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Let's Kill Grandma This Christmas

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More Great Plays Available From Original Works Publishing

Who Killed Santa?

(The Choose-Your-Own-Ending

Musical Murder Mystery Holiday Whodunit)

By Neil Haven

3 Males, 2 Females, 1 Either

Synopsis: In this hilarious and irreverent send-up, Santa is hosting his annual holiday party attended by the usual holiday favorites: Frosty, Tiny Tim, The Little Drummer Boy, and Rudolph, who all have a bone to pick with Santa. After the introduction of the sexy new Little Drummer Girl, tempers flare, and Santa ends up with a candy cane through the heart. No one will confess, no one can leave, and Christmas is in jeopardy. As the tension builds, a couple of incompetent detectives enter the scene, and all the dirty secrets of these iconic holiday characters are revealed. Eventually, with the help of the audience, the murderer is convicted and sentenced.

** The show features parodies of holiday songs and four different endings*

Yes, Svetlana, There is a Grandfather Frost

By Jeff Goode

2 Males, 2 Females, 2 KGB agents

Synopsis: At a State-run newspaper in Communist Russia, a cynical journalist is asked to defend the Soviet Santa. "And even though your father turned out to be an embarrassment, and a traitor, you must still miss him, sometimes, at the holidays."

Let's Kill Grandma This Christmas

By Brian Gianci

Robert Nicotra and John Dapolito presented the world premiere of *Let's Kill Grandma This Christmas* off-Broadway at the Theatre at St. Clement's from November 25th to December 30th, 2012.

The cast was as follows:

CATHY: Roxie Lucas

RAY: Adam Mucci

CARL: James Wirt

LEIGH: Katie Webber

BRETT: Kevin O'Donnell

JEN: Brandi Nicole Wilson

Cast of Characters

CATHY—Eighty years old. The family matriarch. A sharp-witted, eccentric, eighty year old with a foul mouth and tough love demeanor.

BRETT—Late thirties. A handsome, charismatic, opportunistic con-artist.

JEN—Mid thirties. Brett's fed up wife. Frustrated by her failed dreams of family, she turns to alcohol for comfort.

LEIGH—Early thirties. Jen's sister. Attractive alpha female who is a master manipulator.

RAY—Mid thirties. A paraplegic war veteran with a heart of gold and a speech impediment as a result of a head injury. His sweetness is the stuff of experience.

CARL—Mid to late thirties. Leigh's hen-pecked husband. He has been beaten down by his emasculating wife and his job.

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ACT 1

SCENE 1

(The present. Christmas Eve. Saturday. Noon. The dingy, dilapidated great room of Grandma Cathy's completely run down Victorian home. Water damage stains can be seen across a large portion of the ceiling. The furniture is outdated and worn. An assortment of odd items from various generations clutters the room. A dusty old television set from the seventies sits down stage left in front of a ragged couch among a stack of old magazines. A big painting of a Native American chief hangs crookedly next to the entrance to the kitchen. The rickety door to Grandma Cathy's bedroom is down stage left. Brett is relaxed on the couch next to a small stack of Christmas gifts.)

BRETT: You know the more I walk around Grandma's house, the more it grows on me. This place really has a lot of soul babe.

(Jen enters)

JEN: It's dilapidated Brett. It's falling apart. We'll be lucky if it's even standing by the time she passes on.

BRETT: Are you kidding? This place'll be standing through Armageddon. This puppy was built in the 1800's. In a time when people gave a shit. I'm actually starting to think we're lucky to be getting the house and your sister's getting the money.

JEN: Ugh. She makes me sick. Sending her flowers all the time. She's shameless is what she is.

BRETT: How's that shameless?

JEN: She lobbied her for her money.

BRETT: No she didn't.

JEN: Why are you always defending her?

BRETT: I'm not defending her. You're sister's arrogant.
I'm just saying maybe you feel a bit... regretful.

JEN: For what?

BRETT: For not keeping in touch with your grandmother
as much as you think you should have.

JEN: Oh, so you think I should regret not spending time
with a woman who lambastes me every time I talk to
her for just about every aspect of the way I choose to
live my life-

BRETT: (*overlapping*) I'm not saying-.

JEN: (*overlapping*) Including my weight, my marriage,
my unborn children.

BRETT: (*overlapping*) Honey.

JEN: Frankly, I don't enjoy being around people who
want to use me as their personal punching bag, okay?
Being old and wrinkly does not give a person license to
be mean spirited.

BRETT: Okay. Jeez Jen. Let's not go killing Grandma this
Christmas.

JEN: You know what she told me on the phone yesterday?
She said the only reason she's even included me in the will is that she'd rather give the house to a human being than turn it over to the government.

BRETT: Oh, come on. She loves you. Just in her own, old school, cranky granny kind of way.

JEN: She's a bully Brett. You saw how she was to me at our wedding.

BRETT: Then why didn't she give everything to your sister and give you nothing? Hm? And how about some gratitude for what we've got here. And for all our blessings for that matter. It's Christmas. Besides, the way the economy is, that two point two mill your sister's got coming down the pike won't be worth the paper it's printed on. By the time she passes? You guys live like oaks in this family. Your sister'll be lucky if she gets an order of Peking Duck with her share of the inheritance. We'll have a house. We'll have land. There's value in land babe.

JEN: The land, the land. I'm tired of talking about it. I'm tired of thinking about it.

BRETT: Yeah, me too.

JEN: And the dollar's not collapsing Brett. As much as you want to say it is. You repeat yourself a lot these days you know.

BRETT: What does that mean?

JEN: It means maybe the weed's not making you as sharp as you think.

BRETT: It helps with the creative juices Jen.

(Jen's cell phone makes a new text message sound. Jen pulls out her phone and reads the message.)

JEN: My sister. "We're pulling into the driveway." She texts me this. As if I'm not going to see her in ten seconds. God, I just wish I could have a minute to breathe before I have to deal with friggin Leigh.

BRETT: Let's not even mention the will to her. No need to risk ruining your grandmother's big day. We don't want to spoil the Christmas baby's eightieth birthday. Let's have some good wholesome family time. Isn't that what you're always talking about? Let's practice acceptance babe. Like Jesus would've wanted on his birthday. Let's have some fun. We've done good. We've done great.

(Brett kisses Jen on the forehead. Leigh enters through the front door (upstage right) wearing reindeer antlers on her head. Her wet shoes leave a trail of muddy water on the floor.)

LEIGH: Hellooo.

BRETT: Merry Christmas.

(Brett hugs Leigh.)

JEN: Hello Leigh.

LEIGH: Merry Christmas Jen. Look at you. (to Jen) Aren't you festive in your cute little red sweater. You Christmassy little thing you.

JEN: Not nearly as festive as you Leigh.

(Leigh kisses Jen's cheek, missing by at least six inches.)

BRETT: Loving those antlers. Actually, are those antlers or are they your natural horns you little devil you?

LEIGH: I had the horns surgically removed. I got tired of giving myself away. Hey, I'm just trying to bring some Christmas cheer to the royal family and their future castle.

JEN: It's more of a dungeon.

(Carl enters carrying travel bags, gifts and a saxophone.)

CARL: Look at this place, huh? Wow!

JEN: Merry Christmas Carl.

CARL: Merry Christmas Jen.

(Jen and Carl awkwardly hug.)

BRETT: Not bad, right? Whadya say Carl?

CARL: I'm good, good. Happy holidays pal.

BRETT: Good to see you brought your horn.

CARL: I thought I'd set the mood for romance in front of the blaze later.

BRETT: Nice! You gonna hit us up with some Kenny G? I'm breaking your balls. You look good pal.

LEIGH: It is a bit musty in here.

JEN: Her aversion to cleaning has obviously advanced through the years.

CARL: I guess that's how they get at her age. They're messy.

LEIGH: She could clean if she wanted to. She's very energetic. She just doesn't like wasting time on remedial tasks. I spoke to her doctor by the way.

BRETT: Oh. How's she doing?

LEIGH: She's doing great. The doctor said they just wanted to do some precautionary tests for her arrhythmia today. She's had it for years. I'm sure this visit to the doctor will confirm what I already suspect. That she's as healthy as a lark. God bless her soul.

CARL: It's healthy as a horse.

LEIGH: Whatever.

CARL: Happy as a lark.

BRETT: What's a lark?

CARL: It's a festive little woodland bird. They grace the forests with their beautiful morning songs. That's where the saying comes from. I guess they're pretty happy go lucky little creatures.

LEIGH: You are just a plethora of useless information aren't you Carl? Now would you take the bags please.

(Carl picks up the bags and walks towards the bedrooms.)

LEIGH: Anyway, she's going to be absolutely fine I'm sure.

CARL: (*mumbling*) Nothing wrong with having an appreciation for nature that I'm aware of.

LEIGH: (*thwarting*) What?

BRETT: Well, we need to take care of her. Anything can happen at that age.

LEIGH: Are you kidding? She's got the vitality of a school girl. Constantly outside walking and gardening. Have you seen it Jen? She's got an amazing garden. You've got to go out there and see it. She's got everything from squash to navy beans. She just loves that garden.

JEN: Have you seen it, Leigh?

LEIGH: I feel like I have. You should hear the way she goes on about it. I mean every time I talk to her it's, "The cherry tomatoes are so ripe" and "the eggplants are so purple". She's a real hoot. You should call her more often Jen. You know, some people are able to find the time to talk to their family members amongst their very busy schedules.

JEN: That's right Leigh. And other people find the time to talk to their family members strictly when they need something.

LEIGH: I'm just squeezing your ovaries Jennifer, jeez.

JEN: And I'm breaking your balls, Leigh.

LEIGH: Well anyways, I might as well express my feelings now about the business side of things right off the bat and get it over with so we don't have it hanging over us all weekend. As far as I'm concerned, the will is as mysterious as she is. I don't know why she's decided to leave me the two point two mill and you the house. I certainly didn't write it. Nobody in this room wrote it. So I think we should all accept her postmortem wishes and move on.

BRETT: I couldn't agree more Leigh. We should really respect how she's decided to divvy things up here. Besides, it's just money. It's meaningless really.

JEN: Especially with inflation setting in the way it is.

BRETT: Well, I'm glad we're not gonna turn ourselves into the cliché broken family bickering over the spoils. That's for sure. In the end it's this that counts. In the end it's about family.

CARL: Cheers to that.

BRETT: All this dust can't be healthy for an eighty year old woman to be breathing every day.

CARL: Yeah. You know, we should really get her a cleaning lady.

LEIGH: There are men that clean houses for a living too Carl.

BRETT: Leigh's right. They're called Mexicans.

JEN: Grow up Brett.

LEIGH: She wants to be a little messy. Let her. You can't teach an old dog new tricks. Besides, knowing her she'd scare the cleaning person away. She'd probably beat him with a rolling pin.

BRETT: You kidding me? She'd probably sodomize him with it.

CARL: Oh, she's not all bad. She's just a little lonely. They do get lonely at that age.

LEIGH: And that's why we're gonna give her the most fantastic, wonderful and loving birthday Christmas weekend she's ever had in all her eighty years. 'Cause let's face it, we don't know how many more we'll have with her. So let's make this one extra special.

BRETT: Amen to that.

CARL: Where's Ray? I thought he was coming.

LEIGH: Yeah. He didn't come?

BRETT: No, he's here. He's taking a nap. The medication they have him on makes him really tired.

CARL: What do they have him on?

BRETT: Medical marijuana. He's blazed.

CARL: Well that's a nice perk I guess. (falls flat) How's he been doing?

BRETT: Oh, he's great. Just about as angelic as ever. The only difference is now I get to see him every day.

CARL: Did he see anything over there. Any, action or... ?

LEIGH: Yeah, does he have any, psychological problems?

BRETT: What? Shell shock? Oh no. No shell shock for Ray Ray. He wasn't in the shit. They had him guarding some field or something. He didn't see anything. He especially didn't see that I.E.D. that blew his Humvee sky high and into that ditch.

CARL: Wow. What a shame.

LEIGH: Poor thing.

BRETT: You kidding me? He's happier than ever. He's like a little boy again zipping around in that wheelchair of his. I keep telling him, "Ray, I'm gonna start making you wear a helmet if you don't slow your roll on that thing." And he always says the same thing. (*speaking slowly*) "Helmet? What do I need a helmet for. I got a steel plate in my head". Unfortunately he's got the speech impediment now. But don't let it fool you. He's still quick as a whip.

(Ray enters from the hall in his wheelchair.)

BRETT: Right on cue brother man.

RAY: Merry Christmas everybody. I'm crippled. Don't make a big thing of it.

CARL: Merry Christmas Ray. How are you?

RAY: I'm great, great. You know what's left of me. How are you all doing?

CARL: Good, good.

RAY: I'd get up but, you know.

LEIGH: (*loud*) Hi Ray. You look great.

JEN: He's paralyzed. Not deaf, Leigh.

LEIGH: You know, we really meant to come by the hospital the day you had the plate put in your head but we were just swamped. The holidays and all... We're really understaffed these days.

RAY: That's okay.

CARL: Both of us. We're lucky to be working really.

RAY: Yeah, well that's okay. So good to see you guys. I need to use the little boy's room. is it anyway?

BRETT: It's at the end of the hall pal.

RAY: Is it wheel chair friendly?

(*Brett squirms.*)

JEN: No, it's not.

BRETT: You got this one Ray?

RAY: I gotta take a shit Brett.

BRETT: Alright. Roll your ass in there.

(*Ray rolls himself toward the hall. Brett follows.*)

LEIGH: What a shame. Poor thing.

CARL: It's not easy seeing him like this.

LEIGH: It's probably easier than needing your brother to sit you down on the toilet and... I can't even imagine. How's it been? Has it been okay or?

JEN: It's basically like caring for an infant only ten times more expensive. He's a slob. He eats and shits like a gorilla. There I said it. I'm horrible.

CARL: Well if it weren't for the two of you who knows where he'd be. You're a saint Jen.

JEN: I'm at my wits end. I don't know how much longer I can do it. Manhattan one bedroom apartments were not made to house three people.

LEIGH: It's got to be hard.

JEN: It drives me to drink. And don't even get me started with the other one. Once his severance package ends , this writing crap is over and he's back in the work force. I don't care if he's scrubbing toilets. I mean, imagine coming home from work and finding your husband shooting plastic guns at the television set, playing video games.

LEIGH: Ugh.

JEN: And he's smoking some of Ray's prescription I can tell. He's becoming increasingly lethargic. Do you know sometimes I come home and find the two of them napping?

LEIGH: My God.

JEN: Oh that's just the beginning. On most nights, after nap time, he's off to "the cafes". To "write". He always comes back "exhausted" and collapses on the bed, out cold. He's up to something.

LEIGH: What do you mean? What?

JEN: I don't know... I looked at his phone the other day when he was in the bathroom and I found all these weird late night text messages from some guy named Tom.

LEIGH: Really?

(Brett enters.)

BRETT: Well we've got a nice dusting of snow on the ground, Ray's all settled in with his Game Boy. Who's ready for some egg nog?

JEN: I am! Easy on the nog. Heavy on the rum.

BRETT: That's the spirit babe. Leigh? Carl?

(Brett exits to the kitchen.)

LEIGH: Not just yet. Personally, I'd like to be sober when my grandmother arrives.

(Carl looks at Leigh for permission.)

LEIGH: One Carl.

CARL: Sure. I could go for a little holiday cheer.

LEIGH: Speaking of which, we should get a Christmas tree in here.

BRETT: We absolutely should.

LEIGH: Right? There's not even a single clue in this place that says it's Christmas.

CARL: Well we passed a farm a few miles or so up the road. I'm sure they have them there.

LEIGH: Let's go for a ride Jen.

JEN: I have a drink on the way.

CARL: Well I can go get the tree honey.

LEIGH: No Carl. I want to go for a ride with my sister.
(to Jen) I've actually got something I wanted to run by you, Jen. I wanted to keep it private for now. It's kind of a secret.

JEN: If it's got anything to do with the will, I'm really not interested.

LEIGH: It's not about the will. It's an idea I have that I think you're really gonna like. Come on. Let's make that drink a roadie.

(Leigh goes to the kitchen to get Jen's drink.)

JEN: Fine.

LEIGH: We're going to have some girl talk Carl. Have some guy talk with Brett.

LEIGH: Oh, and we should probably pick up some beer too. We need to be well stocked for the game.

(Jen puts on her coat as Leigh enters with an egg nog. She hands it to Jen.)

BRETT: Good call Leigh. Hey babe pick me up a sixer of Silver Bullets, if they got em. I heard Eli's getting the nod, by the way. He practiced on Thursday.

CARL: That guy never seems to come through in the clutch. Lord have mercy on us.

LEIGH: He's won two Superbowls Carl. Must you always be such a Debbie Downer? Go easy on him with the rum Brett. He's a lightweight.

(Leigh puts on her coat.)

BRETT: We're gonna change that. By the end of this weekend he'll be a savage.

LEIGH: Toodles.

BRETT: Ta ta.

CARL: Okay. Bye... Bye.

(The girls exit. Carl stands awkwardly for a few moments alone.)

CARL: This place is really nice. You got to love the old school charm.

BRETT: *(off stage)* Don't bullshit me Carl. This place is a fucking dump! Hey, did you get a haircut or something? You look different.

CARL: I started combing it different. Does it look okay or...?

(Brett enters and strolls over to Carl who eagerly waits for Brett's answer. Brett hands Carl the drink and studies Carl's hair.)

BRETT: It looks good.

CARL: You think?

BRETT: Yeah. It's good. It's a good look for you.

(Brett exits to the kitchen.)

CARL: Oh, thanks. So everything's good?

BRETT: You kiddin me? Never better. Writing, reflecting, philosophizing. Life is good. You? What's cooking with you?

CARL: You know. Same old. Busier than ever. Two more heads-

(Brett begins loudly shaking drinks in the kitchen. Carl struggles to speak over the noise with his weak voice.)

CARL: Two more heads just rolled in my department so I'm basically doing the work of seven people now.

(Brett stops using the shaker.)

BRETT: Wow. That sucks.

CARL: Yeah. You remember that-

(Brett starts shaking the drinks again. Carl struggles again to speak over the noise of the shaker.)

CARL: You remember that sleaze bag Kenny Ryan I was telling you about who steals everyone's clients? Real nice guy? They promoted him to partner. Anyway. How can I complain? I got a job, you know?

(Brett enters and hands Carl a shot.)

BRETT: I hear that. You been playing at all?

CARL: I wish. I'm lucky if I'm home from work by the time Leigh goes to sleep at night. She's been getting all over me for that. But what can I do? I'm just hoping this economy straightens itself out.

BRETT: I'm not holding my breath.

(Brett clinks shot glasses with Carl and they both drink their shots.)

BRETT: Woo!

CARL: Hey, you don't feel like you're uh, you know, losing ground at all?

BRETT: Losing ground? I volunteered. I told my boss if it comes down to mine or someone else in my department's head going on that chopping block, let it be mine. Trust me, I haven't looked back since. I obviously never told Jen that. But that's how it all went down. That's on the D.L. by the way.

CARL: Oh yeah, I'd never say anything.

BRETT: I know you wouldn't. Not that it would really matter if you did.

(Carl laughs uncomfortably.)

CARL: So what's it like? I mean, take me through a day in the life of.

BRETT: It's fucking amazing. I'm up when I'm good and ready. Usually I'm out of the feathers at around ten. By ten o'five I'm blazed out of my tits drinking instant coffee and reviewing yesterday's work. All left brain shit. It helps to edit first and appease the western hemisphere-

CARL: (*overlapping*) Right.

BRETT: To allow the right brain to kick in. The creative shit. The gold.

CARL: I bet the wacky-tobacccy helps that process along quite nicely.

BRETT: You kiddin me? I got this new guy I buy from. He goes to these weed festivals. He's a fuckin genius. It's like his religion. He gets me this home grown from Canada. Amazing.

CARL: I thought Ray got medical marijuana?

(*Brett pulls out his i Phone and begins texting.*)

BRETT: We just tell Jen that. She gets all weird about that sort of thing. She just doesn't get it, you know?

CARL: You devil.

BRETT: I'm texting you him now. He knows anyone I send his way is solid. Anyway, after some edits I spend a few hours at the computer brainstorming. If I get stuck, Ray and I will get a couple games in. We got the new Resident Evil 6.0. It's fucking sick. You played it?

CARL: No. It's good?

BRETT: The blood sprays onto the fucking screen. I swear to God you check your face for a misting of it. You're surprised it's not there. It's like you've actually decapitated someone. After a couple games with Ray I'm back at my desk fully inspired with a fresh outlook on life, ready to create.

CARL: Wow. I am green with envy. You're really doing it. You're an artist.

BRETT: What can I say? I saw an opportunity. I took it.

CARL: God, I want that. I mean, how do you do it? How do you get away with it with Jen? Leigh would be out the door so fast I'd hear a sonic boom.

BRETT: Back in college my dad gave me the best advice anyone's ever given me. He said, "Brett, whatever you do, do not marry the one you can't live without. Marry the one you can live with." You know what that means?

CARL: I think so. Yeah.

BRETT: It means I can do whatever the fuck I want and she'd never go. She could literally come home and find me in the bathroom with my balls in my neighbor Chun Yee's mouth and she'd somehow find a way to justify it. I'm not trying to be a dick, that's just the way that it is.

CARL: Chun Yee gives you oral?

BRETT: Of course not. It's just an example to illustrate my point. I'm not like you. Don't think I didn't see what happened after the Denver game with that little Spanish number by the way.

CARL: Nothing happened. She needed a napkin. She had some mustard and relish on her-

BRETT: Mustard and relish my ass. She had a rear end you could mint coins with... Look, my philosophy is this. You have this dream as a kid. You had it. Playing that sax at Madison Square Garden with Springsteen or whatever the fuck it was. And as you get older you realize the world we live in doesn't foster that kind of dream and allow for a decent lifestyle as you work on the craft. It's one or the other. It's live comfortably and suffer the throngs of corporate America or live in squalor doing your thing.

CARL: Yeah, well you know, this is the life I've chosen. I'm a family man. Is it the right choice? It's the one for me. You make a choice and you stick with it. That's all you can do.

BRETT: I say you can have both. You just have to think outside the box and not worry so much about what people think and feel. Fuck their feelings. You've been in the game long enough to know how things work.

CARL: Yeah. That's for sure.

BRETT: There's a way out Carl. It doesn't even need to be something drastic. For you it might just mean playing the sax on Sundays at a local brunch joint. Maybe that's all you need to inject some juice back into those veins of yours.

CARL: Look at this.

(Carl reaches into his back pocket. He pulls out a spread sheet and hands it to Brett.)

BRETT: What's this?

CARL: This is my life. Every minute of every single day is booked solid from now until April. I'm locked down.

BRETT: You seriously have "make love to Leigh" as a parcel on a spreadsheet?

CARL: Give me that.

(Carl takes the spread sheet back.)

CARL: I work seventy hours a week. I'm still up to my ears in debt. There's no time for music. If I made time for music I'd be facing the music if you know what I mean.

BRETT: Well, I guess somewhere over the rainbow you'll have some freedom. I mean when you get that golden ticket you'll have plenty of it. Which is obviously very exciting.

CARL: What are you talking about?

BRETT: What am I talking about? The inheritance.

CARL: Well yeah. I mean, that'll be nice.

BRETT: You realize you could be dead tomorrow Carl? One inch to the left and my brother's skull would've been flattened by that Humvee. He's lucky to be in that wheelchair.

CARL: You're a saint by the way for doing what you're doing for him.

BRETT: I wouldn't go that far. We've digressed. The point is, sometimes the greatest opportunities in life are the ones that are sitting right in front of our own eyes and we're too blind to see them. I'm going to say something right now that's a funny thing to say out loud and I'm only admitting to it because I know you'd never say anything to the wifeys.

CARL: Of course not.

BRETT: I've been having these crazy fantasies lately about what it might be like to euthanize grandma.

CARL: What?

BRETT: Don't bullshit me Carl. I know you've been having them too. Sad but true she will very soon become a major liability. I mean, do you realize we're entering a depression this country hasn't seen the likes of in eighty fucking years. It'll make the last one look like a leisurely stroll to Pinkberry. We'll be dealing in Chinese Renminbi by the time she goes. The way they live in this family. Her sister went at ninety seven. Ninety seven. Her money will be worth pennies on the dollar by then.

CARL: She's not a horse Brett.

BRETT: The fuck she's not. I crunched the numbers. Do you have any idea the funding it takes to keep them going these days, the elderly? The upkeep? A new hip here. Heart surgery there. Putting them in a fucking home? She'll eat through your inheritance like it's a blue plate special. She'll devour your kid's college funds whole and then she'll pop your retirement like an antacid. And for what? (Continued)

BRETT (Cont'd): To have her around so she can berate you every time she sees you about producing another fucking grandchild? You met her at your wedding. You saw how she is. Don't tell me you haven't had some dirty little thoughts circulating around that little squash of yours you wouldn't want to share with the wifeys. How've you been getting her? In my fantasy, I usually get her with a little rat poison in her prune juice. Granny drifts off quietly in her sleep like a tired old rodent. It's the least detectable. Not that they'd do an autopsy. They never do on the elderly. They just assume they go out on their own accord. So what about you? What've you been doing?

CARL: What?

BRETT: Don't bullshit me Carl. You need that money. You just said it.

CARL: ... Alright, alright. I may have had a few... crazy thoughts.

BRETT: What?

CARL: I can't believe I'm telling you this.... Okay, I've uh... I've, drowned her in a bowl of split pea soup.

BRETT: Nice. No fingerprints. Smart. What else?

CARL: I've uh, I've suffocated her with her chef mittens.

BRETT: You animal.

CARL: Oh, and I've bludgeoned her with an anvil. Is that a cliché?

BRETT: Wow Carl. You're a scary guy.

CARL: You're a crazy guy.

BRETT: It's fun talking about stuff like this. It's fun to fantasize.

CARL: It's sick is what it is. We're a couple of sick puppies.

BRETT: Bullshit! We're products of a sick world. Where you work your balls off at a job for seven years only to be shit canned so they can hire some under qualified dipshit for half your salary. It's fuck or be fucked! And the less of a moral code you have the higher you climb.

CARL: I think you've had too much egg nog.

BRETT: I was about to pour myself another mug. (Brett picks up both mugs and exits to the kitchen.) You know, I'm always telling you to stand your ground. To take risks. And you never do. You always want to play it safe. Well, I'm not letting you off the hook that easy this time. Because you're my brother in law and I give a shit about you. I really do.

CARL: I give a shit about you too. So what are you saying?

BRETT: I'm saying I drove over here a few weeks back to take care of things.

CARL: Take care of what?

BRETT: What have we been talking about here Carl? It was after the Denver game. (Continued)

BRETT (Cont'd): I'd just left you. You were telling me all about your asshole boss that got promoted to GM and how you'd gotten fucked again. It was the week before they let me go. As you were telling me that story all I could think about were all the assholes I worked with who were climbing the ladder just like your guy. I mean I was livid by that story. So I got in my car, I plugged in the GPS, and I drove directly to this house.

CARL: For what?

BRETT: For what? To stake my claim. To put her to sleep.

(Brett slams his fist against Cathy's door.)

CARL: Jeez Brett.

BRETT: Don't bullshit me Carl. Don't give me this face. You've been thinking it too. We've established this.

CARL: Thinking it maybe. But what you're saying is. I mean there's a big difference between thinking and...

BRETT: Doing. Exactly. The difference is ultimately what defines a man's character. Look, I've been listening to the same rhetoric from you ever since I've known you Carl. It breaks my heart. My boss this. My wife that. This victim mentality. So as I'm pulling onto her street that night, I start thinking about you. How maybe it's time for you to do something bold. Something heroic, man. A rite of passage so to speak. How maybe this was the type of thing you needed to be doing. And instantly the following thoughts start permeating into my mind. And I'm only saying this because I know I can. Because you're my brother in law. (Continued)

BRETT (Cont'd): I start hearing, "He's a loser. He'll only fuck it up. He's not capable of something like this. He's too nervous. He's an anxious guy who let's people push him around all day. He's a victim." I dismissed you Carl. I wrote you off. And then I thought. No. No, no. That's not true. Because I've seen this guy take a risk. I saw how he flirted with that cute girl after Monday night football. Right after his wife had left. I thought my faithlessness in you is unsubstantiated. That it's based completely on all the bullshit stories you've been telling yourself all these years. That you believe these lies about yourself so much you've got me believing them too. That's when I realized he *can* do this. In fact he *needs* to do this. And why should I deprive him of this opportunity. So I pulled into her neighbor's driveway, turned around and headed back home. Because for me this is nothing. I'm there already. I'm living the dream bro and I don't give a fuck. But for you. For you this could be life changing. This could be that first transformational step on the path down the road less traveled.

CARL: ... I'm not murdering my wife's grandmother if that's what you're talking about.

BRETT: Don't use that word. We're putting her to sleep.

CARL: She's not a dog Brett.

BRETT: It'd be harder to put down a dog. Dogs are cute bro.

(Brett pulls a small VILE OF POISON from his pocket.)

BRETT: Here. Be the hero Carl. Be the one who saves the day and makes all our dreams a reality. Freshen up her tea with a little of this.

(Brett puts the VILE OF POISON in Carl's coat pocket.)

CARL: You're making me feel very uncomfortable right now.

BRETT: And that's exactly how you should be feeling. Because when you take a risk. When you step out of line, put the cup down, and say, "I'm a man, deal with it". Feelings rush over you that aren't so familiar. They're called growing pains, bro. Be grateful that they're there and realize they won't always be. But for now they're pointing you in the right direction. Where you are is the right place to be.

(Carl is lost in thought.)

BRETT (Cont'd): We'll celebrate in the morning. I'll cook you some flapjacks.

(Lights fade)

SCENE 2

(Christmas Eve. Saturday. Two thirty in the afternoon. A Christmas tree is now standing downstage right. Jen drunkenly decorates the tree. Brett, Carl and Leigh are huddled around the television watching the football game and drinking beer.)

LEIGH: Big play here. Come on. Let's put it in there.

BRETT: I'm surprised Grandma's not home yet. Should we be worried?

LEIGH: Yeah, I was thinking that too. But it is Christmas Eve. The shuttle bus is probably just running a little late.

BRETT: Yeah. Go, go, go, go, go, go! Yes!

LEIGH: Woo! That's what I'm talking about!

(Leigh high fives Brett.)

BRETT: The little train that could!

JEN: What happened?

LEIGH: We just went up by two touchdowns at halftime is what happened.

BRETT: We're killing 'em!

LEIGH: Here's to the Giants bringing us home another shiny Lombardi trophy!

CARL: Cheers to that!

BRETT: Salud.

(Brett and Leigh all toast each other. Carl stands up to toast Brett but Brett isn't looking.)

JEN: Are they gonna bring that trophy to your house Leigh? Or do you think they'll swing it over to my place for Brett to enjoy.

LEIGH: I think you've had a little too much cheer Jen. You're getting weird.

BRETT: Yeah, let's start phasing out the egg nogs and start introducing the water, babe.

JEN: Oh, I think I'm entitled to a drink or two. I worked all week.

LEIGH: You're drunk already Jen. It's two thirty in the afternoon.

JEN: Oh, I'm not drunk yet Leigh.

LEIGH: You are getting a touch hostile. This is one of the famous signs of when you're tipsy. We're family. We notice these recurring tendencies about you Jen.

JEN: Yeah. Well I'm noticing some tendencies too.

LEIGH: Like what?

JEN: Like how a bunch of grown men dressed in strange blue outfits that we've never even met before somehow factor into our lives more than our own family.

LEIGH: There's another one. Jen gets all philosophical on the booze. Don't you Jen?

JEN: Jen's gonna get philosophical with another egg nog.
At least Jen's clear on her relationship with the egg nog.

(Jen exits to the kitchen.)

LEIGH: *(to Brett)* You should check on her.

(Cathy suddenly bursts through the front door.)

CATHY: What the fuck is going on in here?

LEIGH: Grandma!

(Leigh hugs Cathy.)

CATHY: What the fuck is this? You walk around my living room with your shoes on? We take our shoes off in this house.

(Everyone scrambles to take off their shoes.)

LEIGH: Was everything okay grandma?

CATHY: Healthy as a fifty year old, he told me. Whatever the fuck that means. My second husband croaked at fifty. I don't pay much attention to what those cock suckers have to say.

LEIGH: What took you so long? We were worried sick.
Was the shuttle bus late?

CATHY: Fuck the bus. I walked.

BRETT: From Cedarville?

CATHY: I'm healthy as a fifty year old.

BRETT: And you look like a fifty year old. You look wonderful Cathy.

CATHY: Don't bullshit me fella. Human beings do not look wonderful at my age. We look like the goddamn fruit of the juice we drink all day. Like overgrown prunes. You'll be one too some day sonny so you can save the bullshit for the ones you actually want to stick your cock in... I know your type. I've been on this planet long enough to know when something's rotten...

(Jen enters with a fresh egg nog. She's visibly drunk.)

JEN: Hi Grandma.

CATHY: Would you look at this. Drunk as a skunk.

JEN: Here we go.

CATHY: You were right Leigh. She's turned herself into a lush. What a shame. To be given a shot at the miracle of life just to drink it all away.

LEIGH: You remember Carl, Grandma?

CATHY: How long you been with him?

LEIGH: He's my husband Grandma. Remember the wedding?

CATHY: He didn't leave much of an impression. Does he talk? What do you have to say for yourself?

CARL: I uh...

CATHY: Are you a man or a mouse? Say something.

CARL: I'm a man.

CATHY: Bullshit you are. Woman is the new man. Clits are turnin' into cocks. And cocks to clits. It's all gone topsy turvy. That's how come they don't know how to fuck no more, the men these days.

LEIGH: Be nice grandma.

CATHY: What, you don't talk about these things? At your age it should be all you talk about. Your juices flowin' the way they are. Maybe that's the other one's problem. (*referring to Jen*) She's frigid.

JEN: Oh, don't worry about me grandma.

BRETT: Your granddaughter is wonderful in the sack Cathy. I think you'd be proud.

CATHY: Does she use that mouth other than a way of breakin' your chops all day?

BRETT: I'm like an all you can eat buffet for her.

CATHY: So that's where all the grandchildren are goin'. Right down the hatch. Just like this country.

(*Ray enters in his wheelchair.*)

CATHY: Who the fuck's this now?

RAY: I'm Ray. Happy 80th. Ms. Larkin.

CATHY: The only one that said it. Why you in that chair sonny?

RAY: I got into an accident. In Afghanistan.

CATHY: You're a soldier?

RAY: I'm a marine.

CATHY: You oughta be ashamed of yourself.

LEIGH: Grandma-

CATHY: Don't grandma me-

RAY: No, no. It's okay.

CATHY: Do you even know what the fuck we're doin'
over there sonny?

LEIGH: You don't need to answer that Ray.

RAY: Its Okay. It's a confusing situation.

LEIGH: We're fighting the terrorists grandma. Putting an
end to terrorism.

CARL: And we're damn proud of you Ray.

CATHY: Ha. Terrorists? We're *all* terrorists! What? I
can't open my mouth? This new generation has no re-
spect for their elders. That's the problem. Their moral
compass is pointed south. Right down to hell where this
country's goin'. Where the fuck is my great grandchild
Leigh?

LEIGH: He's with Carl's parents. I think he's coming
down with something. I just hope it's not the flu.

CATHY: Eh, it's from all that crap you put in their bodies
these days. All that garbage you feed 'em. And all
those damn shots you fill 'em up with. (Continued)

CATHY (Cont'd): God forbid you throw a fucking vegetable in 'em from time to time. I haven't been sick in twenty years. The only shot I get is my morning shot of prune juice. That's why my libido is what it is. I had my first man a couple weeks before D-Day. A midshipman from Cleveland. You haven't made love 'til you've been fucked by a man before he goes off to war. God rest his soul. Somethin' how I've been blessed. Ended up by the grace of God meetin' your grandfather. He was a good man, your grandfather.

LEIGH: Yes he was.

CATHY: God rest his soul.

LEIGH: We love you Grandma.

(Leigh hugs Cathy.)

CATHY: *(to Brett)* Are you gonna give her a baby or are you gonna let her waste her life on a drip who can't perform as a man? She's getting old. Her oven's getting cold. *(to Jen)* You don't need him. You can just as easily adopt, ya know.

BRETT: When the time is right Cathy. Everything in due time.

CATHY: Like fucking menopause.

(Cathy walks to the closet and puts on her coat.)

LEIGH: Where are you going Grandma?

(Cathy pulls a 9MM HAND GUN out of her coat pocket.)

CATHY: I'm goin out to feed the squirrels. Feed 'em once and they come back tryin to scratch through your fuckin' house.

(Cathy exits through the front door.)

BRETT: O-kay.

CARL: Is it me or did a tornado just rip through this house?

BRETT: What is she doing with a gun?

LEIGH: She says the government's going to declare martial law and start hauling us all off to concentration camps.

BRETT: Well, I don't feel comfortable with her having that thing laying around like that. It's not safe.

LEIGH: Good luck trying to take it from her. I'm sorry about that Ray.

RAY: For what? To see someone like that at her age, with that much life. That much vitality. She's really kind of an inspiration.

JEN: The charm runs off very quickly. Trust me.

LEIGH: Well let's not let her spoil Christmas. I say let her be cranky and vulgar or however else she wants to be. All we can do is, kill her with kindness.

(Lights fade)

SCENE 3

(Christmas Eve. Later that night. The wee hours. Cathy is alone sipping a cup of tea. Ray enters in his wheelchair.)

RAY: Oh, hi Cathy.

CATHY: What are you doin' up?

RAY: I was just wondering if there are any extra blankets?

CATHY: Sure. It's cold in your room?

RAY: A little bit, yeah.

CATHY: Oh, sometimes the heater goes out. It must've gone out again.

RAY: What are you still doing up?

(Cathy picks up a blanket from the couch)

CATHY: Sometimes I have trouble getting to sleep. It's one of the things you have to look forward to as you get older. You don't sleep as much.

RAY: That's sucks.

(Cathy puts the blanket on Ray's lap and tucks it around him.)

CATHY: You kiddin? It's one of the perks. You sleep half your life away when you're young. I'm catchin' up on lost time. Here you go. This one here is wool. Wool's a good fabric. Keep you nice and toasty.

RAY: Great. Thanks.

CATHY: I didn't mean nothin' before. It just pisses me off that's all. These wars.

RAY: That's Okay. It didn't bother me.

CATHY: All that talk of puttin' that Texan and his crew behind bars for it. And then they hand over the damn peace prize to the new one for doing all the same things. For what? Because he smiles nice?

RAY: I hear you.

CATHY: You killed people over there?

RAY: No. No, they had me and my unit watching over an opium field.

CATHY: Opium field?

RAY: Most of the opium comes from that area. I kept trying to figure out what was really going on. Still haven't cracked that nut. When you're in the service though, you don't ask questions. You take orders. My commanding officer used to get all over me for that. I was always very curious.

CATHY: Curiosity killed the cat.

RAY: I think it was ignorance. Ignorance killed that kitty. Curiosity was framed.

CATHY: (*amused*) That's good. I like that. You're a smart boy.

RAY: Thanks. Well, anyway, I'm gonna get my beauty rest. Thanks Cathy.

CATHY: Here. Have some tea. The water's still hot.

RAY: Uh-

CATHY: I got sleepy time or peppermint.

RAY: That's Okay-

CATHY: I'll make you some sleepy time.

RAY: Okay.

(Cathy exits to the kitchen.)

CATHY: I've always preferred tea to coffee. Even in the morning. I don't need all that caffeine workin' on me to get me going. That's the way they want us. All hopped up, crazy, runnin' around like scared chickens with no heads. You don't like talkin' about the war?

(Cathy returns with Ray's tea.)

RAY: There's no sense talkin' about it.

CATHY: Eh, you gotta talk about things. Otherwise, what are you? You're a mouse.

RAY: We're all stuck in our opinions. People get all upset talking about what's going on.

CATHY: That's right. It's because their scared to face the truth about how things are. Most people are scared.

RAY: Yeah.

CATHY: And we're easier to control when we're scared.
That's the way they want us. Scared and asleep.

RAY: Yeah.

CATHY: You like your tea with honey? I got honey.

RAY: That's okay.

CATHY: You like that tea?

RAY: Yeah. It's good... So you're eighty tomorrow, huh?

CATHY: What time is it?

RAY: Uh, It's about one thirty.

CATHY: I'm eighty now.

(Ray holds up his tea cup. Cathy clinks tea cups with Ray. They both sip their tea.)

CATHY: I came out of the oven at twelve thirty seven. A Christmas baby. My mother used to always tell me I had big shoes to fill, being born the same day as Jesus. He understood the true nature of reality. That's how come they tacked him up on that cross. He was too peaceful. Now they use his name as a rally cry to massacre the middle easterners. He'd be rollin' in his grave if he had one.

RAY: Happy birthday.

CATHY: Eh, it don't make no difference. You oughta' celebrate every day you get here. Not just that day. Because if there's one thing I learned. It's that it's over before you even knew what the hell hit you.

RAY: You're happy though? I mean you feel like you've had a good life?

CATHY: It ain't over yet Ray. Jeez.

RAY: No, I didn't meant-

CATHY: Don't go havin' me buried already-

RAY: I didn't mean it like that. So far, I meant to say so far.

CATHY: I'm teasing you. The old lady's teasing you... You know, being old, its a funny thing. You disappear.

(Cathy exits to her bedroom.)

CATHY: People don't notice you there. They don't want nothin' from you no more either when you get to be a certain age. Which is nice.

(Cathy returns holding a small plate with a bag of marijuana and some rolling paper.)

CATHY: Unless you got money. Then they wanna be your best friend. Eh, you can't blame them though. In the times we're living in. These times here are tough. And we become like animals when they put the pressure on us like they are now.

(Cathy begins rolling a joint.)

CATHY: That's just the nature of us wanting to try and protect ourselves when things are falling apart. But we still got a choice to keep our humanity if we're strong enough. These days people are weak. That's why I try to push these girls. (Continued)

CATHY (Cont'd): They don't like that I'm hard on them. But you gotta be. Because who knows what the hell the next generation will be left with.

RAY: Yeah.

CATHY: That's right. So I like my age. Because I learned a lot in this life about who we are. About our place in the universe. Because you can if you want to. You can learn a lot if you care to pay attention. Otherwise you get cold and locked in your ways thinkin' you're important. The universe'll show you how important you are. What about you? I bet you learned a lot bein put in that wheelchair.

RAY: Yeah, well it's different. You know, when you're crippled you stick out like a sore thumb. People trying to help you out. Opening doors. Clearing paths for you. It's not so bad. A lot of times they do it out of sympathy. But that's okay.

CATHY: Well you don't got no sympathy here. We're all gonna lose a lot more than our legs some day.

RAY: Yup. That's the truth. Is that weed?

CATHY: You mind?

RAY: No. No. Of course not. By all means.

CATHY: I've been smoking since the sixties. (*taking a puff*) Those were some good times to be alive. We almost made a difference too. Here.

(*Cathy hands the joint to Ray.*)

RAY: Oh, thanks.

(Ray takes a hit.)

RAY (Cont'd): This is really good. Where you get it?

CATHY: I got a guy delivers to me here. Had him twenty five years now. He gets me some home grown hydro-ponic... *(hippie)* It's kiiind.

RAY: *(giggling)* It's kind she says. Yes it is.

(Carl enters the living room. He is an emotional wreck.)

CARL: Hey.

RAY: Hey Carl.

CARL: I can't sleep.

RAY: What's wrong?

CARL: Nothing. Just couldn't sleep, that's all.

RAY: You got somethin' on your mind pal?

CARL: Oh no, no. Nothing. Nothing worth mentioning.

CATHY: Wrestlin' with the demons are ya? That's when they come out. At night.

CARL: Yeah.

CATHY: Have a seat sonny.

RAY: Yeah. Have a seat Carl. You want a pull?

CARL: Uh, no, no. It doesn't agree with me.

CATHY: Might do you some good. It's good for insomnia.

CARL: Oh yeah?

CATHY: It's good for a lot of things. That's how come they don't want you gettin' your hands on it. Cause it's good for you. Here, have a puff sunny. You'll be fast asleep before you even know what the hell hit you.

CARL: I get paranoid.

CATHY: Not on this you don't. It's mellow. It'll relax you.

RAY: (*motioning to Leigh's room*) She won't know.

CATHY: You're on vacation. Take it easy. (*Cathy massages Carl's shoulders.*) You're very tense.

CARL: (*uncomfortable*) You have very strong hands.

CATHY: They need to be strong to work the soil. We lost our reverence for the land. We're letting them destroy it. Like they destroy everything that's good. Just like they always do. Like they killed that Kennedy boy. He wasn't afraid to stand up to them. Ha, that's the true sign of a good president. When they kill them.

RAY: Wow. When they kill you, you know you were good.

CATHY: That's the truth. They kill the real heroes and reward the villains with the highest honors. It's a topsy turvy land we live in.

CARL: What do you mean "they"? Who are "they"?

(Cathy and Ray chuckle.)

CATHY: You won't be able to see it. You can't see it when you're standin' in it. Just like a fish don't know he's in water til they take him out and he's floppin' all over the floor gaspin' for breath.

RAY: *(giggling)* A fish. You're holdin' it backwards Carl.

CARL: Oh.

CATHY: There's a lot of knowledge in the plants. They can teach you better than any book. They could teach you everything you need to know.

(beat)

RAY: When you die, you think you grow wings and return to a better place?

CATHY: Eh, you become a plant. You go back to being an angel.

RAY: Just like plants are?

CATHY: Of course. All plants are angels. And we're like them. Deep down we are. It's in our chemistry. We're all angels deep down no matter what things we do here.

RAY: *(high)* Like plants with wings?

CATHY: Sure... What about you sonny? *(To Carl)* You're not sayin much. What do you gotta say for yourself?

CARL: I don't know. I uh, I heard it's gonna warm up tomorrow. I-I heard it's gonna...

RAY: ... What? What's it gonna do?

CATHY: You okay?

CARL: I feel funny.

RAY: But you didn't even smoke.

CATHY: What's wrong with you sonny?

CARL: My mouth is dry.

CATHY: Want some tea?

RAY: The Sleepy Time's good.

CARL: Yeah, yeah. That'll be good. I'll have some of that.

(Cathy gets up)

CARL: No, no. I'll get it.

CATHY: Sit down. Let me-

CARL: I said I'll get it!... Sorry. You want some more hot water Cathy?

CATHY: Sure. Sure. I'll have some more.

RAY: You're sweating.

CATHY: And you're very pale.

(Carl takes Cathy's mug.)

RAY: What's on your mind Carl?

CARL: It's uh... It's nothing... I can't.

RAY: Why? If you told me you'd have to kill me?

CATHY: Well, you know, whatever you're thinkin' about you got a choice. You got a choice to do what's right or to do what they want you to do. It's always a choice. Even if they got you locked up in one of their prisons.

CARL: I don't wanna be... I'm tired of being locked up.

CATHY: That's nonsense. You're the one holdin' the key. They can't lock you up. Not unless you give 'em the key.

RAY: Don't give 'em the key.

CARL: I don't want to be in prison.

CATHY: Then get out!

(Carl exits to the kitchen with Cathy's tea cup.)

RAY: She's a smart woman. Listen to what she says Carl. You should get out. Let yourself go.

CATHY: It's no good to be tensed up all the time. You give yourself a heart attack. Like my husband. He was always pent up that man.

(Carl enters holding Cathy's tea cup.)

CARL: *(to Cathy)* Do you know? Do you know what's going on?

CATHY: Smoke the right plants and you know everything.

(Cathy and Ray both laugh.)

CARL: What's so funny? Did I say something funny?

(Ray and Cathy laugh even harder. Carl timidly hovers over Cathy, holding out her tea cup. A moment or two pass as Ray and Cathy laugh. Cathy tries to take the cup and Carl doesn't hand it to her. Cathy finally reaches over and grabs the cup. She takes a sip. Ray and Cathy continue laughing like children.)

BLACKOUT