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Blinders

by Patrick Gabridge

3 Males, 1 Female, 4 Chorus Members

Synopsis: Scientists announce that they have found two people who are exactly alike. Not twins, but two identical human beings. Pulitzer Prize winning reporter, Karen Sayer can clearly see that the "duplicates," Chris and Alex, look absolutely nothing alike. No one else seems to notice, or care, and the media unleashes a feeding frenzy over the new scientific discovery. With modern science and the media behind them Chris and Alex are catapulted to instant celebrity. With the help of Karen's salesman fiancé Stack, the incredible identicals campaign for the Presidency under the slogan "Two Heads Are Better Than One." Knowing she must do something to awaken the world, Karen is suddenly thrust to the forefront of an assassination attempt. Will she have the courage to follow through? Will she succeed before it's too late? Only the outrageous conclusion holds the answers.

Junk Bonds

by Lucy Wang

5 Males, 1 Female

Synopsis: In a fast-paced game of liar's poker a young Asian American woman fights her way into the clubby, high rolling world of Wall Street. Immense wealth, glamorous careers and intoxicating power are at stake in pursuit of a fat slice of American pie.

GOOD MOURNING, AMERICA

**A Play By
Lucy Wang**

PLAYERS

Minimum Cast = 8
With Actors Playing Multiple Roles

KATIE
FLIGHT ATTENDANT
DANA
ALEX
SUSAN
MOURNERS
PATIENTS
GEORGE “DUBYA” BUSH - voiceover
PROFESSOR PHILIP MADDEN
MARK
ROY (female who changed her name from Helen, not a transvestite/
transsexual)
ASPCA REP
TORI
CHRIS
OKLAHOMA BOMBING SURVIVOR (female)
FIREMAN’S PREGNANT WIDOW
21 YEAR OLD
ASIAN AMERICAN
POLICE OFFICER
HERVÉ - French, “H” is silent
VENDORS
HENRY as ANNA
DOCTORS
JOY
KATIE’S MOM (BARBARA)
MARY
THERON
YOUNG SOLDIER

/ denotes overlapping dialogue

ONE DOUBLING PROPOSAL

ALEX
KATIE
DANA

- GEORGE “DUBYA” BUSH/PROFESSOR MADDEN/POLICE OFFICER/HERVÉ
- SUSAN/VENDOR/MOURNER/FIREMAN’S PREGNANT WIDOW/PATIENT/ROY
- CHRIS/YOUNG SOLDIER/MOURNER/VENDOR/ASPCA REP/PATIENT/HENRY AS ANNA
- TORI/ OKLAHOMA BOMBING SURVIVOR/KATIE’S MOM/ MARY/PATIENT/JOY
- FLIGHT ATTENDANT/ASIAN AMERICAN/THERON/ DOCTOR/MARK/21 YEAR OLD

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I would like to thank the following people for helping make GOOD MOURNING, AMERICA possible.

Eric Bogosian for urging me to transform my pain, losses and true stories into this play.

The Atlantic Center of the Arts for allowing us to form Bogo Rep and, thus, for being one of the best artistic residencies ever.

The illustrious members of Bogo Rep for taking the journey: Beau Allulli, Rob Anderson, Gideon Banner, Nikole Beckwith, Elliotte Crowell, Jennifer Gibbs, Josh Lefkowitz, Greg McCain, and Sarah Utterback.

Rob Urbinati and Jeff Rosenstock for being the first to present a staged reading of GOOD MOURNING, AMERICA before live New York audiences.

To the victims and survivors of 9/11 for sharing their heartaches and truths.

Finally, this play is for Tom Halpern whose love and luminosity open new worlds, and help me glow in the dark.

Good Mourning, America

ACT ONE

THE CALL TO CONSCIOUSNESS

SCENE 1

SETTING: Los Angeles International Airport, AKA LAX.

AT RISE: KATIE arrives at the gate with her carry-on and laptop. She hands her ticket to the FLIGHT ATTENDANT.

KATIE: Hi, my name is Katie Fields.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT: Welcome!

KATIE: (*Directly to AUDIENCE.*) The journey we're about to take really happened. To me. True stories. Sure, identities have been doctored and compressed to protect the beautiful and the damned. Dramatic license issued, suspended, renewed, revoked. Civil and uncivil liberties taken, stolen, ravaged. But no way could I ever have imagined this all on my own. Never in a million years. And yet, it really happened. To me.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, this is your final boarding call for American Airlines Flight Number 212, with nonstop service from Los Angeles to New York. Please have your boarding passes out.

KATIE: (*Directly to AUDIENCE.*) Ready for take-off? Seat upright, baggage stowed safely beneath the person in front of you? Brace yourself, truth has a tendency to shift unexpectedly during flight.

KATIE hands FLIGHT ATTENDANT her boarding pass and boards the plane.

SCENE 2

SETTING: New York, September 10, 2001, evening, ALEX and DANA's penthouse apartment. Tribeca.

AT RISE: ALEX watches TV with a TiVo remote while DANA, nervous, tidies up.

ALEX: I wish you'd stop fussing. The place sparkles.

DANA: I hope when Katie arrives, you'll turn off the TV.

ALEX: Why can't I watch TV? What if I turn down the volume real low?

DANA: Can't we show a little class? Just for tonight. One night.

ALEX: I thought Katie was your friend.

DANA: The best. We used to be best friends.

ALEX: Don't friends let friends watch TV?

DANA: At least turn the channel to PBS. Alex, please, I want us to make a good impression. Katie's so smart, so intellectual, I can't have her thinking we're blobs, couch potatoes.

ALEX: Katie's from L.A. Everyone in L.A. watches TV.

DANA: Please, Alex. For me?

ALEX: People who say they only watch PBS are full of shit. Liars.

Alex turns the channel to PBS.

ALEX: But I'll do it for you.

DANA: Just think how awesome it would be if Katie ends up winning a Pulitzer for a novel she wrote in our penthouse.

ALEX: That would be very cool.

DANA: Who knows? Maybe she'd even thank us in her acknowledgements. "To Dana and Alex, who made it all possible."

ALEX: I always wanted to be famous, or know someone famous.

DANA: Please help me make Katie feel at home. Welcome.

ALEX: Don't worry. I can't help noticing you grow more beautiful each passing day.

DANA: Alex.

ALEX: It's true.

DANA: You're right, watch whatever you want, true friends accept you for who you are. It's what's inside that counts.

Doorbell RINGS.

DANA: Sweetheart, will you get the door so I can check my face one more time? Pretty please.

ALEX: Of course.

ALEX starts for the door, but a sudden attack of sharp back pain stops him cold in his tracks.

ALEX: OUCH! Jesus H. Christ –

DANA: Your back?

ALEX: What else? Sorry. It comes and goes as it damn well pleases.

DANA: Oh, Alex, isn't there something more you can do? Take?

ALEX: Help me back to the couch? The good news, you look fantastic.

Doorbell RINGS.

DANA: Coming. *(To ALEX.)* You rest.

ALEX: I'm going nowhere.

DANA opens the front door.

DANA: Katie.

KATIE: Dana.

KATIE and DANA hug.

DANA: I can't believe you're really here.

KATIE: I know. Thanks for inviting me.

DANA: How was your flight?

KATIE: A little turbulent, but luckily, I got here in one piece. I probably have airplane hair.

DANA: You look great.

KATIE: So do you.

DANA: You look the same as you did senior year.

KATIE: God, I hope not, but I appreciate the sentiment.

DANA: I have your senior photo framed in the office.

KATIE: No way.

DANA: Way. I'll show you.

KATIE: How embarrassing. Dana. Why would you do that to me?

DANA: I've always loved that photograph.

ALEX: Hi. I'm Alex, Dana's husband.

DANA: Oh dear. Please forgive my manners.

KATIE: Nice to finally meet you.

ALEX: Likewise. I've heard so much about you. Is it all true? It's not all true, is it Katie?

KATIE: Why not? Works for Gore Vidal.

ALEX: No one could be that good. Could they?

DANA: If anyone can, Katie can. Back in high school, Katie was voted most likely to survive pestilence and famine.

KATIE: You remember that crap?

DANA: How could I forget?

ALEX: Well, I'll be. It is a pleasure and an honor.

LOUD THREATENING DOG BARKS.

KATIE: Oh my god, who or what is that?

DANA: Why, that's Gigi. We put her in our bedroom for now. Gigi loves to bounce all over newcomers.

KATIE: She doesn't sound quite as friendly as you described.

ALEX: Her bark is worse than her bite. Much worse.

DANA: Once she gets to know you, really know you –

ALEX: You'll be inseparable.

DANA: Want to meet her?

KATIE: Sure. Later.

ALEX: You must be thirsty. What can I get you? I'm afraid it has to be non-alcoholic.

DANA: Alex is in AA.

ALEX: Sorry to be such a drag.

KATIE: Ice tea, orange juice, whatever. All fine.

ALEX: Thanks. I'm on my merry way.

ALEX moves achingly. Lets out a few GROANS.

DANA: Oh sweetheart, I'll get the drinks. You sit and keep Katie company.

ALEX: Sorry, sweetheart.

KATIE: I can help.

ALEX: Please, you're our guest. You just arrived.

DANA: Alex suffers from chronic back pain. Tremendous back pain

KATIE: My back's started to hurt too. Occupational hazard for writers.

ALEX: I've been going to doctors three times a week for a year. Nothing.

KATIE: Yikes.

ALEX: Worse. I can't lift. I can barely move my right arm above my shoulder, or behind my back. I tire easily. There are days I can't even get up. I'm starting to lose faith in Western medicine.

KATIE: How awful. I'm sorry.

ALEX: My sponsor in A.A. is encouraging me to give acupuncture a try. But I don't know if I'm ready for needles.

KATIE: How are you going to get around in Italy?

ALEX: Italy's the most romantic place on earth. Capital R.

KATIE: Still, three weeks. Sure your back can handle that?

ALEX: A change of scenery can do wonders. But just to be safe, we're staying at luxury hotels just so we can avail ourselves of all the amenities.

KATIE: Of course.

ALEX: Plus I booked us on a bus tour. Found a bus with plush high back chairs. Cushiony. It's our back up plan.

KATIE: Clever.

ALEX: You have to be prepared.

DANA returns with some cold drinks.

DANA: Lemonade?

KATIE: Perfect.

ALEX: Thanks, sweetie. You're the best.

DANA: Alex and I want to thank you so much for house-sitting. We really appreciate you flying in all the way from Los Angeles.

KATIE: No sweat. What are friends for? Besides, how often does a struggling artist get offered the use of a two-story penthouse?

ALEX: A two-story penthouse with two terraces and two magnificent views.

KATIE: I feel like I won the lottery.

DANA: So you like?

KATIE: What's not to like?

DANA: So you think you can get a lot of writing done?

KATIE: I'll certainly try.

ALEX: What do you write? Tawdry romance novels?

KATIE: Hardly.

ALEX: No? Why not? They're my favorite.

DANA: Alex. Hacks write romance novels.

ALEX: They do? Sure fooled me. Then again, I've always been a sucker for a good romance. That's how Dana and I ended up together.

KATIE: Sounds sweet.

DANA: It was. Very.

ALEX: Whirlwind romance.

DANA: For the next three weeks, our home is your home. Invite as many or as few friends as you like. We trust you completely.

ALEX: Your husband Josh is welcome to visit too. We'd love to meet him. Some day.

KATIE: Thanks. I'm sure he'd love to come, but his job.

DANA: Manhattan is your oyster.

KATIE: I look forward to slurping away.

DANA: Lourdes normally comes in Tuesdays to clean. She'll do your laundry too, if you like.

KATIE: Wow, I'm impressed, I don't even have to clean up after myself. A sign you've really moved up in the world.

ALEX: Hey, from what Dana says, you deserve the best. She says you gave her sound financial advice.

DANA: How I miss those days.

KATIE: The market could have just as easily gone the other way.

DANA: But it didn't.

KATIE: If the market had turned the other way, who knows if I'd be sitting in your penthouse today.

ALEX: If the market had turned the other way, who knows if you two would still be friends.

DANA: Of course we'd still be friends. You don't throw away a 17 year-old friendship away over money.

ALEX: I'm just postulating.

DANA: (*Shooing ALEX off the subject.*) Postulate away. (*To KATIE.*) Do you think you'll be getting together with some of your Wall Street buds?

KATIE: I very well might.

DANA: Would you hit them up for some hot investment tips?

KATIE: You bet. I'm the one that needs help in that department. Major help.

DANA: Ever since you quit your job on Wall Street to write, I've been worried sick.

KATIE: Hey, you're not the only one.

DANA: Do you have anything to retire on? Josh have a good 401K? Life insurance?

KATIE: Oh, Dana.

DANA: Katie, this is important.

ALEX: You can't count on Social Security.

KATIE: I know. It's just that I'm tired, jetlagged –

DANA: Oh please. You have an MBA in Finance from the University of Chicago. Of all people, I know you can calculate the present and future value of money on the back of a cocktail napkin with your eyes closed.

KATIE: I appreciate your concern, truly, but I can't discuss this right now.

ALEX: Look, you two. There's a fascinating PBS documentary coming up next on capuchin monkeys. The female capuchins seem to have this notion of fairness and throw pebbles when there's a perceived injustice. Any interest? (*Short beat, no interest expressed.*) I didn't think so.

ALEX changes the channel on TV.

DANA: Katie, you can't depend on the arts. It's not wise.

KATIE: I know. Unfortunately I know.

DANA: That's why Alex and I buy so much. Someone has to support the arts. Why not us?

ALEX: Dana and I, we know art is a hard row. That's where we come in. Big buyers.

DANA: We love art. All kinds of art.

KATIE: I love the African masks on the wall.

ALEX: That window frame hails from Morocco. The pottery from Portugal. The rug, Tibetan.

KATIE: Who is that cute girl in the beaded frame?

DANA: We met that girl in Sri Lanka, on the beach. That girl offered us some pretty shells. We gave her twenty dollars. She gave us that million dollar smile.

KATIE: And that boy holding a snake?

DANA: We simply admired his fearlessness. To be eight and fearless. Can you imagine?

ALEX: Look at the art on this boy's tongue. We love to take photos of children on vacation. Gives us joy. They're our imaginary children.

KATIE: You have so much stuff. I barely own anything.

ALEX: Maybe Dana has a point, you shouldn't have left Wall Street.

DANA: We used to have more.

KATIE: More? Where would it fit?

DANA: Quite a few of our favorite valuables are missing thanks to Alex's crazy cousin Henry. Normal people steal electronics. Jewelry. Credit cards. Henry has a taste for the exotic, the less easily replaceable, the uninsured.

ALEX: Dana's philosophy is "Nature Abhors a Vacuum." If there's a space, fill it. Dana likes her nooks and crannies filled.

DANA: Would you trust someone who steals your Buddhas? That's like stealing your soul. Would you steal my soul?

ALEX: We're not Buddhists.

DANA: How do you know? We could be walking reincarnations.

ALEX: Cut Henry some slack, he grew up with nothing. Nothing.

DANA: So did I, but I don't steal.

ALEX: I guess you're better than him.

DANA: I am.

ALEX: I never liked those gold Buddhas anyway. I thought they were tacky as hell. Imagine, your 3 million dollar home resembling a greasy Thai restaurant. Tacky.

KATIE: Speaking of food, I'm starving. How does grabbing some dinner sound? My treat. Sorry, was that way rude?

DANA: Of course not. What are you in the mood for? Italian, Thai, Chinese --

KATIE: I wonder if this cozy little French bistro is still open for business. Where's your phone book?

DANA points.

ALEX: Wherever you guys go, you mind bringing me and Gigi back some food?

KATIE: Aren't you going to come with us?

ALEX: I don't want to rain on your parade. You two haven't seen each other in so long. Besides, this way you can drink. Just don't tell me. And use breath mints.

DANA: Please, Alex. Join us.

ALEX: What if my back starts acting up again? I'll just be in an embarrassing way.

DANA: Then take another painkiller. You promised.

ALEX: I know I did, dearest, but I'm staying in for us, saving myself up for Italy. I counted 23 confrontations today, roundtrip. Can you imagine 23 confrontations just to pick up your mail, some flowers, and a carton of juice? 23! Can you imagine? Between the energy and the confrontation, I ask you, where is life? I'm wiped.

KATIE: We can go somewhere very, very close. Or, take a taxi. So many delicious choices to tempt even the most discriminating palate.

DANA: I was so hoping my two dearest friends in the whole wide world would get a chance to know each other better.

ALEX: Sweetheart, I don't know about Katie, but I would love nothing more.

KATIE: Why don't we order in?

ALEX: Why don't we? We've only got a thousand menus.

DANA: You sure you don't mind?

KATIE: Plenty of time to eat out.

ALEX: We got all we need right here, including our darling irreplaceable Gigi.

GIGI RESUMES VOCIFEROUS, OMINOUS BARKING.

SCENE 3

SETTING: Morning of 9/11. Terrace off DANA and ALEX's Master Bedroom.

AT RISE: The plane has just hit the first (North) Tower. DANA watches through binoculars. ALEX watches through a video camera. The LARGE TV in the master bedroom is on. CHAOS ensues.

DANA: Katie, get up! Get the fuck up! Katie!

KATIE stumbles up the stairs.

KATIE: Coming.

ALEX: Katie! Quick, or you'll miss everything!

KATIE: *(Muttering to herself.)* My god, don't they know it's still 5 AM in California?

DANA: Probably another Exxon Valdez. Pilot got drunk, or dropped acid, forgot to look where he was going.

ALEX: You think?

DANA: Got a better explanation?

ALEX: Stupid pilot. Don't we learn anything from our mistakes?

KATIE enters.

KATIE: What's wrong?

ALEX: A plane just hit one of the Twin Towers.

DANA: The North Tower.

KATIE: The Twin Towers? As in World Trade Center? *(Looking.)* Holy shit.

DANA: Wanna close-up?

DANA offers KATIE binoculars. Alex watches through the videocamera.

KATIE: How did this happen?

ALEX: We're thinking accident. Maybe the pilot fell asleep.

KATIE: Accident. What kind of accident?

ALEX: Not sure.

DANA: A stupid one.

ALEX: We were just trying to assess what level of stupidity.

KATIE: How'd you find out? Did you hear the crash?

ALEX: TV is the new god. I love TV.

DANA: Look at all the people on the rooftops. All over the city. Let's wave. "Good morning!"

KATIE: Jesus, I'm half-naked.

ALEX: Yeah, maybe you should grab some clothes.

DANA: Oh, Katie, I wouldn't worry about it, the City's attention is focused elsewhere at the moment.

KATIE: Still, I'd like to get a sweatshirt. I'm freezing. My high beams are flashing.

DANA: Alex, can't you loan her one of your shirts?

ALEX: Mine? What about yours?

DANA: Fine, Katie, go into our bedroom and grab whatever you want from my closet. Anything as long as you remember to return it.

KATIE: Of course I'd remember to return it.

DANA: I don't have time to explain and you don't have time to run downstairs. You might miss the best part.

KATIE: The best part?

DANA: You know, the moment when all the helicopters arrive, dump water on the building and save everyone. Wouldn't it be nice to start off the day heroically, with a happy ending?

SCENE 4

SETTING: Morning of 9/11. Terrace off DANA and ALEX's Master Bedroom.

AT RISE: ALEX, DANA and KATIE sit on the teak deck furniture, waiting for the helicopters. The large TV in the master bedroom is still on. ALEX continues to document the tragedy with his video camera. GIGI BARKS.

ALEX: Did you walk Gigi this morning?

DANA: I thought you were.

The second plane crashes into the South Tower. A BURST OF ORANGE.

DANA: Did you see that?

ALEX: I did. Got that second airplane on tape.

KATIE: What the hell is going on?

DANA: See what you would have missed if you went downstairs? If we didn't wake you?

ALEX: This no longer feels like an accident.

KATIE: It feels deliberate. Too deliberate.

ALEX: Oh my god, what are we going to do? What can we do?

DANA: I don't think we're going to Italy.

ALEX: No Italy? Oh my god, does this mean that we're trapped? How long? We can't just sit here and watch, can we?

DANA: What choice do we have, sweetie?

KATIE: There must be something we can do. Something proactive.

ALEX: Like what?

DANA: Well, like someone has to take Gigi for a walk and see what other people are doing. Maybe someone out there knows what to do.

ALEX: I think we should let her do her business on the terrace.

DANA: Alex, that's disgusting.

ALEX: When we toured Versailles, remember when I asked where the bathrooms were, what those stains were in the marble, remember how the tour guide told us that the people used to just lift up their dresses, drop their pants and shit and piss in the corner?

DANA: Can you be any less graphic?

KATIE: Is that true?

ALEX: (*Nods.*) What is a little dog doo-doo compared to that?

DANA: You're cleaning it up.

ALEX: We should probably watch the news. Find out what the President is going to do, to protect us, to reassure us.

KATIE: Yes, let's find out what the media knows. What they advise us to do.

ALEX steps in, looks at the TV in the master bedroom.

ALEX: Shit. A plane also hit the Pentagon.

KATIE: The Pentagon too?

ALEX: According to CNN, there were 4 planes. One went down in Pennsylvania.

KATIE: What's going on? How many more planes are there?

ALEX: They say the fourth plane was headed for the nation's capital.

DANA: Holy shit, people are jumping to their deaths.

ALEX: Goddamnit! We're fucked. I've got to get a hold of my sponsor.

KATIE: Jumping?

DANA: Check it out.

DANA offers KATIE her binoculars.

KATIE: No thanks. I can see fine where I am. My view is plenty unobstructed.

DANA: Isn't that where you used to work?

KATIE: Yes.

DANA: You might know some of these people.

KATIE: *(Takes the binoculars for a second, then hands them back.)* I can't, I'm too frightened. I need the hope.

ALEX: Katie, you have friends up there? In there? How many?

DANA: God knows how many.

KATIE: Many. Too many.

ALEX: Great. Fucking great. Where's the joy of being stone cold sober if you can't shut out the pain?

KATIE: When I traded, we worked with Cantor Fitzgerald every day. Used to visit my brokers Vic and Ray on the 105th floor. The building shakes. Even on a clear day.

DANA: We used to sip champagne and watch the sunset at Windows on the World.

KATIE: There are a lot of companies at the World Trade Center. Thousands of employees.

ALEX: Thousands! Oh my god, how are they all going to get out? This is too upsetting. They can't all get out, can they?

KATIE: I don't know. (*Trying to convince herself.*) But miracles happen every day, right?

DANA: We're on the 10th floor and I don't think we'd survive if we jumped.

ALEX: I think we should move. Live on the ground floor. It'd be better for my back. Of course, the value of this penthouse has probably just dropped astronomically now that we can't say we have a stunning view of the Twin Towers. Oh my god, what am I saying, how are those people going to get out?

KATIE: Alex, please we can't give up hope so fast.

DANA: Why don't we pray?

ALEX: To whom?

KATIE: God?

DANA: Buddha?

ALEX: (*Clasping his hands together in prayer.*) To Whom It May Concern, please save our godforsaken asses. Please don't let us down. Please numb our pain and wipe away our fears. Until then, I'm going to help myself to some Valium. The pain is too sharp. Amen.

DANA: What are you going to do?

KATIE: What would you do? What can I do?

DANA: Tell me about some of these people.

KATIE: Ray took me to Petrossian for my 25th. We ate so much caviar, stuffed ourselves to the gills. Vic loves to cook. He's single, lives alone, but he goes to the trouble to cook these elaborate gourmet meals for himself. Just for one. How many people do you know would take the time? I was going to call them and see if they wanted to meet for lunch, or cook together.

DANA: Go on. Tell me more.

KATIE: I can't breathe. The clouds of past tense closing in, I can't breathe.

DANA: I think you should start assembling a list of all the people you know that could be in those buildings.

KATIE: And start making some phone calls.

DANA: Yes. I'll help.

KATIE: Maybe some of them changed jobs and neglected to tell me.

DANA: You switched careers.

KATIE: Maybe some of them are on vacation.

DANA: We were headed to Italy.

KATIE: Maybe some of them called in sick.

DANA: There is still hope. Wisps of hope.

ALEX: I've brought reinforcements. Box of tissues. Water. Cold compresses. Valium.

KATIE: I can't give up hope at the speed of gravity times mass.

DANA: You better call Josh. Let him know what's going on. Beg him to stay home.

KATIE: You think something bad will happen in L.A.?

DANA: Just in case.

ALEX: You never know. Not after today.

KATIE: Do our phones work?

ALEX grabs the cordless.

ALEX: Miracle number one. A dial tone.

KATIE: I hate to wake Josh up. It's still so early in California. He barely gets enough sleep.

DANA: Does Josh work in a tall building? Tall enough to attract unwanted attention?

KATIE: Only the second tallest building west of the Mississippi. (*Realizing.*) Give me the phone.

ALEX hands KATIE the phone.

ALEX: He's going to be so glad you called.

KATIE: *(Dials.)* Josh?

LIGHTS FADE. ALEX, DANA and KATIE sit in the teak chairs, using cold compresses and emptying boxes of tissue. SPOTLIGHT on TV showing the FALL of the TWIN TOWERS. BLACKOUT.

SCENE 5

SETTING: DANA and ALEX's living room.

AT RISE: The huge TV is still on, CNN. Suitcases packed for Italy stand near the door. The phone RINGS nonstop in the penthouse.

ALEX: I can't fucking believe the twin towers collapsed.

DANA: Who can?

ALEX: I thought America was strong. Invincible.

DANA: We all did. Honey, you're pacing.

ALEX: How come everybody's phone is down, but ours? How did we get chosen as Grand Central Station? It's for you again, Katie. How is it you know so many people? What are you, a social butterfly? I'm beginning to feel as if Dana and I don't know anyone.

KATIE: Sorry. I told all these people I was going to be in New York City for three weeks so I gave them your phone number. I thought it'd be okay.

DANA: Alex, it's not Katie's fault.

ALEX: Of course not. Sorry, Katie. I'm just annoyed because I was counting on Italy. I needed Italy. The Romance. The Fresh Air. The Art.

KATIE: I understand. We're all rattled.

KATIE goes off to talk privately.

DANA: Hey, you're not the only one hurting. I was looking forward to practicing my Italian. *Prego. Bellissimo. Basta.*

ALEX: When do you think the airports going to open up? I want the first flight after that.

DANA: Are you nuts? I'm not getting on any plane.

ALEX: Don't you feel ambushed? We have to fight back.

DANA: Honey, I'm not sure I'm ready to fly again. If ever.

ALEX: Then let's rent a car. Drive as far away as we can. Find some beauty. North Carolina. Arkansas. Tennessee. Let's get the hell away from all this ugliness and these awful carcinogenic smells.

DANA: You heard the news. The bridges and tunnels are closed.

ALEX: (*Grabs a Kleenex.*) Goddamnit! It isn't fair. It isn't fucking fair. I need a vacation. And the day we can finally get away, the FAA shuts down the airports nationwide. For the first time in history. We're trapped. The terrorists have won.

DANA: At least we're alive. Think of all those people. We're the lucky ones.

ALEX: I don't feel much like a survivor.

DANA: Those poor people. All gone in one fell swoop. Poor Katie, has to try and figure out where everyone is, was. Isn't she great, the way she's able to take charge?

ALEX: I haven't been able to reach my sponsor. Where is he?

DANA: Oh dear.

ALEX: What if?

DANA: No. Keep trying.

KATIE hangs up the phone.

KATIE: Alex. Dana. Some of my friends are stuck in the City. They can't get home. I was wondering and they were wondering if they could come here, just until the City opens back up, until they can get home. Safely. If it'd be OK since you have so much room.

DANA: Sure –

ALEX: Sure?

DANA: It'd be our pleasure.

ALEX: Shouldn't we ask how many friends? Who these people are?

KATIE: Totally fair question. Tori is a sculptor, met her at an artist colony. Roy and I used to work on Wall Street together. Chris was my neighbor when I lived in East Village, works in the public library, a regular sweet guy. Mark is a fellow writer, we used to belong to the same writers group. Hervé is a jazz musician, plays saxophone.

DANA: Alex. This is our chance to be useful. To make a difference. Meet interesting new people.

ALEX: Can't we just write a check like we usually do? I'm not sure I'm ready to meet new people. I'm not in any state to be social. I feel so vulnerable. At my worst.

KATIE: You don't have to be social, I promise.

ALEX: I don't? But that doesn't seem quite right.

DANA: Katie's right, in times like these, nobody expects anyone to be hostess with the mostest.

KATIE: I wouldn't ask, but they don't have anywhere to go and they're my friends. Good people. Just like you and me. I swear.

ALEX: I feel like I'm going to fall apart. Just like those Towers. Without any warning. Where the fuck is President Bush?

DANA: Alex, we have plenty of food and room. I stocked up for Katie's visit. I think it could be good for us, to grieve together, hold hands, form our own support group. Couldn't your back use a little more support?

ALEX: I'm not used to breaking down in front of strangers. Total strangers.

DANA: Who is?

KATIE: You'll be among friends.

ALEX: Is that dog shit I smell?

DANA: How can you distinguish anything from that overpowering stench of charred human flesh?

KATIE: It reeks, doesn't it? And the dust --

ALEX: Did anyone take poor Gigi out for a walk?

KATIE: I'll take Gigi out for a walk if you'll let my friends crash here temporarily.

DANA: If that's not a bargain, Alex --

KATIE: Please I have to do something. Help in some small way. It's the only thing that keeps me going. Knowing there's something I can do.

DANA: I'm going to donate supplies, on behalf of both us, Alex.

ALEX: No one's going to make fun of me if I stay in bed all day, or burst into tears at the drop of a hat.

KATIE: Of course not.

ALEX: Oh, all right. But soon as it's safe, your friends are outta here.

DANA: (*Hugs and pecks ALEX.*) Thanks, honeybunch. I'm so proud to be your wife.

KATIE: Thanks, Alex. You're a peach.

ALEX: Peaches bruise easily, you know.

KATIE: (*Complimenting ALEX.*) They also have strong pits. That hold firm, even under duress.

DANA: Hear that, Alex? Katie just paid you a compliment.

ALEX: Where do you get your energy? Your bounce?

KATIE: I'm not quite sure.

ALEX: Do you take vitamins? Work out? Cocaine?

KATIE: Cocaine? You think I'm a cokehead?

DANA: When we were in high school, Katie used to be an insomniac.

KATIE: Used to? I still am.

ALEX: What do you have against sleep?

KATIE: I wish I could sleep through the night. I wish I could sleep well. Regularly. I certainly want to. But I've always been a light sleeper. Things keep me awake. All sorts of things. Stupid things, little things, big things. Some days I feel so completely exhausted –

ALEX: (*Totally relating.*) You feel you could snap in two.

KATIE: (*Same wavelength.*) Yes.

ALEX: That's me most days.

DANA: Have you tried drinking herbal tea half an hour before going to bed?

KATIE: Problem with tea is you have to wake up in the middle of the night to pee.

ALEX: Would you like a Valium? I have plenty.

KATIE: No. No thank you.

ALEX: Why not? It works. It really numbs the pain so you can rest. Finally rest.

KATIE: As idiotic as it sounds, I've grown afraid of the dark. I want to be awake. I crave the light.

ALEX: You're strange. Strange in a good way.

KATIE: Thanks. I better go call my friends and tell them it's OK for them to crash here.

KATIE disappears with the phone.

ALEX: Where is all this dust coming from? You don't think they're human remains, it's bad enough inhaling the dead, but to also be sitting in it and seeing the dust collect everywhere --

DANA: No. Stop. Please don't worry about the dust. Dust can be swept up, away, out. I'll take care of it. Later. I promise.

ALEX: (*Teasing.*) Dana the dust buster. That's not the Dana I know and love.

DANA: Have I told you lately how proud I am of you?

ALEX: For what? I feel so weak.

DANA: I'm proud of you for expanding your heart, for being kind and generous and strong --

ALEX: (*Teasing.*) Is that all?

DANA: For beating alcohol. Substance abuse.

ALEX: It ain't over until it's over.

DANA: We're gonna make it through this. Together. I'm sure of it.

ALEX: Oh, Dana, that's why I love you so much. You're always so sure. So positively sure. I wish I could be so sure. Sure and steady.

SCENE 6

SETTING: DANA and ALEX's living room now functions as a crisis support center, filled with people in various states of distress, undress and grief. TV continues to drone on.

AT RISE: ALEX still controls the TiVo remote and channel surfs. Katie's friends MARK, TORI, CHRIS, HERVÉ settle in. KATIE is in charge of a long list of names on a bulletin board, tracking who's been reached (safe) and who's "missing." DANA serves liquid refreshments. CHRIS lights lavender-scented candles. Everyone takes turns using the phone to call people.

CHRIS: Everybody inhale. Take deep breaths.

EVERYONE COUGHS from the fumes and dust.

ALEX: *(Covering his nose.)* Are you nuts? I bet the noxious fumes alone shave five years off our lives.

DANA: Five whole years?

ALEX: We need more duct tape.

CHRIS: Lavender is supposed to be very soothing.

MARK: Let's meditate. Or, chant.

TORI: I don't know if I have an apartment anymore.

DANA: There, there. At least you're alive. Count your blessings.

TORI: Everything I owned could fit in your kitchen.

DANA: Then you didn't lose very much, did you?

TORI: You trying to make me feel better?

DANA: Every cloud has a silver lining, Tori. Sometimes you have to really look for it.

CHRIS: Shit, man, this guy's saying this terrorist attack is directly related to the bombing in 1993. Have we been asleep at the wheel? That fuckface is saying it's our fault. We were warned. Warned, my ass.

CHRIS grabs onto ALEX, tightly.

CHRIS: Were we warned? Is it our fault? Did we do this to ourselves?

ALEX: Please, the very idea that we asked for it, it's too much to bear.

CHRIS: I'll say. What's the world coming to when we blame the victim?

MARK: Are you saying we're all innocent? Completely innocent?

CHRIS: Apparently you're not.

TORI: Something to confess?

CHRIS: Out with it. You know something about those terrorists?

KATIE: Hey, Mark writes books.

CHRIS: What kind of books? Anti-American books?

MARK: I don't owe you any explanations.

ALEX: Please, everyone, I'm not well.

DANA: It's his back.

HERVÉ: Perhaps now is the perfect time for a group hug.

ALEX: Group hug? What will that accomplish?

HERVÉ: You prefer a more personalized hug, Alex? One that fits the curvature of your spine?

DANA: I believe that's my job.

ALEX: Where is Gigi? Has anyone seen Gigi?

MARK: Who's Gigi?

ALEX: Our darling Westie.

MARK: Oh. That thing.

TORI: I'm not much of a dog person either.

ALEX: Please dear god, don't tell me someone let her out by mistake. The smoke alone could kill her.

CHRIS: She could be anywhere. This place is huge.

HERVÉ: You want me to help you look for Gigi?

DANA: Please, if everyone could stop what they're doing and –

KATIE: She's hiding behind the drapes.

DANA: What's she doing there? I hope she's not ingesting all that toxic dust.

ALEX: What a relief, Gigi's okay. I almost had a heart attack.

HERVÉ: Time for a big bear hug.

ALEX: Well...

HERVÉ: I insist.

HERVÉ hugs ALEX tight, massaging his back.

HERVÉ: That wasn't so bad, was it?

ALEX: You think you could massage my back some more?

HERVÉ: *Absolument.*

HERVÉ kneads ALEX's back.

HERVÉ: Hey, Alex, where are your souvenirs from France?

DANA: Stolen.

HERVÉ: *Quel dommage.* Pity.

DANA: Isn't it?

HERVÉ: Just gives you another excuse to return to France. If you like, I could show you around.

ALEX: I love France.

HERVÉ: Who doesn't?

DANA: You love France? Since when?

ALEX: Since we visited.

Doorbell RINGS.

MARK: I'll get the door. It's probably my friend Dominick.

It's ROY. Mark is visibly disappointed.

ROY: Hi, I'm Roy. Katie's friend.

MARK: Come on in.

ROY: Don't look so disappointed.