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True Genius
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More Great Plays From OWP

Knuckleball

by William Whitehurst

1 Male, 1 Female

Synopsis: In a moment of passion and intimacy, Ross proposes to his promiscuous lover Trish. She desperately wants to say yes, but cannot. But Ross won't take no for answer—she must either marry him or explain why she won't. She tells an extraordinary tale about who—and what—she really is. But is she telling the truth? And if she is, will the truth destroy these lovers, or save them? *Knuckleball* challenges us to rethink the nature and meaning of love in our contemporary world.

WINNER

Best Play

2008 San Francisco Fringe Festival

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.

WINNER

Outstanding Playwright Award

2008 Fringe NYC

TRUE GENIUS

By DAVID HOLSTEIN

SETTING

*An apartment and a psychologist's office,
New York City, 1997*

CHARACTERS

Scooter (19): A pathological liar, boy genius and high school drop out.

Lila (22): Spontaneous, quirky and pathological; she's everything you'd ever want in a girl you met at a psychologist's office.

Margaret (40s/50s): Scooter's mother. She loves her children even when loving them means hurting them.

Foyer (30s/40s): A psychologist with more problems than his patients.

Jeffrey (10): Scooter's younger brother.

TRUE GENIUS was developed and first produced by Northwestern University's Theatre and Interpretation Center in Evanston, IL, premiering on November 19, 2004. It was directed by the author; the lighting design was by Christina Calce & Kevin Cannon; the set design was by Micah Stanek; the costume design was by Jocelyn Kelvin & Lauren Holstein; the Production Manager was Claudia Kunin; and the Stage Managers were Meredith Forlenza & Lauren Weisman. The cast was as follows:

<i>Scooter</i>	<i>Reginald Gowland</i>
<i>Lila</i>	<i>Alexandra Adair</i>
<i>Margaret</i>	<i>Melissa Hunter</i>
<i>Dr. Foyer</i>	<i>Matthew Sheelen</i>
<i>Jeffrey</i>	<i>Courtney Dunn</i>
<i>Daryl</i>	<i>Andrew Gebhart</i>

A revised version of TRUE GENIUS was produced at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in Edinburgh Scotland on August 4, 2005. It was directed by the author; the set and lighting design were by Kyle Eck; the costume design was by Kristy Hall; the Production Manager was Laila Siddiqui; the Stage Manager was Amanda Krieg. The cast was as follows:

<i>Scooter</i>	<i>Reginald Gowland</i>
<i>Lila</i>	<i>Alexandra Adair</i>
<i>Margaret</i>	<i>Melissa Hunter</i>
<i>Dr. Foyer</i>	<i>Blake Silver</i>
<i>Jeffrey</i>	<i>Laura Scheinbaum</i>
<i>Daryl</i>	<i>David Winkler</i>

**Per development, the role of Daryl was removed from the play.*

TRUE GENIUS

ACT ONE

SCENE 1: SCOOTER'S BEDROOM

(SCOOTER 19, sits in a pool of light, shaving into a mirror we can't see, wearing a suit jacket over street clothes. He lathers his face in shaving cream. JEFFREY, 10, his brother, sneaks in carrying a garden gnome, dressed for church, but no suit jacket. JEFFREY travels in his own pool of light. As SCOOTER brings the razor to his neck, JEFFREY--)

JEFFREY: Tell me I'm cute.

SCOOTER: *(doesn't look at him)* Get out.

JEFFREY: I can't sleep, Scooter. Let's play Monopoly.

SCOOTER: Not today. Go back to sleep, Jeffrey.

JEFFREY: But we always play monopoly before church.

SCOOTER: Not today, Jeffrey.

JEFFREY: I'm only here because I thought you would want a friend.

SCOOTER: You're here to watch me shave.

JEFFREY: Friends do that.

SCOOTER: I want a real friend.

JEFFREY: I am a real friend.

SCOOTER: You're 10.

JEFFREY: You're crazy.

SCOOTER: I'm not crazy.

JEFFREY: Can you prove it? *(a beat)* Can you prove it? Why are you awake?

SCOOTER: I'm not. I'm sleeping.

JEFFREY: Are you sleep talking?

SCOOTER: Yes. Or maybe I'm dreaming.

JEFFREY: You're not dreaming. Let's play Monopoly.

SCOOTER: It feels like I'm dreaming.

JEFFREY: Why? I'm here talking to you.

SCOOTER: Yeah, but you're holding a garden gnome.

JEFFREY: I am.

SCOOTER: Friends don't do that.

JEFFREY: They don't?

SCOOTER: No. Let me see your gnome.

JEFFREY: Don't touch it.

SCOOTER: I'm not going to break it.

JEFFREY: No. I'm teaching him math.

SCOOTER: Where'd you learn math?

JEFFREY: In school. I go to school every day after a complete breakfast. Why don't you go to school anymore?

SCOOTER: I hate math.

JEFFREY: Why'd you try to kill mom, Scooter? *(A pregnant beat. SCOOTER doesn't answer.)* Tell me, come on, I won't tell anyone.

SCOOTER: *(playing it off)* Who told you that?

JEFFREY: She said you had a knife. Is that why you're not in school anymore? Is that why you stay home all day in your room?

SCOOTER: I didn't try to... you're supposed to be my friend.

JEFFREY: You don't have any friends.

SCOOTER: Let me see your gnome.

JEFFREY: DON'T TOUCH MY GNOME.

SCOOTER: It was nothing, Jeffrey. I was gesturing...do you know what gesturing is?

JEFFREY: You don't hate Mom, do you Scooter? I love Mom. I'm giving her my math gnome. *(then)* Wanna hear my math gnome song?

SCOOTER: Not even a little bit.

JEFFREY: (*sung*) "I've got a gnome...he can add...that's why he's my gnome...and he's not sad..." (*Beat.*) Scooter?

SCOOTER: Yeah.

JEFFREY: Are you still sleeping?

SCOOTER: No. I think I'm really really awake.

SCENE 2: SCOOTER'S BEDROOM

(*JEFFREY's pool of light disappears and another pops up on SCOOTER's mother, MARGARET, dressed for church, holding two broken halves of a garden gnome. We notice COMIC BOOKS on the bed.*)

MARGARET: You're a liar.

SCOOTER: That's mean.

MARGARET: This was an innocent gnome.

SCOOTER: And it knew math.

MARGARET: And you're not dressed.

SCOOTER: Nope. Not coming with you.

MARGARET: Are you being spiteful? Are you doing some spiteful thing?

SCOOTER: Yes. My elaborate plan of not going to church.

MARGARET: Michael, if I had known I would need to keep you on such a short leash, I wouldn't have asked them to cut the umbilical cord.

SCOOTER: (*re: gnome*) It's just an act of rebellion. "Bottled up angst released spasmodically through a quick bout of physical violence."

(*MARGARET leafs through the comic books.*)

MARGARET: Janet Rothchild, "Psychology of the Adolescent Mind," page 28. You're driving me insane.

SCOOTER: I am not.

MARGARET: You are too. Since when do you read comic books?

SCOOTER: I never said I did.

MARGARET: You're nineteen already. How often? Once a week, once a month?

SCOOTER: Once in a while.

MARGARET: Which ones? The violent ones?

SCOOTER: Batman, Superman, the Ultra-Rapist.

MARGARET: Your father doesn't like this.

SCOOTER: How do you know?

MARGARET: He tells me. He tells me everything.

SCOOTER: Right. Treat me like I'm ten years old.

MARGARET: Listen--

SCOOTER: I want to know what you say to him.

MARGARET: I tell him lots of things.

SCOOTER: Like what?

MARGARET: I tell him that you're out of high school... because you're too smart for it.

SCOOTER: Dad! Dad! (*then*) Wait. He can't hear you. He's dead.

MARGARET: Why are you provoking me?

SCOOTER: --you provoking me? You think he agrees with you?

MARGARET: Is that it? Do you need a father?

SCOOTER: For Christmas?

MARGARET: That's a serious question.

SCOOTER: Maybe I'm not a serious person.

MARGARET: I'm trying to figure you out. Believe it or not, that wasn't my idea, it was the doctor's.

SCOOTER: Why? So I can have somebody take me to little league and go to football games, well it's a little late--

MARGARET: To protect me from you. (*SCOOTER shuts up.*) What makes you think you're so smart? Is it all these trophies? When are you going to see that they don't mean anything outside of this house. They're nothing, Michael. Absolutely nothing. I know you're a smart kid. I do.

SCOOTER: Smart? I'm deadly. (*SCOOTER goes to the wall, gestures to a wall of trophies that we must imagine are there. Reading trophies*) The Braverman award for academic excellence. Two Westinghouse certificates. A Crenshaw distinction. And this silver plated thing that IBM only gives to smart kids.

MARGARET: Dr. Foyer says you need to be monitored. He thinks you're delusional.

SCOOTER: Who's Dr. Foyer?

MARGARET: Your new best friend.

SCOOTER: I don't think so.

MARGARET: It's your choice: God or a modestly recommended family therapist. Someone has to monitor you.

SCOOTER: Do you believe that? Do you think that's what I need?

MARGARET: I'll tell you what I think, but it's not like you care. You don't want to hear it if it doesn't come out of your mouth.

SCOOTER: No, I want to hear what you think. Such an untapped resource.

MARGARET: I think you need to grow up. You've got a long life ahead of you. (*SCOOTER takes out his notebook and pen, prepares to write, but doesn't.*) What is that?

SCOOTER: My memoirs. The story of my life. The genius forbidden to reach his potential. A portrait of the perfect family.

MARGARET: You're delusional. Maybe you should go back to high school.

SCOOTER: You don't learn anything in school. You read books. That's all. There isn't anything they can teach me there that I can't do faster and better on my own. You have to learn in the real world by doing. Not by being pinned to some benign curriculum. Right?

MARGARET: (*re: the trophies*) I never said you didn't have potential, Michael, but I think you're falling apart.

SCOOTER: I've been reading. Tell that to the psychologist.

MARGARET: It doesn't matter. You'll just be told you're crazy and a lunatic and a mental case and they'll wrap you up in a big white towel, throw you in a cage for sixty years, then bury you somewhere between Einstein and that guy who shot Lincoln.

SCOOTER: Booth.

MARGARET: Whatever. *(beat)* I love you dearly.

SCOOTER: I'm shouting out for help. I'm waving the white flag. I blame the movies, I blame television, and I blame you.

MARGARET: Paraphrased. Matthew Gilmore. "My Mother the Whore." I wish you'd just read Hemingway.

SCOOTER: What do you know about Hemingway?

MARGARET: That's my job. I'm well-read. Maybe you should get a job.

SCOOTER: I don't need a job: I'm funny.

MARGARET: You're self-destructive.

SCOOTER: *(holding half a gnome)* That's not what the gnome said.

MARGARET: You drew a knife on your mother.

SCOOTER: Once. I was gesturing.

MARGARET: Last night you set a bag of dog poop on fire and left it on Marty Anderson's porch. You're destructive.

SCOOTER: It's a joke, he's supposed to stomp it out.

MARGARET: They weren't home. You almost burned their house down.

SCOOTER: *(handing her the gnome)* Poop is funny.

MARGARET: Gnomes are weird, Michael. Like Charles Manson-weird. You shouldn't be playing with them.

SCOOTER: I wasn't playing with it. Jeffrey was playing with it.

MARGARET: Let's not do this again.

SCOOTER: Jeffrey WAS PLAYING WITH IT.

(A beat)

MARGARET: So it was Jeffrey...?

JEFFREY: *(O.S.)* Mom! Scooter!

SCOOTER: Mom.

MARGARET: Yes, honey.

(JEFFREY scampers on stage and immediately joins SCOOTER on the bed.)

JEFFREY: *(to SCOOTER)* What did you do with my gnome?

SCOOTER: I broke it.

MARGARET: You need to control yourself.

JEFFREY: *(indicating female gnome)* But they were gonna get married and live upstairs.

SCOOTER: Don't you turn him against me.

MARGARET: Michael! That's enough. I'd feel better if you'd talk to someone.

SCOOTER: Please stop calling me that.

MARGARET: It's your name.

(JEFFREY begins to cry.)

SCOOTER: *(SCOOTER picks up half a gnome.)* Don't cry, Jeffrey. *(beat)* You're killing him.

(MARGARET begins to leave.)

MARGARET: Are you sure you don't want to come?

JEFFREY: If you're hungry, they give you pieces of Jesus to eat.

(MARGARET looks down towards the two of them.)

MARGARET: Smile. You look... you look like your father when you smile.

JEFFREY: I love you.

(SCOOTER scampers off towards the kitchen. MARGARET begins to exit.)

MARGARET: I love you.

JEFFREY: *(trailing, echoing)* I love you. I love you. I love you...

(JEFFREY exits.)

MARGARET: Some people go to church. Some people wish you would sit next to them and read from the Holy Book of G-d. They wish you would hum along gracefully with the choir. They don't understand why your mother furrows her brow when the usher hands her the collection plate over your empty seat.

SCOOTER: Have fun.

MARGARET: I'm going to church. *(beat)* You're going to Hell, Michael.

SCOOTER: I'm not going to Hell. I don't believe in Hell. You can only go to places you believe in.

MARGARET: Fine, you're going to Hell, Scooter.

SCOOTER: You're leaving me alone?

MARGARET: May the Lord be with you.

(MARGARET exits. SCOOTER's pool of light disappears. Some '90s grunge music ushers us into...)

SCENE 3: DR. FOYER'S OFFICE WAITING ROOM

A POOL OF LIGHT illuminates LILA, 22, sitting on the floor. LILA is cute in the independent, carefree, are-you-going-to-finish-that-steak sort of way. She shoulders a very distinguishable purse, something homemade and original. She unceremoniously dumps the contents of her purse onto the ground: a hairbrush, a hammer, lots of random things, a bag of stale gummy worms. She takes a gummy worm out, bounces it against the ground; it's rock hard. She takes another one out of the bag and eats it, sifting through the mess for something. SCOOTER enters.)

LILA: I lost my passport.

SCOOTER: What?

LILA: A blue leather passport with the bald Eagle-thing on the front. I lost it.

SCOOTER: That sucks.

LILA: *(an observation not a complement)* You have nice eyes. Like a father's.

(LILA shoves all the contents back into her purse, sits down in a chair. SCOOTER isn't sure how to respond.)

SCOOTER: Thank you, passport girl.

(But LILA isn't paying attention to him. SCOOTER scribbles her a note and hands it to her.)

LILA: What's this?

SCOOTER: My phone number.

(LILA takes the note, confused.)

LILA: I'm sorry, who are you?

SCOOTER: Scooter.

LILA: Scooter, why are you giving me your phone number?

SCOOTER: Because if I make a fool of myself trying to flirt with you, then at least you'll already have it. Better work ethic.

LILA: Right. You seem needy.

SCOOTER: Sorry...severe emotional anguish...that's why I'm here. Why are you here?

LILA: Just seeing a psychologist.

SCOOTER: Really? Maybe we have something in common.

LILA: What makes you think that you and I have anything in common?

SCOOTER: If we don't have anything in common, you can give me back my lunch receipt.

LILA: That doesn't sound like much of a deal.

SCOOTER: I'm here because of my mother.

LILA: Oh, are you close with her?

SCOOTER: No...she's a hooker.

LILA: Really? That's...neat.

SCOOTER: Yeah. A prostitute. Do you know the corner of 156th and Amsterdam?

LILA: Next to the Dairy Queen?

SCOOTER: Well, that's what they call her. Literally thousands of satisfied customers. And hey, you know the dumpster out back? That's where I was conceived. Some egg cartons, my mom, and a father I never knew.

LILA: Wow...so you're like, a real bastard!

(SCOOTER blanks, defeated.)

SCOOTER: Are you going somewhere?

LILA: What?

SCOOTER: You said you lost your passport, are you going somewhere? Do you like to travel?

LILA: No. Yes.

SCOOTER: Why are you--

LILA: This is a psychologist's office. People don't go around bragging about their mental disorders.

SCOOTER: So it's a mental disorder?

LILA: I didn't say that.

SCOOTER: Yes, you did. But I understand if you don't want to brag.

LILA: I'm not bragging about it. I don't even want to talk about it!

SCOOTER: Fine.

LILA: (*turning serious*) I'm having mother issues.

SCOOTER: Me too.

LILA: I'm pregnant.

SCOOTER: Oh. OK. That's neat.

LILA: Yeah, quadruplets. They've been in there for like two years. It's weird. They just won't come out.

SCOOTER: Yeah, that is weird-- Premies!

LILA: What was that?

SCOOTER: Sorry, I suffer from Tourettes Syndrome.

LILA: I thought you had emotional anguish.

SCOOTER: Yes. And Tourettes (*Beat.*) Premies! PRE-MATURE BABIES. Sorry, it's a condition I've had since I was five....four three two one LIFTOFF!

LILA: I'm also severely depressed. So if you don't mind...I'd like to make it through another trimester.

SCOOTER: You're depressed, too? Double threat, soccer mom.

LILA: It's Lila.

(LILA extends her hand, then grabs SCOOTER's wrist.)

SCOOTER: Lila.

LILA: Scooter, when you were growing up, did you ever know anybody who cut their wrists?

SCOOTER: Yeah, I knew this kid, Fuckhead, in middle school.

LILA: His name was Fuckhead?

SCOOTER: Well, that's what we called him.

LILA: Fair enough.

SCOOTER: So you're saying you cut your wrists?

LILA: No. I cut other people's wrists. Better work ethic.

SCOOTER: You're not pregnant.

LILA: Are you calling me a liar?

SCOOTER: Yes. I am.

LILA: Good. Now we have something in common.

(Lights down on SCOOTER and LILA...)

SCENE 4: FOYER'S PSYCHOLOGIST OFFICE

...and up on FOYER, trying and failing to light a cigarette. SCOOTER reclines on a leather chaise. We notice FOYER's desk has two picture frames on it. SCOOTER stares up at the ceiling.)

SCOOTER: When I stare up at paneled ceilings, I like to pretend I'm an action hero, who has to escape by climbing up through the ceiling and navigating the ducts.

FOYER: Ducks? Quack quack?

SCOOTER: Ducts. *(makes blowing sound)* Air conditioning.

FOYER: Please state your name.

SCOOTER: You sound like you work for the government. *(beat)* Scooter J. Thermapolous, Esquire, King of Apes--

FOYER: Fantastic. Scooter. Start talking...

SCOOTER: That's it? Start talking? What do you want me to say?

FOYER: I don't care. Quack if you like. Surprise me. Something good. One day I'm going to plagiarize it into a novel so don't hold back.

SCOOTER: You know, I don't really want to be here.

FOYER: (*patronizing*) Oh? Oh geez... I didn't... I mean... you don't have to be here... (*SCOOTER goes to exit.*) Oh oh oh you must be traumatized. (*then*) SIT. THE. FUCK. DOWN.

SCOOTER: I'm sorry?

FOYER: You. Chair. It. Now. Talk!

SCOOTER: I don't have to be here.

FOYER: Ooh! Ooh, now me. I want a pony!

SCOOTER: Don't patronize me.

FOYER: What's your name?

SCOOTER: Scooter.

FOYER: Really?

SCOOTER: Call me Scooter.

(*FOYER lights his cigarette.*)

FOYER: You're nineteen. Do you smoke?

SCOOTER: No.

FOYER: Why not? It's good for you.

SCOOTER: I heard it kills.

FOYER: You don't want to die young? I thought you were writing your memoirs; you don't want a novella.

SCOOTER: I keep a notebook.

FOYER: You're nineteen.

SCOOTER: Idle hands.

FOYER: Hey, that's good, it means you're a smart kid.

SCOOTER: Yeah, well...ConED calls me fifteen times a week, begging me to work as a consultant. I won the Westinghouse twice before I could cross the street on my own. In my spare time, I design skyscrapers with Legos.

(FOYER nods.)

FOYER: And you're funny.

SCOOTER: And I'm funny.

FOYER: And I'm laughing.

(FOYER coughs a smoker's cough.)

SCOOTER: Tell me about you.

FOYER: I'm an open book.

SCOOTER: Kids?

FOYER: Yes.

SCOOTER: Married?

FOYER: Sort of.

SCOOTER: Sort of?

FOYER: Flawlessly matrimonious.

SCOOTER: Got it.

FOYER: What are you afraid of?

SCOOTER: I'm not afraid.

FOYER: Fear is a great motivator. Einstein was afraid of math. Newton, heights. Beethoven...being deaf?

SCOOTER: I'm not afraid.

FOYER: You're nineteen and you act like you're going to die... tomorrow.

SCOOTER: Maybe I am. You could die tomorrow. I saw that empty box of Krispy Kremes behind your desk and I think you're about three sprinkles away from a coronary.

FOYER: Which one's a coronary?

SCOOTER: I'm just saying. Maybe I am going to die. You don't know that. (SCOOTER's patience is wearing thin. Every time he says 'Bam,' he snaps or gestures.) Every day people die. Bam, someone died. Right there. Bam, dead. Bam, a train wreck in Thailand. Bam, cancer. Bam, trampled to death at an IKEA. Daughters, sons, aunts, uncles, mothers--

FOYER: Fathers.

(A pregnant beat. SCOOTER doesn't snap. He gets up and looks around.)

SCOOTER: Do you like crossword puzzles?

FOYER: I do.

SCOOTER: I think they're stupid. New York Times?

FOYER: New York Post.

SCOOTER: Better headlines.

FOYER: You like questions, Michael.

SCOOTER: I like answers.

FOYER: Who's Michael?

SCOOTER: Me.

FOYER: Who's Scooter? *(then)* Do you mind if I ask a few questions?

SCOOTER: Hasn't stopped you so far.

FOYER: Well, they teach you in shrink school to ask about the patient's childhood.

SCOOTER: Am I that patient?

FOYER: You are sometimes. Zinger!

SCOOTER: Was that a joke, Dr. Foyer?

FOYER: Yes Michael, they taught those in grad school. Have a seat. *(SCOOTER sits down.)* Your childhood. Let's go...day one, you popped out and you landed...

SCOOTER: Dangling from my mother's stomach, hanging by my navel two feet off the operating table. I thought it was a noose so I didn't fight back.

FOYER: Then you swung like Tarzan over to the counter and hijacked the room with handful of syringes.

SCOOTER: I was precocious.

FOYER: And your mother?

SCOOTER: She was so high on painkillers she named me Little Jesus.

FOYER: Give me your first memory.

SCOOTER: I'm not big on memory.

FOYER: You have to remember something. Unless you don't want to remember.

SCOOTER: Why wouldn't I want to remember?

FOYER: I don't know. I mean, no one remembers their infancy. You don't want to remember the taste of baby food, being cut out of your mom's stomach. That would pretty much mess you up for life.

SCOOTER: OK.

FOYER: Your first few years were perfect, exactly what you want them to be, because you can relive them in baby photos and Huggies commercials.

SCOOTER: What are you getting at?

FOYER: ConEd's a big electrical company. The Westinghouse is hard to win.

SCOOTER: You think I'm lying?

FOYER: If you are, I don't think it's your fault. You're a generation raised by former hippies, what did you think was going to happen? We raised a generation of cynics. *(beat)* My parents grew up in World War II...this age of absolutes...nobody talked back to their parents, there was no rebellion in the American family...you woke up, got the paper, ate your breakfast and went to school...but then we had our own war, we had Viet Nam, which started out as this absolute and then collapsed into what it really was, which was just lies...and we started talking back, we started pushing our parents around...and we went to sleep and woke up the next morning with children screaming at us, who we had to tell not to do the things that we grew up doing and sound like we actually meant it! *(beat)* We raised you in a world so cynical, so bereft of absolute realities, that I can tell you to your face that I hate you and you won't know whether I'm kidding or not...your generation, Michael, lives in a gray area with nothing, no reality to latch onto and you feel desensitized and depressed and alone and I know this because my generation pays me to deal with it for them.

SCOOTER: So you think I'm a liar?

FOYER: I think you're filling in the blanks. *(beat)* Have you ever asked your mom where she was when President Kennedy was shot?

SCOOTER: No, why?

FOYER: Every one my age knows where they were when Kennedy was shot. To me that day was the last real day anybody in this country ever experienced...Oswald shot the last great American hero from a book depository...and we were vulnerable...and we were afraid, had a Cold War and raised a bunch of cynical basketcases who are now just as afraid as we were. *(beat)* Tell me about your family.

SCOOTER: What do you want to know?

FOYER: Tell me about your Dad.

SCOOTER: He died when I was three. I never really got the chance to know him.

FOYER: That sucks balls. Do you want to talk about him?

SCOOTER: No. Do you want to play Monopoly?

FOYER: What about your mother? Did she remarry?

SCOOTER: No.

FOYER: Does she date?

SCOOTER: No.

FOYER: Do truckers honk at her?

SCOOTER: No. No. She has no one.

(A beat.)

FOYER: I wish I had Monopoly. *(beat)* Race car?

SCOOTER: Thimble. Always.

FOYER: Oh?

SCOOTER: No one ever suspects the thimble.

FOYER: Who do you play with?

SCOOTER: I'm sorry?

FOYER: Who do you play with? Who's the race car?

SCOOTER: Why do you care?

FOYER: Because Michael, you're my patient. You're pathological.

SCOOTER: What did you call me?

FOYER: Pathological.

SCOOTER: I told you I'm not lying.

FOYER: I never called you a liar.

SCOOTER: What's the difference?

FOYER: A liar knows he's lying. You're pathological; you don't.

(Lights down on SCOOTER and immediately up on...

SCENE 5: DR. FOYER'S OFFICE

...MARGARET standing exactly where SCOOTER was, staring at the ceiling.)

MARGARET: Interesting ceilings.

FOYER: Thank you. You're shorter than he described you and less of a prostitute.

MARGARET: He didn't say that?

FOYER: No. I'm lying. Have a seat.

MARGARET: The insurance company said you were the best.

FOYER: They usually do.

MARGARET: And I wanted to say hello.

FOYER: So you're employed?

MARGARET: Yes. I work at a publishing house. Mostly reference books. I'm a receptionist. I read a lot.

FOYER: You like what you do?

MARGARET: I've been doing it for sixteen years.

FOYER: Must be great insurance.

MARGARET: Yes.

FOYER: He calls himself Scooter.

MARGARET: He idolizes his father. There's nothing wrong with that.

FOYER: No.

MARGARET: The trophies in his room, the plagues on his wall. They're his fathers.

FOYER: Like you said.

MARGARET: It makes him happy.

FOYER: It keeps him safe.

MARGARET: Yes. It keeps him safe.

(Lights down on FOYER...

SCENE 6: THE KITCHEN

...and up on MARGARET in her kitchen. As SCOOTER enters on one side with a CAKEBOX, JEFFREY enters at the exact same time across the room with his HOMEWORK BOOKS sits at the table.)

MARGARET: Where were you?

SCOOTER: I went to Doctor Foyer's.

MARGARET: Oh. That's good. What did he say?

SCOOTER: He says I'm having emotional constipation.

MARGARET: What does that mean?

SCOOTER: It means my inner child is trapped in my ass.

(SCOOTER high fives JEFFREY.)

MARGARET: What's in the box?

SCOOTER: A birthday cake. Chocolate.

(SCOOTER places the cake on the table.)

MARGARET: Who's birthday is it?

SCOOTER: Sixteen years ago Dad died of a heart attack. Tonight, we eat cake. Festive and ironic.

(MARGARET removes the cake from the table.)

MARGARET: Michael, that's morbid and inappropriate.