4-2007

The High School Play

Kevin Drzakowski
Western Michigan University

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THE HIGH SCHOOL PLAY

by

Kevin Drzakowski

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of English
Dr. Steve Feffer, Advisor

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
April 2007
The High School Play

Kevin Drzakowski, Ph.D.
Western Michigan University, 2007

_The High School Play_ is a creative work, a full-length play in three acts. Set in suburban Richard M. Nixon High School, the play explores the notion of adolescent identity while satirizing the American educational system’s artificial construction of these identities. The play is especially concerned with theatrically representing the way students view each other through flawed frameworks based on preconceived notions of race, gender, sexuality, and intelligence, as well as how this behavior shapes adolescents’ construction of their own self-conceptions. _The High School Play_ also deals with the difficulty schools experience in addressing the increasingly common controversial issues students experience as everyday social realities.
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to thank Dr. Steve Feffer for his invaluable support and enthusiasm as my dissertation advisor. Furthermore, I wish to thank the other members of my graduate committee: Dr. Arnie Johnston, Dr. Tony Ellis, and Dr. Jennifer Chapman. The members of Dr. Johnston’s Spring 2006 graduate playwriting workshop, for which this play was originally written, also deserve my gratitude for their thoughtful commentary and encouragement. Lastly, I would like to thank everyone at St. Charles High School, without whom this play never would have been conceived.

Kevin Drzakowski
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CHARACTERS

DIRK KOPITZ (M), late teens, perennial member of the JV football team.

DOOGIE CRENSHAW (M), late teens, intellectual freethinker.

DYLAN CORMACK (M), late teens, openly gay football quarterback and team captain.

MARY ELLEN JONES (F), late teens, conservative and religiously devout.

AUBREY HAWTHORNE (F), late teens, pretty and popular head varsity cheerleader.

BECKY WHITE (F), late teens, African-American, new to the school.

HUNTER "CORNSHUCKER" BOOBY (M), late teens, dresses Goth, but speaks in a drawl.

JANITOR JOE (M), fifties, sweeps up after everyone.

DR. RUTH VOSS (F), forties, the principal, prefers to go by “Dr. Ruth”.

SET: Most of the scenes take place in the student lounge at Richard M. Nixon High School. There are goofy motivational posters on the walls, advertisements, announcements on bulletin boards—all the things you might expect to find in a high school. If possible, there might be a vending machine or two upstage. One table with four chairs is at L. Two doors on the upstage wall lead to the boys’ and girls’ restrooms. The upstage wall should actually be a scrim that will allow us to see into the restrooms for one scene and enable us to see silhouettes behind it for another. A banner across the top of the upstage wall reads: “RICHARD M. NIXON HIGH SCHOOL: Home of the Nicks”. It might include the school’s logo, perhaps an angry-looking cartoon Richard Nixon face.

SCENES

ACT ONE

Scene One. SETTING: the student lounge. TIME: October. Two weeks before Homecoming.

Scene Two. SETTING: the hallway. TIME: next Monday.
SCENES—Continued

Scene Three. SETTING: the student lounge. TIME: Wednesday afternoon.

Scene Four. SETTING: principal’s office. TIME: later that day.

ACT TWO

Scene One. SETTING: the student lounge. TIME: the following Monday.

Scene Two. SETTING: the student lounge at George Washington Carver High School. TIME: the same.

Scene Three. SETTING: principal’s office. TIME: Tuesday morning.

Scene Four. SETTING: the student lounge. TIME: the same.

Scene Five. SETTING: the same. TIME: Later that day.

ACT THREE

Scene One. SETTING: the auditorium. TIME: Thursday, the homecoming pep assembly.

Scene Two. SETTING: Mary Ellen’s bedroom. TIME: that night.

Scene Three. SETTING: the principal’s office. TIME: Friday morning.

Scene Four. SETTING: the student lounge. TIME: later that day.

Scene Five. SETTING: the student lounge. TIME: Saturday night, the homecoming dance.
THE HIGH SCHOOL PLAY

by

Kevin Drzakowski

ACT ONE

Scene One

SETTING: The student lounge at Richard M. Nixon High School.
TIME: The present. Two weeks before Homecoming.

(DYLAN, DOOGIE, and DIRK are sitting at the table. DIRK is pushing a butter knife into the palm of his right hand. He does this over and over, stopping to examine his palm after each try. DOOGIE is munching on an apple while reading a book. DYLAN squints at a textbook. All three are wearing high school letter jackets. DIRK’S jacket is the only one without a letter. The other two jackets have capital N’s.)

DYLAN

You know we gotta black kid comin’ to the school?

DIRK

(Sticking himself with the knife.)

Ow!

DOOGIE

You don’t say.

DYLAN

I do say, Doogster. Heard it from Vice Principal Chalkers. I was walking down the hall, and he was like, “Look sharp, Dylan. We’ve got a black student coming next week.”

Ow!

DOOGIE

Did this school finally sign on to the bussing program?
DYLAN

Nope. Chalkers said he knew about it 'cause the family was movin' in next door to him.

DOOGIE

Are you serious? Chalkers lives in the subdivision right next to mine. The sheer economics of it don't make any sense to me. For the life of me, I just can't fathom how an African-American family could afford it.

DYLAN

Black people can get rich, too.

DOOGIE

But what you don't know is just how difficult it is. These African-American families are relegated to the inner cities, where rent, gas prices, and the general cost of living are forcibly kept at a higher than average rate, just so...

DYLAN

Yeah, yeah, I know. But the system can be broken. Bill Cosby was a doctor.

DIRK

(Looking up.)

On TV or in real life?

DOOGIE

Both, actually.

DIRK

(Genuinely impressed.)

Wow.

DYLAN

Yeah, well, all I'm sayin' is it's about time we got us a decent running back.

DOOGIE

It's always about the football with you.

DYLAN

I'm sorry, Doogie, but if you haven't noticed....

(He gestures around.)

...we're in high school. Football is life.

DIRK

Ow! Damn straight.

DYLAN

Shut up, you JV faggot.
(DIRK looks down, jamming the butter knife into his palm especially hard.)

How many people were at your last soccer game, Doogie? Me, your mom, and, like, five other people. Now how many were at the last football game? I’ll tell you who was there. Whole damn school, that’s who! You’re there, Dirk’s got his JV senior butt in the stands, Mary Ellen’s there…

DIRK

Mary Ellen’s in the band. She has to be there.

DYLAN

But she’s there! That’s the point I’m tryin’ to make here, gentlemen. The football game is a social event! High school life revolves around it. I don’t care if you like football, I don’t care if you can’t tell the difference between a touchdown and a fumble. It don’t matter. What matters is that you’re there, affirming that you are a student of Richard M. Nixon High School. Can I get a “Go Nicks”?

Go Nicks!

DYLAN

Shut up.

(DIRK glares at him, but resumes pushing the knife into his palm. DYLAN sits down.)

You see what I’m saying here? My playing quarterback is a Richard Nixon High School event. That’s my identity. When people see me in the halls, they say, “There’s Dylan. The quarterback.”

DOOGIE

Your identity is the gay quarterback.

DIRK

Ha ha!

DYLAN

Shut up, Dirk. And so what if it is? If that’s what everybody wants to label me as, fine. I’m not ashamed of my sexuality.

DOOGIE

Of course you’re not. You couldn’t be more proud of it! You didn’t come out of the closet last year. You came out of the cannon! Everywhere you go, anyone you meet….that’s the first thing out of your mouth. “Hi. I’m Dylan Cormack. I play quarterback for the Nixon Nicks. Oh, and by the way, I’m flamin’ gay!”

(DOOGIE does a jazz-hands type move.)
DYLAN
I take exception to that. It’s not like a go around waving some rainbow flag.

DOOGIE
You wear that rainbow towel sticking out of the back of your pants every game!

DYLAN
Fine. OK, maybe I do want people to know. I want people in the stands to look at me, look at the courage I have, and go, “You know what? Maybe it’s OK for gay people to play football. Hell, maybe it’s OK for me to be gay.”

DOOGIE
If I suspected that were true, I would actually stand up and applaud. But we both know there’s not a bigger drama queen than you in this school, and, frankly, it makes me sick the way you take something as sensitive and controversial as homosexuality and use it for your own personal gain!

DYLAN
My own personal gain? Come on!

DOOGIE
There are homosexuals who are afraid to stand up and admit who they are in the military, in the workplace, and, yes, in this very school, because they’re afraid of the way that people are going to view them. They’re afraid of how they’ll be treated, and maybe they’re ashamed of who they are because of people like you who make them feel worse by rubbing their face in it with a rainbow towel!

DIRK
Ow!

DYLAN
(Pointing at something in his textbook.)
Oh! Oh! You know what you are, Doogie? You’re an iconoclast!

DOOGIE
What, you’re labeling me as a vocabulary word? And for God’s sake, I told you guys, I’m sick of this fucking Doogie Howser shit. My name is Doug, OK? Doug!

DYLAN
You are so Doogie and you don’t even know it.

DOOGIE
Fine. You want to keep callin’ me Doogie? I’ll just start calling you Dillhole again.

DYLAN
(Standing up and getting his things.)
All the same to me, Doogie.

DOOGIE

Dillhole, the gay quarterback who both literally and figuratively sucks. Dirk, what’s that quarterback number Dillhole here has?

DIRK

Passer rating of 38.8.

(Looks up.)

That’s bad.

DOOGIE

But hey, Dillhole, cheer up. I’m sure you’ll get at least an honorable mention on the conference all-gay squad.

DYLAN

That 38.8 is because every other team knows we have no running game! You just wait! You just wait till we get that black guy on the team! Then everyone’s gonna be able to see what I can really do! Fuck you, Doogie.

Whatever. See you after school.

(DYLAN storms out. DOOGIE sighs.)

God. Look what he reduced me to.

(DIRK is still looking down, pushing the butter knife into his palm.)

DIRK

Ow!

DOOGIE

(Whirling to face him.)

What? What the hell are you doing? You’ve been sitting here, sticking a knife into your hand this whole time, just because you want attention. You want us to ask you what you’re doing, and, so help me God, we’ve been doing our best to ignore you, but fine. Fine! You’ve won. Why do you want my attention so badly?

DIRK

I don’t want your attention. I’m trying to give myself those Jesus wounds.

What?

DOOGIE

DIRK

Those Jesus wounds. The cuts he had. And sometimes really holy people get ‘em now.
Stigmata?

Yeah, that.

Why?

I just...look, forget about it, OK?

Oh, Jesus Christ, Dirk. OK. I'll admit it. You've actually piqued my curiosity. Why are you trying to give yourself fake stigmata?

(DIRK stops pressing the butter knife into his palm and looks at DOOGIE.)

Well...OK, but don't tell this ta' anyone, all right? I'm doing it for Mary Ellen. You know, to impress her. If I have the...the Jesus wounds, she'll think I'm really holy.

Oh, for God's sake.

No, no...hear me out. I live right by Mary Ellen. Her family's, like, super-religious. They have one of those creepy little Virgin Mary statues out on the front lawn and everything. So if I get Mary Ellen to hold my hand, and she feels one of these Jesus wounds...then she might actually go out with me.

Well, I'll tell you this. When I asked Mary Ellen to Homecoming last year, she did bring up my atheism as a negative. I told her I thought my own personal religion was irrelevant, and she told me atheism wasn't a religion, and...well, anyway, you're right about the fact that she is a very religious, and by religious I mean Christian, person. Specifically Catholic, I believe, and Dirk, I'm not sure what your relative familiarity is with the various sects of Christianity...

Um...
Yeah. Well, suffice it to say, if somebody here would believe in stigmata, it would be Mary Ellen. However, there’s only person in this school I know of who would believe that you yourself could legitimately get it.

Who?

Unfortunately, that also happens to be you yourself. Not gonna work, Dirk.

Oh yeah?

(He holds up his left palm, the one that he has not been pressing with the butter knife. It is a bloody mess.)

Oh my God! What is the matter with you?

Yeah, see? This one’s a lot better, ‘cause I was able to do it at home. So, they’re kind of uneven, but I don’t think it matters.

(Looking off L.)

Ooh! Here comes Janitor Joe!

(LOOKING OFF L., pushing a broom in front of him. With a low-pulled cap and a droopy mustache, JANITOR JOE looks like the saddest man in the universe. DOOGIE and DIRK dig desperately through their bookbags. They come up with handfuls of trash.)

Hey, Janitor Joe! How’s it going?

My name isn’t Joe.

(LOOKING OFF L., slightly reluctant about it, throw their trash, including the apple DOOGIE was eating, on the floor in front of JANITOR JOE. JANITOR JOE keeps his head down as he sweeps up their trash, pushing it in front of
Ha ha! Man, Janitor Joe sure loves trash.

DOOGIE
(After JANITOR JOE is gone.)
We should probably stop doing that. It isn’t Janitor Joe’s fault he’s a janitor.

Sure it is.

DOOGIE
Dirk, there’s so much about the world that you are just completely incapable of processing.

DIRK
Come on, Doogie. I’m sick of this holier-than-thou attitude you’ve got goin’ on all the time. Besides...

(DIRK holds out his bloodied palms.)
...I think it’s pretty clear who’s holier than who.

DOOGIE
(Standing and getting his things together.)
I have to get going. I’m gonna be late for Capitalist Programming.

What?

DOOGIE
Consumer Ed. I always call it that.

DIRK
Oh! Here comes Mary Ellen. Get out of here, man!

DOOGIE
Part of me wants to see this train wreck, but...no. Look away, Doug. Look away.

(DIRK exits. DIRK stands and turns to face MARY ELLEN. MARY ELLEN has her arms wrapped around her stomach.)

DIRK
Hi, Mary Ellen.

(He crosses to her with his hand extended, as though he is planning to shake hands with her.)
What? Oh, hi, Dirk.

MARY ELLEN  
(Looking distracted.)

(He is right next to her, with his hand out. She looks at his hand briefly, but then looks back up.)

What are you doing?

DIRK  
Me and Dylan got this new secret handshake we been workin’ on. It’s killer smooth.

MARY ELLEN  
I’d love to, later. Have you seen Aubrey around anywhere?

DIRK  
(Putting his hand down.)
Not since Typing this morning. Oh, and speaking of Typing, I was having a hell of a time with it today. I got this hand injury, see....

(He tries to show her his palm.)

....really makes it tough to reach the letter “B.”

MARY ELLEN  
(Looking at her stomach.)
That’s too bad. B’s a…important letter.

DIRK  
Yeah. B is for...

(Pause. He can’t come up with anything.)

MARY ELLEN  
Look, if you see Aubrey around, tell her I’m looking for her, OK?

‘K.

‘Mary Ellen!

MARY ELLEN  
(Turning back.)

What?

DIRK  
(He raises his hand for a high five. MARY ELLEN awkwardly slaps it.)

Go Nicks!
Ow!

What, did that hurt? Are you jo...  
MARY ELLEN

(Looking at her own palm.)

Oh my gosh! What’s this?

DIRK

Oh, I’m sorry. Did I get my blood on you?

MARY ELLEN

What is wrong with you?

DIRK

That’s my bad. I keep forgetting. See, I’ve been doin’ a lot of praying lately, and charity, and good works and stuff. That’s all great, but it looks like it gave me a bad case of...

(He holds out his palms to her.)

...the stigma.

The what?

MARY ELLEN

The...uh...the Jesus wounds.

DIRK

Stigmata?

MARY ELLEN

That’s not stigmata!

(She grabs his hands and looks at them.)

DIRK

Sure it is! I know it’s uneven, but...I been prayin’ harder with my left hand.

MARY ELLEN

The wounds of Jesus on the cross were not through his palms. They were through his wrists.

DIRK

The wrists?

(Looking down.)

MARY ELLEN

If his hands were nailed up, the stakes would have torn right through them and he would have fallen off the cross, and then none of us would have been saved from eternal
damnation. Crucifixion was through the wrists, where there’s actually enough muscle mass and bone to support a hanging body.

DIRK

Whoa. That’s gross.

MARY ELLEN

You’re gross, Dirk. Did you do that to yourself?

DIRK

No.

(Meekly.)

It was a miracle.

MARY ELLEN

Jesus hears every lie, Dirk.

DIRK

That’s what my parents used to tell me about Santa, and then it turned out there was no Santa.

(Beat.)

Do you want to go to Homecoming, Mary Ellen?

MARY ELLEN

(After a bit.)

Oh, Dirk. That’s really sweet of you to ask. But...I already have a date.

DIRK

Oh.

(Beat.)

Wait. It’s not Jesus, is it? Because he doesn’t count.

MARY ELLEN

No, Dirk, it’s not Jesus.

(She looks down at her stomach, placing her hands on it.)

Besides...I doubt Jesus would take me, right now.

DIRK

Sure he would! You’re totally hot.

MARY ELLEN

Oh. Thank you. But that’s not really it.

DIRK

Is something wrong?
MARY ELLEN
No.

DIRK
'Cause you can tell me. I know I don’t strike people as someone they could tell all their shit to, because... oh, sorry... someone they could tell all their crap to, because, I don’t know... everyone thinks I don’t think about stuff the way other people do. Plus, I’m on JV, so there’s that. But, if something’s bothering you... I want to be a friend. I don’t even care if you want to go to the dance with me or not. I just want to know what’s up.

MARY ELLEN
It’s... I appreciate that, but... I hardly know you anymore, Dirk.

DIRK
But, we used to be, like, best friends.

MARY ELLEN
We weren’t best friends.

DIRK
Oh. Jesus. I always forget about him.

MARY ELLEN
No, Dirk. I mean, we were friends, but it was because we lived on the same block. When we were kids, we didn’t know anybody else. The block was the whole world to us, and... you were the only other kid in my world. But, Dirk... I don’t know. You’re not a very nice person, and you don’t have a sense of your own faith. And when the world got bigger... you know what I’m saying?

DIRK
No.

MARY ELLEN
We’re two incredibly different people. We don’t have anything in common. Just the block we live on.

(She hurriedly exits into the girls’ restroom.)

DIRK is left standing there alone. He is silent for a moment. Then...)

DIRK
Beer! Beer starts with B! That’s what I shoulda said! That would’ve been killer smooth.

Nah. That would’ve been gay.

(He looks at his palms for a moment. Then...)

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he pulls back the sleeves of his jacket and looks at his wrists. CORNSHUCKER BOOBY enters, dressed in all black, with a long trench coat and sunglasses. He appears as though he is trying to look like Keanu Reeves in The Matrix. Despite his appearance, CORNSHUCKER speaks with a thick drawl.

DIRK

What's up, Cornshucker?

(CORNSHUCKER strides toward DIRK, his black coat flowing behind him.)

CORNSHUCKER
Ah told you sons a'bitches not ta' call me that anymore. Mah name ain't fuckin' Cornshucker. Mah name is Omega now. Omega, Prince of Finality.

DIRK
No, no, no. Don't you try to pull that vampire shit on me. You're Cornshucker Booby, and you're always gonna be Cornshucker Booby. And don't you think for a second that you can change that with how you dress, or what you say, or who you are, or anything like that. 'Cause you're fucking Cornshucker Booby, and if for no other reason than people like me say so, then that's the way it is.

CORNSHUCKER
Don't you preach this bullshit high school social stratification shit ta' me. Ah am outside whatever system y'all think ya' got. Ah am above it. Ah am Omega, and I wanna hear you say it.

DIRK
You are Cornshucker, Cornshucker. Go shuck some corn.

CORNSHUCKER
The only thing Ah am going to shuck is the flesh right off your skull, Dirk the Dork.

DIRK
(Grabbing him by the collar.)

No! You don't call me that! Only certain people can call me that, and you're not one of them!

CORNSHUCKER
Ah can call you whatever the hell Ah want, you chicken shit!
Call me Dirk!

You call me Omega!

Cornshucker! Cornshucker Booby! That's your name!

(He puts CORNSHUCKER in a headlock.)

Fuck you! Fuck you! Ah'm fucking shootin' up everyone in this school, and you'll be the first to go! You hear me! Ah'm comin' in one of these days, Ah swear to God, guns raised, bullets flying....Ah am the Omega!

You are Cornshucker Booby! Say your name!

(DIRK twists his head. CORNSHUCKER violently resists.)

Omega, Prince of Finality!

(CORNSHUCKER screams.)

Say your name!

(CORNSHUCKER raises his voice.)

Cornshucker Booby!

(DIRK releases him and throws him on the ground. CORNSHUCKER is crying.)

Cornshucker Booby!

(He reaches for his face, then looks at his hand. Some of DIRK'S blood is on it. AUBREY, wearing a halter top, tight pants, and heels, comes running in.)

You made me bleed, you dumb shit! What the hell's wrong with you?

That's my blood, not yours. Settle down, a teacher's gonna hear you.
What’s going on, Dirk?

AUBREY

Nothin’. Cornshucker’s just being a fuckin’ hick. Like always.

DIRK

Are you OK, Hunter?

AUBREY

(Bending down to CORNSHUCKER.)

CORNSHUCKER

Mah name ain’t Hunter!

DIRK

It’s Cornshucker.

CORNSHUCKER

It’s Omega.

(AUBREY pulls CORNSHUCKER up, but once he is on his feet he pushes her away.)

Hey!

AUBREY

Get yer hands off me! Ah don’t need no help from no goddamned teeny-bopper. Bet you got a ton of them boy band posters all around yer bedroom. With a whole bunch of pink fuzzy teddy bears on yer bed with its little curtains and the four posts.

CORNSHUCKER

I share a room with my little sister.

AUBREY

Ah hate you! Ah hate all the people like you! That’s why Ah am the Omega. Ah have been sent by the forces of darkness to eradicate the shallow! To wipe from the Earth all you halter-top bitches who think y’all better than ev’ryone else. Ah’m comin’ in this fuckin’ place with two guns and a shit-load a’ bullets.

(As he exits.)

Fuck you! Fuck all y’all! Mark mah words. This whole school is fuckin’ dead!

DIRK

Bye Cornshucker. Don’t be late for retard class.

(CORNSHUCKER is gone.)

AUBREY

That wasn’t very nice.
DIRK
No, it’s true. Comshucker’s in all the L.D. classes.

AUBREY
You shouldn’t call them “retard” classes.

DIRK
It don’t matter. Comshucker’s not a real person. Him and his family, they’re river folk. You ever seen where he lives? One time me and Dylan went out there, up by the river. He lives in this trailer, but, like, it’s even worse than a regular trailer. It’s on stilts.

AUBREY
That’s so it doesn’t get flooded. My aunt and uncle live out there, and their house is raised, too.

DIRK
Oh, come on, Aubrey. It’s not the same. If they’re your aunt and uncle, than they probably got like some mansion with giant stairs leading up to it. I’m serious, Comshucker’s shack is on actual stilts. You could probably saw ‘em off if you wanted. Hey, that’s a good idea! Oh my God, that would be so fuckin’ hilarious! Can you imagine me and Dylan goin’ out there one night and sawing off one of those stilts, and Comshucker, and Ma and Pa Booby, and his, like, fifteen inbred cousins would come rollin’ out the window. Oh, man! That would be killer smooth.

AUBREY
That’s not funny.

DIRK
Comshucker’s right. You’re a total teeny-bopper.

I am not.

AUBREY

DIRK
Do you like Britney Spears?

I used to.

AUBREY

DIRK
Do you watch American Idol?

Yes.
DIRK
See? You’re a shallow teeny-bopper. Look at you. Look at that outfit. Look at that freakin’ Porsche Mommy and Daddy bought you.

AUBREY
That’s an ’85 Trans Am, Dirk. And I bought it with my own money, the money I made from working at Old Country Buffet every single day.

DIRK
Whatever. You don’t even know what it means to be a normal person. You think...you think, just because you’re a varsity cheerleader and I’m on the JV football team, you don’t have to make a locker sign for me.

AUBREY
What?

DIRK
I see those signs you make. Every Friday you make one for Dylan. One that says “Go Nicks! Go get ‘em, Dylan” or some shit like that. And you even make ‘em for Doogie’s soccer games. How come I never get a locker sign?

AUBREY
Don’t the JV cheerleaders make them for you?

DIRK
(After a beat.)
You know what? I hate people like you.

(He turns and exits. AUBREY looks after him and shakes her head. She turns to leave herself, but MARY ELLEN rushes in from the bathroom.)

MARY ELLEN
(Holding her stomach again.)
There you are! I have a problem, Aubrey. A big, big problem.

AUBREY
What?

MARY ELLEN
I...Aubrey...how do you know if you’re...pregnant?

AUBREY
Pregnant?

(JANITOR JOE enters. MARY ELLEN...
Oh. Hi. Um, here you go.

(She spits out the gum she has been chewing at JANITOR JOE’S feet. He looks at it for a moment, then looks at MARY ELLEN.)

Oh...I don’t know if I...

Oh, wait. Here’s something.

(MARY ELLEN)

(Shee fiddles in her pocket.)

Oh, wait. Here’s something.

(She tosses some loose change on the ground in front of JANITOR JOE. He looks at it sadly, looks at MARY ELLEN, then picks up a quarter from the change and pockets it. He then sweeps the rest together, along with the gum, and sweeps his way offstage.)

AUBREY

You’re not supposed to give him change. That was mean.

MARY ELLEN

I just had to get him out of here. Did you forget what I just said, Aubrey? I might be pregnant! Oh my gosh, I cannot believe I’m even talking about this with you. Ohhh. What have I done to deserve this?

AUBREY

Are you sure about this? I mean, you don’t look like you’re...you know. You look fine.

No, I’m not sure!

MARY ELLEN

AUBREY

Then what makes you...

MARY ELLEN

I haven’t had girl time for a long time.

AUBREY

Girl time? What’s that?
You know! A girl’s...special time.

MARY ELLEN

Your period?

AUBREY

Aubrey! Shhh! Don’t say that around me!

MARY ELLEN

How long has it been?

AUBREY

Five months.

MARY ELLEN

Five months! Oh my God! Are you crazy?

AUBREY

He’s testing me, Aubrey. I know it. God is testing me.

MARY ELLEN

(Collapsing into a chair.)

He’s not testing you, Mary Ellen. When did it happen? You know...the conception.

AUBREY

(Beat.)

Mary Ellen, you have to tell me. When did you have sex?

MARY ELLEN

(After a pause.)

I’m a virgin.

AUBREY

What?

MARY ELLEN

You heard me, you airhead. I’m a virgin. I would never have sex before marriage.

(Crying.)

I’m not...one of those people. I’m not you!

(AUBREY takes MARY ELLEN’S head and forces her to look at her.)

AUBREY

Look at me. Mary Ellen, look at me. Look into my eyes. Do you swear to me that you’re not lying? Do you swear you’re a virgin?

(MARY ELLEN hits her.)
Ow!

MARY ELLEN
I am not a liar! Don’t you call me a liar, you stupid...I am a virgin. If I’m pregnant, then this is an immaculate conception!

AUBREY
Fine. OK. If you say it, then I believe you. But there’s something really wrong here. Have you...

(She stops.)

Mary Ellen, have you messed around with anyone?

MARY ELLEN
Messed around?

AUBREY
Have you done anything...you know...with a guy, with your pants off?

(MARY ELLEN tries to hit AUBREY again, but she is too far away.)

MARY ELLEN
That is filthy! Don’t you say that, do you hear me? That is filthy!

(Beat.)

Yes.

AUBREY
What did you do?

MARY ELLEN
We...I should not be telling you this. Yes, I screwed up. Yes, I have sinned. But you are not a priest. I have nothing to gain by telling you this.

AUBREY
You’ve gotta tell me or I can’t help you.

MARY ELLEN
(Beat.)

Why me? Oh, Jesus, why me?

AUBREY
Stop that. Come on.

MARY ELLEN
(Beat.)

Mary Ellen, when you were messing...when you doing whatever you were doing, did he....did he ejaculate?

(MARY ELLEN shrieks at this and puts her...
hands over her ears. AUBREY pulls her hands away and holds them in her grasp.

Listen! Quit acting like this! Did the guy, whoever it was...did he ejaculate?

MARY ELLEN
(Through tears.)

Yes! Yes he did, and it was awful! It went everywhere! Oh God, it was horrible! Why? Why does it have to be like that?

AUBREY

So it might have gotten... down there?

(MARY ELLEN just bawls at this.)

This is... OK, we’re going to get you a pregnancy test after school. Just to be sure. Meet me after sixth hour, and we’ll go to Central Drug and buy a kit.

MARY ELLEN

No!

AUBREY

Yes. You have to, Mary Ellen. Actually, you should probably go to a doctor.

MARY ELLEN

I’m not going to a doctor!

AUBREY

You’re going to have to eventually. But we’ll just get the test for now.

MARY ELLEN

Don’t you have one? I thought people like you always carried them around. In your purses.

AUBREY

What do you mean, people like me?

MARY ELLEN
(Sniffling.)

I...I’m sorry. I didn’t mean that. It’s just....I can’t go in there. I can’t go into the drugstore and buy a pregnancy test. Then everyone’s going to see me, and they’re going to know, and they’ll...they’ll...Can’t you buy it?

AUBREY

By myself?

MARY ELLEN

Please, Aubrey? It’s different for you. You could do it.
AUBREY
Why is it different for me?

MARY ELLEN
Because if you went in, and you bought one, nobody would even pay any attention.
It’s... I’m not the kind of girl who’s supposed to get pregnant, but you... you...
(Beat. AUBREY looks at her.)
...you’re a stronger person than I am. Help me. Please, please help me.
(Grabbing AUBREY tight and hugging her.)

Please!

AUBREY
Fine. I’ll buy the stupid kit.

MARY ELLEN
Oh, Aubrey! Thank you! You’re... Jesus will remember this, Aubrey. He will.

(MARY ELLEN is still holding AUBREY.)

You’re a terrible person, you know.

MARY ELLEN
Don’t say that! You have no idea what this is like!
Do you?

AUBREY
No, I don’t.

MARY ELLEN
You just don’t understand. You can’t. Why? I can’t believe he did this to me.

AUBREY
Jesus did not do this to you. He had nothing to do with this.

MARY ELLEN
Not Jesus! Why does everybody always think I’m talking about Jesus?
(Short pause.)
The father, Aubrey! And no, not God the Father! I mean that awful boy who... who... released his sin all over me!

AUBREY
Mary Ellen... who was it?
I can't tell you that. I won't.

MARY ELLEN

This is his problem just as much as it is yours.

AUBREY

Oh, yeah, right! Are you an idiot?

MARY ELLEN

Who was it?

AUBREY

MARY ELLEN

(Quietly, after a bit.)

Joseph.

(There is a pause, then AUBREY jumps away from her.)

AUBREY

Janitor Joe!

MARY ELLEN


AUBREY

That guy who was the lead in the musical?

(MARY ELLEN nods.)

Have you talked with him about this?

MARY ELLEN

No.

AUBREY

We need to tell him. Come on.

(She takes MARY ELLEN'S hand and pulls her up.)

MARY ELLEN

(Resisting.)

We're doing it right now. I'll go with you.

No! I'm not telling him! Nobody else knows about this, and nobody else is going to know! Do you hear me? Not the father, not my father...not...not...

(She trails off, seeing somebody offstage.)
DR. VOSS enters.)

DR. VOSS

What is this? What’s going on here?

(MARY ELLEN lets go of AUBREY.)

Miss Jones! Miss Hawthorne! Are you two fighting?

No.

MARY ELLEN

AUBREY

No, Dr. Voss.

DR. VOSS

That’s good to hear. The last thing I’d want to have to do is give two of my finest students a seventh-hour. And Miss Hawthorne, you know I like everyone to call me by my first name. Dr. Voss is my father. And my mother. And my older sister. And her husband, who, through sheer coincidence, also happens to have the surname Voss. I, on the other hand, am Dr. Ruth.

AUBREY

But...um, Dr. Ruth, there’s already a Dr. Ruth.

DR. VOSS

Well, I don’t know who this other Dr. Ruth person is, but I certainly think there can be more than one. After all, there’s more than one Dr. Voss. Now come on, Miss Jones, I’d like you to come with me.

MARY ELLEN

But...

DR. VOSS

There’s a new student coming next week who I’d like you to help get started here. A new student is always important, but this one is extra...well, of particular note, and I want to make sure they have a friend here at Nixon right off the bat. I’m a little worried about some of the...well, let’s save the details for my office, shall we? Come on.

(To AUBREY.)

Miss Hawthorne, shouldn’t you be heading off? You’ll be late for home ec. Or, wait. Do we even have home ec anymore? Or do we call it cooking now? Well, whatever it is, you don’t want to be late for it, do you, dear? Go...

(MARY ELLEN looks desperately at AUBREY.)

Go now, shoo! Shoo!

(AUBREY exits, looking back at MARY ELLEN as she does so.)
There we go. Now, follow me, Miss Jones. As I was saying, we’re about to open up a dark new chapter here at Nixon. Did I say “dark”? That’s not what I meant. Just a little Freudian slip. It’s going to be an historic week...for...for...wait a minute.

(Calling out to the hall.)

Hunter! Hunter Booby! Get in here!

(CORNSHUCKER enters, looking a little bewildered.)

Mr. Booby, where do you think you’re going?

CORNSHUCKER

Ah was just goin’ from shop ta’ get a drink. Mr. Wheeler said it was OK.

DR. VOSS

Mr. Booby, you know perfectly well that students are not allowed in the hall during class time.

(She takes a pad and writes something hastily on the top page.)

I’m writing up a seventh-hour for you. I hope it teaches you an important lesson. And might I add, Mr. Corn...um...might I add, Mr. Booby, that you are not in a cartoon of Spy vs Spy. That outfit is categorically ridiculous, even for you.

(She rips the piece of paper off and hands it to CORNSHUCKER.)

Here. You can use your time in seventh hour to consider the pointlessness of whatever statement you believe yourself to be making.

(CORNSHUCKER looks at the slip of paper, then at DR. VOSS.)

CORNSHUCKER

You just signed your own death warrant.

DR. VOSS

No, Mr. Booby, if you’ll inspect that paper closer you’ll find it has nothing of the sort on it. And I’ll thank you to please dispense with the empty threats. The faculty and myself are growing rather tired of them. Now, off to L.D. with you. Miss Jones, this way, please.

(DR. VOSS exits R. MARY ELLEN follows her.) CORNSHUCKER looks at the piece of paper in his hand. JANITOR JOE enters.)

JANITOR JOE

What is that, son?

(Beat.)

Hunter, right? They stick you with one of them seventh-hours? That wasn’t fair.
Mah name is Omega.

CORNSHUCKER

Fine with me, Omega. Whatever suits you.

JANITOR JOE

(CORNSHUCKER looks at JANITOR JOE, then rips up the piece of paper and lets the pieces fall to the ground.)

CORNSHUCKER

Shut up and do yer job. Fuckin' janitor.

(CORNSHUCKER exits. JANITOR JOE sweeps up the pieces of paper into a pile. The lights fade.)

Scene Two

SETTING: The hallway.
TIME: Monday, next week.

(A platform with three lockers on it is placed DC to represent a scene in the hall. DYLAN'S locker is R, DIRK'S is C, and DOOGIE'S is the next. All three lockers are open. The back of DYLAN'S open locker door has rainbow “pride” stickers and pictures of NFL quarterbacks on it. DIRK'S door has nothing on it. DOOGIE'S has a picture of Karl Marx and, perhaps, the poster from the movie A Clockwork Orange. The audience cannot yet see what is on the outside of the locker doors. All three lockers have an array of textbooks inside. DYLAN, DIRK, and DOOGIE dig through their respective lockers.)

DYLAN
You gents have dates for Homecoming yet?

DOOGIE
No. And, thank you in advance for asking, but no.
DYLAN

Don’t flatter yourself, you homophobe. I already have a date.

DOOGIE

Girl or guy?

DYLAN

Guy.

DOOGIE

Last year you said taking a guy was a special act of courage for a special occasion…in other words, only for prom.

DYLAN

Well, now that I did take a guy to prom, I can’t go back. It would be, like, scandal to the extreme if I showed up with a girl to Homecoming.

DIRK

Who is it?

DYLAN

Remember that guy who was Joseph in Technicolor Dreamcoat?

DIRK

Didn’t see it. Plays are gay.

DYLAN

Dirk, please. This was a musical. What about you? Made any headway with Mary Ellen?

DIRK

(Reaching for a book on the top shelf of his locker.)

Dude, I’m tryin’. But that girl’s got, like, some kinda force field or something. But I got a plan.

(DYLAN suddenly grabs DIRK’S arm.)

Hey!

DYLAN

What’s this?

DIRK

What?

(DYLAN rolls up the sleeve of DIRK’S arm.)
jacket. There are bleeding scratch marks on his wrists.)

DYLAN
These scratches? What the fuck is this supposed to be?

DIRK
(Looking at the scratches quizzically.)

I don’t know.

Oh, for the love of God, Dirk.
This is going too far. Way too far.

DIRK
(Pulling his arm away.)

I didn’t do this.

DOOGIE
Please. Been boning up on your stigmata?

DIRK
That’s not what this is.

DOOGIE
I’ve had it with this, Dirk. I’ve had it up to here with your constant cries for attention.

DIRK, why are you cutting your wrists?

DOOGIE
Don’t fall into this trap, Dylan. It’s the same thing with him, time after time. Always a desperate ploy to secure our attention. That’s what he wants. That’s all this is.

DYLAN
(Killing yourself is a JV move, Dirk.

DIRK
I’m not trying to kill myself! I didn’t even do this! I don’t know what this is!

DOOGIE
You’re pathetic, Dirk. You’re exactly what’s wrong with American teenagers today, you know that? There are people out there with problems. Real, genuine problems, and then there are people like you that get jealous of these people with problems, just because they
want some sympathy for themselves, so they pretend to have their own problems. When they don’t. It’s people like you, Dirk. People like you who are running up the cost of prescription medications. First, you flood the market with Prozac because everyone thinks they need it. Then, you start producing less, you jack up the price...simple supply and demand. People are desperate for anything, any drug, and the Canadian companies, who are really controlled by the...

(DYLAN is poking DOOGIE in the back over and over.)

...what the hell are you doing?

DYLAN

There has to be an “off” button somewhere.

DOOGIE

Oh, ha ha. Well, I’m sorry if neither of you wants to hear the truth. I’m sorry if...whoa.

(DR. VOSS enters with MARY ELLEN and BECKY, the new African-American student. The three boys look more than a little surprised to see her.)

DR. VOSS

And the cafeteria is down this hall. Today I believe we’re having fried chicken. No. Wait...that’s tomorrow. I’m sorry. Today is...um...is today Monday? I believe it’s “chef’s choice.”

(Seeing the boys.)

Oh, this is perfect. Here are two of Richard M. Nixon High School’s finest students: Dylan Cormack and Doogie Crenshaw.

(DIRK half-heartedly raises his hand at DR. VOSS.)

Well, I’ll leave all of you to get acquainted. And remember, dear, if you need anything, just ask. And please, while I may be Principal Voss to the Brown of Education...I mean, the...um...the Board of Education....to my students I’m just plain ol’ Dr. Ruth.

(DR. VOSS exits.)

BECKY

Does that woman even know who Dr. Ruth is?

MARY ELLEN

(After a beat.)

Um...she’s Dr. Ruth.

BECKY

No, Dr. Ruth is a woman on the....you don’t know Dr. Ruth?
Mary Ellen wouldn’t know. But don’t worry, the entire rest of the school gets the joke. I’m Doug Crenshaw. (He takes her hand.)

Nice to meet you.

I thought she said your name was Doogie.

Yes, that’s true. Most people here do call me Doogie.

Like Doogie Howser.

This pathetic human being who just tried to miraculously utter a coherent thought, but, alas, as he often does, failed, is Dirk. And this... (He gestures to Dylan.)

...is Nixon High’s flamboyantly gay quarterback Dylan Cormack.

You’re a girl.

That’s right.

A girl.

Correct.

Is this a joke?

Excuse me?

Girls can’t be running backs!

What are you talking about?
DYLAN
No, no, no. This is all wrong. You were supposed to be a guy. An All-American
African-American who was going to be a part of my backfield.
(DIRK snickers.)
Now what am I going to do? This is just going to be the same old story. Same old,
crappy white running back who gives us no running game and runs down my passer
rating. 38.8! 38.8! That’s bad, even for high school! This sucks!
(He slams his locker shut. There is a sign
on the outside of his locker that says “Go
Dylan, #7! Manhandle the Mandrakes!
The sign is in rainbow letters.)
Same old jokes, just like always.
(To BECKY.)
Thanks a lot.
(He starts to storm away, but then turns and
crosses back to BECKY.)
No offense, of course.

BECKY
Actually, I do take offense.

DYLAN
Well, my apologies. Really. But it’s just that I’m a little frustrated right now. If anyone
needs me, I’ll be on the stage singing Les Mis.
(He exits in a huff. From offstage, we hear
his voice trailing off as it sings.)
“Look down! Look down! Don’t look ‘em in the eye! Look down! Look down!
You’re here until you die!”

DOOGIE
Sorry about that. I think in time you’ll actually grow to like him. He’s normally a very
happy person. Annoyingly exuberant, actually.

BECKY
Yeah. He seems like a real charmer.

DOOGIE
You know what, I don’t think we got your name.

BECKY
I’m Becky.

DOOGIE
Well, Becky. I just want to welcome you here, and to tell you I think your presence is
extremely courageous.
BECKY
What?

DOOGIE
Well...you know. I hate to put it bluntly, but I'm glad to finally see somebody cross the color line here at Nixon.

BECKY
(Looking around.)
Wait...am I the only black student here?

DOOGIE
Becky, please. "African-American."
(MARY ELLEN puts her hand over her eyes.)
Oh...um...sorry. I'm just kind of used to correcting people when they say that.

BECKY
Well, you don't need to correct me.

DOOGIE
Right. Of course I don't. Sorry. Anyway, yes, I know it's weird to be the only one of your race at a school this size, but, let me tell you, I empathize completely. In a way, surrounded by these Neanderthals, I feel like a minority myself sometimes.

DIRK
So, wait...I just gotta ask. Is Becky short for, like, Beniqua or something?
(MARY ELLEN puts her hand over her eyes again.)

BECKY
(Coldly.)
Rebecca.

DIRK
Oh.
(Beat.)
I didn't know Rebecca was an African name.

DOOGIE hits DIRK.

Ow!
(MARY ELLEN starts to pull BECKY offstage.)
MARY ELLEN
Soooo....why don’t I show you the student lounge?

BECKY
Yeah. That’s probably a good idea.

DIRK
(Rolling up his sleeve.)
Wait! Mary Ellen! I gotta show you something! I need you to explain something for me.

MARY ELLEN
(Pulling BECKY away.)
Later, Dirk.

(MARY ELLEN and BECKY exit. There is a short silence.)

DOOGIE
(After the silence.)
She’s beautiful.

DIRK
Yeah.

Wait. Which one?

DOOGIE
Becky.

DIRK
Becky? Ohhhh, I see what’s goin’ on here. Doogie’s got a bad case of the jungle fever.

Ow! Quit hitting me!

DOOGIE
This is not “jungle fever.” There is an attraction based purely on my appreciation of her feminine features, regardless of race.

DIRK
(Singing.)
Doogie’s got jungle fever! Doogie’s got jungle fever!

(DOOGIE hits DIRK again.)
Dude! What’d I just tell you?

Not the wrist! Not the wrist! OW!

You’re a jerk, Doogie. You know that?

I’m a jerk, you’re an idiot. We all have our labels, don’t we?

If you need me, I’ll be in the library.

The library? Don’t you have gym now?

I’m skipping it. I need some help. Romantic advice, you might say. This looks like a job for....Henry Louis Gates...junior!

I don’t know who that is.

Scene Three

SETTING: The student lounge.
TIME: Wednesday afternoon.

(AUBREY and MARY ELLEN are sitting at the table. MARY ELLEN is fingering a rosary nervously. There are brochures on the table, along with MARY ELLEN’S cell
OK, *Technicolor Dreamcoat* was in the middle of April.

(Counting on her fingers.)

April, then May is one, June two, July, August, September, October. Six months. And six times four is... uh oh.

What?

This is the twenty-fourth week. You're sure it was on a Friday?

Yes. That's when I saw the show.

Then on Friday it's going to officially be twenty-four weeks.

So?

So you have to make a decision by then. It's illegal after twenty-four weeks.

(Picking up a brochure.)

That's what it says right here. "Viability is different in every case, but is usually placed at about seven months. In some cases, viability, albeit with artificial aid, can occur in twenty-four weeks."

What does that mean?

(Pushing the brochures toward MARY ELLEN.)

Read these. Come on. I got them for you.

I am not looking at those. This isn't right. This isn't Christian.

Three days, Mary Ellen. It's Wednesday. That's all the time you have left. Either you're coming with me to Planned Parenthood today, or it doesn't matter what you decide. After Friday, they won't do it.
MARY ELLEN

I won't do this. I won't let this happen.

AUBREY

Then you're having the baby. And I'm telling your mom.

MARY ELLEN

(Crying.)

No. No, no, no.

AUBREY

Give me your cell phone.

(MARY ELLEN clutches her rosary, quietly praying.)

Hello? Can I speak with Mrs. Jones, please? She's not? Oh. Well, Mr. Jones, this is Aubrey Hawthorne.

MARY ELLEN

NO!

(She grabs the cell phone away from AUBREY and closes it.)

AUBREY

Hey! What is the matter you? What, do you think they're never going to find out?

MARY ELLEN

(Through tears.)

I'll get it.

What?

AUBREY

MARY ELLEN

After school...today. I'll...I'll...

(She bursts into tears again. AUBREY holds her. DIRK enters, smiling, but his smile quickly fades.)

DIRK

Mary Ellen! What's the matter?
Go away, Dirk. Not now.

AUBREY

No, no, it’s cool. Mary Ellen...Mary Ellen. Get this. I got something that’ll cheer you up. I was thinkin’, you know, about how you said I don’t have a sense of my own faith or whatever. Well, I went to that Baptist church on Sunday, and people were talkin’ about Planned Parenthood and how they’re evil and whatnot. So, like, I thought of you, and I stood up, and I was like, “Hey, why be talkers when you can be doers?” ‘Cause, you know, that’s what Coach always says. Anyway, I thought everyone was gonna laugh at me, like they always do, but get this. We’ve got protests set up at Planned Parenthood for the rest of the week! And I’m gonna be there every day, with my camera, so if anyone goes in that place, I’m gonna get a picture of them. And I’ll have it put right in the school paper, so everybody knows exactly who it is.

(MARY ELLEN bawls.)

Don’t cry. I’m not lyin’. I promise. Oh, and look at this...

(He rolls up both of his sleeves and demonstrates his wrists.)

…it’s gettin’ worse. Now it’s on both wrists.

AUBREY

Oh my God! Dirk! Do I have to take you to Counselor Walker?

DIRK

(Rolling down his sleeves.)

I don’t get you people. Girls. There’s just no pleasin’ you, is there? Well, if you want to be at the protest, I’ll save you a couple signs. Here, check this out.

(He pulls up his jacket and his shirt. On his chest and stomach, he has written “YOU CAN’T DE-FETUS!”)

“You can’t de-fetus!” Isn’t that killer smooth?

(MARY ELLEN is still crying. AUBREY yanks DIRK’S shirt and jacket back down.)

What, don’t you get it, Aubrey? It’s a play on words. Right over the air in your head, I guess.

(DIRK exits.)

MARY ELLEN

This is horrible. It’s horrible. I’m so....so....fucked!

(AUBREY looks surprised at this.)

AUBREY

It’s OK. I’m sure there are other clinics. We can go downtown.
MARY ELLEN
I’m not going downtown! Have you ever been there? Do you know what it’s like down there?

AUBREY
Calm down. There’s gotta be a way to get this done.

(BECKY enters. She is listening to an iPod, but pulls her earphones out when she sees MARY ELLEN.)

BECKY
What’s up, Mary E?

MARY ELLEN
(Wiping her eyes.)

Nothing.

BECKY
(Crossing to MARY ELLEN.)

Wait...are you crying?

No.

BECKY
Yeah you are. What’s going on here?

MARY ELLEN
It’s....it’s nothing. It’s just personal stuff.

BECKY
(Sitting at the table.)

Oh. That’s cool. I won’t bug you about it. But if you need someone else to talk to, you know I’ll listen. You know you’re, like, the only friend I got in this place.

MARY ELLEN
You haven’t been making friends?

BECKY
You shittin’ me, girl? I can’t talk to no one in this school. Everyone looks at me like they’ve never seen a black person before. And half of ‘em probably haven’t.

(Looks at AUBREY.)

Like you. Look, I’m not tryin’ to be rude or anything, but I’ve got Poli Sci with you, and I see you starin’ at me from across the room all the time. I don’t even know your name.
It's Aubrey.

Aubrey, huh? That sounds about right.

What does that mean?

I'm sorry. I don't know what's the matter with me. I've been actin' like that all week. It's just like, I feel like I've been put in this situation, and I don't even think my parents had any idea what they were getting me into. They thought they were doing something to help me and my little sister, but it ain't exactly been anything close to help. You know what I'm saying?

Maybe. I'm not really sure.

Yeah. Well, it's cool. I could use another friend. Aubrey. Huh. You're the first girl I've known with that name. Same with Mary E, here. You my girl, Mary E.

Becky... do you know anything about pregnancy?

What? What do you mean, do I know anything about pregnancy?

Do you know anything about...

...abortion?

Oh, no. You are not asking me this.

Come on, Becky. You're from the city. City girls are always getting pregnant, aren't they? Where do they go?

Get your ass to a clinic. Don't be talking to me about this.

I can't go to the clinic! They're protesting it! There have to be other places to go.
BECKY
Uh-uh. Forget it. You don’t want to know about any of this.

MARY ELLEN
So you know places?

BECKY
Damn it! I am not talking about this! Do you hear me? This is one thing I am glad I left behind. At least, I thought I was leaving it behind. Now you’re trying to pull this shit with me. Get out of here, Mary E. Both of you. I thought you were my friend.

MARY ELLEN
I am your friend!

BECKY
If you were my friend, you wouldn’t be asking me this! Get out of here.

(MARY ELLEN and AUBREY stand up.)

MARY ELLEN
I need your help, Becky.

BECKY
Get it from somebody else. I’ve seen this shit too much in my life already. I’ve only been at this school for three days. Go get yourself some real help.

MARY ELLEN
(Coaching over to BECKY.)

Could you do it?

BECKY
Becky? Becky, I’m begging you. Please!

(MARY ELLEN gives up and exits R. AUBREY sighs, then follows. BECKY closes her eyes, shaking her head.)

BECKY
I need some real friends.

(“X” enters, wearing a black cap with an “X” on it and holding an open notebook.)

DOOGIE
Whatcha listenin’ to?
(BECKY takes out her headphones, then looks at DOOGIE. Her eyes widen.)

Oh, no.

DOOGIE

So...I was curious to know, Becky. What do you think of Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s theory of blackness?

Theory of blackness?

DOOGIE

Yes. What's your take on it?

What, my own theory of blackness?

DOOGIE

Yes. Are you in accordance with Gates?

BECKY

My theory of blackness is that some people a long time ago were in Africa, where the sun is stronger than other places, and over time the skin of these people became black. Or maybe we started as black, but some of you all went out of Africa, and over time your skin got to be white. That's my theory of blackness.

DOOGIE

Oh. I see. Well, yes, that's certainly a valid, physical theory. But Henry Louis Gates has more of an aesthetic theory of blackness.

BECKY

Well I like my theory just fine.

DOOGIE

Don't you think it's a little...um...reductive?

BECKY

If you say so. Now what the hell you tryin' to pull with that hat?

DOOGIE

What do you mean? I'm just wearing it in solidarity...to support you. You don't appreciate it?
BECKY
No, I don’t appreciate it. Next thing, you’re gonna show up in a sarong. You think you’re funny or something?

DOOGIE
I’m not trying to be funny. Is that what you think this is? A joke?

BECKY
You’re damn right. And I’m not laughing.

DOOGIE
But... I think I’m in love with you!

BECKY
(Standing up.)

You what?

DOOGIE
Won’t you go to Homecoming with me?

BECKY
(Starting to back away.)

Um...

DOOGIE
I know, I know. It’s a stupid dance. Couldn’t be any whiter.

BECKY
You couldn’t be any whiter.

DOOGIE
But, whether we like it or not, it’s part of the American high school tradition. And, in spite of what people think, I’m not such a counter-culturist that I’ll skip out on what could be one of the defining moments in a teenager’s life. Won’t you go with me, Becky? I know you hardly know me, but... I know you. We’re perfect for each other!

BECKY
You think so, huh?

DOOGIE
Look at us. We’re kindred spirits. We’re both outsiders, aware of our own position in a society that relegates people like us to the margins.

BECKY
“Us”? Where do you get off calling us “us”? 

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DOOGIE

You have to understand, Becky. I know what it feels like to be looked at as though you’re different. In a way…I’m probably even more black than you.

(BECKY rips the hat off his head and throws it on the ground. As if on cue. JANITOR JOE enters and quickly sweeps his way to the hat. He looks up BECKY and DOOGIE.)

BECKY
(To DOOGIE.)

What’s he doing? Why’s he looking at me like that?

DOOGIE

He wants you to give him some trash to sweep.

BECKY

What?

DOOGIE

That’s his job. He likes it. Just give the poor man some trash.

BECKY

I don’t have any.

(DOOGIE hands her his notebook.)

DOOGIE

Here. These are my notes on Gates. You can use them.

(He looks her in the eyes.)

I guess I won’t be needing them.

(DOOGIE exits in a hurry. BECKY watches him, then turns back to JANITOR JOE, who is still watching her. Slowly, she rips a page out of the notebook and drops it on the floor. JANITOR JOE quickly sweeps it up. BECKY looks uncomfortable. JANITOR JOE is still looking at her. She tears out another page and drops it. JANITOR JOE sweeps it up. BECKY rips out page after page, faster and faster, starting to look less and less uncomfortable. She eventually smiles and starts tossing the pages all around.)
JANITOR JOE is doing his best to keep up with sweeping them. The lights fade.)

Scene Four

SETTING: The principal’s office.
TIME: Later that day.

(A desk with a large chair has been placed DC. On the desk is a nameplate inscribed “Principal Ruth Voss, Ed.D.” There is a small chair opposite the desk. DR. VOSS is sitting at her desk, shuffling a pile of papers, apparently trying to get them all at a right angle. She keeps attempting this until a knock is heard from offstage.)

DR. VOSS

Wilkommen! Kommen Sie in, bitte.

(DOOGIE enters.)

Ah, Dr. Crenshaw...I mean, Mr. Crenshaw. My, my. Looking into the future, aren’t I? Sit down, sit down. Now, what can I do for you?

DOOGIE

Well, um...OK, I’ll get right to the point. Dr. Voss...

DR. VOSS

Nein, nein, nein. Nicht Dr. Voss.

DOOGIE

(Sighing.)

Fine. Dr. Ruth...I’m afraid I must respectfully inform you that I am hereby ending my tenure at this school.

DR. VOSS

I beg your pardon?

DOOGIE

As of this moment, I am no longer a student at Richard Nixon High.

DR. VOSS

What? No. Mr. Crenshaw, you can’t be serious. You can’t drop out. Think of the future! Without you, our school’s ACT average drops an entire point!
I'm not dropping out. I'm transferring.

DR. V OSS

Transferring? To where? It's Country Hills, isn't it? Those private school bastards. What are they paying you? We'll double it! No, no...that would be ridiculous. We couldn't afford that. But there are things we can offer you, Mr. Crenshaw...things that Country Hills cannot. I have, in my desk at this very moment, the keys to the faculty bathroom. Store-brand toilet paper, Mr. Crenshaw. And the graffiti on the stalls is all Dylan Thomas verses.

DOOGIE

It isn't Country Hills I'm transferring to. It's George Washington...Carver.

DR. V OSS

Washington Carver? Are you out of your mind? That's...Mr. Crenshaw, Washington Carver is...

(Whispers.)

...over the river.

DOOGIE

I know perfectly well where it is. I've contacted the assistant principal there, and I'll be starting classes tomorrow.

DR. V OSS

But, may I remind you, Mr. Crenshaw, that George Washington Carver is a public school. You cannot attend if you do not live within that district. And, if I may be so bold as to say so, the house of your parents is most certainly on this side of the river.

DOOGIE

That may be, but according to county law, a student may be bussed to any high school he or she chooses.

DR. V OSS

Provided the school is a participant in the desegregation program. And Nixon, Mr. Crenshaw, does not participate in the program.

DOOGIE

That's true. But Carver does.

(He stands.)

Well, Dr. Ruth...

(He reaches to shake her hand. She does, absentmindedly.)

...I'd love to say it's been a pleasure. My best to you and your school, but the time has come for me to close out my senior year in a more culturally stimulating environment.

(He turns to leave. He mutters.)
I'll show her.

DR. VOSS

Fine! Leave, then! But you'll be back, I can assure you of that! You won't last a day there, Mr. Crenshaw. Those city kids will tear you apart! Do you hear me? A day! (DOOGIE is gone. DR. VOSS clicks her tongue, then sighs. She then resumes shuffling her papers.)

Such a shame. Well, at least that will save us from a sarcastic valedictorian speech. (There is another knocking.)

Another one?

(Calls.)

Come in!

(DYLAN walks in, looking a little confused.)

Ah, Mr. Cormack. I nearly forgot. Something actually pleasant. Most pleasant, as a matter of fact. I have exciting news for you. Won't you sit down?

DYLAN

Oh...OK. (He sits.)

So, Dr. Ruth, what's going on? Chalkers...I mean, Vice Principal Chalkers told me to come up and see you.

DR. VOSS

Yes, Mr. Chalkers was nearly as excited as I was to find out. (She searches though the stack of papers she has been shuffling.)

Where is it? Where is it? Ah! (She pulls out a piece of paper and hands it to DYLAN.)

What is this?

DYLAN

This is your letter of intent!

DR. VOSS

My what?

DYLAN

Your letter of intent to play college football at Our Lady of the Woods University!

DR. VOSS

Me? Play college football?
DR. VOSS
I know! Isn’t it exciting? It’s a Division Three school, of course, but I think you’ll find the opportunity is one that simply won’t come your way again.

DYLAN
I don’t understand. I was never planning on playing in college.

DR. VOSS
And why not, young man? You’re our joy and pride, here...er...pride and joy.

DYLAN
It’s just...I don’t really think I’m good enough to play college ball, am I? I mean, Dr. Ruth...look, I don’t know if you know if you know what a QB rating means....

DR. VOSS
Yes, yes. I’ve endured a good bit of ribbing from others in the district about that 38.8 of yours. But you must understand, Dylan, this has nothing to do with being “good.” Our Lady of the Woods has recently taken on a new initiative...diversity. Now, being a conservative Catholic college, it should come as no surprise that they want to achieve this goal with as little...well, shall we say, upsetting of the delicate balance as possible.

DYLAN
I still don’t get it.

DR. VOSS
Why, Dylan...what better way to create diversity than by placing your most diverse student in a prominent role?

DYLAN
Wait...so I’m just going to be their gay quarterback poster child?

DR. VOSS
That’s a rather crass way of putting it, but, essentially, yes.

That’s ridiculous! I’m not doing that.

DR. VOSS
Oh, Dylan. Don’t you understand what this means for you? I’m sure you know that you won’t be playing, much less quarterbacking, at any other college. You truly would be a fool to pass up what Our Lady is giving you. A full ride.

DYLAN
A full ride? But I thought Division Three schools couldn’t even give athletic scholarships.
DR. VOSS
Well I’m sure it won’t technically be labeled “athletic.”

DYLAN
So all I’ve gotta do is sign on the dotted line, be the gay quarterback, and I go to college for free?

DR. VOSS
That’s the spirit!

DYLAN
Could have a little time to think it over?

DR. VOSS
(Sighs.)
Time, time, time. You teenagers. One of these days, Mr. Cormack, you’ll realize that time is far more precious than you think. Very well. Mull it over. I’m confident that you’ll make the right decision. Now, if you’ll excuse me, I have an engagement for lunch with Brother Marlowe, president of Our Lady of the Woods. It was supposed to be a congratulatory occasion, but, alas…I’ll just tell him we’ll have to postpone the bubbly for the time being. But…all in good time, I’m sure, Dylan. Goodbye.

(She exits. DYLAN is left holding the letter. He looks at it.)

DYLAN
Man. This is so gay.

(The lights fade. End of Act One.)
ACT TWO

Scene One

SETTING: The student lounge, as before.
TIME: The following Monday.

(As the lights rise, CORNSHUCKER is attempting to put a dollar into one of the vending machines. For whatever reason, the machine does not seem particularly inclined to receive his dollar bill. Suddenly, quietly, a couple measures of banjo music play, something reminiscent of “Dueling Banjos.” CORNSHUCKER looks around at this, not sure if he heard it. He returns to the vending machine, getting the same result. More music, this time a guitar in response to the banjo. CORNSHUCKER looks over his shoulder. The guitar stops. CORNSHUCKER looks unsure of himself, but turns back to the machine. The banjo plays again, slightly louder. CORNSHUCKER perks his ear into the air, then shakes his head. But the guitar’s response is quicker this time.

Who is that? Who’s playin’ that shit?

CORNSHUCKER

(The banjo and guitar pick up the tempo on their call and response, causing CORNSHUCKER to tear all around the stage in increasing agitation. As the song reaches a flourish, DYLAN and DIRK burst out of the men’s restroom door, DYLAN brandishing a guitar and DIRK a banjo. The music continues to play loudly as a sound cue, although the actors themselves aren’t playing. Instead, they focus their energy on yelling and dancing and stomping in a circle around CORNSHUCKER.)

DIRK
(As he dances an exaggerated jig,)
Yeeeee-haw! C’mon Cornshucker, it’s your kinda music. Don’t be shy! We got us a real hoot-nanny goin’ on here!

CORNSHUCKER

Fuck you two!

DIRK

Let’s go, Cornshucker! This is real trailer-on-stilts music.

(CORNSHUCKER lunges at DIRK, but DIRK dodges, or dances, out of the way. DYLAN runs downstage and yells out to the audience.)

DYLAN

C’mon everybody! Clap along! Everyone! Stomp your feet, it’s what he wants!

DIRK

(Joining him downstage.)

That’s right! Let’s all make fun of Cornshucker! Come on! Get into it!

DYLAN

Don’t feel bad! He’s dirty and poor!

DIRK

Stilts, everyone! Fuckin’ stilts, I’m not kidding!

(DYLAN and DIRK run up and down the apron of the stage, then into the audience, ad-libbing as they encourage the audience to join in clapping. Any available cast and crew do the same, yelling and hooting along with the music. CORNSHUCKER stands in one place. At one point, he removes his sunglasses and glares at the audience. DYLAN and DIRK go back to dancing around him. At some point, they run into the restrooms, one in the men’s door and one in the women’s. They come back out of the opposite doors, still dancing and holding their instruments.)

DYLAN

How ‘bout a big hand for Cornshucker Booby, everyone? He’ll be here all decade.
DIRK

Maybe tomorrow he'll bring his jug. What do you say, Cornshucker?

(CORNSHUCKER screams. DYLAN and DIRK look taken aback and stop dancing, although they keep smiling. The music continues.)

CORNSHUCKER

That's the last straw! You mother-fuckers have pushed me too far this time! Ah am Omega, Prince of Finality! And this is my solemn vow to you!

(He crosses downstage, pointing to the audience!)

My vow to all of you! None of y'all are innocent! Ev'ryone here is dead! Fuckin' dead! Ah will rain down the power, the glory, and the blood on all you! And not one fuckin' soul in this room is gonna be spared.

(As a last reminder.)

You're all dead!

(He exits, and the music stops. The cast and crew leave the audience, and the fourth wall is closed. DIRK and DYLAN look at each other for a moment, then burst out into laughter.)

DIRK

Oh, man! That was the best one yet!

DYLAN

Did you see his eyes? He was pissed. Dude, I told you fifth period guitar lessons would be totally worth it.

DIRK

Man, you were right. That was killer smooth. Dude. Cornshucker's such a fuckin' hick.

DYLAN

Yeah.

(Leans the guitar against the chair as he sits at the table.)

You know, I miss Doogie, but this is exactly the kind of thing he would tell us we couldn't do.

DIRK

No kidding.

(Sits at the table with the banjo across his lap. He occasionally picks at the...
Still, I could use his advice.

DYLAN

DIRK

You’ve got me. I’m at least worth talkin’ to.

DYLAN

You still cutting your wrists?

DIRK

No.

(DYLAN shakes his head, then removes the letter of intent from his jacket pocket.)

DYLAN

I can’t believe this. I have a chance to play college football, and I can’t bring myself to sign this stupid letter. Because if I do, then I’ll become exactly what Doogie keeps telling me I am.

DIRK

Does the letter say anything about you being gay?

DYLAN

Actually, yes, it does. Right here.

(Sighs.)

This is all Becky’s fault. If she hadn’t come here in the first place and got my hopes up... damn it! Why did she have to be a girl? I mean, when you’re told a black student’s coming, you’re just going to naturally assume it’s a guy. Come on. A black girl? What is that? What do you even do with a black girl? I keep thinking that if I had that black running back, my passer rating would go up, and then I could just sign the letter and feel fine about it. Look at the NFL. Are there any white running backs there? Dirk, can you name me one white running back in the NFL today?

DIRK

Daunte Culpepper.

DYLAN

He’s a quarterback. And he’s black.
Oh.

I’m a white running back.

(Beat.)

But you suck. You’re third string on JV. Every time I think about how much money college is gonna cost, and how much fun it would be to keep playing, I start to say fuck it.

(He takes out a pen.)

But every time I take out a pen, I think of what Doogie would say.

(DOOGIE, or at least a ghostly vision of DOOGIE, appears in the men’s room door.)

I can’t believe you’re going to sign that. You know what you’re doing? You’re taking a spot away from somebody who can actually throw the damn ball. Not to mention the illegality of the whole thing. Now don’t get me wrong, I’m a firm supporter of affirmative action...

(DYLAN puts his pen away. The DOOGIE vision looks slightly disappointed to not get to continue, but disappears.)

I just don’t know. What about you, Dirk? What would you do?

Beats me, man. I ain’t gay. If I was, I’d be on varsity like you.

(Giving DIRK a dirty look.)

You think so, do you? Fine. That settles it. Where’s Janitor Joe?

(Calling.)

Janitor Joe! Hey, Janitor Joe, I got some trash for you!

(He tosses the letter onto the floor as he gets up from the table. He exits into the men’s restroom. JANITOR JOE enters.)

That it?

(He starts to sweep his way toward it. DIRK jumps down and picks it up.)
DIRK
No. Sorry, Janitor Joe. False alarm. Go back to your janitor closet.

(JANITOR JOE shakes his head, then leaves the way he came. DIRK puts the letter in his pocket. He takes the guitar and banjo and exits L. A moment after, MARY ELLEN enters. She looks down at her stomach for a moment, then looks around. She then hits herself in the stomach.

MARY ELLEN
Ow!

(She looks around, then hits herself again. She takes a moment to catch her breath. DYLAN exits the restroom, stopping to watch her. MARY ELLEN hits herself in the stomach two more times, looking more in pain with each blow.)

Ohhhh, God.

(She raises her arm again, but DYLAN stops her.)

What are you doing?

MARY ELLEN
(Dropping her arm.)

Nothing.

DYLAN
Nothing, huh? Looks like you’re punching yourself in the stomach.

I...joined Opus Dei.

MARY ELLEN

Hey.

(DYLAN turns her head to look at him.)

It’s me. Dylan Cormack. You know you can tell me anything.

I’m...

(MARY ELLEN shakes her head, as though snapping out of a trance.)

Leave me alone, Dylan.
Fine. I’ll just sit.

If you want to leave, that’s fine by me.

I shouldn’t be talking to you.

What? You think I’m evil now?

I never thought that.

That’s what I heard. I came out, and you think I’m a bad person.

I don’t judge people.

I’m sorry. I was under the impression that I was speaking with Mary Ellen Jones.

I’m Dylan Cormack.

Whoa. Red flag. Something is clearly wrong with you.

Shut up!

I don’t care what you do with your life, OK? That’s your business.

(He holds out his hand.)

(She hits his hand away.)

(BECKY enters from R.)

What’s going on?

Nothing.

(GETTING UP.)
Nothing at all's going on. I was just trying to talk with someone who used to be one of my best friends, but I guess she feels like there's no use opening up to me, seeing as I've become the spawn of Satan. (To MARY ELLEN.)

I'll see ya', oh righteous one. (He starts to exit R.)

BECKY

You can't talk to her like that. You better apologize.

DYLAN

For what? (Turns to MARY ELLEN.)

I'm sorry for being gay and disappointing you.

MARY ELLEN

Fuck you, Dylan!

DYLAN

Whoa. You've learned some new words, young lady

MARY ELLEN

I'm not disappointed in you! I'm disappointed in myself! I'm pregnant!

DYLAN

You're...I'm sorry did you just say that you're....

BECKY

She did.

DYLAN

Oh. (Beat.)

My. That's...something. I don't suppose this is the kind of pregnancy where we all shout out congratulations, is it?

MARY ELLEN

Yeah, that's exactly what it is, you ignorant shithead.

DYLAN

Geeze. Your baby's making you moody.

MARY ELLEN

It's not a baby!
But... wait, what?

It's not a baby yet.

Wait, wait, wait a minute. You were punching yourself. Hey!

You can't do that.

Well, what the hell am I supposed to do? I missed the deadline for a legal abortion because of Dirk and his stupid protests! I'll kill him!

And she won't help me.

She's been like this all week. Actin' like I can take her downtown and hook her up with somebody that's gonna do it in some back alley or something.

I've made my decision. I'm getting it with or without your help. I'll go downtown and start looking by myself if I have to.

Whoa, whoa, whoa. Mary Ellen, that's crazy. You're not going to do that.

Well it's gotten to the point where I feel crazy. And I don't care anymore, I don't care how it's done, I just want this thing out of my body.

Calm down. How far past the, uh... the official deadline, or whatever, are you?

A few days.

Then... OK. We'll figure it out. I'll help you.

You can do it?

(Backing away from her.)
No! No, that's not what I meant. I can't do it myself.

MARY ELLEN
(Sitting back down in frustration.)
Then you aren’t any help! I don’t need advice right now, I don’t need support. I need someone who can do it.

DYLAN
There’s only one person I know of who I would actually trust for this.
(MARY ELLEN turns to him.)
But... he no longer goes to this school.

MARY ELLEN
You mean...

DYLAN
That’s right. Paging Dr. Howser.

BECKY
That guy? Why him? You all talk about him like he’s so smart or something, but based on what I’ve seen, that boy is dumb as shit.

DYLAN
You know someone better?

BECKY
How ‘bout you try having the baby and putting it up for adoption?

MARY ELLEN
That’s just insane, Becky.

DYLAN
Dylan. Where’s Doogie now?
(The lights begin to fade, although not all the way to black.)

MARY ELLEN
(To DYLAN.)
Where is he? Dylan, tell me now. I’m serious. Don’t you ignore me! I know you know where he is. Dylan... where is Doogie?

Scene Two

SETTING: The student lounge at George Washington Carver High School.
TIME: The same.

(The lights have faded somewhat. Before leaving the stage, the actors flip the Nixon banner over. Now, it reads: “George
Washington Carver High School. Go Nuts!"
There is a picture of something that looks like a black Mr. Peanut. The lights flicker a bit, as though there is a problem with the fluorescent lighting. In general, the student lounge at Carver looks run-down compared to that of Nixon, although whatever it takes to achieve this effect should be limited to a quick transition between the scenes.

DOOGIE enters, still wearing his Nixon letter jacket, with a bookbag on his back. He looks around awkwardly, maybe even a little scared, then sits down at the table. He takes a book out of his bookbag and tries to read. Silhouettes appear, walking behind the scrim. They walk back and forth, occasionally stopping to look at DOOGIE. Some of them point at DOOGIE or gesture to each other, but they remain silent.

DOOGIE seems painfully aware of them. At some point, the silhouettes all stop and stand still, looking at DOOGIE. He pretend to read for a bit more, but soon abandons the act, closing his book. He grabs his bookbag and hastily exits. The lights fade. The silhouettes are the last things visible, but they then fade as well.)

Scene Three

SETTING: The principal’s office.
TIME: Tuesday morning.

(The office of DR. VOSS appears DC as before. DR. VOSS is sitting in her chair as the lights come up. DOOGIE enters.)

DR. VOSS

Well, well, well.

(Beat.)

Well well well well well well well. Mr. Crenshaw.

(He sits in the chair opposite her desk.)

Have you ever heard the story of the prodigal son?
Sure. The prodigal son leaves home without his father's permission, goes out drinking and whoring it up and pretty much blows all his dad's money, then comes back. And the prodigal son is welcomed with open arms and showered with forgiveness.

Mmm. I don't much care for Bible stories.

Me neither.

Mr. Crenshaw, do you know how many times the word "loyalty" appears in the Nixon High School Fight Song?

I don't know the fight song.

Twice.

But keep in mind that it is a very short song. For you see, loyalty is a quality that we prize above no other.

That's fascinating. Really.

Ah, the trademark Doogie Crenshaw smugness. I suppose you think we all missed it. Well, let me tell you something, young man. This time around, I hold all the cards.

I live in your district. You have to take me back.

You transferred out. The decision of whether or not to readmit you is entirely up to me.

You want me back. You need me.

Granted, while it pains me to say it, this school does benefit from having you as a student. You will be readmitted.

Sit down, Mr. Crenshaw.

(DOOGIE stands.)

(He does.)
But not without conditions. As I said before, we value loyalty in our students. Thus, in order to secure your return, I require proof that you are indeed a loyal Nixon Nick.

DOOGIE

Meaning what?

DR. VOSS

I believe I have just what the doctor ordered, the doctor being, of course...

(She taps the name plate on her desk.)

...Dr. Ruth. You are familiar, I take it, with the Nixon High Peer Players?

DOOGIE

(Aghast.)

No!

DR. VOSS

The Peer Players are a group who seek to ease the troubled turmoil of adolescence through informative and relevant theatrical commentary...

DOOGIE

No. I know what the Peer Players are. Come on, you can’t be serious.

DR. VOSS

I couldn’t be more serious. The Peer Players are in need of another male, and given your well-known concern for social issues, I think your participation would be the perfect way to reaffirm your loyalty.

DOOGIE

But...whatever message they’re trying to get across, the Peer Player skits are always so lame that they actually achieve the opposite effect. It’s like those anti-drug and smoking commercials on TV.

DR. VOSS

Well, you can put those fears to rest. Given the recent, unprecedented quandaries that Nixon students have been facing, I have taken it upon myself to write the scripts for the Peer Players, scripts that will be performed at Thursday’s Homecoming pep assembly.

(She pulls a script out of a drawer and hands it to DOOGIE.)

Here’s your copy. Your parts have been highlighted.

(DOOGIE scans the script, looking revolted.)

DOOGIE

Oh my God! Is this supposed to be dialect?
Think of it as an acting challenge.

Forget it. No way am I performing this.

It's either that, or learn the school fight song and sing it before all at the assembly.

“Nixon, Nixon, I love thee.
Honor, duty,
loyalty.”

I’ll be in the Peer Players.

Excellent! Oh, and to quote a line from Arthur Miller, “Speak the speech I pray you, as I pronounced it to you.” There are to be no additions, no omissions, or any other sort of uncalled-for commentary on the part of you and that legendary smart mouth of yours. Do we have an understanding?

Yes.

Yes, what?

Yes, ma’am.

Yes who?

Yes...Dr. Ruth.

Lovely. You are dismissed, Mr. Crenshaw.

Oh!
And don’t forget, we’ll have rehearsals today and tomorrow after school.

But I have soccer practice.

I think you can afford to miss a couple days. Soccer is a game, Mr. Crenshaw. The Peer Players...deal with life!

Right.

(He exits.)

Ah. This is going to be the best Homecoming pep assembly ever!

(The lights fade.)

Scene Four

SETTING: The student lounge.
TIME: The same.

(BECKY and AUBREY are sitting at the table with open political science textbooks. AUBREY’S book has a paper-bag cover that she has drawn on with different color markers. She has a water bottle sitting in front of her. BECKY is looking at AUBREY, who is reading her book.)

Why do you keep looking at me like that?

Sorry.

Here, let me have a drink of your water.

Holy Jesus!
(In lightning-quick speed, JANITOR JOE runs onstage and mops up the spot where BECKY spit. He then runs offstage.)

What's in that?

It's vodka. Straight.

(AUBREY opens the bottle and sniffs it.)

BECKY

You just bring the bottle into school like this? That's pretty good.

Yeah... but if we run out.

(She pulls a metal flask either out of her bookbag or somewhere from her clothes.)

AUBREY

You're shrewd, girl. I like you. Don't the metal detectors pick that up?

We don't have metal detectors here.

(Pouring the contents of her flask into the water bottle.)

BECKY

We don't need 'em.

I thought every school had 'em.

AUBREY

(Putting away the flask.)

BECKY

Guess not.

Yeah.

(After a moment, BECKY takes another swig from the water bottle. The two girls work silently for a moment. DOOGIE enters. He sees the girls, takes a deep breath, then crosses to them. AUBREY looks up at him.)

Doogie!

AUBREY
Hello, Aubrey...Becky...

DOOGIE

(Nods, then turns to leave.)

BECKY

Get back here.

(DOOGIE reluctantly turns around.)

What do you think you were trying to pull, running off to Carver?

DOOGIE

I don't want to talk about it.

AUBREY

Are you back here now? Officially, and everything?

DOOGIE

Pretty much. Look, I need to go talk to Coach Roberts.

BECKY

Sit down.

DOOGIE

(Shrugging.)

I'm glad to see you've made yourself the boss of this school in a matter of a few days. 'Fine.

(He sits. BECKY starts writing. AUBREY doesn't do anything.)

BECKY

(To AUBREY.)

Ask him.

AUBREY

About what?

M.E.

BECKY

What about you?

AUBREY

Ask him about Mary Ellen.
You ask him.  

Ask me about what?  

I hardly know him. You ask.  

I don’t think he likes me. You ask.  

Nuh-uh.  

What?  

(To AUBREY.)  

And for the record, your materialism is at the very least interesting to me. I don’t...not like you.  

AUBREY  

Mary Ellen wants an abortion.  

DOOGIE  

Really? Are you serious?  

BECKY  

Yep.  

DOOGIE  

Mary Ellen? This is perfect! It’s just like Roe changing sides...only...she went the other way.  

(Beat.)  

Wait. I thought you said you were going to ask me something.  

AUBREY  

You ask him.  

BECKY  

No way.  

DOOGIE  

Hold on...when you said Mary Ellen wants an abortion...I was hearing, in my mind, “Mary Ellen wants a legal abortion.” That is what she wants, right?
AUBREY
(After a pause.)

Well I'm sure it's what she wants.

BECKY

And she can get one. If you have a time machine.

DOOGIE

Oh, no. No. I think I see where this is going.

AUBREY

You're the only hope she has, Doogie.

DOOGIE

You're crazy. You really are. Both of you must be bat-shit nuts.

AUBREY

It's only a few days past twenty-four weeks.

DOOGIE

See, Aubrey, they have these things in pregnancy called trimesters. You know why they're called trimesters? Because they're thirds. And what you're telling me is that we're in the third trimester.

AUBREY

They would have done it last week! This is an artificial deadline.

DOOGIE

(Putting his hand to his ear.)

Excuse me, I think I hear my sense of morality calling. Goodbye.

(He gets up and starts to leave.)

AUBREY

If you would listen to your sense of morality, then you would listen to me! Our friend needs us.

DOOGIE

(Whirling around.)

You really think you want to get into a debate on ethics with me, Aubrey? You and your little political science textbook with the hearts and smiley-sunshines you've drawn on it?

AUBREY

I can't make you do it, but I think you should at least talk to her.
DOOGIE
Now wait a second! At what point did I become best buddies with Mary Ellen Jones?
Naturally, that girl should be my mortal enemy!

AUBREY
But she’s not! And if you’re going to ignore her just because of politics, or religion, or
anything like that, well... then you’re missing the point. Of everything.

DOOGIE
No. You’re missing the point. Get somebody else.

(He starts to leave.)

BECKY
Doogie... wait.

(He turns back.)

What... what if I went to Homecoming with you?

DOOGIE
Are you joking?

(Disbelieving.)

BECKY
I’m serious. Help me, Jesus, I’m actually serious.

DOOGIE
So, on top of everything you just said, you’re actually offering yourself... as date bait for
me if I perform an illegal abortion?

BECKY
That’s right.

DOOGIE
I... I can’t believe that. You want to talk about ethical... nightmares? There’s one for
you.

BECKY
Just say no, then.

DOOGIE
Fine! I’ll just say.... I’ll just... say...

(He covers his eyes.)

No! No. What is the matter with me? Forget it. This is insane. This is...

(To BECKY)

You’re really serious?
Yes.

BECKY

(DOOGIE keeps walking back and forth, to and away from BECKY.)

I...no. Well...uh-uh. No. I’m definitely saying...definitely...

(Crosses to BECKY.)

Will it be a real date?

BECKY

Yes.

DOOGIE

Will you be sarcastically rolling your eyes all the time? Checking your watch, trying not to have a good time, that whole thing?

BECKY

If we go, I promise I’ll actually try to have a good time.

(DOOGIE thinks, then clenches his fist.)

DOOGIE

Damn you, Becky... wait. What’s your last name?

BECKY

White.

DOOGIE

Oh... really? That’s...never mind. As I was saying, damn you, Becky White! Yes. While it makes me a horrible, dirty person...I’m willing to live with that if you’ll go to Homecoming with me.

(A sound cue begins, one that we will hear throughout the rest of the scene: it is the sound of a heart monitor with a regular beat, the sort of beeping you would hear in a hospital.)

But if we’re going to do this, we’re going to do it exactly as I say.

(The lights shift, and while it is somewhat apparent that it is sometime later, the three actors remain onstage. The lights come up behind the scrim, and MARY ELLEN can be seen in the girls’ restroom, sitting on a toilet. She is wearing a long skirt. Her head is bent down. DYLAN enters, carrying a surgical gown on a coat hanger, along with a pair of rubber gloves. He puts the gown
on DOOGIE, then hands him the gloves. DOOGIE puts them on. BECKY holds the water bottle from the table.)

Has the patient been properly sedated?

DOOGIE

I shot her up with some of that stuff I bought from Cornshucker.

DYLANT

Well done, Nurse Dylan.

DOOGIE

Don’t call me “Nurse.”

DYLANT

I’m the attending physician here, and I’ll call you whatever the hell I want, Nurse. Now, shooting her up will get us most of the way there, but did you bring the Tylenol?

AUBREY

(Taking out a bottle.)

DOOGIE

Got it.

AUBREY (Taking out a bottle.)

DOOGIE

Good. Give it to Becky.

(AUBREY does.)

Each of you is going to have a job, and it’s going to take all of us to get through this procedure cleanly.

BECKY

You sure you know what you’re doing?

DOOGIE

Rule One: don’t question the doctor. Becky, your job is to keep the patient calm. Hold her arm, sing to her, whatever you have to do...but no churchy songs. I don’t care if she likes them. I don’t. If she starts to scream or anything like that, give her the Tylenol. And have her take it with what’s in that water bottle.

BECKY

I’m pretty sure you’re not supposed to mix medication and alcohol.

DOOGIE

And you’re not supposed to perform abortions in high school restrooms either, but hey, that’s why we have Rule One. And you’re not following it. If anyone fails to follow Rule One or anything else goes wrong, we’re aborting the procedure.
DYLAN
I think you should use a different word. If something goes wrong, and you go, “Abort! Abort!”, I’m not gonna know whether you want us to stop, or if you’re just shouting out encouragement.

DOOGIE
(Glaring at him.)
Since Nurse Dylan thinks he’s so funny, I’m banishing him from the operating room.

What?

DOOGIE
I want you on guard duty. You need to make sure nobody comes in the restroom.

But I wanna be with Mary Ellen.

DOOGIE
I think the fewer guys she has in with her, the better.

Come on…

DOOGIE
You should be thankful I even count you as a guy. Whatever you do, make sure nobody gets in there. Make up whatever story you want. Forcibly hold them back if you have to. As for you, Aubrey…

(He takes a sponge out of one of his pockets and hands it to AUBREY.)

...you sponge my forehead.

AUBREY
Why do I have to hold the sponge?

DOOGIE
Because you are one. Nurse Dylan, the surgical instrument, please.

(DYLAN hands him the coat hanger. DOOGIE looks at it.)

This isn’t right. It’s supposed to be cut.

DYLAN
I thought you just use the hook part.
Damn it! This is a highly complicated medical procedure. You don’t just “use the hook part.” Luckily, one of us is prepared.

(He takes a pair of wire cutters out of his pocket and cuts the coat hanger near the hook.)

There…now…

(He bends the coat hanger into a new shape, straightening it out somewhat and curving part of it around the bottom of his elbow.)

…OK. That’s about what we want. Ladies and gentle…I mean, ladies…

(He checks his watch.)

…the time is 2:53 p.m. Let’s begin.

(DOOGIE, AUBREY, and BECKY enter the girls’ restroom. DYLAN follows them. DOOGIE turns back to him.)

Stay.

(DYLAN glares at him, but stays outside the door and crosses his arms. The other three approach MARY ELLEN.)

How you doin’, Mary E?

(MARY ELLEN groans.)

OK. Last chance. Are you sure you want to go through with this?

(MARY ELLEN says something incoherent, but nods.)

Alright. You heard…whatever that was she said. Let’s do this.

(AUBREY, DOOGIE, and BECKY kneel in front of MARY ELLEN, DOOGIE in the center, in such a way that they block the audience’s view of what DOOGIE is actually doing with the coat hanger.)

OK. Making primary incision…

(MARY ELLEN shoots her head up and lets out a blood-curling scream. DYLAN’S eyes widen.)

Give her the Tylenol.

DOOGIE
Are you sure about…

BECKY

Give it to her!

DOOGIE

(BECKY puts pills in MARY ELLEN’S mouth, then holds up the water bottle.)

Come on, Mary E. Swallow.

BECKY

(MARY ELLEN starts to drink, but spits out the pills and vodka, a lot of it getting on DOOGIE. She screams again.)

She won’t take ‘em.

DOOGIE

Make her!

BECKY

No!

(MARY ELLEN screams, crying.)

Becky! Do it!

DOOGIE

(BECKY puts more pills in MARY ELLEN’S mouth, then pours vodka from the bottle into her mouth. BECKY covers MARY ELLEN’S mouth with her hand and pinches her nose. MARY ELLEN swallows, then coughs.)

Hold her! Damn it, keep her still!

(AUBREY and BECKY each grab on to MARY ELLEN. DOOGIE continues working.)

There…right there…

(MARY ELLEN yells out again, crying. This is the loudest one yet. The lights drop behind the scrim, and the lights come up to full on the student lounge. DYLAN looks like he is thinking about going into the restroom. DIRK comes running on from L.)

Dylan! What’s going on?

DIRK
That’s Mary Ellen!

No! Dirk!

What are you doing? Let me in there!

You can’t!

Dylan, listen to me. You need to leave.

No!

Ow! My wrist...let go of it...it’s...

Dylan! Stop!

You have to let me in there. Mary Ellen!

You have to go. Now.

(MARY ELLEN screams again.)

(He tries to run into the restroom. DYLAN grabs him and holds him back.)

Dylan

(Holding him.)

DIRK

What’s happening to her? What are you doing to her?

DIRK

Dirk, listen to me. You need to leave.

DIRK

No!

(MARY ELLEN screams once more. DIRK struggles harder.)

DIRK

Ow! My wrist...let go of it...it’s...

(DYLAN takes it with both hands and grabs it tighter. DIRK clenches his eyes and teeth, falling to his knees in pain.)

Dylan! Stop!

(DYLAN lets go, but keeps himself between DIRK and the door.)

You have to let me in there. Mary Ellen!

You have to go. Now.

(DIRK jumps again and tries to run past DYLAN.)

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Dirk! Dirk, Dirk, Dirk! OK. OK. Listen. Stop. Listen to me! She’s getting an abortion.

DIRK
(Still struggling.)

What?

DYLAN
She’s getting an abortion in there. She’s OK. Doogie’s doing it.

DIRK
No. No. You’re lying. Mary Ellen wouldn’t do that.

She is.

DYLAN
(Beat.)

It’s OK, Dirk.

DIRK
Let me in there!

(He tries to get past DYLAN again.)

DYLAN
She doesn’t want you here, Dirk. Do you hear me? She doesn’t want you. Nobody does. Get out of here.

She needs me.

DYLAN
She doesn’t. Nobody needs you, OK? Do what’s best for everybody, and just go.

(MARY ELLEN screams. DIRK tries get past DYLAN once more, but DYLAN takes his wrist, again putting DIRK in pain again. DYLAN pushes him back. DIRK rubs his wrist, backing away from DYLAN. The two look at each other for a moment. Finally, DIRK, looking like a grenade has exploded inside of him, slowly leaves the way he came. The lights change to feature the restroom behind the scrim once more. DOOGIE is still working.)
This is...almost...it...Aubrey, sponge.

OK...OK. Right...there.

NOOOOO!

Hold on...hold on.

There.

It’s done.

One of you stay with her.

I will.

Me too.

Fine. Both of you. Keep an eye on the bleeding. I’ll be in the auditorium. If it’s still bleeding in half an hour, come get me.

(AUBREY sponges DOOGIE’S forehead.)

(MARY ELLEN screams and struggles. BECKY and AUBREY hold her. There is the sound of a small splash.)

(Pause. DOOGIE stands.)

(MARY ELLEN continues to cry. DOOGIE removes his gloves.)

(AUBREY)

(BECKY)

(DOOGIE)

(DOOGIE throws his gloves on the floor. He leaves the restroom. The lights remain as they are so we can still see behind the scrim.)

(DYLAN)

(DOOGIE looks at him for a moment. After a bit, he nods. He looks down. DYLAN sighs, then puts his arm around DOOGIE. The two of them exit together. BECKY and AUBREY hold MARY ELLEN, still sitting on the toilet and crying. The lights fade. The sound of the beeping of the heart)
monitor, which has been continuous throughout all this, only now fades.)

SETTING: The same.
TIME: Later that day.

Scene Five

(Lights up behind the scrim. JANITOR JOE is plunging the toilet that MARY ELLEN was sitting on.)

JANITOR JOE
(After plunging for a while.)

(He plunges some more, then pulls up his plunger. Something is attached to the suction cup. He looks at it curiously.)

(Gasps.)

(Beat. He looks at it closer.)

(He looks directly out at the audience.)

(The lights fade. End of Act Two.)

Somebody shit this up good.

What the hell?

Oh my God...this is a fetus!

Wait. This is no fetus. This is a baby!

It's alive!
ACT THREE

Scene One

SETTING: The auditorium.
TIME: Thursday afternoon. The Homecoming pep assembly.

(Only the apron of the stage is lit, and a podium is placed DC. If the stage is equipped with a curtain, it should be closed at the end of Act Two, with this scene taking place in front of the closed curtain. The house lights should still be up when DR. VOSS enters, striding to the podium.)

DR. VOSS
(The following is ad-libbed, with DR. VOSS pointing at any audience members who are still coming back from intermission.)

You! All of you! Yes, you! You’re late. This is an assembly, so let’s go...assemble! Sit down, sit down, all of you. Quiet! Everyone, quiet!

(I like at the beginning of Act Two, any available cast and crew members should be in the house. They throw paper airplanes and launch things onto the stage, some of them coming pretty close to DR. VOSS. These planted extras also encourage those near them to throw wadded up pieces of paper onto the stage, handing out paper to anyone who will take it.)

I mean it, I’ve had it with this nonsense. Stop it! All of you!

(DR. VOSS continues to ad lib, responding to things that are thrown onstage, yelling until everyone finally takes their seats.)

The longer you keep talking, the longer we’ll be here.

(The extras encourage everyone to hush up. The house lights finally go down. When all is silent, DR. VOSS speaks again.)

There. Well.

(Clears her throat.)

Welcome to this year’s Homecoming pep assembly! As you all know, every day at Richard M. Nixon High School is special. Every teacher special, every class is special, and every student special.

(From somewhere, DIRK shouts out.)
DIRK
Especially Cornshucker!

DR. VOSS
No, I don’t mean special like that... um... what was I saying? Please, no shouting out. A pep assembly is not the time or place for obnoxious shouting and hooting. No, this is a time for silent contemplation. Contemplation of your good fortune in joining the ranks of the many successful Nixon alumni... your good fortune in attending one of the cleanest, safest, and most academically adequate schools in the state. Your good fortune in living on this side of the river. Bearing that in mind, I have an announcement to make. Many of you may have heard the wild rumors, so let me set the record straight. It seems some misguided student left a baby in the toilet in the women’s room adjoining the student lounge.

(A murmur goes up.)
Hush, hush. Let’s not start that again. Now, I take a great deal of pride in this school, and I hardly think it is representative of the Richard Nixon spirit for a student to flush their problems down the toilet, be the problem a baby, a bad report card, or anything else we don’t want. For the time being, the baby, who, for those concerned, is very much alive, is waiting for its parent or legal guardian to claim it from the lost and found bin in my office. I assure you that the matter will be kept as confidential as possible. If that student, whoever she is, wishes to claim her baby, she need only notify her teacher, who will send a message to my secretary via a hall monitor. The secretary will tell me, and I will make a general announcement to the whole school over the loudspeaker, calling the student in question’s name in order for her to come to my office and pick up her baby. And please, remember. We all make mistakes, so I don’t think it’s anybody’s place to judge.

(Beat.)
Well, that unpleasantness aside, let us turn to our true purpose. Let’s have some polite applause for the president of the pep club and our head varsity cheerleader, Aubrey Hawthorne.

(DR. VOSS steps away from the podium. AUBREY, wearing her cheerleading outfit, enters to a chorus of male voices whistling, whooping, and shouting out things like “Take it off!” A pair of pants is thrown onstage. DR. VOSS glares at the audience, but doesn’t say anything. AUBREY takes the podium, speaking after the audience has quieted down.)

AUBREY
OK, hi everybody. So, yeah... tomorrow’s the big game.

(Some cheers, some boos.)
Anyway, you all know we’re playing Carver, so there’s no way we’re going to win. But I think the Homecoming football game is about more than winning. It’s about being there...
with your friends and having a good time. It’s about seeing all the Nixon alumni from decades past, and laughing at the forty year-old guys who show up wearing their letter jackets.

Anyway, I’m going to be there, cheering on Nixon, and even though we usually don’t get any points, I have a feeling that Dylan’s due for a touchdown completion, and at the end of the night, when it’s all said and done, there’s going to be a “seven” on the scoreboard right next to Nixon. Or a six, ‘cause we’ll probably miss the extra point. But anyway.... you all know this cheer!

“I say Nicks, you say Nicks....Nicks....”

Miss Hawthorne, I specifically told you not to use that cheer for that very reason. Oh, well. Go get your script, will you dear?

Now, ladies and gentlemen, the highlight of the assembly, the moment I know you’ve all been waiting for. Let’s have a warm welcome for Nixon High’s own edutainment sensation, the Peer Players!

Oh, Mr. Crenshaw, for heaven’s sake! That’s Doogie Crenshaw on the right hiding under that bag, the newest proud addition to the Peer Players.

Of course, you already know Miss Aubrey Hawthorne.

And, rounding out our trio of thespians, Mr. Hunter Booby.

The Peer Players will be presenting three short skits, and, if I may modestly say so, all three have been penned by yours truly. The skits, as you will see, are highly topical, dealing with issues currently relevant to our school. Our first skit will feature Miss Hawthorne and Mr. Booby. It is entitled, “Scratching the Surface.”

(DR. VOSS clears her throat.)

(DR. VOSS pushes AUBREY away from the podium.)

(DR. VOSS)

(AUBREY heads offstage.)

(AUBREY reenters, along with CORNSHUCKER and DOOGIE. All three are holding scripts. DOOGIE is wearing a paper bag over his head.)

(Boos fill the auditorium. AUBREY reenters, along with CORNSHUCKER and DOOGIE. All three are holding scripts. DOOGIE is wearing a paper bag over his head.)

There is a great deal of laughing at this.)

(The male whooping returns.)

(The chant of “Cornshucker! Cornshucker!” echoes through the crowd until CORNSHUCKER gives the crowd the finger. The crowd erupts in delight at this.)

(The response is a chorus of voices shouting back “dicks!” AUBREY tries, unsuccessfully, not to laugh at this. DR. VOSS pushes AUBREY away from the podium.)

(DR. VOSS)

(DOOGIE exits. A spotlight falls on AUBREY and CORNSHUCKER. DR. VOSS)

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VOSS stands off to the side.)

AUBREY
(Awkwardly reading her script.)
Are you OK...Derek? Something's been different about you.

CORNSHUCKER
(Also looking at his script and reading.)
Ah'm fine, I guess. It's just...Ah been feelin' kinda sad lately.

DR. VOSS
(Whispering.)

Diction, diction!

AUBREY

Sad about what, Derek?

CORNSHUCKER

Oh, you know. Life and all its...
...ad-o-les-cent pressures.

DIRK
(From the audience.)

Ha! Cornshucker can't read!

CORNSHUCKER
(Lowering the script.)

Ah swear to God, I'll kill you. Y'all think you can have your precious little Homecoming Dance, but...

DR. VOSS

No ad-libbing!

(CORNSHUCKER glares at her, but reads from his script again.)

CORNSHUCKER

Things are really lookin' down fer me. Will you be mah friend and let me talk to you 'bout mah feelings of depression?

AUBREY
(Quizzically looking at her script.)

No.

DR. VOSS
(Acting as narrator.)
That night, friendless and alone, Derek wrote a note in his room.

(CORNSHUCKER takes out a pen and pretends to write on his script.)

CORNSHUCKER

"Dear cruel world, Ah am tired of being constantly ignored. It’s not mah fault that Ah suck so bad and am a senior on the JV football team. Killing mahself is gonna be killer smooth. Maybe this will teach you not to ignore people. Your friend, Dirk."

AUBREY

(Whispering out of character.)

Derek!

(CORNSHUCKER takes a plastic knife out of his pocket and slides it across his wrist. He falls over, playing dead. Those in the audience cheer wildly at his.)

AUBREY

(Standing over CORNSHUCKER as she reads her lines.)

Oh, no! Derek killed himself because nobody liked him. Well, I guess I learned a valuable lesson today. It’s true what they say. Attention must be paid.

(AUBREY takes a bow with a flourish. CORNSHUCKER stands up, and the audience responds with an “Aw!” of disappointment, then boos.)

DR. VOSS

Well done, both of you. Bravissimo!

(AUBREY and CORNSHUCKER exit.)

For our second skit, I have a very special treat for you all. The role of “Best Friend” in this skit will be played none other than...me! Your own Dr. Ruth.

(More boos. DR. VOSS looks surprisingly saddened by this.)

And the other role will again be played by...

(Calling.)

Are you ready, Miss Hawthorne?

AUBREY

(o.s.)

Just about!

OK!
Please welcome back Aubrey Hawthorne.

(More whooping. AUBREY returns. Something has obviously been stuffed up the front of the shirt of her cheerleading uniform.)

The title of this work is, “I Want my Baby Back, Baby Back.”

(An awkward pause follows this. Then, DR. VOSS takes a script off her podium and reads from it.)

Why, if it isn’t my friend, Lucy Morals! Hello, Lucy.

AUBREY

(Looking uncomfortable reading this role.)

Hello.

DR. VOSS

Why Lucy, have you been taking too many helpings on Macho Nacho day at the cafeteria?

AUBREY

No. These aren’t nachos, muchacho. I’m pregnant.

DR. VOSS

You’re pregnant? But Lucy, pregnancy is a serious matter. Surely you know how to protect yourself. Didn’t you pay attention during Lifetime Health and Wellness class? Attention must be paid…in every class!

AUBREY

Well, I’m a very bad student...

(She looks disgusted as she reads the next line.)

…as can be assumed, based on the fact that I am pregnant.

DR. VOSS

Well, Lucy, you’ve made your bed…now you have to have your baby in it.

AUBREY

But don’t I have other options?

DR. VOSS

Lucy, there are certain political matters that are not appropriate for discussion in school. However, if you want the opinion of me, a character, whose opinion in no way reflects that of Dr. Ruth, the school, or the Board of Education…
(A baby doll falls out of the front of AUBREY’S shirt.)

AUBREY
(Dropping character.)

Oops.

DR. VOSS
(Out of character.)

Oh, my. That wasn’t supposed to happen yet. Um...well, improvise, dear.

(AUBREY picks up the baby doll and holds it, unsure of what to do.)

AUBREY

Um...um...help?

(Suddenly, accompanied by a track of peppy marching band music, DYLAN bursts onto the stage. He is wearing his football jersey. A rainbow towel is sticking out of the back of his pants.)

Look everybody! It’s gay Nixon High quarterback Dylan Cormack!

(Wild cheering is heard. DYLAN grabs the baby doll from AUBREY and uses it as the football while striking the Heisman Trophy pose. AUBREY claps enthusiastically. DR. VOSS looks bewildered. DYLAN acts as though he has received the baby doll in a football snap, then backs his way around the stage, looking out at the audience as though looking for an open receiver. He then throws the baby doll to someone near the front. It is MARY ELLEN. She catches it, looking mortified. DYLAN pulls the towel out from the back of his pants and wipes his hands. MARY ELLEN runs up onto the stage and exits with the baby doll.)

DYLAN

Mary Ellen, wait! I was trying to throw it to someone in the back!

(He drops his towel and runs off after MARY ELLEN. The marching band music fades away. DR. VOSS returns to the podium, hushing the crowd.)
DR. VOSS
Yes, yes, that was exciting, but that’s enough. We still have one final skit, and I daresay it’s the most important of them all. For it deals with an issue unprecedented here at Nixon, but an issue that, left of its own accord, will only feed on itself and grow until it envelops and envenoms every member of this school. I speak, of course, of racial tension. Here to present our last skit, “Watermelon Man,” please welcome Hunter Booby in the role of Amos Tambo...

(CORNSHUCKER walks on from R, wearing overalls and a ratty top hat.)

...and Doogie Crenshaw as Andy Bones!

(DR. VOSS looks off L.)

Mr. Crenshaw, get out here! Mr. Crenshaw, you get out here right now! We had an agreement! Either you come out here to play this role, or I am expelling you from this school.

(Looking absolutely mortified, DOOGIE steps out, wearing a straw hat and blackface makeup. The crowd murmurs.)

Students, students. I ask that you please view this in a mature attitude. Now is not the time to behave like juveniles, for this is the only true authentically American theatre, and it demands the utmost scrutiny. Mr. Tambo, Mr. Bones... please begin.

CORNSHUCKER
Boy Andy, it sho ‘nuff is hot out here today.

(AH said it sho ‘nuff is hot here!

(DOOGIE remains silent.)

DR. VOSS
Crenshaw! Say your line this instant!

(Pause.)

I mean it, Doogie, say your line or you’re out of here!

DOOGIE
I can’t argee wid dat. Mebbe ‘de watermelon man will...will...

(He throws down his hat.)

No! I won’t do this!

(He picks up the rainbow towel that DYLАН dropped and wipes his face. This smears the makeup, making him look more like he is wearing facial camouflage. He takes the podium, pushing DR. VOSS out of the way.)

No longer will I tolerate the oppressive, self-congratulatory, racist regime of this administration. No longer will I accept a school that refuses to participate in the
desegregation program! No longer will I tolerate a boundary that divides the masses into one side of the river or the other! Down with the ideologies of the petty bourgeoisie! Down with global capitalism, and racism, and Marxism... no. No, not Marxism. Wait. Fuck it, yeah, down with Marxism, too! Down with every kind of “ism.” Down with Catholicism, and atheism too! Screw both of ‘em! Down with sexism and feminism! Down with realism and surrealism! And prisms! Fuck prisms! Fuck those fucking triangles of glass! I’m sick of ‘em! Fuck prisms! Fuck prisms! Come on! Fuck prisms!

FUCK PRISMS!

DOOGIE

THOSE IN THE CROWD

FUCK PRISMS!

DOOGIE

THOSE IN THE CROWD

FUCK PRISMS!

(Music, something like “School’s Out for Summer,” begins to play.)

DOOGIE

No, students... everyone, don’t listen to him!

DON’T LISTEN TO HER! DON’T LISTEN TO HER ANY LONGER! DON’T LISTEN TO ANYONE, OR ANYTHING!

RIOT!

(DR. VOSS covers herself, but eventually runs offstage.)

DOOGIE

Riot, I say! RIOT!

(Doogie runs off yelling. CORNSHUCKER shrugs, then yells and runs as well. The extras in the audience also yell, cheer, and scream. Trash is thrown onstage from all directions. DR. VOSS covers herself, but eventually runs offstage.)

DR. VOSS

Call the police! It’s a race riot!

(Paper and trash continues to be thrown onto the empty stage. Eventually, the music fades out. The trash stops flying. Silence. Then, JANITOR JOE comes out with his broom and looks at the stage. He sighs and sweeps up all the trash. The lights fade.)
Scene Two

SETTING: Mary Ellen’s bedroom.
TIME: That night.

(A bed is placed DC. The bedsheets have little crosses on them. A stuffed angel is next to the pillow. As the lights rise, MARY ELLEN is kneeling with her elbows on the bed, praying.)

MARY ELLEN

OK...I’m sorry I haven’t prayed to you in a while. I know I haven’t even prayed since I found out I was...oh, and by the way, thanks a whole lot for that.

(Beat.)

I’m sorry. I didn’t mean that. It’s not your fault. Or maybe it is, I don’t know. I’m not really sure how the world is supposed to work anymore. I mean, I know you want us to have our free will and everything, and I appreciate that. But I tell you what. I’ll make you a deal. I mean a covenant. I’ll give up my free will if you just use your power to not let anything bad happen to me. I won’t mind. I won’t miss it.

(Beat.)

How can that baby still be alive? I’m sorry. It’s...it’s just that I know you must have a hand in all this. Everyone always says that you don’t cause suffering, but how else can I explain everything that’s been happening to me? And why me? Huh? Why is it me that you have to pick on? I’m the good one, if you hadn't noticed. At least, I was until you got involved. You’re always promising things, and then you take them away. Remember the covenant with Noah? You said no more floods. But we still have all these tidal waves, and hurricanes. And remember that guy from the Old Testament who was helping to carry the Ark on that stretcher thing, but then it started to fall and he reached out to steady it with his hand, and you smote him down right then and there just because he touched it. Even though he was just trying to help. That’s the kind of God you are. And you try to fool us with all this happy Jesus stuff in the New Testament, but I’m not buying it anymore. You’re still the same Old Testament jerk, sending disease, and plagues, and...and babies. I wish I didn’t believe in you. I wish I could stop believing, I really do. But when I look inside myself, deep down in my heart...I know...I know you’re up there. Waiting to fuck me over again.

(Beat.)

Amen.

(MARY ELLEN crawls into bed and pulls the covers over herself. She sighs and shuts her eyes. After a moment, the lights change. An angelic chorus is heard singing softly. The actor playing JANITOR JOE enters,
Who are you?

JANITOR JESUS

Hello, Mary Ellen. I’m Janitor Jesus.

MARY ELLEN

Janitor Jesus?

JANITOR JESUS

That’s right. I’m here to sweep up all your trash. Do you have anything for me?

MARY ELLEN

Oh...um...let’s see...

(She pulls a banana peel, some change, DYLAN’S rainbow towel, and a crumpled up piece of paper out from under her sheets and throws them on the floor.)

...there.

JANITOR JESUS

Thank you, Mary Ellen. I love sweeping up other people’s messes. After all, I’m Janitor Jesus. That’s my job.

(He sweeps together the items that MARY ELLEN dropped.)

Is there anything else?

MARY ELLEN

Oh, yeah. This.

(She pulls a baby doll out from under the covers and also throws it down.)

JANITOR JESUS

(As he sweeps the baby doll into the pile.)

Wonderful. Nothing makes my day more than this. I died to get this job, you know.

MARY ELLEN

Could you go away, please? I hate it when janitors stay and try to talk to you after they’ve already taken your trash. They’re creepy.
JANITOR JESUS
You're right, Mary Ellen. I am creepy. I'll go now. Don't worry. Janitor Jesus will take care of everything.

(MARY ELLEN puts her head back down and shuts her eyes. JANITOR JESUS sweeps his way, along with his pile of trash, offstage. The angelic chorus fades out, and the lights change back. After a moment, MARY ELLEN jolts up.)

MARY ELLEN
Jesus! Oh, no!

(She hops out of bed and runs offstage. The lights fade.)

Scene Three

SETTING: The principal’s office.
TIME: Friday morning.

(The office of DR. VOSS appears DC as before. DR. VOSS is sitting in her chair as the lights rise, talking on the phone.)

DR. VOSS
Yes. That's right. One hundred and fifty prisms. How soon can you have those delivered? I see. Thank you very much.

(Hangs up the phone.)

God, I hate these kids.

(A SECRETARY’S VOICE is heard on DR. VOSS’S intercom.)

SECRETARY’S VOICE
Principal Voss? The student is here to pick up the baby.

(DR. VOSS a button on the intercom.)

DR. VOSS
Thank you. Send them in.

(DIRK enters from R.)

Ah. Hello, Mr...young man.
I'm Dirk Kopitz.

Sit down.

Now, Mr...

Kopitz.

...you're going to tell me that it was your baby in the toilet?

Yeah. Well...I'm, like, responsible for it.

Who was the baby's mother?

I can't tell you.

You don't know?

I...no.

Then why in the world would you be responsible for it?

'Cause I care about her.

Ah. Well, you at least know the gender of the baby.

What? Oh...yeah.

(DR. VOSS pulls out the "Lost and Found" bin from under her desk. She sets it on the desktop.)
There she is, Mr...

...Kopitz.

Whoa, I think she crapped her pants.

That's so cool.

Hi! Hi!

She does seem to like you, doesn't she?

Yeah. She's awesome.

Then why, may I ask, did you decide to leave her in the toilet?

I guess...I guess I must have been scared, you know. Because...I'd be, like, the last person anyone would expect to get...uh...to have a baby. I... probably just did it because I didn't want people to be disappointed in me.

Well, congratulations, young man, because now the entire school is disappointed in you. And when this gets out, the entire board of education will be disappointed in me as well as you. Well. You'll have plenty of time to think about how disappointed we all are while you're in seventh hour.

(A she takes a pad and writes something on the first sheet.)

Aw, man.

For the remainder of the year.

(She hands him the entire pad.)
DIRK

But, Dr. Ruth...I'm on the JV football team. And this is my senior year!

DR. VOSS

I'm afraid you can kiss JV football and any other extra-curricular activities goodbye. That is...if this baby is really yours.

(Beat.)

Is it?

(DIRK looks at the baby.)

Yeah.

DIRK

Then get out of my sight. Both of you. You're a disgrace to Richard Nixon High.

(DIRK gets up, holding the baby and the pad, but before he exits he turns back to DR. VOSS.)

DIRK

Dr. Ruth?

DR. VOSS

(As she puts the bin back underneath her desk.)

What?

DIRK

I'm sorry I'm a disgrace.

(He exits.)

DR. VOSS

Me too, Mr... (She tries for a moment to remember DIRK'S name, then gives up.)

SECRETARY'S VOICE

(On the intercom.)

Principal Voss? There's somebody here to see you.
What now?
Who is it?
It's somebody from the NAACP.
What the hell does that stand for?

DR. VOSS
(Pushes button.)

SECRETARY’S VOICE

DR. VOSS
(Letting go of the button.)

(The lights fade.)

Scene Four

SETTING: The student lounge.
TIME: A bit later.

(Lights up on the student lounge. DOOGIE is sitting at the table, making notes in a textbook. BECKY enters and sits at the table.)

BECKY
Saw your soccer game yesterday. I was like, "Damn, look at my dog Doogie out there, tearin' it up with the hat trick."

DOOGIE

BECKY
Yeah. You're really good.

DOOGIE
Thanks. I don't think anybody else in the school's ever even noticed. No one goes to the soccer games.

BECKY
I love soccer.

(DYLAN enters. He sings the Monday Night Football theme.)
"Are you ready for some football?"

"Are you..."

"Are you..."

"...ready for some football?"

All my gay friends are coming over tonight.

(DYLAN
(Singing, pointing BECKY.)

(Singing, pointing to DOOGIE.)

(Singing, pointing at himself with both hands.)

DOOGIE
(Half-singing the melody of the song.)

(DYLAN
(Seriously, you two are going to be there, right? I feel different today. I don’t know if your little coup attempt at the assembly got me fired up or what, but I feel ready. I don’t care if our running back sucks. I think I’ve got something to prove.)

(BECKY
(Playing for pride?)

(DOOGIE
(DYLAN
(Well said.

Yeah, you two are very cute. I’m not joking, though. I know something big’s gonna...

(Uh oh. Incoming inbred, three o’clock.

(CORNSHUCKER
(What’s up, Cornshucker?

(Gonna be at the homecoming dance tomorrow night?)

(CORNSHUCKER
(Yup.

 DYLAN

 BECKY

 DOOGIE

 CORNSHUCKER

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Really? Bringing a date?

DYLAN

CORNSHUCKER
(Seemingly uninterested.)

Mmm-hmm. Bringin’ two.

DYLAN

Wow. Two, huh? Well you better get them hogs back into the pen by ten, or Pa’s gonna
be worried.

BECKY

Why are you guys so mean to that kid?

DYLAN

It’s Cornshucker. He brings it on himself.

DOOGIE

I hate to say it, but he is something of a racist.
(Thinks.)

Or...at least I assume so.

DYLAN

Hey, Cornshucker! We rented a limo for tomorrow night. What did you rent, a tractor or
a mule?

(CORNSHUCKER abandons the machine
and turns to the table. He still speaks
calmly.)

CORNSUCKER

Ah am the Omega. And tomorrow night, Ah think y’all are gonna find that revenge is a
dish best served cold.

BECKY

Uh-huh. And I think tomorrow night you’re gonna find that skunk is a dish best served
run-over.

DYLAN and DOOGIE
(Eruping in delight.)

Ohhhhhhh!

(DYLAN and DOOGIE high five each other
and clap BECKY on the shoulder.)
Becky’s first Cornshucker joke!

DYLAN

And it was a good one!

DOOGIE

DYLAN

(His arm around BECKY.)

Becky, my friend...you are officially one of us.

(BECKY looks troubled by that thought. CORNSHUCKER turns and exits. MARY ELLEN enters, looking like she’s in a rush.)

MARY ELLEN

Has anyone seen Dr. Ruth?

BECKY

No. Why?

MARY ELLEN

I went to her office, but her secretary said she had to go away for the day. I need to find her.

DOOGIE

(Looking off.)

Hold that thought. Here comes Janitor Joe.

(DOOGIE, BECKY, and DYLAN pull various pieces of trash out of their bookbags and throw them on the ground. JANITOR JOE comes in and begins to sweep them up.)

MARY ELLEN

No!

(She drops to her knees and tries to pick up all the trash.)

Don’t throw your trash in front of Janitor Joe anymore! We can’t do that! It isn’t right!

(JANITOR JOE looks bewildered. He tries to sweep up the trash that falls out of MARY ELLEN’S arms.)

No, Janitor Joe! That’s our trash, not yours! Don’t sweep up after us anymore, OK?

BECKY

Mary E, you on crack?
DOOGIE
Mary Ellen, I understand your misgivings, but Janitor Joe is a janitor. And while an education and the kind of opportunities we enjoy may have been denied to him because of his socioeconomic status, we can't change the past. We can only change...

MARY ELLEN
(Cutting him off.)

Shut up, Doogie! Shut up!

(She frantically tries to pick up all the trash at once. She does, then stands up, holding it in her arms.)

Janitor Joe, do you know where Dr. Ruth is? I'm claiming my baby.

BECKY
But Mary E... didn't you hear the announcement this morning?

MARY ELLEN
What announcement? I didn't get here until eleven. I was talking with my parents all morning.

(BECKY, DOOGIE, and DYLAN look at each other.)

What?

DOOGIE
Mary Ellen... someone already claimed your baby. Dirk.

(MARY ELLEN drops all the trash. JANITOR JOE sweeps it into a pile. The lights fade.)

Scene Five

SETTING: The student lounge.
TIME: Saturday night. The Homecoming Dance.

(As soon as the lights fade on the previous scene, pop music begins to play, the kind of music you would hear at a high school homecoming dance. When the lights rise for this scene, the music should fade into the background, as though it is coming from another part of the school. The lighting in the student lounge is dim, as if the only light is coming from the hallways outside of it. DIRK, wearing a suit and tie that doesn't...
fit him very well, is holding the baby.)

DIRK
(To the baby.)

Hey. Hey. It's OK. Did that music scare you? I'm sorry. Little Ellie. You like that name? Ellie? I named you after your mommy. You might not get to know your mommy, 'cause she's gonna go to college and everything, but that's OK. Daddy's not goin' anywhere.

(AUBREY enters, wearing a black dress.)


AUBREY

DIRK
Come here. Just look at her.

(AUBREY crosses to DIRK and the baby. She looks over DIRK'S shoulder.)

AUBREY

Awww.

DIRK

Isn't she beautiful?

AUBREY

She already looks a little like Mary Ellen.

DIRK

Look, Ellie. Look. It's Aubrey! Say hi. Say hi to Aubrey, Ellie. You two can watch stupid girl shows on TV together. And you can buy stuff off the Home Shopping Network.

AUBREY

I don't do that.

DIRK

Well, you can take her to the mall or whatever. Hey, where's your date?

AUBREY

He's still up in the gym.

DIRK

Who is it?
AUBREY

Jeremy Phillips.

DIRK

Crappy white running back Jeremy Phillips? Aw, Aubrey. Come on. You can do better than that. You should be dating...well...OK, you can't date the quarterback, and I know the running back would seem like the next logical choice, but did you see the game? Man, Jeremy sucks. No wonder he's white.

AUBREY

Yeah, well, all the same...he's the only one who asked me.

DIRK

Are you for real?

AUBREY

Yep.

DIRK

But you're like, one of the prettiest girls in school. And you're the head cheerleader, and you laugh at the crap guys do, and you're a big drinker, which is killer smooth. You should be, like, numero uno on the target list.

AUBREY

Thank you, Dirk.

DIRK

Maybe it's like, every guy already thinks you have a date, so nobody even thinks to ask you.

AUBREY

That's a nice thing to say. But I doubt that. And if it really were true, then I wish more people would just ask me.

DIRK

Aubrey...if I had asked you...would you have said yes?

AUBREY

Oh. No.

DIRK

But I thought that's where this conversation was going.
Yeah, sorry, no. I came down here because Mary Ellen's looking for you. Is it OK if I tell her where you are?

Sure. Yeah.

OK.

Bye, sweetie. It was nice to meet you.

Call her Ellie. That’s her name.

We’ll see.

(AUBREY exits L.)

You’re gonna love your mommy. She’s my favorite girl in the whole school. I’ve known your mommy since we were little kids. You know... one time, when we were in kindergarten, we were out playing in the playground, and there was this tunnel. Sometimes you could hide in the tunnel, and the teacher would say that recess was over, but then you could stay in the tunnel. Most of the time they remembered to check, but some days they’d forget, and everyone would go inside. And one of those times, it was just me and your mommy in the tunnel. And you know what we did? We kissed. And it was so killer smooth. I know it sounds gay, but me kissing your mommy is, like, the best thing that ever happened to me in my life.

(Beat.)

Then she started crying. And then the teachers came and found us, and she said I hit her, and I had to sit on the steps... that’s where they put the bad kids... until my mom came. And then she yelled at me for hitting Mary Ellen, even though that didn’t happen.

(Beat.)

Mommy doesn’t mean things like that. It’s like when she tried to kill you and leave you in that toilet. She didn’t mean to hurt anybody’s feelings. She was just... oh, wait. You probably shouldn’t know about that.

(MARY ELLEN enters from L, wearing a simple black dress.)

There you are.
DIRK
(Smiling.)

What's up?

(To the baby.)

Look, Ellie...there she is!

MARY ELLEN

Her name is not Ellie.

(She crosses to DIRK.)

Give her to me.

DIRK

But you're gonna go to college. You can't have a baby in college. I can take her. I ain't going anywhere.

MARY ELLEN

Isn't that the truth? No way am I leaving my baby with you, Dirk.

DIRK

We can raise her together.

MARY ELLEN

You're not going to have any part of this. I mean it. Give her to me. Now.

DIRK

But...I'm her daddy.

MARY ELLEN

What? You are not her daddy. Her daddy is a talented actor. He looks handsome. He looks smart. He's not some senior on the JV football team.

DIRK

I'm not on the JV team anymore. I got detention for the whole rest of the year.

MARY ELLEN

Well isn't that just like you? That would be the perfect environment for a baby, wouldn't it? Growing up in detention.

DIRK

I'll only be there for a year. Then I'll graduate, and I'll get a job, and I'll devote all my time to taking care of her. I swear it.

MARY ELLEN

If she were going to end up with you...she'd have been better off if the abortion had actually worked.

(DIRK just looks at her. MARY ELLEN
I don’t know what you were thinking. You really are the dumbest guy I know. Why did you take my baby?

DIRK
Because...I wanted you to be able to get on with your life without worrying. Because...I love you. I do.

MARY ELLEN
(After a moment.)
You just don’t get it, do you? Dirk, I’m tired of trying to put this in a nice way. I can’t stand you. And there’s nothing you can do about it, OK? You’re always going to be Dirk to me. And that’s just...that’s not a good thing.

DIRK
Can I say goodbye to Ellie?

MARY ELLEN
No.

(MARY ELLEN exits R. DIRK looks after her for a moment, then goes to sit at the table. He puts his head down on it for a bit, then sits up and loosens his tie. He takes off his jacket and puts it on the back of his chair. There is laughter off L, then DYLAN, DOOGIE, and BECKY enter from L. BECKY is wearing a black dress, while DYLAN and DOOGIE are wearing good-looking suits and ties. DYLAN’S tie is striped with rainbow colors.)

DYLAN
Hey, look who it is! What’s up, Dirk? Hey, where’s the little one?

I told her I loved her.

The baby?

Mary Ellen.

Oh.
What?

Nothing, nothing.

What'd she say?

I don't think she was interested.

(He and DYLAN look at each other, and both snicker as though they are trying to keep from laughing.)

DIRK

DYLAN

BECKY

DIRK

(HE, DOOGIE, and DYLAN still seem to think this is a little funny.)

DIRK

It's not funny, guys. I really do love her.

DYLAN

I know, I know. Sorry.

(They all sit down at the table with DIRK.)

DIRK

(To DYLAN.)

Where's your date?

DYLAN

We show up here, and now he's too afraid to admit he's my date. Talk about a technicolor dreamcoat of lies!

DOOGIE

You guys hear about Dr. Ruth?

DYLAN

I heard she had to go before the school board. They almost fired her.

BECKY

(Shaking her head.)

Yeah. Almost.
That woman’s on thin ice.

DOOGIE

DIRK
(To DYLAN.)

Oh, hey, nice game yesterday.

DYLAN
(Stretching.)

Yep... yep. It was all about the D-train last night.

BECKY

Are you kidding? You all lost fifty-six to twelve.

DYLAN

And that twelve was the result of... what? That’s right. Two Dylan Cormack touchdown completions, thank you very much. And I don’t know if you noticed my complete to attempted ratio, but...

DIRK

Eleven out of nineteen.

DYLAN

Um... yeah. That’s... OK, it’s a little weird that you know that, but damn straight, that’s right.

DOOGIE

You know, according to the papers, I think we actually beat the spread.

BECKY

We did? Shit. Now I owe some people.

DOOGIE

Really? Who?

BECKY

I was joking.
(Taking her finger and putting it on DOOGIE’S temple.)

See this spot? Everybody, see right here? This where I’m gonna put a sense of humor.

DYLAN

So, are you two, like, an item now, or what?

DOOGIE
(After a pause.)
Dylan, I’d like to thank you very much for turning what was up to this point an enjoyable date into an extremely awkward one.

Dylan

My pleasure.

Becky

Look, um...this is probably a good a time to tell all you this as any. Doog, we’re not gonna be an item. And it’s not just because of you, but...well...Jesus, it sucks to have to do this at two schools in one year. I’m...I don’t really like...you know...guys.

What?

Doogie

Wait. So, what, are you coming out?

Dylan

I am.

Dirk

I didn’t know there were black lesbians.

(Doogie hits Dirk.)

Man, I’ve told you! Don’t hit me, I’m serious!

Doogie

Then don’t be a fucking idiot all the time! I’m serious!

Dylan

Hold on, hold. Let me get this straight. You’re a minority minority? A double minority?

Becky

I don’t really think of it like that, but I guess so. Plus I’m female, right? Triple threat.

Dylan

(Standing up, his whole mood changing.)

That’s it! I just...I can’t compete with that! Three years I’ve been at this school, opening doors, being proud of who I am, and trying to make the school be the same. And now, I think I’ve finally succeeded, but now we’ve got someone here who thinks they can out-minority me? I’m sorry, Becky, but I don’t think so. I’m the popular gay student here, and if you think you’re gonna horn in on what I’ve worked so hard to establish as my territory, then...then...that’s it! What did I do with that letter of intent? I’ll show you what it’s like to be a minority! Where’s Janitor Joe?

Dirk

Dylan!
DYLAN
(Running off L.)

Janitor Joe! I need the keys to the dumpster!

DIRK

Dylan, wait!

(DYLAN is gone.)

Damn it. How come nobody ever listens to me?

BECKY
(After a moment.)

Dylan has some mood swing issues, doesn’t he?

DOOGIE

Yeah. Sometimes, he’s a relatively cool ember. Other times, he just flames right up.

(BECKY laughs at this. She gets up and tries to pull DOOGIE out of his chair.)

BECKY

Come on. Let’s go shake that groove thing again.

DOOGIE
(Staying put.)

In a bit. I’m still tired.

BECKY
(Smiling.)

Whatever. I’ll be up there...whenever you’re ready to get funky, white boy.

(BECKY exits L.)

DOOGIE

She’s a lesbian. God, I want her. Is it strange that now I’m even more attracted to her? And I don’t think it’s just the...hey, what’s that?

(He picks up DIRK’S arm. There is a large blood stain on the wrist of the shirt.)

Look at this! You’re bleeding right through your shirt!

(He grabs DIRK’S other arm. It is the same way.)

You’ve gotta be kidding me.

DIRK

You think this is bad, you should see the ankles of my socks.
DOOGIE
I thought we were done with this. I really did. This is the last straw, Dirk. I said it before. I'm not even going to talk to you about this.

(He gets up.)

DIRK
Doogie, I'm serious. I keep telling you guys, I'm not doing it.

DOOGIE
That's bullshit, Dirk. I'm so fucking sick of this. You know what? I'm so fucking sick of you. The only reason we were even friends with you in the first place is because you worship Dylan like he's your fucking idol or something, and you know he just loves any kind of attention, even from someone like you. I'm sorry to be the one to say it, but we're really getting tired of you tagging along all the time.

DIRK
But...we're the three D's. You, me, and Dylan.

DOOGIE
(After a bit.)
You really think that, don't you? You're pathetic.

(DOOGIE exits L.)

DIRK
(After a moment.)
Least I don't play soccer. That's what I should've said.

(Suddenly, the music in the background fades, and a dissonant guitar chord is struck as CORNSHUCKER enters from R. He is wearing the same clothes as always, along with black gloves.)

CORNSHUCKER
The hour is upon you, motherfuckers. Ah am Omega....KING of Finality!

DIRK
Dude, Cornshucker, seriously...

...oh, shit.
“Oh shit” is right, you piece a’...shit. Ah warned y’all. Ah warned you judgment day was coming, and here it is. Right on schedule. Let the body count begin.  

(He points one of the guns at DIRK.)

Dirk the Dork. Number one. 

(Beat.)

Well? Ah want ta hear you beg fer mah mercy.  

(Beat.)

What’s the matter with you?  

(Beat.)

You’re lucky. You’d better run, shithead. If Ah shot you now, everyone would hear it, and Ah want everybody in that gym when Ah show up.  

(He lowers the gun.)

Well. It’s time. 

(He crosses L. DIRK gets up to block him.)

DIRK

Wait, Cornshucker. No. Don’t do it.  

CORNSHUCKER  

(Pointing the gun.)

Ah told you not to call me fucking CORNSHUCKER!  

DIRK

They’re gonna haul you off to jail, man. You’ll be there the whole rest of your life.  

CORNSHUCKER  

(Lowering the gun.)

You really think Ah’m gonna live through this? When all the guilty are lyin’ in their pools a’ blood and sorrow, and Omega has fulfilled his calling...then Omega will end Hunter.  

DIRK

What’s that supposed to mean?  

CORNSHUCKER

It means I’ll kill mahself, you dumb shit! You should know all about that, shouldn’t you? Ah played you in that skit. Ah know what ev’ryone here thinks of you. They all think you’re a fuckin’ piece a’ shit, just like me. But that’s all gonna change.  

DIRK

I don’t think anyone’s gonna think you’re less a piece of shit if you shoot everyone.
CORNSHUCKER

That's not the point, dipshit. The point is to be remembered. Long after they've forgotten about the gay quarterbacks, and the teeny-bopper cheerleaders, and the crazy fuckin' religious chicks who died, you know who they're gonna remember? Omega. Omega, who executed them all. A've been plannin' this fer two fuckin' years. And this school...this whole school...has been just beggin' for it. Haven't they?

(He pulls one of the guns out.)

You think it's OK for people to treat others like shit? You think it's OK for people to make others' lives a fuckin' state of misery every goddamn day? Shit. Look at you, man. You know what I'm talkin' bout, Dirk the Dork.

(Beat.)

I got two guns.

DIRK

What?

CORNSHUCKER

Come up there with me. We'll do it together. That's the only way they're ever gonna remember the name of Dirk...

Kopitz.

CORNSHUCKER

(Crossing to DIRK.)

You can die with me as Dirk Kopitz, or whatever you want to be...or you can live as Dirk the Dork.

(He pulls the other gun out of his pocket and hands it to DIRK.)

Take it.

DIRK

No way, man. You're crazy.

CORNSHUCKER

Take it. You and me, man. We'll make all those motherfuckers pay.

(DIRK takes the gun. He looks at it for a while.)

DIRK

(Handing CORNSHUCKER the gun back.)

Fuck you, Cornshucker.

(CORNSHUCKER fires. DIRK clutches his chests, gasps, and staggers.)
CORNSHUCKER steps back, shaking, his mouth open. DIRK falls behind the table. CORNSHUCKER, shocked at what he has done, drops the gun. He turns and runs off R. DIRK is dead. Stillness for a while. Then, DYLАН, BECKY, DOOGIE, AUBREY, MARY ELLEN, DR. VOSS, and JANITOR JOE enter from both sides. Silently, they cross to DIRK'S body. Without stopping, DYLАН, BECKY, DOOGIE, AUBREY, and MARY ELLEN then cross to DC where they gather around a pool of light that now falls on the floor. DYLАН carries DIRK'S Nixon jacket and lays it in the light. The girls take off their corsages and lay them on top of the jacket. All the students are still wearing their homecoming outfits. While the students cross to DC, DR. VOSS and JANITOR JOE carry DIRK offstage. The five students stand gathered around DIRK’S represented grave, looking down at it. MARY ELLEN is holding her baby.)

AUBREY
(After a long silence.)

This is just like when Angel died on my Rent CD.

DYLАН

No. Dirk was no Angel. This is more like...if Benny had died. I mean, you knew the guy, and he was kind of your friend, but...yeah. Well, here, Dirk. I have something for you.

(He pulls out a fabric-letter “N” from his coat pocket.)

I got you your varsity letter. Here it is, man. Your Nixon “N.”

(He drops the letter onto the jacket.)

DOOGIE

I hate to sound like a jerk, but I really don’t think you should be able to earn your varsity letter by killing yourself.

You know what? You’re right.

DYLАН

(He picks up the letter and takes something else out of his coat.)
Here’s your JV patch, Dirk. You’ve earned it.

(He drops the patch onto the jacket.)

BECKY

I still can’t believe he shot himself.

AUBREY

I know. But the gun was right by him...with his prints on it.

BECKY

Yeah, but to do it in the student lounge, during Homecoming...

DYLАН

Pfft. Drama queen.

DOOGIE

I shouldn’t have said all that stuff to him.

MARY ELLEN

You can’t blame yourself, Doogie.

DOOGIE

I know. He would’ve done it anyway.

(Beat.)

I envy you, Mary Ellen.

MARY ELLEN

Why?

DOOGIE

I mean, I wish had some kind of faith, like you. You have the comfort of believing you’ll be seeing Dirk again someday.

MARY ELLEN

Oh. I don’t plan on going to hell.

(Silence for a bit.)

DOOGIE

The soccer coach at Our Lady of the Woods called me again.

DYLАН

Think you might play there?
DOOGIE
Maybe. I already have the scholarship to the school.

DYLAN
I figured you’d go to Harvard or Princeton or some shitty-ass school like that.

DOOGIE
I’m a big fish in a small pond here. I wouldn’t cut it at some Ivy League place. And I don’t think I’d want to, really. It’s a lot easier to lead a revolution at a small school. That’s why I want to go to a small conservative college. It’s hard to change people’s minds when they already agree with you.

DYLAN
You know they found my letter of intent on Dirk when he died?

So you signed it, then?

AUBREY

DYLAN
Yep. But you’d better believe I’m gonna make ‘em regret it. They want diversity? Well, they’d better get ready for one big fucking rainbow of it.

DOOGIE
Killer smooth.

DYLAN

MARY ELLEN
I thought I was going to go to Our Lady of the Woods.

Sorry, Mary E.

MARY ELLEN
Don’t be sorry. I’ll still go...someday. Just maybe a few years later than I thought. Well...I’d better get going. I think Ellie needs to be changed.

BECKY
I guess I’m gonna head out, too. Wish you’d stuck around, Dirk. Bye.

Later, Dirk.

DOOGIE

DYLAN
Peace out, buddy.
(MARY ELLEN, BECKY, DOOGIE, and DYLAN start to head L.)

BECKY
(As they leave.)

You know we got an Arab kid comin' to the school?

You don’t say.

DOOGIE

BECKY
I do say, Doogster. Heard it from Principal Chalkers.

(MARY ELLEN, BECKY, DYLAN and DOOGIE exit L. AUBREY stands alone over the grave.)

AUBREY
(After they are gone.)

Here, Dirk.

(She takes a folded-up piece of paper out from her dress and unfolds it.)

I made you a locker sign. Or...I guess it’s a headstone sign now, but whatever. I didn’t know what your number was, so I just wrote “Go Dirk” on it.

(She sets the paper on top of the jacket.)

Well...there you go. Go Dirk.

(AUBREY exits L. After a moment, CORNSHUCKER enters R. He crosses to the grave and speaks to it)

CORNSHUCKER
Ah bet you think you changed somethin’, don’t you? Well, you didn’t change a thing. You hear me? Not a goddamn thing. You just bought ’em all some time. But that’s all it was. Time. Ah still got one gun. You just wait till prom. Just wait till fuckin’...

(He stops, then picks up the locker sign.)

“Go Dirk.”

(He looks at the sign for a while longer, then tosses it on the grave.)

I used to get these all the time. Locker signs. Before Ah moved up here, I was the quarterback on my freshman football team. Betcha didn’t know that. And ah sure as hell didn’t have no 38.8 passer rating. And football wasn’t no game where I came from, neither. If we didn’t play the hell out of every single quarter from start to finish, Coach’d whoop our asses.

(He takes off his sunglasses.)

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Those were the best fuckin’ days of mah life, man. First semester freshman year. Then mah mom died, and mah dad...he stopped goin’ to work and ev’rything after that. Just sat around the house in his undies and watched fuckin’ Nickelodeon. Then one day, Ah came home and he was gone, and there was a man and woman wearin’ suits there. And they told me Ah was gonna come up here and live with mah uncle. “Got a place right on the river,” they told me. “You’re gonna love the river, Hunter.” What the fuck would I care about a river? I ain’t never even seen a river before that.

(He drops the sunglasses and removes his coat, letting it fall to the ground as well. Underneath, he is wearing a flannel shirt and tattered overalls.)

Hated it the second Ah got here. Wasn’t doin’ mah work in classes in stuff, ‘cause who the fuck cares about doin’ homework when you’re livin’ in a trailer by the river. It’s not like you got anywhere farther down ta’ fall. Then they made me go see that Counselor Walker, and she said Ah had to be in the L.D. classes. And that whole thing just pissed me off, so Ah did even worse. Then come sophomore year, when Ah thought Ah could finally start playin’ football again, they told me mah GPA was too low fer me to play.

(Shakes his head.)

Yer gay ass friend shoulda been mah backup. Instead, it’s mah senior year, and Ah ain’t even on the JV team. I’m even worse than you, Dirk the Dork. Talk about fuckin’ depressing.

(He pulls a beat up baseball cap out of the back of his overalls, some John Deere type cap, and slides it on his head.)

Ah hate all y’all.

(He looks at the gun, still in his hand.)

Look watcha made me into.

(CORNSHUCKER studies the gun for a while, then drops it. He exits L. DR. VOSS enters R. She looks disoriented, maybe a little drunk. She makes her way over to DIRK’S grave and glares angrily at it. She picks up the sign, looks at it, then rips it into pieces.)

DR. VOSS

Well...thank you very much, Mr...whatever the hell your name is. I hope you’re happy. This little stunt of yours cost me my job. I’m unemployed. I’m a drain on society. All because some disillusioned, ignorant young man thought it would be funny to kill himself in my school. Well, I’m sure you’re laughing, wherever you are.

(Beat.)

Why is this my fault? Huh? Any of it. The riot, the baby, this...you tell me how it’s supposed to be my fault. I can’t safeguard the life of every individual student. I can’t make your choices for you. I tried. I tried so goddamn hard, can’t you see that? All I wanted was to help you. To help all of you students. I just wanted to be your friend!
And this is what happens. Why? Why do you do this to me? How come nobody likes me? This is just like high school all over again!

(She stops, seeing the gun. She bends over and picks it up.)

Oh my. Some thoughtless individual left a firearm here.

(She studies the gun for a while. She looks around, then looks back at the gun. Her grip on it tightens.)

I’ll show them. I’ll show all of them. They think they can do this to me? Oh, no.

(She begins to put on CORNSHUCKER’S jacket.)

They’re not gonna laugh at me anymore. Not after this. They think they can have their precious little prom. I’ll show them. They’re dead. Everyone in that school is fuckin’ dead. I am Omega, Principal of Finality! I’ll make all those motherfuckers pay.

(Putting on CORNSHUCKER’S sunglasses.)

Just wait till prom.

(She looks at the audience, pointing the gun out at everyone.)

All of you. Just wait till prom.

(She exits L, clenching the gun. JANITOR JOE enters R with his broom. He whistles the tune that DR. VOSS used earlier for the Nixon High fight song, over and over. He sweeps up the letter jacket, pieces of paper, and flowers, sweeping them off as he exits L. The lights fade.)

END OF PLAY