

Condolences

A new play by Wade Schacht

Characters

Charlie Powers

Mid 20s. Male.

Vince Johnson

Mid 20s. Male.

Scene

The action in this play primarily takes place in an office in the New York Financial District. Although other venues appear throughout the play, they are intended to be conveyed through relatively minimalist sets. Locational focus should remain on the office at all times.

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PROLOGUE

Lights up on Charlie's office. A corporate, lifeless desk sits at the center, adorned with mostly practicalities – a laptop, stationery, scattered newspaper clippings – and little to no personal paraphernalia. The only decorations in the room are a lightly battered Buffalo Bills flag and a pristine MBA from Yale – and a photo book, displayed prominently on a stand on his desk. In the corner, a pair of boxes with files strewn around them. From offstage, we hear a slam, followed by the jangle of a set of keys. CHARLIE stumbles in, clearly intoxicated. He is wearing loose formal attire. He is sweaty and disheveled. He rips off his tie and discards it, stumbling over to his desk. He throws himself down in the chair, seemingly on the verge of passing out. Eventually, he collects himself enough to move to the boxes. He searches through them desperately, finding pills and a gun, both of which he seems markedly uninterested in, leaving them to join the messy pile of files. Eventually, he finds a small bag of white powder. He crawls over to his desk, pours out the powder, lines it up, and snorts it. After an original moment of discomfort, he begins to take deeper breaths and looks relieved. He sits again, eyes closed, and begins unbuttoning his shirt. He takes the photo book off of its stand and opens it to a random page. He begins to flip through it, his shirt now fully unbuttoned. As he continues, he becomes increasingly tortured and his breath becomes noticeably shorter. Suddenly, before things get out of hand, the phone rings. CHARLIE jolts out of his intense fixation. He is terrified. VINCE enters stage left, wearing jeans and a blue union shirt. He is illuminated by a spotlight. CHARLIE, despite his now-raging paranoia, answers the phone.

CHARLIE: Hello?

VINCE: Charlie!

CHARLIE: Who– who's this?

VINCE: It's Vince, man, who else?

CHARLIE: Ah, shit. Shit.

CHARLIE slams the book shut and puts it back on its stand. He begins to button his shirt back up.

VINCE: You alright?

CHARLIE: Yeah. Yeah. Hey, buddy.

VINCE: *(clearly amused)* Long night?

CHARLIE: Yeah. Yeah. Something like that.

VINCE: Same old Chuck.

CHARLIE: Well, you know what they say. You can take the kid outta Hyde Park...

VINCE: And he'll still be a scumbag.

CHARLIE: Damn right.

VINCE: How ya been, man.

CHARLIE: Fine. Just fine. Hard to keep up, though. It's a whirlwind. New restaurant. New club. New girl. Every damn night.

VINCE: Sounds like some shit I don't want to know about.

CHARLIE: Yeah, they're serving me papers soon.

VINCE: Oh?

CHARLIE: Still. Can't complain.

CHARLIE suddenly feels a sharp pang in his head.

CHARLIE: *(somewhat incoherently)* It's life, man, real life... I'm living... I'm doing this shit. Big shit!

Pause.

VINCE: Are you on something right now?

CHARLIE: No. I told you, I'm off that.

VINCE: You sound like shit, man.

CHARLIE: Hey, fuck you. Why are you calling me at two AM anyway?

Huh? How'd you even know I was at the office?

VINCE: Just a hunch. Anyway, you gotta come home soon. We'll hit Kelly's, like old times. I got some news you're gonna want to hear in person.

CHARLIE: Oh, shit. Everything okay?

Pause.

CHARLIE: Vince?

VINCE: Just get down here when you can, alright?

CHARLIE: Alright. I can move some things around and be back tomorrow night.

VINCE: Good man. Kelly's at 8?

CHARLIE: Book it.

VINCE: Right. And Charlie?

CHARLIE: Yeah.

VINCE: Go home. Get some rest.

CHARLIE: Will do.

CHARLIE hangs up the phone. The spotlight on Vince fades. He exits.

CHARLIE gets up, stuffs the drugs and the gun back in the box, and exits.

BLACKOUT.