Where you been?
JIMMY. What you need here is a turnover, but these guys don't turn the ball over.
DEV. That's right, Jimmy, hit 'em with that juju.
JIMMY. I don't think they've turned the ball over in the last three games.
DEV. That's sweet music. Stop him. Stop him! Nowhere!
JIMMY. No fumbles, no interceptions, no muffs.
DEV. I knew you loved me, Jimmy.
JIMMY. Timeout! I have a knot in my stomach. They might stop 'em.
DEV. They will stop 'em.
JIMMY. They gotta stop 'em.
DEV. Third and five, One seventeen left to go, down by three, no time outs. My balls are sweating. This is it.
JIMMY. This is the game.
DEV and JIMMY. Fumble!
DEV. Fall on it, fall on it, you fat fuck.
JIMMY. Stay down, stay down, stay down. Ohhh shit. He's running.
DEV. Hold on. Two hands, you fuck! Oh.
JIMMY. Oh.
DEV. Yes.
JIMMY. Holy shit.
DEV. Holy shit!
BOTH. Holy shit! Touchdown! (They hug.)
DEV. And that people is why you don’t bet against the home team.
’Cause sooner or later, they’re gonna make a winner out of you.
Fuck the spread. You don’t bet against the home team!
JIMMY. Holy shit. Dev, you won a thousand bucks. (Dev grabs
two of the shots. Hands one to Jimmy.)
DEV. To winning.
JIMMY. Winning. (They drink. They look at the third shot.) So, you
want to come over for dinner?
DEV. Tonight?
JIMMY. Yeah. Or not. We can do it during the week.
DEV. I might watch the late game.
JIMMY. Then later in the week.
DEV. Thursday?
JIMMY. Sounds good.
DEV. Okay.
JIMMY. Congratulations.
DEV. Yeah.
JIMMY. See you Thursday.
DEV. Thursday. (Pause.) Let me see if I can get J.P. to cover me on
the strike line. I’ll let you know. (Jimmy leaves. Dev sits at the
table for a moment and he reaches for the third shot. He looks at it for a beat
before he drinks it. Lights fade on Dev.)

Scene 13

February. Strike, week sixteen. Jimmy’s house. There is a loud
knocking on the door.

JIMMY. (Offstage.) Just a minute … crying out loud. Wait! (Jimmy
enters. He looks out the window and opens the door. Mikey charges
into the room.) Mikey, what the hell? Everybody’s sleeping what are
you doing?
MIKEY. You got something to drink? I need something to drink.
JIMMY. What the hell, you see a ghost? You alright?
MIKEY. I saw ten thousand. Jimmy, a drink.
JIMMY. Yeah. Hang on. (He goes into the kitchen and comes back
with a bottle and a glass.) What do you mean ten thousand?
MIKEY. I screwed the pooch on this one.
JIMMY. Ten thousand what?
MIKEY. He buried us. He sold the town. He fucked us. We’re all
fucked.
JIMMY. Mikey, you gotta tell me what you’re talking about here.
MIKEY. Dolan.
JIMMY. Dolan what? Mikey, Dolan what? He’s selling the plant.
MIKEY. Sold. It’s a done deal.
JIMMY. That fucking prick. The goddamn oily bastard. But, so
what? So we negotiate with the new owner. We’ll still get a
contract, right?
MIKEY. Jimmy, he’s burned this town to the ground. He’s kept the
line up twenty-four hours to fill whatever remaining orders we had.
He’s gonna put a lock on the place as soon as they’re all done. He sold
the plant to some Swiss company. Just the plant. Not the business.
They’re gonna take two, three years to open up again with their own
product. gonna fully automate the line, maybe not even be union.
JIMMY. Mikey, that’s impossible. Who told you this?
MIKEY. Dolan told me.
JIMMY. Mikey, what the fuck? What did he do? (Jimmy turns sud-
denly towards the stairs leading to his bedroom.) No ... sorry hon.
No, everything’s fine, go back to bed. It’s Mikey. No, he’s fine.
MIKEY. Sorry, Meg. No, I’m alright.
JIMMY. Just some stuff we’re working out with the contract. Go
back to bed, babe; I’ll be up in a little bit. I love you, too.
MIKEY. Night, Meg. (Silence as they wait for Meg to return to bed.)
JIMMY. If he sold the plant, he’s out of business. He can’t be
cashin’ out this early. He likes his money too much for that.
MIKEY. He’s moving the company to Mexico. I went to his office
to ask him why the negotiations were going so slow and he just told
me. He came right out and told me. He’s selling the physical plant
to the Swiss, and moving his operation to Mexico. He’s paying
these people four fucking dollars a day. I mean, Christ, I know it’s
Mexico, but four dollars a day? Is he fucking serious? Do they got
unions down there? ’Cause they suck if they do. Jimmy, he looked
at me and told me this, he told me this as if I was gonna say, “Jesus,
Mr. Dolan, that sure seems like sound business sense to me.
Desolate an entire town, fuck the community’s whose backs you
built your little empire. Burn their fucking houses to the ground
and then go pay some poor brown people somewhere in magic
beans to break their goddamn backs for you and get 'em to think that you're their very salvation. You are a goddamn friggin' genius. He told me all this. And then, he looked me in the eye and offered me a job. Jimmy, I started shakin'. I swear to god I started shakin', and then I started laughing 'cause all I could think about was Dev. I was shaking and laughin' and I must've looked like a maniac. I couldn't even speak, I just picked up a stapler and threw it at his head. I was diving across his desk when security came in and dragged me out. I mean they dragged me all the way out, down the hall, through the parking lot and out the back gate. And they saved that man's life, 'cause I would have killed him. The police may or may not be looking for me. By the way.

JIMMY. Mikey.
MIKEY. I helped him do it. I stood there and fed his line of shit to anybody'd who'd listen. He murdered this town and my fingerprints are all over the gun.

JIMMY. Mikey, if it wasn't you, it would have been somebody else, it could have been me. It was almost me. I got the offer from the union and that sealed it for me, but I don't know what I would have done if I hadn't. We both wanted the same thing, Mikey. Shit. You cramped out, that's all.

MIKEY. I was doing the right thing though, right? Looking out for Em. I wanted to make it better for her, maybe even get married again. I didn't want the job, it wasn't about the fucking job, it wasn't about avoiding the strike, Jimmy, it was about the future, her future, not mine, hers.

JIMMY. I know.

MIKEY. I'm dead, Jimmy, I'm dead. It blew up on me. I don't know what I'm gonna do. I'm dead.

JIMMY. You're not dead, Mikey. You're fucked, but you're not dead. We're all fucked.

MIKEY. I'm not a bad person, though. I made a mistake. I made a bad decision, but it didn't have to be. I'm not a bad father 'cause I got fired. Or what the hell, I guess I quit. Throwing a stapler at your boss' head is like a resignation, right? But I'm not a bad father.

JIMMY. Emily doesn't love you an ounce less if you're on the line, in an office or out on your ass. That kid idolizes you, Mikey. That's the thing you got to remember in all this. That little girl loves you with every inch of her body.

MIKEY. I know.

JIMMY. I love you, Mikey. (Jimmy pulls Mikey to him and gives him a hug.)

MIKEY. I know.

JIMMY. It's gonna be all right.

MIKEY. I know ... It may not be if Meg comes out and sees us like this. (They hold the embrace. Lights fade.)

Scene 14

February. Three days later. Lights up on Dev in the Bar. He has a beer and a shot. Jimmy walks in. He's wearing his suit.

DEV. This official business or can you have a drink?
JIMMY. Well, since we're all officially fucked, I think I can have an unofficial drink or two. I'm not on the clock.

DEV. Jimmy, as the last man in town with an actual job I don't think you should be taking time off in the middle of the week.

JIMMY. This town is going ape shit. There's a council meeting tonight, somebody's gonna accuse the mayor of being in bed with Dolan.

DEV. I feel like the girl who gets passed around at the prom and ends up walking home.

JIMMY. We're scrambling to find spots in other plants up to three counties over.

DEV. Twenty years later everybody's thinking about her and turns out she's this great girl who ends up marrying a millionaire or something.

JIMMY. That your plan?

DEV. So far it's the best I've come up with.

JIMMY. Put your name on the list for jobs in the other plants. What else you gonna do?

DEV. I drove around for two days looking for some Swiss people to punch in the face before I realized I don't know what they look like. I mean what the fuck do they look like? Then I figured we probably don't have any here. So I thought about buyin' a plane ticket to Switzerland. Step off the plane and just start swinging. Go through customs and just punch the fuck out of 'em. We got Mexicans though. I know where the Mexicans are — don't worry
I'm not about to go punching any Mexicans, 'cause all of a sudden I've never felt so goddamned Mexican in all my life.
JIMMY. You're not gonna do anything stupid, are you, man?
DEV. Do anything stupid? What are you, fucking kidding? What could be stupider than sitting out there for four months fighting for something that doesn't exist. He's got some balls though, doesn't he?
JIMMY. He left town yesterday. The whole plant should be shut down in little over a week. My father was one of the first people to walk through those gates almost fifty years ago. Now we'll never see the inside of it again.
DEV. Tell you the truth, I'm a little relieved. I wasn't looking forward to going back inside.
JIMMY. I thought you were getting off on the strike line a little bit.
DEV. No, I've just never been in there alone.
JIMMY. I'm sorry, man.
DEV. Nah.
JIMMY. I didn't even think that far ahead.
DEV. What are we gonna do? Go through life holding hands?
JIMMY. Things are different but it doesn't have to be a bad thing, Dev.
DEV. We broke up the band. It happens, man. Plane crashes, strikes, little Japanese broads. Vomit.
JIMMY. Hey. Enough. Okay.
DEV. Enough what?
JIMMY. This can't go on like this. He lost, you lost, everybody in this town is on the same side again.
DEV. You didn't lose. You're still gainfully employed.
JIMMY. Yeah, well, if it makes you feel better they may be reducing the number of business agents, seeing as there's been a drastic decline in the workforce this past week.
DEV. I'm glad you're working. I gotta borrow money from somebody.
JIMMY. Goddammit, how long you gonna dance around this? It's over, Dev. Mikey's in the same boat as you are. Everybody got fucked on this thing.
DEV. He's not in my boat.
JIMMY. He was looking out for his family, he was doing what he thought was right for his family. You can't hold that against any man, you sure as shit can't hold it against your best friend. Before this happened didn't you always want the best for him? And the best for Emily? Goddamnit, Dev, the hardest breakup you've been through in your life was his and Lydia's. You've got a history, you gonna throw that away 'cause he was forced to make an economic decision?
DEV. For every guy who crossed the line there are fifty who didn't. You telling me the guys who crossed the line are better fathers, better husbands?
JIMMY. You telling me the guys who stayed out are better people?
DEV. Now you got it.
JIMMY. I don't understand this. I don't understand this. You wouldn't have laid your life down for Mikey four months ago. Now you can't even say his fucking name. You grudge-holding Irish stubborn fuckin' muck-savage.
DEV. It's not a grudge. It's a system of beliefs like a religion. It's got two commandments: You don't fuck your friends, and you don't cross the line. He did both by doing the second.
JIMMY. I'm not doing this, Dev. I can't do this anymore. You are not going to make me choose. I feel like a fucking idiot. So you're gonna talk to him, you're going to sort this shit out. Enough is enough. He's meeting us here, in the parking lot, and we're going for a drive.
DEV. I'm not going anywhere.
JIMMY. You fucking prick. I'm not doing it, Dev. I'm not choosing. I'll pack up Meg and the girls and move 'em to fucking Poughkeepsie, Idaho, before you make me choose. When did we say we were gonna be union dogs, Dev? Was that in the fourth grade?
JIMMY. Junior high? Was that one night we were driving around in Mikey's Buick, you two stopped and made some pact about working for the union between busting mailboxes? We've been friends since before we knew what work was. The only reason we went to work in the first place was so that we'd have money for beer when we went out together. I believe in doing the right thing as much as you do, Dev. I believe in workers' solidarity, I believe you gotta make sacrifices, I believe you don't fuck your friends. And you are fucking your friends, Dev. Mikey and me, too.
DEV. He left me out there. You left me out there. I mean I'm sitting out there wondering what the fuck are they doing? Where the fuck are they going? I was out there with thousands of people sometimes, Jimmy, fucking thousands of screaming people all wanting the same thing, and I felt completely alone. The big alone. I thought I was gonna disappear out there.
JIMMY. That's 'cause you made it about us, and it wasn't about us, it was about work, Dev. It was just fucking work. He needs you,
Dev, Mikey needs you. His heart is broken; he misses you like Christmas, man. You were right, no one's giving him the time of day. I'm the only friend he's got and I don't know how to do it without you.

DEV. You'll get better at it.

JIMMY. You're not coming?

DEV. No. You can stand there all day and I'm still not going to come. (Jimmy leaves and Dev drinks his beer. After a beat Jimmy comes running back into the bar.)

JIMMY. Dev! Dev! They got Mikey in his car. They got Mikey trapped in his car. They're bustin' the windows, they're gonna give him a beatin'. Dev. Dev. Dev, they got fuckin' Mikey. Bill, give me the bat. Bill, give me the fucking bat. Moody, give me the goddamn bar bat! You fuckin' pricks! (Jimmy runs to the wall, grabs a pool cue and runs out again. Dev looks at his beer for a long moment. He finishes his beer.)

DEV. Jesus, Mary and Joseph. (Dev grabs the bar bat and runs out the door.) Mikey. Mikey!

**End of Play**

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