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The Bound Trilogy—First Printing, 2007

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Gore Hounds
by Matt Pelfrey
3 Males, 1 Female

Synopsis: Three drug-fueled horror junkies, Turk, Hud and Alex, get their hands on an authentic snuff film and plan to watch it as part of their weekly night of junk food and debauchery. However, the evening takes a surreal detour when one of the victims from the snuff film explodes from the television and into the “real world” of their basement. Alex and Hud think this is their chance to finally indulge in their darkest, most depraved fantasies with a woman who can’t possibly be real. Disgusted by what his friends are planning, Turk refuses to let Alex or Hud touch the woman, whether she’s real or just a creation from their drug-addled mind. GORE HOUNDS is an edgy and unflinching exploration of media violence in our interactive culture.

I ♥ Kant
by Ken Urban
4 Females, 1 Male

Synopsis: Four women, living in post-grunge, pre-boy-band revival New Jersey, are on a quest for happiness. Linda has been in graduate school for ump-teen years and has a dissertation that is one-sentence long. Her sister Maureen is a substitute teacher with an addiction to heroin and an abusive boyfriend. Betsy celebrates her impending 30th birthday by getting her freak on with a would-be meteorologist and her own brother, while her friend Pam, who wants everything to be normal, faces her own mortality at work.

The Bound Trilogy
Three one-act plays
By Paul Barile

...for those who struggle to remain free...

Abducted: Fred Kennedy has a secret that has been eating away at him for decades. Jasper Anderson unwittingly holds the key that might unlock the weight around Fred's neck. As a final act of desperation, Fred abducts Jasper at gunpoint.
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Civil Restraint: Alice and Jeff met in a bar last night. After a romantic evening, Jeff passed out on Alice's couch. Seeing this as her one chance for whatever she is looking for, she ties Jeff up with her pantyhose in hopes of keeping him around. He has different ideas when he wakes up in the next morning.
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Ransomed: When a mental health facility is threatened with financial ruin, social worker Mr. Frank devises a plan to keep court ordered detox patient Matthew hostage in order to squeeze more money out of Matthew's father's corporation. Lizbeth just wants a math book and Rocky just wants Lizbeth... or a cup of coffee.
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Abducted

Time: Sunrise on a Sunday in early spring

Place: A bachelor pad in America

Cast: FRED KENNEDY, 30-something bachelor with a secret
JASPER ANDERSON, late 20-something professional

(The scene is a sparsely furnished studio apartment. There is a balcony door upstage right. There is a couch stage left facing a television – in front of the couch is a cluttered coffee table. Between the couch and the television - in the middle of the room is an office chair on wheels facing downstage. There is virtually nothing in the apartment that would indicate a woman's touch. There is a small table with a few books and a phone upstage center. When the lights come up, JASPER is sitting in the chair with his head down. FRED is feverishly pacing back and forth behind him. We can't see that Jasper's hands are tied behind him and his feet are bound together and strapped to the chair.)

FRED: You know what else I hate?

(FRED stops in front of JASPER and screams.)

FRED: DO YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT ELSE I REALLY REALLY HATE, BUDDY?

JASPER: *(groggy)* What are you talking...

FRED: You better wake up my friend.

(FRED crosses to Jasper and yanks Jasper's head up by the hair.)

FRED: You better wake your candy-ass up and get with the program. Do you understand me?

JASPER: What? What?

FRED: I asked you if you knew what I hate?

JASPER: Besides me?

FRED: I don't hate you, Buddy.

(FRED is visibly touched by JASPER'S assumption.)

JASPER: Then tell me why am I here.

FRED: Not just yet. When you need to know, I'll tell you. In the meantime, it's important to me that we get to know each other. It seems that we have a lot of catching up to do. There are so many things I want you to know.

JASPER: I still don't understand...

FRED: Do you want to know what I hate? I'm giving you another chance. Tell me what you think I hate.

JASPER: The government?

FRED: Too easy...

JASPER: Your ex-wife?

FRED: Too cliché...

JASPER: Your job?

FRED: *(pause)* How did you know I was divorced?

JASPER: Just a guess.

FRED: You're good... no, I mean you are really good... I never told you I was divorced. I kept this place just like it was when she lived here so that it wouldn't be too depressing for me to come home to an empty unlit house.

JASPER: It was just a guess...

FRED: You guessed that I am divorced, but you can't guess what I hate...

JASPER: Can I get some water, please? My throat is pretty dry.

FRED: You guess, you drink. No guessy, no drinkie.

JASPER: How about a hint...

FRED: Okay. Remember that guy that was sitting across from you at the bar? He was drinking Glenlivet...

JASPER: You hate that guy? I didn't even know you knew him.

FRED: It's not the guy necessarily, it's the Glenlivet. I hate the fact that he ordered it just because he thought how sophisticated he looked drinking it.

JASPER: Maybe he likes Glenlivet.

FRED: Nobody likes Glenlivet. They drink it because it's a status symbol. Even the name sounds phony – Glenlivet... And you could tell how that guy's face got all sour every time he took a sip. He was not enjoying that drink.

JASPER: So is it that you hate people that drink Glenlivet? Or is it Scotch drinkers in general?

FRED: It's the phony people who do stuff cause they think it makes them look better than everyone else. Like when they order Glenlivet and sip it with their pinky finger waving in the air.

JASPER: So you're quite sure this guy didn't like the Glenlivet but he was ordering it because... Can you loosen the ropes a little please?

FRED: The guy was ordering the Glenlivet because he wanted to impress the people at his table. Why couldn't he just drink Cutty like a normal guy?

JASPER: Maybe he doesn't like Cutty?

FRED: You know what I hate even more...

JASPER: So you won't concede that he might not like Cutty?

FRED: Scotch is Scotch. Do you know what I hate even more?

JASPER: I'm not playing anymore until I get some water.

FRED: Playing? Playing? Does this look like I'm playing?

(FRED reaches into his pocket and realizes that is it empty. HE scurries about the house looking frantically for something. HE finally finds the very small gun. HE waves the gun around like it is something to be afraid of.)

FRED: Does this look like I'm playing to you, Buddy-boy?

JASPER: That's an awfully small gun, Friend.

FRED: It'll do the trick, I imagine.

JASPER: You'd do more damage with paper clips and a rubber band. If that's all you got, I am going to kick your ass when I get out of this!

FRED: This bad little mother can be deceiving, Buddy.

JASPER: I must have been pretty drunk you let you kidnap me with a peashooter.

FRED: You don't want me to pop a couple rounds off in ya...

JASPER: Whatever, can I have some water now. Please?

FRED: You know what I really really *really* hate?

JASPER: Getting water for your hostages?

FRED: Now you're going to make more jokes?

JASPER: Listen friend, why don't you tell me your name.

FRED: Oh yes... you'd like that wouldn't you?

(FRED spins JASPER around in the chair stopping him when he is facing the TV.)

FRED: Then we could get all chummy and hang out and watch Monday Night Football and eat Cheetos. Forget it, Pal.

JASPER: My name is Jasper Anderson. I work at Mid-Town Realtors over on Bluff Avenue.

FRED: That's really nice, Casper but I wasn't asking.

JASPER: It's Jasper and all I want is a drink of water. Then I will listen to you and play your little guessing games. We can even play *Pin-the-tail-on-the-hostage* if you want, just get me a glass of water.

FRED: Promise you won't try anything stupid? This thing's loaded and I ain't afraid to use it.

JASPER: What could I possibly do?

FRED: Alright Jason, stay right there.

JASPER: I'm not going anywhere and my name is Jasper!

FRED: That's what I said, Jackson.

(FRED exits upstage left. HE returns with a glass of water and some individually wrapped cheese slices. FRED holds Jasper's head back and gingerly pours some water down Jasper's throat. We see here that FRED has a soft spot for Jasper, but it is unclear why. FRED throws the cheese slices on the coffee table. HE begins to unwrap one. HE offers a piece to Jasper.)

JASPER: No thank you, the water is fine.

FRED: You gotta eat...

JASPER: I'd just as soon not eat that processed cheese-food if it is all the same to you.

FRED: I'm sorry, the chef took the day off today.

JASPER: I really appreciate your offer; I'm just not hungry right now.

(FRED rolls the cheese up and eats it himself.)

FRED: You know what I really really *really* hate, Janson?

JASPER: Jasper

FRED: Whatever... You know what I really really hate? I hate it when people use big words for stuff when smaller words will do just as good...

JASPER: As well?

FRED: Well what?

JASPER: You said *smaller words will do just as good* I think you meant to say *just as well*.

FRED: You're being funny again.

JASPER: Not in the least.

FRED: Don't be funny, I have no patience for funny.

JASPER: Small gun and no sense of humor... You sure are tense for a guy who thinks he's in charge of the situation.

FRED: I'm trying to tell you a story here... Can you shut up and let me talk?

JASPER: By all means...

FRED: So I met this lady at a Denny's one evening...

JASPER: The bar or the restaurant?

FRED: Does it make a difference?

JASPER: I'm trying to get a visual here.

FRED: There you go with the jokes again... I'm trying to be serious and you're making jokes.

JASPER: Can you loosen up the rope a little?

FRED: I met this lady in Denny's bar and right away she starts tossing big words at me. I don't want to look dumb so I just nod my head and agree with everything she said but I knew - deep down - she was laughing at me.

Civil Restraint

Time: Two Saturdays ago, in the morning

Place: A woman's apartment

Cast: ALICE, a 30-something woman with issues
JEFF, a 30-something man with no issues

(The scene is a plain, but tidy apartment. There are no mirrors anywhere. It is well kept but not fancy. There is a couch and an easy chair with a small end table. There is an empty bottle of wine and two empty glasses on the table. When the scene opens, JEFF is laying on the couch. He appears to be sleeping. He is covered by a blanket, which hides the fact that he has been tied up. ALICE is sitting in the easy chair reading her Bible. SHE glances up at Jeff occasionally from across the room. She is very pretty).

ALICE: Good morning, Sleepyhead. Did you sleep well?

JEFF: What the hell? Hey, Lady what the hell is going on here? Where am I for Chrissakes?

ALICE: Oh relax you silly...

JEFF: Who are you, Lady? How did you get me here? Let me the hell out of here!

ALICE: I'm so sorry, Jeff, I...

JEFF: What's happening...

ALICE: Alice...

JEFF: What's going on here, Alice?

ALICE: We were having a few drinks and you said you'd like to see my place and... well... here we are.

JEFF: This could not have been what I had in mind.

ALICE: Can I get you something?

JEFF: Can you just untie me?

ALICE: God I wish I could but I just can't do that yet.

JEFF: Yes, you can.

ALICE: No really, I can't. Not yet, anyway.

JEFF: What do you want? Money? You want money? I'll give you money!

ALICE: I don't need money, Jeff.

JEFF: What... what do you want?

ALICE: Have you already forgotten last night's conversation?

JEFF: I forgot it before it was over, lady.

ALICE: I was afraid of that. I kind of thought you were different, special but you are obviously just like all the other guys.

JEFF: Yeah, I'm just another guy. I see a pretty girl and I figure a couple of drinks...

ALICE: Don't patronize me.

JEFF: I'm not sure what you're saying, but if the situation were slightly altered we would probably both enjoy it more.

ALICE: Stop now, Jeff.

JEFF: What'd I say?

ALICE: You don't know me very well and you have obviously forgotten what you did learn about me last night.

JEFF: I have forgotten everything from last night. I don't even remember how I got here.

ALICE: You came up stairs on your own two feet.

JEFF: Which is just how I'd like to leave. Now can you untie me please?

ALICE: I will soon enough. I want you to take a look at something.

JEFF: It's not like I have a choice

(ALICE pulls a book off of a shelf and pulls a newspaper clipping out of it. SHE waves the clip toward Jeff.)

ALICE: Read this.

JEFF: You'll have to hold it. Police, today, charged Gail Barber in connection with vandalizing Lakeside Jewelers on the 6500 block of west Ogden Ave. Responding to the alarm, Officer Marty Schemer found Barber in front of the store. She had a brick in her hand and there was a second brick in the picture window of the popular jewelry store. Barber gave herself up without a struggle. "She just stood there and cried and asked me to get her off of the street," Schemer said. This is not the first time Barber has had been arrested. She was arrested three months ago for a similar crime.

ALICE: That's enough.

JEFF: Do you want me to read the article or not?

ALICE: I said *that's enough*.

JEFF: Fine, but what does this have to do with you?

ALICE: Gail Barber is my grandmother.

JEFF: So your grandmother was a vandal.

ALICE: Did you notice that there was no picture with the story?

JEFF: It isn't that big a story.

ALICE: Did you notice there wasn't a picture with the story?

JEFF: What does that mean?

ALICE: My grandmother knew she was so ugly she spent most of her adult life trying to get arrested so that she could surround herself in the ugliness of a jail cell. It broke her heart to walk anywhere during the daytime. She had to listen to the kids laughing at her and feel their pointing fingers whenever she left the house, even when she was going to church.

JEFF: I don't understand.

ALICE: Of course not. You've never dealt with the gaping glares and snide remarks.

JEFF: No, but I still don't see what this has to do with you.

ALICE: I was made in my grandmother's image.

JEFF: I'm no judge but if grandma was ugly, you ain't made in her image.

ALICE: You're teasing again.

JEFF: No, really. I wouldn't have come up here with you if you were ugly.

ALICE: You were drunk.

JEFF: I could never get that drunk.

ALICE: You were pretty drunk.

JEFF: Look, I would love to have this conversation, but I am hog-tied and hungry.

ALICE: I'll get some cheese and crackers. Would you like water, tea, or Seven-up?

JEFF: No beer?

ALICE: Water, tea, or...

JEFF: Whatever...

(ALICE goes into the kitchen. JEFF calls out to her.)

JEFF: Anyway, you have to understand this one thing about me. I am way too shallow to even be seen in public with an ugly woman. If my mother was ugly, I wouldn't take her anywhere. If I had an ugly sister, I'd visit her on her birthday but I'd never take her out. I fearlessly embrace my shallowness.

(ALICE returns with a plate with small chunks of cheese and crackers and two glasses of Seven-Up.)

ALICE: It's nice of you to say those things but I...

JEFF: Let me finish. I had every intention of sweeping you off your feet tonight and if it was good for both of us, I would have taken your number and maybe called you sometime, as likely as not though.

ALICE: Here...

JEFF: Now, though, I am having second thoughts about taking your number and it's not because I don't think you're hot, it's the whole *tying up* thing.

ALICE: I am sorry about that but I just didn't want you to get away... not after last night.

JEFF: Did we...

ALICE: No. God, no. We talked all through the night. We came up here and you pulled the bottle of wine that you stole from the bar out of your coat and we drank and talked until you passed out. That was when I tied you up and went to bed.

JEFF: What the hell did we talk about?

ALICE: Everything... we talked about your dream of playing in the major leagues... we talked about my loneliness... You shared childhood secrets with me...

JEFF: I didn't tell you about the Barbie doll episode with the twins down the street, did I?

ALICE: Not entirely, that was where you drifted off to sleep.

JEFF: And you tied me up.

ALICE: Please don't be angry. Try to understand my point of view.

JEFF: That would be...

ALICE: I am a 34-year-old virgin who doesn't get a lot of men to come back to her apartment with her. When I saw you there snoozing so peacefully, I couldn't help but want to preserve the moment forever.

JEFF: Are you listening to yourself? You wanted to preserve the moment so you went into the bathroom and got a bunch of your pantyhose off of the shower curtain thing and tied me up.

ALICE: Don't you trivialize me, Jeff. I'm sorry. I know I have issues that even I don't always understand but I will not be taken lightly. Do you understand that? Do you Jeff?

JEFF: Believe me sister, I am not taking this lightly. Not at all. Now can you just untie me and I'll go and we can forget the whole thing.

ALICE: I wish I could Jeff, but I'm not ready yet.

JEFF: What do you mean you're not ready yet?

ALICE: I mean I have so much I want to talk about and if I untie you, you'll leave and I won't have anyone to talk to.

JEFF: Don't you have any friends?

ALICE: None that I can talk to, none that would understand.

JEFF: None that you can tie up, you mean.

ALICE: You have to understand how sorry I am about tying you up but...

JEFF: I know. You're lonely. Actually I think desperate is a better word.

ALICE: I think desperate is a perfect word.

JEFF: So we agree on that.

ALICE: Tell me when you're ready for some Seven-up.

JEFF: Now would be good.

(ALICE: gently lifts Jeff's head and brings the glass to his lips.)

ALICE: That's better, huh?

JEFF: Much.

ALICE: I'm trying to make this as comfortable for you as I can, given the situation.

JEFF: I got an idea that would make me really comfortable untie me and let me get the hell out of here.

ALICE: I need you here with me now.

JEFF: You don't need me, you need a body. Have you thought about getting a dog?

ALICE: I need someone to talk to.

JEFF: Join a support group for Chrissake. They have plenty of people who need to talk and to listen and they can roam around the room freely... with no restraints.

ALICE: It's not the same.

JEFF: It's better because they are there because they want to be there not because you tied them up with your pantyhose.

ALICE: But it will be I who sought them out... again. Last night, for whatever reason, it was you who sought me out. You wanted to be with me.

JEFF: I was drinking, you looked good to me. That's the natural order of things in a bar on a Saturday night. I couldn't even begin to tell you how many strange beds I have woken up in on Sunday mornings. I couldn't even begin to count.

Ransomed

Time: Last Friday afternoon

Place: The day room at a mental health facility

Cast: ROCKY, a developmentally disabled adult male
LIZBETH, an obsessive compulsive college-aged female
MATTHEW, a spoiled college student in for detox
MR. FRANK, a questionable mental health worker

(The scene is the day room at a mental health center. There is a blackboard upstage left with numbers written in extremely small perfect handwriting on it and four chairs center stage arranged in a half-circle. LIZBETH is pacing back and forth behind the chairs stopping occasionally to look at the board and erase a number with the palm of her hand or write a new number in. There is no semblance of order to the numbers and no actual equation. They are just a series of numbers that Lizbeth shuffles back and forth from one row to the next. ROCKY is sitting in a chair with his knees pulled up to his stomach. HE is humming to himself.)

LIZBETH: But if I carry the three to the fourth position, that will...

ROCKY: Stop saying that? Rocky say please stop.

LIZBETH: I could move the four to the...

ROCKY: Stop that please. Hurting Rocky ears.

LIZBETH: Mr. Frank and Matthew will be here soon, I have to fit the three into the equation before they get here because you know Mr. Frank will take my chalk away. I can't use the chalk when we're talking.

ROCKY: Chalky - talky Rocky say chalky - talky. Mr. Frank is Rocky friend. Mr. Frank like-a Rocky.

LIZBETH: Don't get too attached, Rocky. Mr. Frank is your friend because it's his job. That doesn't necessarily mean he likes you.

ROCKY: You no say Mr. Frank no like-a Rocky. Mr. Frank is Rocky friend. Matthew is Rocky friend too.

LIZBETH: What if I put the three over the eleven in the third position...

ROCKY: Stop! Rocky say Stop!

(MR. FRANK and MATTHEW enter. MR. FRANK, the mental health worker, is a little older and more conservative in his dress and in his manner. MATTHEW is unkempt but still has a strong sense of his charisma and his looks. HE is in the center for court ordered detox.)

MR. FRANK: Good morning, Rocky. Good morning, Lizzy.

LIZBETH: My name is Lizbeth, Mr. Frankie. Can you remember that?

MATTHEW: Hey Rock. Hey, Lizbeth.

ROCKY: Hello, Matthew. Hello, Mr. Frank. Hello, Rocky friends.

MR. FRANK: I apologize Lizbeth. You are right. Your name is Lizbeth; I shouldn't get so... familiar.

LIZBETH: You can make it up to me...

MR. FRANK: How so, Lizbeth?

LIZBETH: Maybe you can – not take my chalk away today?

MR. FRANK: Well...

MATTHEW: Let her keep the chalk. She ain't hurting anyone if she holds it in her hand. We're just gonna sit around here and waste a perfectly good morning anyway.

MR. FRANK: That's not the point. We have to keep Lizbeth's program in mind.

MATTHEW: Screw the program for a day. Pretend it's Christmas or something.

MR. FRANK: Matthew, this is a side of you I have never seen. You are actually concerned for someone else. You're making some progress yourself.

MATTHEW: It's not that I'm concerned, I just don't want to watch her bite her fingernails until they bleed, all the while whining about her chalk and her numbers.

ROCKY: Rocky good boy. Rocky no bite fingernails.

LIZBETH: You play with yourself when you get nervous. I wonder which is worse.

MR. FRANK: All right, Lizbeth. Here's the deal. You want to hold onto your chalk, you have to promise me that when we talk, you will not mention numbers or mathematics.

ROCKY: *(sings surprisingly melodic)* No numbers. No numbers for you-who-who...

MATTHEW: Who's the one with issues here, Mr. Frank? How is she going to go the entire time without talking about numbers and that stuff?

MR. FRANK: That's the deal. You can put the chalk on the ledge and talk about whatever you want, or you can hold onto the chalk and not talk about numbers or math.

LIZBETH: What if I hold onto the chalk, then I find out that I can't talk about anything.

MR. FRANK: When that time comes, you can surrender the chalk and talk about whatever you want.

MATTHEW: That's sounds pretty fair Lizbeth.

LIZBETH: You think so?

ROCKY: No numbers. Mr. Frank say - No numbers for a-you-who-who...

LIZBETH: Shut up, Rocky.

ROCKY: No shut up Rocky – Rocky a good boy.

MATTHEW: You're all right, Rocky.

(LIZBETH slips the chalk into her pocket and slides into a chair. MR. FRANK motions with his head toward the chalkboard. LIZBETH gets up slowly and turns the board around. There are happy shiny home-made art projects with Rocky's name on them plastered to the other side. SHE sits back down in the chair.)

MR. FRANK: Who wants to start today?

ROCKY: Rocky want Matthew talk about girls. Rocky say Matthew like-a girls.

MATTHEW: Rocky ...my man...

(MATTHEW puts up a hand to high-five – ROCKY flinches as if Matthew is going to hit him. ROCKY slowly looks up at the hand, but clearly doesn't know what to do. MATTHEW puts his hand back down.)

MATTHEW: Never mind.

LIZBETH: I want Matthew to talk about the school and the classes...

MATTHEW: The school is one of the reasons I am here in the first place.

MR. FRANK: /LIZBETH: Let's explore that.

MATTHEW: I think I'd rather not today. I think we should talk about why Rocky is here... What do you say, Rock?

LIZBETH: Rocky has been here, or in some center somewhere, since he was six years old. He doesn't know anything else. Do you think you'll ever make it to Wrigley Field without an escort, Rocky?

ROCKY: No lights - day game. Hey Ernie, let's play two.

MATTHEW: Rocky, man, didn't anyone tell you? They got lights at Wrigley Field now.

ROCKY: (*panic*) NO LIGHTS!

MR. FRANK: Let's try to bring this back in. So Matthew, let's talk about school. What happened at school?

MATTHEW: Mr. Frank, I always talk. I'm sick of talking. Why can't Lizbeth talk first today?

LIZBETH: I have my chalk, I can talk.

ROCKY: (*sings*) Have chalk – can talk. Have chalk – can talk.

MATTHEW: Go, Rocky. Go, Rocky.

(*MATTHEW offers Rocky another high five with the same results as above. MATTHEW shoves his hand into his pocket.*)

ROCKY: No go. Rocky stay here with friends and with Lizbeth.

MR. FRANK: Lizbeth: is your friend, Rocky.

ROCKY: Lizbeth is girl. Rocky no friend of a girl.

LIZBETH: I can vouch for that.

MR. FRANK: Why don't you start today, Lizbeth?

LIZBETH: Do you want the standard *When I was an unloved child thing?* Or would you prefer the *traumatized by a bearded man in a butcher shop story?*

MR. FRANK: How about what brought you here...

LIZBETH: I'm not going to fall for that. I know as soon as I say the "n" word, I'll lose my chalk.

MR. FRANK: I think we have a trust issue, here Lizbeth.

LIZBETH: Not really. No issue, I don't trust you as far as I can throw Rocky.

ROCKY: No throw Rocky. Rocky be quiet. No like-a throw Rocky.