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Burying Mom
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First Printing, 2010
Printed in U.S.A.

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Get Stuffed

by Mark Scharf

2 Males, 1 Female

Synopsis: Marty tries to live his life while contending with a foul-mouthed teddy bear who says all the things Marty can't or won't. It isn't easy for a grown man to live with an oversized talking stuffed bear and Furball fears being sent into exile again. But who needs who more? During a visit by a woman Marty is interested in, Furball's antics cause Marty to imprison the bear in a closet – painfully reminding the bear of his years of attic exile. In response, Furball stops talking and Marty must decide if life is better with or without the voice of his friend.

The Redheaded Man

by Halley Bondy

3 Males, 2 Females

Synopsis: This darkly funny new play takes you on a multimedia journey through the mind of a man with a unique mental illness. Brian is a gifted young architect plagued by visions that inspire his designs, yet render him a walking social disaster. He calls it "insight," while others call it insanity. As Brian struggles to forge a normal future with a job and a girlfriend, visions of a flame-haired paternal figure, gruesome childhood memories, and unpleasant side effects from medication rear up against him. The fine line between madness and genius becomes increasingly blurred as he struggles to navigate the secrets of his mind.



**Visit the playwright online:
www.mattfotis.com**

Burying Mom was first produced by Shantz Theatre at the Art Dive Gallery as part of the 2007 Iowa Fringe Festival. It was subsequently produced at the Cedar Cultural Center as part of the 2007 Minnesota Fringe Festival, at Theatre on the Square as part of the Indianapolis Fringe Festival, and was first produced in Chicago at Gorilla Tango Theatre September 6-14, 2007. The production was directed by Matt Fotis with the following cast:

PAUL	Matt Fotis
JANE, et al.	Jeanette Nielsen

Burying Mom was first produced in New York City on February 24, 2009 by Emerging Artists Theatre (Paul Adams – Artistic Director) as part of Spring EATFest at TADA! Theatre. Andrew Ronan was Production Manager; sets were designed by Tim McMath; lights by Jennifer Granrud; costumes by Meredith Neal; and sound by Ned Thorne. The production was directed by Deb Guston with the following cast:

PAUL	Scott Raker
JANE	Janelle Lannan
PATTY	Kelly Dynan
CASKET SALES	Hershey Miller
COUNSELOR	Alexandra Zabriskie
WAITRESS	Deb Armelino
GRANDMA	Jane Altman
MAGGIE	Laura Beth Wells
MOM	Jacqueline Sydney

CHARACTERS

PAUL MORGAN	A mid thirties paper boy trying to come to terms with his mother's death.
JANE MORGAN	Paul's wife.
PATTY	Paul's sister.
CASKET SALESWOMAN	A woman selling caskets.
COUNSELOR	Paul's old high school guidance counselor.
WAITRESS	A southern waitress in northern Wisconsin.
GRANDMA	Paul's grandmother.
MAGGIE	Paul's ex-fiancé.
PAUL'S MOM	Paul's mother.

*All female roles should be played by an individual actress. The play can be done with several actresses as well, but one actress is preferred.

*For each female character there should be one article of clothing to signify a change. The clothing for each character should be onstage the entire time and the costume changes should occur onstage as they are part of the action.

TIME

The play jumps back and forth between the present (2007) and 2001.

BURYING MOM

(The stage should have various items of women's clothing hanging, suspended, scattered about the stage. These will be the costumes for the various women Paul will encounter throughout the play. The clothes shouldn't be overwhelming, but they should be noticeable for the audience. Likewise any props or settings that will be used throughout the play should be onstage throughout. PAUL MORGAN is standing over a recently covered grave. He slowly drops dirt onto the grave.)

PAUL: I don't really know what exactly to say. I'm a bit shocked really. One moment you're here and then suddenly everything is different. Life won't ever be the same again.

(JANE MORGAN, Paul's wife enters. She puts her arm around Paul. They share a moment.)

PAUL: It's not fair.

JANE: I know, honey. *(Pause.)* Why don't you come inside and have something to eat?

PAUL: In a minute.

JANE: It's freezing out here Paul. You're going to catch a cold.

PAUL: Why does this keep happening to me?

JANE: I don't know.

PAUL: It's not fair.

JANE: She was just a dog Paul.

PAUL: Jane!

JANE: It's true. She was a dog. What are you getting all upset for?

PAUL: I don't know. This is like the fourth one in five years. I'm starting to think I'm cursed. Everything around me dies.

JANE: You've just had a little bad luck.

PAUL: Do you think PETA is going to come after me?

JANE: Yes Paul, I think PETA is going to come after you.

PAUL: You could be a little supportive Jane. The body's still warm.

JANE: You're right. *(Pause.)* You know, we might want to put in some rose bushes out here. Aren't dogs supposed to be great fertilizer?

PAUL: Jane!

JANE: Look, I'm sorry your dog died.

PAUL: No you're not. Don't lie at Ripley's grave. At least give him that tiny sliver of respect. Don't stand *at his grave* and pretend that you liked Ripley.

JANE: You're right, I hated Ripley. She pissed on everything, she bit me everyday and she smelled bad.

PAUL: Please, could we have a moment of silence? Can you spare two seconds for Ripley?

JANE: This is ridic—

PAUL: Jane, have some respect for the dead. I didn't say anything at your grandmother's funeral.

(They share an awkward pause.)

PAUL: *(Singing.)* 'Kumbaya my Lord, Kumbaya.' *(To Jane, normal.)* Jane. *(She doesn't respond.)* I'll take it. *(Singing.)* Kumbaya my Lord, Kumbaya. *(Normal.)* Ripley. He was a glorious—

JANE: She.

PAUL: No, *he* was a glor—

JANE: Yup. Girl dog. You only had her for three months. And then you killed her. Puppy killer.

PAUL: You're a horrible person Jane. No wonder you have trouble sleeping.

JANE: Maybe it's because you mutter to yourself all night. Oh yeah, and you're a friggin' monster. You sink the whole bed.

PAUL: Well I'm glad at least one of us will be able to tell our children what the Holocaust was like.

JANE: Why don't we go inside?

PAUL: This is all my mom's fault.

JANE: Paul.

PAUL: If she hadn't read me *Sounder* when I was a kid I wouldn't be so fucking attached to dogs.

JANE: This has nothing to do with your mother. It's been six years. You need to let her go.

PAUL: I have let her go. Sorry that I mentioned my dead mother's name. I won't do it again.

JANE: Don't twist my words.

PAUL: I'll twist whatever I want to twist.

JANE: Very mature Paul. I'm not sure why I ever thought that you haven't dealt with your mommy issues.

PAUL: Because I don't have mommy issues.

JANE: Oh please. I should have never married you. I should have known after what you did to Maggie.

PAUL: I didn't do anything to Maggie.

JANE: Paul, you slept with her best friend two weeks before the wedding because you were too afraid to face Maggie and just tell her you didn't want to get married. God, you're so passive-aggressive you might as well have Midwest stamped across your forehead.

PAUL: You didn't seem to mind at the time...Ms. California.

JANE: That's not fair.

PAUL: Not fair? So you get to pretend like you had nothing to do with it?

JANE: Yes.

PAUL: Who cares? That was eight years ago, and I think it worked out for the best.

JANE: You have such issues with women.

PAUL: The only issue I have with women is which one to chose.

(Pause.)

JANE: Do you want me to pretend you didn't say that?

PAUL: If you would.

JANE: Look, Paul—

PAUL: I'm dealing with it Jane. Okay? I'm under a lot of stress right now, so could you cut me a break? Rigley just died!

JANE: Ripley. Rigley was the last one. He's over there.

PAUL: God dammit.

JANE: I'm just worried about you Paul. You just keep everything inside. I don't know what you're thinking, how you're feeling.

PAUL: I don't know. Nothing.

JANE: You're not thinking or feeling anything? You gotta start talking to me Paul.

PAUL: I'm sorry.

JANE: You gotta give me something Paul. You can't keep this wall up forever. I stood by you when you quit your job. I stood by you when you went back to school to get your law degree. I stood by you when you dropped out six months later. (Continued)

JANE (Cont'd): I even let you keep your mother's ashes in a shoe box in the attic. Do you know have any idea what it's like to have your mother-in-law's soul hovering above you while you sleep? I've never judged you Paul.

PAUL: Then why do you always introduce me as a writer at parties? Too ashamed of the thirty year old paper boy?

JANE: I do it for you Paul. I know what a great person you are, but most people would probably be pretty freaked out by a grown man who delivers papers and carries his mother around in a shoe box.

PAUL: Is this about money?

JANE: No Paul, it's not about money. It's about you being happy. I just want you to be happy. And I look at you and I can tell that you're miserable. And you won't talk to me and I just feel like you're driving this wedge between us.

PAUL: I am happy. I'm just sad about Riley right now.

JANE: RIPLEY!

PAUL: I'm sorry Jane, okay? I don't know what to tell you. And you make it seem like I'm some sort of Rain Man who carries his mom around everywhere spouting off square roots. I carried it around for one week. I haven't touched that shoe box in six years. Like you should talk, with your crackberry. You can't go anywhere without that thing. Look at me, I'm Jane and I'm so important—

JANE: I'm pregnant Paul.

PAUL: (*Continuing*) I'm such a big shot hot shot. I'm too important to ever leave work. Work, work, work. Call, fax, print. Call, fax, print. I'm Jane—

JANE: Paul. Paul, Paul, Paul. Paul.

PAUL: What?

JANE: I'm pregnant.

(*Pause.*)

PAUL: *(Pointing to the imaginary Blackberry in his hand.)* This is your crackberry. I'm Jane. Call, fax, print? *(Pause.)* This is really awkward.

JANE: Sorry?

PAUL: Well, I just spent the last ninety seconds mocking you. And we're surrounded by dead dogs. Can we start over?

JANE: Sorry Paul, I thought you'd be happy. We've been trying for such a long time.

PAUL: No, I am happy. It's just a bit weird. Look, can we start this over? Oh my God, you're pregnant! That's fab—

JANE: I'm going inside before I freeze to death. Make sure you kill the next dog in summer. Puppy killer.

PAUL: Unnecessary Jane, unnecessary.

(The lights shift, the actress changes from JANE into PATTY onstage. This can be done while the next scene is beginning or as a very quick transitional piece, but the change should take place within the flow of the piece, not as a separate blackout. It should be clear to the audience that we have moved to a different scene, but it is important that the flow of the piece doesn't stop. PAUL should have a simple costume change to signify between the past and present. A pair of glasses for the present and no glasses for the past works well.)

(PAUL is visiting his sister PATTY. It is the summer of 2001. Paul has brought JANE, his then girlfriend soon to be wife, to meet his sister.)

PAUL: God, this is brutal.

PATTY: Settle down Paul. Things are going fine.

PAUL: Um, you clearly hate each other.

PATTY: I don't hate Jean.

PAUL: Jane, Patty. It's Jane. You know it's Jane. Why do you have to do that, huh? God. And don't think that I don't know you're working for Mom. You've always been her little spy. How do you live with yourself? Huh? Turning on your own flesh and blood? That's low Patty.

PATTY: I don't report to Mom.

PAUL: Patty please, I'm surprised you don't have Mom's note cards.

PATTY: We've talked about you enough that I don't need note cards.

PAUL: Christ, are you trying to give me high blood pressure?

PATTY: Dad had high blood pressure, it's not my fault. Blame the genes.

PAUL: I wonder why, Patty, I wonder why. What a stumper. Oh maybe because Mom was insane. Yeah, that could be it. Maybe it stems from the time she hosed me down naked in front of the entire neighborhood when I was twelve because I had, gasp, a grass stain on my pants. Or the fact that she called all of my girlfriends in college to bitch them out for breaking up with me – "Biggest mistake of your life." Or maybe—

PATTY: It was the time she bailed you out of prison in college.

PAUL: Picked me up. She picked me up okay, she didn't bail me out.

PATTY: (*Continuing*) Or maybe it was the time she drove halfway across the country to buy you a stupid Transformer for your birthday. Or the time she quit her job, her once in a lifetime opportunity so she could take you to all of your stupid baseball games, and now she's a part-time receptionist. Good thing you quit in college.

PAUL: I tore my rotator cuff—

PATTY: Same thing.

PAUL: It's not the—

Whose side are you on? God, good to know that it only took you twenty-seven years to turn into mom. I had thirty-two in the pool. I lost to Uncle Frank.

PATTY: You're just jealous that mom and dad loved me best.

PAUL: Only because you bore their grandson. You're just riding little Joaquin's (*pronounced Joke-im*) coattails.

PATTY: Joaquin.

PAUL: Joke-im.

PATTY: Joaquin.

PAUL: Joke-im.

Look me in the eye, and say that mom wasn't a tad crazy when we were growing up.

PATTY: Only because you made her that way.

PAUL: I'm just saying. Joke-im.

PATTY: Please, so what, you blame mom for dad's death now?

PAUL: Don't be ridiculous. I don't blame mom for dad's death. But I mean, let's be honest here, mom...killed him.

PATTY: You know, that's your problem. You blame everybody else for all of your problems.

PAUL: I'm not blaming you for anything.

PATTY: Oh God Paul, please.

PAUL: Look, could you just be nice to Jane for the rest of the day? When she gets back from the store with your fucking bag of sugar – which you have nine zillion of under the sink, real classy Sis – I want you two to try and get along. As sick and disgusting as it is, she actually reminds me of you. She even falls down all the time like you and Mom. We'll be standing there looking at the sunset or something and then BAM! she's on the ground. How does that happen? Do you guys have no equilibrium? Look, Patty, she's really great and I don't want you to scare her off.

PATTY: There you go again. You're blaming me for your future breakup with Jeannie.

PAUL: Jeannie?

PATTY: Yes?

PAUL: You're a real ace.

PATTY: Thank you.

(Pause.)

PATTY: I was simply seeing if Jan was willing to cut corners, or if she would go the extra mile. Now I know that she won't spare any expense to make you happy. I think my trust is well worth her little trip to the store.

PAUL: You should be hanging in a museum.

PATTY: So you're really serious about this one?

PAUL: Yup.

PATTY: This isn't another Maggie scare is it? Talk about killing dad—

PAUL: Fu—

PATTY: Because I am not spending another six months with mom putting together *another* wedding so you can break it off *again* because you're so immature—

PAUL: Don't act like anyone forced you two to do anything. You guys couldn't get enough of it. It's all you talked about for the past thirty years.

PATTY: You're welcome Paul. Sorry that we put together your wedding for you. I didn't realize what a burden that was for you. I guess I should be thanking you for wasting six months of my life.

PAUL: Could you let it go? You'd rather we got married and then divorced so you didn't lose your precious deposits—

PATTY: I don't care about the deposits—

PAUL: You talk about them all the time. Mom mentioned them in her Christmas prayer last year.

PATTY: It was a joke. Everyone else thought it was funny.

PAUL: I didn't.

PATTY: We just want you to be happy Paul. You know that right?

PAUL: Yes Mom.

PATTY: I know you think that Mom's out to get you, but she just doesn't want to see you get hurt again. It broke her heart Paul. You've always been able to do that. No matter how much more she loves me, she's got a soft spot for you. Asshole.

PAUL: I don't hate Mom.

PATTY: So Jane's a Jew? Is that going to be a problem?

PAUL: Oh Christ. Patty, you're married to a Jew. Right, Tom's Jewish right? Because I always make it a point to bring up Israel when he's around and that would seem really strange from his perspective—

PATTY: How do you function?

PAUL: I'm sorry I don't know what to talk about with your maybe Jewish forty-five year old investment banker husband.

PATTY: Tom was Jewish. He converted. I'm only saying that it can be a problem down the line with weddings and children.

PAUL: I don't care.

PATTY: You don't care?

PAUL: No Patty, I don't.

(During Patty's next speech Paul just keeps repeating "Patty.")

PATTY: Fine. Deal with it when she's nine months pregnant. I'm sure that's the best way to go. You think if you don't deal with it somehow it'll just disappear?

PAUL: ...Patty, Patty, Patty. Shut up.

PATTY: I made pork chops—I mean white steak. I hope that's not a problem.

PAUL: You're something else. A real chip off the old block.

PATTY: Paul, come here. I think Jane's very lovely. Even for somebody from San Diego. And if she makes you happy that's all that matters to me. If she doesn't believe in the New Testament, fine, I just want to make sure that you're ready.

(The doorbell rings.)

PATTY: *(As she goes off-stage to answer the door.)* Jane, dear, you won't believe this but I actually had a bag of sugar here. You're a real kvetch though sweetie, thank you.

(The lights shift and the actress changes from PATTY to SALESWOMAN. PAUL likewise shifts to the present.)

(PAUL is at a funeral home picking out caskets. An employee is helping him select a casket. She speaks in soft whispers, almost in short bursts. She touches Paul at every opportunity.)

SALESWOMAN: This one is a very lovely casket. Very popular model.

PAUL: Yeah.

SALESWOMAN: It's faux oak, and all the hardware has a nickel brushed finish. If you don't like the fabric pattern we have several styles to choose from. I happen to like this particular one. Very soothing. From the picture you showed me it should contrast nicely with your mother's hair. This is a very popular model. One of our top sellers, especially among your mother's demographic.

PAUL: Well that's important.

SALESWOMAN: Oh, it's very important Mr. Morgan.

PAUL: I'm not sure if she'd like this one. We never really had the whole I want this type of casket conversation.

SALESWOMAN: It can be awkward. A bit morbid.

PAUL: A bit.

SALESWOMAN: Well we have a very wide selection. I'm sure that we'll find something ideally suited to your mother's tastes.

PAUL: We cremated her.

SALESWOMAN: I'm sorry?

PAUL: We cremated her. But I think maybe that was a mistake.

SALESWOMAN: So you want to bury the urn?

PAUL: Yeah. But in a casket. Sort of like the best of both worlds. Give her a place, you know.

SALESWOMAN: Okay.

PAUL: See, um, here's the thing. I haven't really gotten my life back on track, so I'm worried that I kind of fucked everything up.

SALESWOMAN: I realize you're grieving Mr. Morgan, but please watch your language.

PAUL: Sorry. It's just that since my mother died things have been different—

SALESWOMAN: Losing a parent is often very difficult.

PAUL: *Often* very difficult?

SALESWOMAN: There are always situations Mr. Morgan.

PAUL: Anyway, it's like, okay, she died six years ago—

SALESWOMAN: Your mother passed six years ago?

PAUL: On 9/11.

SALESWOMAN: Oh. I'm very sorry Mr. Morgan. Was she on one of the planes?

PAUL: Yeah...no, she fell down the stairs. Talk about a tough break. I mean, oh hey, three thousand people just died...and my mother fell down the basement stairs.

SALESWOMAN: It's a tragedy nonetheless Mr. Morgan.

PAUL: That's the thing. It isn't. I mean yeah it's totally sad and heartbreaking, but it's not...you know. I feel like this total jerk, because I'm like trying to mourn my mom, but I feel bad about it.

SALESWOMAN: We all deal with grief in various ways Mr. Morgan.

PAUL: Right after it happened I started going to grief counseling. I don't know why I didn't put two and two together. At the first meeting we all went around the room to tell our stories. The first woman to speak was this twenty-five year old widow. *Twenty-five*. Her husband had been called out to Boston on some last minute business – did I mention that they were on their honeymoon? – and he was flying back home, on United Flight 93. The next guy tells this story about his wife who worked in the north tower on one of the top floors – she's trapped in the building. She calls him to say goodbye but he doesn't pick up, he's too afraid to answer the phone; he just sits there with the phone in his hand staring at her number, just fixated on the number, totally frozen in time. He never picks up. And now all he has is a voice mail. It haunts him. Devastates him. He'll never escape it. This goes on for two hours, story after story. The whole room is in tears. I'm getting into it - everyone is hugging everyone, you can feel the communal grief; but you can also feel this underlying surge of hope and power and community. It's this totally beautiful moment.

And then it's my turn. I have to tell these people that my mother fell down the stairs. Oh, your husband was on Flight 11, your brother was in the Twin Towers, well my mom fell down the basement stairs getting some extra canned peas. I was this close to making up some tragic 9/11 story, like, oh I mean my mom fell down the stairs at the Pentagon saving babies, but I don't even know if the Pentagon has stairs let alone babies. I'm sitting in this room filled with people whose lives have been irrevocably altered and I'm trying to figure out a way to make my story more tragic?

SALESWOMAN: This model over here might better suit your needs—

PAUL: Is that wrong? Am I like the biggest jerk in the world?

SALESWOMAN: Mr. Morgan, perhaps you should come back at another time, when you're better prepared to make a purchase.

PAUL: I'm also seeing my mother everywhere. Like you look exactly like her. Is that some sort of sign?

SALESWOMAN: I'm not qualified to speak to your visions Mr. Morgan. Let me give you the number for a grief counselor.

PAUL: No, that's okay. I've been seeing my old high school guidance counselor. It was actually her idea to do the casket thing. You know, totally put her to rest.

SALESWOMAN: Mr. Morgan—

PAUL: This is awkward, I'm sorry.
Look, I haven't had a steady job in five years, and not that I don't love my mom like twelve thousand dollars worth, but it's just an urn, so would it be wrong, do you have, you know, smaller ones, umm, you know, for, babies?
(She gasps.)

I'm sorry. Look forget I said that. Oh God, I'm a horrible person. I come in here and complain about other peoples' 9/11 tragedies and then I ask for a baby casket. You know what, I'll take that first one. Yeah, that one is great. She loved faux oak. Everything in our house was nickel brushed. She'd love it. Please just take my card.

SALESWOMAN: I'm sorry Mr. Morgan, but perhaps you should take your business elsewhere.

PAUL: Look I'm broke, my wife is pregnant, and I still haven't buried my dead mother, so please, just give me the fucking casket. Is that how it works? Do you give it to me? I don't know, this is my first time doing this sort of thing.
(Referring to the urn.) Do you take this? Or do I hold onto it until the day?

SALESWOMAN: Mr. Morgan, please.

(Lights shift. The actress changes from SALESWOMAN to COUNSELOR. PAUL changes to past Paul.)

(PAUL is seeing the high school guidance counselor for the first time (he's an adult). COUNSELOR occasionally motions/refers/speaks to students waiting outside her office offstage. Lines given directly to students are noted.)

COUNSELOR: Are you just going to sit there Paul?

PAUL: No.

COUNSELOR: I've got four students waiting outside. Spring schedules are due at the end of the day, so I don't have a lot of time here.

PAUL: Sorry, Mrs. Cobey.

COUNSELOR: So?

PAUL: I appreciate you seeing me Mrs. Cobey. I know you don't usually see former students.

COUNSELOR: Not in this capacity, no.

PAUL: Right. Okay. I want to take Shop.

COUNSELOR: Paul.

PAUL: That class is filled? Again!

COUNSELOR: Look, Paul, you don't have to tell me anything okay? I don't really care. This is an extra twenty bucks a week for me, okay? That's it. You want to tell me about your mother, great. You want to talk about baseball, fine. You want to tell me you've got bodies buried in your back yard, go ahead – frankly it wouldn't surprise me. You've got ten minutes, and I'm not going to give you my full attention either way.

PAUL: So in high school, when I came to see you about my dad you weren't paying attention?

COUNSELOR: Does it matter? Did you feel better after talking to me?

PAUL: Yeah, because I thought you were listening. I felt like you understood me.

COUNSELOR: Paul I'm a thirty-seven year old single woman. I don't understand men at any age. That's why I'm a thirty seven year old high school guidance counselor who lives in a studio apartment because she gave her life savings to Frankie-fucking-Perez because he needed the money to open a bicycle shop. Who opens a bicycle shop? God I'm an idiot. Like I should be giving advice to anyone.

PAUL: You're thirty-seven? So that means you were like twenty-something when I was in high school? Is that legal?

COUNSELOR: Paul, you're wasting valuable time.

PAUL: No this is important. I thought I was talking to an adult. You're barely older than I was.

COUNSELOR: Look, Paul, either tell me about your mom or shut up. I was in my twenties then I'm in my thirties now. We may be close in age but you're so emotionally stunted that we're light years apart. You're still terribly immature, incapable of having a healthy relationship with a woman and completely maladjusted, which undoubtedly stems from your inability to deal with your parents' deaths. You want to talk about it, great. Otherwise do me a favor and sort those files by last name, I'm way behind. *(She hands him a stack of files, which he begins to absentmindedly sort.)*

PAUL: So you aren't really Mrs. Cobey? You're Miss Cobey.

COUNSELOR: The last thing I need is high school boys hitting on me.

PAUL: *(Referring to her Fall themed vest or other item of "teacher" clothing.)* I think that vest will do the trick.

COUNSELOR: Shut up Paul.

(There is a long pause.)

PAUL: I just feel alone. I mean, I've got Jane, but it's different now. I don't know. It's like you expect to lose your father, but you don't ever really expect your mom to die. Wow, that's morbid, sorry dad. But does that make sense?

COUNSELOR: What's that now?

PAUL: I mean, I look out the window the other day and see my neighbor taking out the trash, and I want to go and shake him for doing something so trivial and meaningless.

COUNSELOR: My trash comes on Thursday. Is that weird? I feel like everybody else's comes on Monday or Tuesday.

PAUL: *(Continuing over Counselor)* I just quit my job. I felt like I was wasting my life, but now I just sit around the house all day doing cross-words. I tried Sudoku but it's so fucking hard. I'm thinking of getting a paper route just for something to do.

COUNSELOR: If I didn't get summers off...

PAUL: I don't really know what to do with myself.

COUNSELOR: That's pretty selfish Paul. Your mom dies and you're bored.

PAUL: Were you always this disinterested?

COUNSELOR: Yeah, but I was in my twenties and you were eighteen so you didn't care.

PAUL: Good point.

(Pause.)

COUNSELOR: MOM!

PAUL: Jesus.

COUNSELOR: What are you feeling right now?

PAUL: I don't know.

COUNSELOR: *(She claps her hands after every 'right now.')* What popped into your head right now? Right now. Right now. Right now.

PAUL: Why are you clapping your hands. Why are you clapping your hands.

COUNSELOR: Fine. Fuck it. I don't care. It's your Hamilton.

PAUL: Jackson. Jackson's on the twenty.

COUNSELOR: Are you sure? It's not Hamilton?

PAUL: Yeah.

COUNSELOR: Fuck it. You learn something new everyday. So...Mom...

PAUL: A t-shirt with a crying bald eagle soaring in front of an American flag.

COUNSELOR: Are you kidding? Paul, look, I don't really care, but if you're going to come here every week you should at least try. Or pretend to try.

PAUL: I'm serious. She died on 9/11.

COUNSELOR: You're mom worked at the Pentagon?

PAUL: No, we live in Chicago. She fell down the stairs. On 9/11. So now whenever I see one of those American flag lapel buttons I think of my mom.

COUNSELOR: God, I hate people that try to martyr themselves 'cause of 9/11. (*As her students.*) "I visited the World Trade Center in August." "My dad was on Flight 11 last year." "I've been to western Pennsylvania." (*To her students off-stage.*) Well guess what, you weren't at the World Trade Center on September 11th, so stop trying to be a fucking hero. Stop stomping on the sacrifice all those people made to make yourself feel important. (*To Paul.*) God, people want to victimize themselves so badly. Fuck Paul. Sometimes I really hate people.

PAUL: I noticed. I'm not doing that. That's my whole problem.

COUNSELOR: You're still using it for sympathy that you don't deserve.

PAUL: No I'm not.

COUNSELOR: Yes you are. You said my mom died on 9/11, not my mom died. Your mom died. Deal with that.

PAUL: I am. But I can't. It's like *Schindler's List*.

COUNSELOR: Paul, you've already desecrated September 11th, do you really want to take on the Holocaust?

PAUL: No, look it's great that that movie is out there and we all have the little girl in the red coat. But that movie, and all these books, museums and all these things – okay – they take that experience away from Jews. It isn't theirs anymore; it's ours. I know I sound like Himmler right now. Look my brother-in-law can explain it better. 9/11 did that with my mom. It took this very personal and unique thing and blew it up— enlarged it into this giant thing that I just can't connect with.

COUNSELOR: That's just stupid Paul. You should really stop trying to be more intelligent than you are.
Tell me about her; your relationship.

PAUL: I don't know. I mean, I'm not one of those guys that talked to his mom everyday or anything...

COUNSELOR: Wait, you're not gay?

PAUL: What? No.

COUNSELOR: Really?

PAUL: Really.

COUNSELOR: Are you sure? Because, I mean, you're gay. Not that there is anything wrong with being gay. (*To students.*) There is nothing wrong with being gay. Nothing. (*To Paul, referring to one of her students.*) Bobby Patterson. Turns out my dad is gay – that's a whole 'nother set of issues. You just seem gay that's all. Really? Are you sure? Never been to a gay bar? Ever? Fascinating.

PAUL: Sorry to let you down.

COUNSELOR: Let me just update your file here.