

The BOSTON STRONGARM

A Comic Book Written for the Stage

MATTI PAASIO



MERC A DIEU

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For the Boston Five

While the *adat* and the collective wisdom of the elders are important, though, these are forever in tension with an egalitarian, competitive and aggressive spirit of adventure and independence.

MARK GALEOTTI,
Russia's Wars in Chechnya
1994 – 2009

Wherein, as in a mirror, may be seen
His honour, that consists in shedding blood

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE,
Tamburlaine the Great I

CHARACTERS

- D. "DEE" MURRAY A man in his late forties.
- CASTING DIRECTOR (CD) "EDDIE" A woman in her early
thirties.
- RAMZAN "RAM DASS" KADYROV A son in his mid-forties.

BREATHE

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The action takes place in a looking-glass world. Reader's right is "left" in the text, and vice versa. But "upstage" is in its proper place—away from the audience—and "downstage," in your face.

The author claims no responsibility for the confusion.

We can blame Beckett, so I suggest that we do. The Beckett Estate, they know not what they are doing. Like Lynyrd Skynyrd, but way worse—the Estate's ban on improvisation destroys the life's work of somebody else.

Then again, maybe that's what Samuel wanted, stirring still. So screw him. Study the lives of King A instead. Read Rimbaud the White Moor, and learn.

Yes, the note: I haven't forgotten and am getting there

An exclamation point at the end of a sentence indicates emphasis. It doesn't mean that the person delivering the line has to shout. Not every time, anyway. Let the music roar.

RELAX

ONE

CD is standing in the middle of a desert with a whip in her hand. MURRAY is running around her counterclockwise. CD is addressing the AUDIENCE.

CD

Ladies, and all. For those about to clock—we salute you.

(MURRAY stops and makes a quick Nazi salute in the general direction of the AUDIENCE. He hurries off.)

He's kidding, of course. He's no Nazi. I mean, as Gaia is my witness. One word: Antifa. He's testing you. Seeing how woke you are.

MURRAY

And you fail miserably.

CD

O significant other! Yeah, I'm talking to you. The downtrodden, you!

(Singing)

Hey, you've got to put your phone away.

(Alarmed, MURRAY stops running.)

Don't be afraid! You're not missing anything. It's happening right here, right now! Soon, anyway. We have an important announcement to make.

MURRAY

We do.

CD

We bring breaking news for ya. A story straight from the IRA—

MURRAY

And we know what you're thinking.

CD

You're thinking *Hunger*.

MURRAY

You're thinking the film.

CD

The Steve McQueen "masterpiece."

MURRAY

Yeah.

CD

Not that, though. Steve McQueen the actor, no. What you should be thinking is the Artist, the Director—

MURRAY

Yeah.

CD

Black Jesus. And you'd be wrong.

MURRAY

Not him. Not them.

CD

Terrorists, no.

MURRAY

The Irish. No dogs. No—

CD

A bad bunch. So wrong.

MURRAY

The dustbin of history, where they belong.

CD

Russians we're talking about. Ta-da! There it is: the Russian IRA.

MURRAY

Seems they got one, too.

CD

Called the Internet Research Agency.

MURRAY

Or whatever. Fake news—

CD

Also known as the Troll Factory.

MURRAY

Sounds like fake news to me.

CD

To you—Dog the Corrupt? What a fucking surprise.

MURRAY

It is possible. It is! What if—

CD

You lush!

MURRAY

It's not them, it's us?

CD

Oh, absolutely. Let's take a long, hard look at ourselves, shall we? The Deep State deep fake, whatever you say. Now they say, down at the Troll Factory, they say the FSB—feel me?

MURRAY

Their intelligence agency.

CD

FSB? The successor to the KGB—

MURRAY

That carried the torch of the NKVD. Stalin's secret police, you know. Lenin's too, initially—and brutal too, not just secret. Of course it'd be brutal, what with that bubbly psychopath Beria at the helm—

CD

Oh, SHUT UP already!

MURRAY

In brief: the FSB is to the KGB what the KGB was to the NKVD. Simple, eh? Why? Shut up why?

CD

You're distracting! You're distracting *me*. Trying to muddy the waters—

MURRAY

“Those who do not remember the past—”

CD

—on purpose.

MURRAY

“—are condemned to repeat it.”

CD

You're a spy.

MURRAY

In the house of love, I am.

CD

Working for Putin, you bastard!

MURRAY

Do I detect a whiff of paranoia there? “Those who do not remember the past—” A sign said so in Jonestown, “behind Jim Jones’s dead body,” as Jello Biafra told us, the former front man of Dead Kennedys. Royalty of the second wave of punk rockers, in case—

CD

I'm getting a headache.

MURRAY

—you weren't aware. Okay? Are you—?

CD

All right! Are you through?

MURRAY

For now, I am.

CD

I may continue? Superb! Now the FSB—the SS—they send a warning to the FBI, concerning one of the Tsarnaev—

MURRAY

Big—

CD

—Fuckers.

MURRAY

The Big Brother, I presume. Tamerlan, I presume.

CD

Russians give us a heads-up concerning one Tamerlan Tsarnaev—

MURRAY

The future Marathon Bomber.

CD

—and her crazy mother—

MURRAY

Allegedly.

CD

I beg your pardon?

MURRAY

Allegedly, the bomber, Tamerlan is. Was: he was, or so they say. Zubeidat? His mother, she is. Now that is a *fact*. A proven—science, bitch!

CD

Watch your mouth, old man. Now, they warned of her too.

MURRAY

Mother Zubeidat.

CD

Alive and well today.

MURRAY

In Russia.

CD

Where else?

MURRAY

Whoa! See that, missy! That right there is a—

CD

(Overlapping)

These adherents of radical Islam. We were warned of their—

MURRAY

(Overlapping)

A slur! An ethnic—too much! Can't you see? Crossed a line right there!

CD

Oh, for God sake. Go fuck yourself, would you?

MURRAY

You did! A line in the sand.

CD

Where?

MURRAY

You said, she said, "Where else?" When referring to Russia as the current residence of, of Zubeidat Tsarnaeva. Mother Zubeidat—and—no, no, let me finish! My turn now! Karma is a bitch! The "radical Islam" part, see, and very much so, indeed. You said—and that's Islamophobia, right there! That's hate speech, right there!

(She raises the whip. He cowers, waiting for the lash.)

CD

Is that so?

MURRAY

It is.

CD

Very well, then. I apologize.

(She lowers her hand. He straightens himself.)

But what did they do?

MURRAY

Blew up the Boston Marathon, I guess. Allegedly.

CD

Not them. The Tsarnaev Fuckers, fuck them. The FBI. What did the FBI do?

MURRAY

The fuck should I know? What would Jello do? That is the question: Biafra—

CD

The same difference. They do nothing. The FBI did nothing. And why was that? See, the FSB, the Soviet-born peasants that they were, the hicks, they did what? Used a slur. Watch that language, the words! The optics, they looked bad. Those were the times, my friend—of reelection, remember? Twenty twelve—when you wouldn't wanna get caught on camera using a term like "radical Islam." Oh, no. God in His Glory would have gotten Hell had he let those two words

slip. They woulda got him the way they got Osama! Woulda sent Seal Team Six! And then, see what happened?

MURRAY

No.

CD

Those people, the Boston Five would still be alive, hadn't been such goddamn pussies! Hadn't been so goddamn scared of the thought police! There's the federal bureau—

MURRAY

Five?

CD

—of investigation?

MURRAY

Did you say *five*?

CD

And then there's the all-pervasive, all-powerful Thought Police!

MURRAY

Hey, you've got to put your beef away! Take a look at Iraq. The butcher's bill there? Compare it to the Marathon. And Boston just goes poof. Why it goes poof—

(Having covered her ears, she starts singing the Sublime song "Garden Grove.")

CD

This ain't no funky reggae party!

MURRAY

Well, that's for sure.

CD

5 dollars at the door—

MURRAY

That's cheap. We are cheap—

CD

You're a fool!

MURRAY

To them. But we are the 99 percent. And we rule.

(The soundtrack kicks in, and she sings harmony with Bradley Nowell, the late vocalist of Sublime.)

Don't fuck around my dog!

(Louie the Dog does his part as the song continues.)

All that I can see I steal
I fill up my garage
'Cos in my mind—
Music from Jamaica, all the love that I found
Pull over, there's a reason why my soul's unsound!

(The background music ends abruptly.)

It's YOU, it's that shit stuck under my SHOE—

(MURRAY cuts her off, starting his own aria at full volume. The tune is “Cum on Feel the Noize” by Slade.)

MURRAY

Come on, feel the Bern!
He's for what we yearn.
Child, child, child
Is a child, child, child!
So come on, feel the Yearn
As everyone is turned
Into a child, child, child—
I'm a child, child, child
Again.

(MURRAY does a little number and stops. He has a moment.)

CD

Oh, shut up. Be quiet. I'm trying to think.

MURRAY

You are? I wouldn't have guessed.

CD

That static, that background noise of yours? Your yap-yap-yapping, your ear-piercing whining isn't making my job any

easier. Climbing the walls like that? And yet, despite that—fuck that! Yeah, fuck this! I'm doing my very best, I'm trying to compose here.

MURRAY

Compose.

CD

I'm applying my Zen-slash-jazz approach to music. My stream of conscious—what's it called again?

MURRAY

Your Patti Smith impression?

CD

No.

CD

Your Ben Lerner parody?

CD

No. Who's Ben—?

MURRAY

The Batman for the Progressives? The fool that wrote *The Topeka School*?

CD

Never heard of him. Or—

MURRAY

Leaving the Atocha—?

CD

—it, either.

MURRAY

Leaving the Atocha—

CD

What?

MURRAY

The Atocha!

CD

Leaving what? You're distracting me!

MURRAY

Now there's a great title, have to admit.

CD

Distracting? Leaving—?

MURRAY

The Atocha station? In Madrid, the one that got blown up? In twenty oh-four? Now his debut novel, Lerner's, it was all right. The Atocha thing, the title itself, that place, the event lent some dignity to the work. Whereas his latest, praised all over the Failing *New York Times*... I'm kidding, of course. Don't you just hate how they write their stories, though? Like a Russian novel, the Beijing subway? Reporters serving as the subway SS, pushing everybody in—

CD

The *New York Times* equals the Beijing subway? That's far out!

MURRAY

It's a revenge fantasy for the Far Left, Topeka is.

CD

So it's just perfect for you.

MURRAY

Very funny.

CD

Is it?

MURRAY

The book? No. It's a giant kiss-ass to those who'd like take it to the streets. In theory, that is. If the stars were aligned right. They just choose not to. They prefer not to! Can't stand the mess. Don't wanna tear their dress. Hey, here's a rhyme for ya! Think you're so cool, you Topeka Fool!

CD

You read a book, got all upset.

MURRAY

I can't stand those people! Fucking hipsters—and their man in shiny armor, swinging his sword of resentment! See? After spending two thirds of the book bragging about his prowess as a master debater—a human speech synthesizer of

some sort—Ben admits by mistake, yeah, it’s a slip of the tongue I swear, one he can’t take back, it’s out, it’s in the open, a fact that he must arm-wrestle into a victory by sheer force of will, by persistence, by being himself—a huge, 10-inch prick! So, unintentionally, Ben admits to losing his girl to some Spaniard. His rival is some super stud, allegedly. One with a motorbike, at least. Our boy Ben, he’s furious. He’s going crazy, leaving for Barcelona immediately. Ben is Robert De Niro in *The Deer Hunter*, going to get his buddy back—his girl, in this case, even better. And he does. Of course he does. Duh, get his girl back! See the magic trick? We jump forward in time, to the present. We witness Ben having bloomed into a RoboCop of the people, for the people—too bad 2020 comes too soon for him. Saint Ben could have saved us from ourselves! We watch Ben clock a father that he has gathered enough evidence on. A bad parent, a Nazi, obviously. A Trump supporter, it’s plain to see. The assault takes place on a playground in front of children and everyone. No matter, hey. Ben’s daughters love their Dad more than Mom on any day—how’s that for authenticity? How’s that for street cred? This newsflash is brought to us at a protest rally, as the Lerner’s occupy an ICE office as a family. The only thing that puzzles me reading this is, who would stay married to such a dick? That has the nerve to print *that*? For everyone to see? In summary—Ben Lerner is the Lars von Trier of literature.

CD

He is.

MURRAY

A fascist piece of shit!

CD

What a grand surprise, your arriving at that conclusion.

MURRAY

The word you're after here, were before. I believe it's poetry.

CD

Poetry? Could be.

MURRAY

Our boy Lars—Lerner, he does that too.

CD

No. It's me, Eddie!

MURRAY

Edwards?

CD

Limonov. I'm his Western counterpart!

MURRAY

Eduard Limonov?

CD

And female, at that.

MURRAY

Also a fascist. Another one. Where do they grow these pigs these days? Why do I keep running into them everywhere?

*(“Lamb Ran away with the Crown,” a song by
Judee Sill, appears in the background.)*

CD

No. This is about me! Not you, me. I’m doing poetry!

MURRAY

Limonov, a self-declared National Bolshevik.

CD

Ergo, fuck him!

MURRAY

And Ergo will.

CD

Fuck Lars. And fuck you, too.

MURRAY

All right, maybe. Maybe me too.

CD

In the midst of all this fucking that’s going on, I do have a distant memory, a flashback of sorts. Of something like... you... running?

(Sighing, he continues his jogging. She is swallowed by her thoughts.)

MURRAY

Yo! How much more?

CD
(*Reciting*)

O Eternity!

MURRAY

Oh fuck.

CD

Here we come! Go!

(*She swings her whip. He ducks. She recites.*)

A vast radiant reach. A hand-grab across the ages—from beyond the grave. When you're a star, you can do that. You can do anything, you're the Lizard King.

MURRAY

Now, that's blasphemy!

CD

We're living the worst time ever, in history! That's why it's time to make it Her Story.

MURRAY

A long way to the top, I know, you wanna rock 'n' roll. But how far, exactly?

(*Her phone pings. She looks at it.*)

CD

26 miles.

(Staring at her phone, she leaves her spot as the center of his track. Immediately, he gets lost and eventually, stops running.)

MURRAY

What?

CD

Give or take.

MURRAY

Hello?

CD

One or two or six.

MURRAY

Dear? I'm in the dark here!

CD

(Snickers at the phone)

26.2.

(Looking up)

How now—who gives up now?

MURRAY

But I am dying here!

CD

And doing a great job at that.

MURRAY

Excuse me?

CD

Stop whining! And keep it up!

(She starts typing. "The Ballad of Johnny Butt," MURRAY's song, starts playing in the background.)

Not the whining, no. The practice. Exercise! Keep it up. What we need is. And carry on.

MURRAY

Jesus!

(He makes a running start, then drops to his knees.)

CD

Is with me on this, Jesus. And he's telling me that you're stalling. Haven't answered my question yet.

MURRAY

Where will it end?

CD

No place good, you know, since you're running away. My man, you're fleeing the finish line! And that is not. Not the question—

(He gets up.)

MURRAY

Sweet amphetamines!

CD

You must face the music.

MURRAY

Where is Ryan Adams when you need him?

CD

Make up for that distance—

MURRAY

I know.

CD

—you cover now, heading away from the finish line—

MURRAY

Girls, they keep him busy.

CD

—once you're back on track—

MURRAY

Lucky bastard!

CD

—running towards it again. Towards Boylston Street. And I am not—plunging headfirst into the past, burying your head

this way. Relishing your past grievance. Not kidding, no. Absolutely not.

MURRAY

It's the wrong way?

CD

Another great song by the band, by the way.

MURRAY

Why are you doing this?

CD

It's my job to do this.

MURRAY

That is your excuse?

CD

Yeah?

MURRAY

And what's in it for me?

CD

Let's just say your duty. A solemn, I don't know? Do something with your life. Not waste it, not all of it. Why don't you stop whining and get on with it?

MURRAY

Mary Mother of God!

(She cracks her whip.)

CD

You must change. Mend your ways. Make up for what you've done so far. Running away from it, you fool! Don't fuck around my dog!

MURRAY

O Lord.

CD

Yeah, go ahead. Hurry back to the arms Patriarchy. See how well *that's* worked for you so far!

MURRAY

No.

CD

What?

MURRAY

I do wanna change. I do wanna mend my ways.

CD

You wanna go with the future?

MURRAY

Yeah.

CD

Go with the flow? Choose the future?

MURRAY

Yeah.

CD

Very good. Excellent. You made the right choice there, took the right turn.

MURRAY

Gee, thanks.

CD

Now all you have to do is find the finish line. Where was it again? Where is the finish line?

MURRAY

On Boylston Street.

CD

That's right! And Boylston Street? Downtown Boston, agreed, but to be—?

(He points ahead.)

Be Precise? It's—

(She points in the opposite direction.)

That way!

MURRAY

For the love of—!

CD

Is with me on this. Remember? Jesus too. Better start closing in.

(He starts, reluctantly, running around her clockwise.)

MURRAY

This is no way!

CD

It is not.

MURRAY

I'm telling you!

(Close to tears)

No way to treat a fellow human—

CD

Try and improve. Answer my question.

MURRAY

—being! I'm a human—

CD

Like John Merrick.

(He stops, momentarily baffled.)

He was, you know, too. A human being, first; an elephant, man, second. The elephant in the room. So proceed. Stop whining, and praise the Lord! Thank Him for making your

head the right size, or thereabouts. Keep going. Keep running. Run, Dog, run!

(He does.)

Run with me—and answer my question. Who gives up now?

MURRAY

Lord.

CD

No!

MURRAY

The Elephant Man. That's me!

CD

False! Feeling sorry for yourself again, you rat! Who gives up now?

MURRAY

A loser.

CD

I can't hear you!

MURRAY

LOSER! Gives up now!

CD

That's right! And what is it that losers don't do?

MURRAY
They don't—

CD
Huh?

MURRAY
(Stops running)
Losers do not care.

CD
That's right! And how about us? Do we care?

MURRAY
Yeah.

MURRAY
DO WE?

MURRAY
We care a lot!

CD
Great! Absolutely—

*(Her phone rings. The tune is “Mosquito” by
the Doors. She raises a finger.)*

Fantastic. You are—five stars for—

(The phone keeps ringing. She lifts it towards her ear and starts walking away from him—in order to get some privacy, it seems.)

MURRAY

When?

CD

Michelin, soon.

MURRAY

Is all I'm asking?

CD

(Turning back)

And I'm telling you!

MURRAY

When?

CD

I will tell you! Soon. Now would you please, please be quiet, please?

(She hurries stage right, talking on the phone.)

Hi, Mark! No, I was a—it was a—no. Big deal. Was a-going to, yeah. Take a five.

MURRAY

The Boston Five.

CD

Yeah. No prob.

MURRAY

How soon you forgot all about them.

CD

We're doing *great*. Couple of weeks, give or take? And we're good to go! Right—yay. No? Really?

MURRAY

After you nodded, you logged off. Slave driver.

CD

You are?

MURRAY

Might get burned.

CD

(Jumps)

Oh my God! That is so amazing! A dream come true! For me, the entire crew, I'm positive about it!

MURRAY

“Mark, listen. I've got HIV.”

CD

It's a darn miracle! A proof of life!

MURRAY

The exact opposite, I think.

CD

Like there's, has been an *abduction*?

MURRAY

What it used to mean, being positive. Getting the result: a death sentence. Not anymore. A life sentence, barely merely. Science, bitch!

CD

And the family needs, uh—?

MURRAY

Dick. What the family needs is dick. Speaking of which.

(She exits, laughing. He goes on in a squeaky voice, making a caricature of CD.)

Tell me, Marc. Is it true that you are the notorious mister Ten and a half? O My God! Jesus! I mean, *really*. So excited! I mean, I can't fight it! No way, I mean, yeah? I could have a teeny weeny—no pun intended—bit of a taste. But, hey, no way! Get this. Most definitely you aren't going to stick it in me! You'd tear me in half! I mean, you would, uh huh. Ha, ha! Yikes. Get away from me, you old pervert, you!

(Himself again)

Bitch. You will tell me? You will tell me when? Yeah, right! You tell me nothing, E, ever. You hang me out to dry. You leave me in the dark. That is your MO, your main offence! Why I'm forced—my only option, my sole access to information is eavesdropping. And stalking your Facebook profile. And Instagram too, since no one does Faces no more. And I absolutely HATE it in there! Insta, or Penta—for Pentagram, for what it is, Devil worship is what it is—Penta is

exclusively for psychos and sadist freaks like Ramzan Kadyrov, sociopaths like Lars Lerner and you. Wait! Watch and learn. Too many names, you say? “There’s too much to process. I’m going home!” No! Stay! Please, let’s face it. Who’s Ramzan Kadyrov? There’s a hole in the evening—left by a bullet as it was passing through—and that hole is called Ramzan Kadyrov. Ram Dass. Some say he’s a scapegoat. A pansy, or patsy, like that muckraking journalist from *Rolling Stone*, you know. What’s his face?

(The Wire character Clay Davis appears in a video clip, saying, “Shiiiiit. Shiiiiit. Shiiiiit...”)

To quote your bullying president, his fiefdom is a shithole. His too. That is, the Kingdom of Kadyrov. Bear with me, please, live through this. Who is he? Who is Kadyrov? Let’s find out, shall we?

(A song by Ministry, “N.W.O.,” is heard from the beginning. The scene changes into an urban setting—a TV studio.)

If there’s one thing you’ll be taking home tonight, I hope and pray it’s the apologist for the Tsarnaev brothers, Ramzan Kadyrov, also known as Sonny Kadyrov!

(KADYROV enters stage right in a silver sports coat. At the same time, CD enters stage left wearing a Megyn Kelly look. The lights flash for a moment, then settle.)

And here he is! Come on now, people! Give him a generous hand! Applause, please, for Ramzan Kadyrov!

(The music fades. MURRAY retreats. CD and KADYROV shake hands and take seats.)

CD

Your name and occupation, please.

KADYROV

Name? Ramzan Kadyrov.

CD

So far so good, all true. And?

KADYROV

And?

(MURRAY has settled in the background. He is playing with his phone.)

CD

Tell us about yourself. Who are you?

KADYROV

Who—?

CD

What is that you do?

KADYROV

Do?

CD

How will you be able to contribute for this film?

KADYROV

Film?

CD

If you'd stop repeating everything I say. That is so boring, just makes for bad TV.

KADYROV

Okay, hey. It's my movie, innit? Am I right? All about me, eyes on me, as Pac said.

CD

Pac?

KADYROV

Yeah.

CD

Yeah?

KADYROV

See. Now it's you.

CD

It's me?

KADYROV

Acting like an idiot. Repeating every word after me.

CD

Uh huh. Okay.

KADYROV

Okay. See? It's all about me. That's where the money is.

CD

By Pac, you mean Tupac? Tupac Shakur, the late rapper, that it?

KADYROV

Yeah.

CD

You like him?

KADYROV

Found him only recently, but I do, yeah. I like him immensely. Read this book called *The Kopeka School?* By a kid called Hugh Hefner—

CD

Okay. All right.

KADYROV

—or some such whiner. What a wanker, fool he is!

CD

Lars Lerner, I believe, is the name. But let's—

KADYROV

But Pac is cool.

CD

Okay. Let's get on with this—

KADYROV

The book isn't, by no means. But Pac, he's all right. He's my man! The book is just bullshit, you hear what I'm saying? But, in a way, I have to thank Les Lester, his—

CD

All right.

KADYROV

—his drivel of novel, for bringing him to me. For bringing Pac to me. “My baby's coming—” So thanks, Lester! Ah am obliged! And watching out for you. Lerner, I'm watching you!

CD

A serial killer, right? You are.

KADYROV

(Snorts)

That is just bullshit.

CD

Come on now. You can tell. Talk to us! We feel you. It was, it's what you have to do, right? For survival, right?

KADYROV
(*With a slight shrug*)

I guess.

CD

So, anyway. Setting the question of your culpability aside? You're being recognized, worldwide, as a very prolific hit man. Like Léon, the character? A professional. They make you for—for the Politkovskaya and Nemtsov murders at the very least. A journalist and an opposition, should I say, force of nature? They were major figures in Russia, very famous. And you, you didn't do just one, you did *two*. Like the Ryan Adams song? If the control room could give us just a bit of a taste of it, "Two" by Ryan Adams?

KADYROV

Dude is a degenerate.

CD

He is, you're right. Allegedly. But no, no Adams for us now. "Get to the point," they are shrieking in my earpiece. "Move on!" Everyone and their mother out of their minds, pressing their faces to the glass. See, there? Who they are, what they do. They fucking command. That's the fucking situation room. The Free World is being led from there. What they think, anyway. What I think? Feel like I'm not dealing with humans anymore. They are machines, these people!

KADYROV

Get the exact same feeling every time I have to deal with the Kremlin.

CD

You don't say.

KADYROV

Putin, you know? He thinks he's in charge!

CD

And how do you deal with it?

KADYROV

By sheer brutality. That is the only feasible response to it.
"The horror, the horror!"

CD

Well. We don't have time for that now. Or the means, equipment and whatnot. So let's just, let's do as we're told for now.

KADYROV

All right.

CD

All right. Just trying to figure out your accomplishments is hard... like that loser that shot Kennedy? What's his face, Taibbi? Matt Harvey? No, Oswald! That's who. Think about it. What if...? After he takes out JFK, Oswald takes a breath, and then he drops Robert, too. And walks, after.

KADYROV

Well. Yeah?

CD

Don't you think?

KADYROV

I haven't thought about it that way. But you may have a point there. And yet, making me for it, accusing me of assassinations, this one or that one? All of them? As I understand you're doing? That is just totally unacceptable.

CD

You say so.

CD

I could, you know, sue you. For defamation. Isn't that the term you people use?

CD

Okay, all right. Very good! But I took it back, didn't I? I rephrased! For the record: Ram Dass is not a murderer, no. After all, he's not. That is just, it's fake news. There, I said it! You may withdraw your complaint now. In your own words, then, Mister Kadyrov. What is it that you do?

KADYROV

As President of Chechnya, a semi-sovereign republic of Russia... quasi-independent, I think, is the term... the former Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. That was the criminal enterprise we put an end to, me and my Pops. Peace to him—and love—see you in Paradise, Baba! It was written in the stars that I became his successor. It was God's will: I was too young at first, but then, after turning 30, I filled his shoes. I busted them at the seams! I surpassed Dad's achievements, became the Chechen Strongman. Strongarm, as they say, the

enemy of the people, folks like you do. Ramzan the Great! Well, that figures. It's true, innit? But to answer your question: Everything. I do everything. Sometimes I get the feeling, you know, I should delegate, you know, let someone else take care of some shit? This micromanaging it all, it does get on my nerves sometimes. That's when I have to let out some steam.

CD

Do it abroad?

KADYROV

I beg your pardon?

CD

Let out that steam abroad?

KADYROV

I hardly travel. Stay home most of the time. So the answer is no.

CD

Your people, then. They do it for you in major cities of Europe, the United States? They let out some steam in Vienna, Berlin, Boston? Those ring a bell?

KADYROV

Fuck you!

CD

That is a no?

KADYROV

I had dick to do with Boston!

CD

Okay. Very well—

KADYROV

That's a dirty lie! That's your racist, bullshit propaganda, your failing *New York Times* again!

CD

How about the others? Vienna, Berlin? How about—?

KADYROV

(Standing up)

Don't know what you're talking about!

CD

You don't? Let me try to bring it back to you.

(Rising)

Vienna, 2009. A former bodyguard of yours, he steps out of a grocery store and is riddled with bullets. He has accused you of torture, among other things.

KADYROV

I've no idea. You're making this shit up.

CD

Ten years later in Berlin. This time the victim is a fighter from the Second Chechen War. He's been at the center of a feud, he's received multiple threats from your crew before he arrived there, before he sought refuge in Germany. He

must have thought it was safe there. Berlin felt safe, I guess. And then it wasn't. The Chechen vet is shot dead on his way to the mosque, while eating lunch in a park. The shooter, the perpetrator, he appears and vanishes like a ghost on a bike. That's what they call him: the Berlin Bicycle Assassin.

KADYROV

I am done here!

CD

He's Chechen. Or is he?

KADYROV

I'm not talking to you.

CD

"Slavs of the World, Let Us Unite!"

KADYROV

No more talking to you!

CD

Was he a Slav, the perpetrator? A pan-Slav, the perp? That's it, we don't know.

KADYROV

That's it: I am leaving.

CD

Why?

KADYROV

Cause you're full of shit! That's why!

MURRAY

I am?

KADYROV

You're a whore! And he—he's a pervert! He likes boys!

MURRAY

I do?

CD

And here we go.

KADYROV

I can see! I can tell!

MURRAY

You can?

KADYROV

See it in your face! There's that glow. Little babies or grown men—it don't matter! You're having it every way, in all colors and, and sizes! Oi! What's your name, freak?

MURRAY

Murray.

KADYROV

What?

MURRAY

D. C. Murray.

(KADYROV produces a phone, takes a pic of
MURRAY, and begins typing.)

CD

Okay, I'm done. I'll leave you morons to it.

(Exit CD.)

KADYROV

And how do I know you? Your faggot face seems familiar to
me somehow.

MURRAY

I've done a couple of books.

KADYROV

Like?

MURRAY

The Strange Death of Europe. That's one.

KADYROV

Huh! There's a shitty title.

(Putting his phone away)

What's it about, your book?

MURRAY

Immigration, identity, Islam. That's the sub—

KADYROV
Islam?

MURRAY
—title.

KADYROV
ISLAM?

MURRAY
Yeah.

KADYROV
How dare you? You have no right!

MURRAY
You're right. Absolutely not. I have no right to say anything on the subject—of your Mom. I'm an incarnation of White Privilege. I am the Devil. Al-Shaytan, that's me. Your MO, isn't it? Your Main Objection to Everything. So why don't you—just do what you always do? Throw me off the top of a tall building. The Raqqa Cure for All.

KADYROV
Raqqa?

MURRAY
Capital of the so-called, the late Islamic State. I'm sure you've heard of it. Everyone has.

KADYROV
I won't do it.

MURRAY

You won't throw—? Wow, gee, thanks! That's mighty big of you.

KADYROV

(Stabbing the air with his finger)

But you'll be hearing from me!

MURRAY

I've no doubt about it. None.

KADYROV

You'll be hearing from us!

MURRAY

Yeah, but before I do. There's just this one thing that I absolutely must do—

(MURRAY has advanced on KADYROV and kisses him on the lips. Disgusted, KADYROV wipes his mouth.)

KADYROV

Faggot!

MURRAY

Some slavophilia to sweeten your night.

(KADYROV spits three times. He uses his finger to fiercely brush his teeth.)

KADYROV

What are you—?

MURRAY

Trying to culturally colonize you.

KADYROV

That's Dostoevsky!

MURRAY

I know.

KADYROV

That's the Brothers Tsarnaev!

MURRAY

I'm guilty as charged.

KADYROV

I mean Karamazov—

MURRAY

You got me there.

KADYROV

That's literary theft!

MURRAY

You figured it out. You're not so stupid after all. Well done, Ram Dass.

KADYROV

Don't call me that!

MURRAY

Why not? He does, don't he? Pops, and he's right.

KADYROV

You'll be hearing from us!

KADYROV

He's always right, Pops is.

KADYROV

Don't call us! We'll call you—He'll call you!

(Exit KADYROV, hurried.)

MURRAY

He will call—about the role? But isn't he, like, dead? As I understand, you took Pops out yourself, blew his ass up at the Victory Parade twenty-of-four. Nine years before Boston. Or am I mistaken? He's not dead, Ahmad Kadyrov? He just smells bad. Having a rest, catching some z's. Going to Moscow, you can catch him there, at the Red Square. Where Baba resides, behind the glass. See, these people—what have you? The Karam Haram Dim Sum? The Tsarnaevs, Kadyrovs—they say that Chechnya is their home. Their Motherland, see? Well, Motherland my ass! A bunch of motherfuckers is what they are! Selling her for a piece of rock! And has she been sold? Boy, a million times! By the

Czar, by Stalin, by Putin—and even by their very own national hero, president and martyr. Dzhokhar Dudayev, the patron saint of Latvia—

(There is an explosion. Black and grey smoke flood the stage. MURRAY remains standing. He raises his voice.)

I have news for ya: Finlandization is the Way! Appeasement kicks ass! Fuck the Eternal Now. There is no such thing, it is gone! Rats, they abandon the ship. They fly to India on Daddy's card. They are off to the Bahamas, to Panama. What are they doing, really doing? They're trying to avoid responsibility. Avoid dealing with their own fallibility, growing old, dying, eventually. Their very own death scares them so, boo-hoo. Hey, but that won't cut no ice, since nothing ever stops. Or starts. Life is a circle with dick in the middle! We've come the full circle here. The end is also the beginning... see the full circle... no other voices... and enough with this one.

(A second explosion erupts with white smoke that engulfs the stage. Eventually, the smoke clears to reveal the setting, a second-hand store with seven busts of Lenin on display. CD enters, carrying a clipboard and a start pistol.)

So much better. Thank you. Goodnight, God bless—and let's go! RUN WITH ME!

CD

Not so fast.

MURRAY

Of course not. The Lesson. There has to be one, always—or this wouldn't be the theater. Why we've gathered here is to escape the swarming wisdom of the Beats. Kerouac, Ginsberg, those fuckers. Listen. What I've learned in the Actors Studio of Miss E's is... Miss Easy is...? No! Objection! The jury will disregard Mister Murray's last remark. And they will, they will. She's not easy at all. By no means. Oh quite the contrary—

CD

You're crazy.

MURRAY

And I am drenched too. There's nobody there. No stagehand, towel head, towel man waiting in the wings, standing by with a fresh one. The theater has been deserted! The cradle of democracy left in ruins. All headed out to Panama.

(He dries himself on a cloth.)

It's a strange place to hold an audition. I know, thought so myself stepping in. They got it cheap, I guess.

(Suddenly filled with joy)

Can you smell the all-piercing sense of doom, of foreclosure, in the air? Catch the whiff of something burning? And that's no forest fire, either! The civilization entire, burning to the ground—that's the smell the Finlandization! That's Appeasement for you! The body odor of Neville—

(CD points her pistol above and shoots.)

Chamberlain, our national hero. No sex, please.

CD

Ladies! I'm sorry for the interruption. It won't happen again, I promise. See, the circumstance. That was just, it was—

MURRAY

Wonderful? The phone sex was—?

CD

It was Mark.

MURRAY

Wahlberg?

CD

Yeah. He's going to pay us a visit!

MURRAY

Mark Wahlberg? The producer, right? Of *Boston Strongarm*? What I call it, this film, your prequel to *Patriots Day*—

CD

I have no comment on that—

MURRAY

—the blockbuster movie about the marathon bombing? Can't make a sequel for obvious reasons—the bad guys being dead and locked-up—so the cash-in on the story, it has to be in the shape and form of a prequel! What happened before

the events depicted. And the Lone Survivor—forget about Jahar Tsarnaev for a second, all right? Lone Survivor Wahlberg is going to land the male lead again, on top of his producing activities again. Am I right?

CD

As I said, I've no comment on that.

MURRAY

The emotional depth of a fridge instead.

CD

Look.

MURRAY

You're no person. You are a cyborg.

CD

Sure. That's what it takes, sure.

MURRAY

I don't follow. What's "it"? That it takes—?

CD

Getting things done. If it's required, sure. I'm game. A cyborg, absolutely—even fridge, ditto. Now my records are a mess. You're name again?

MURRAY

Murray. DOG—

CD
Come again?

MURRAY
Doug Murray.

CD
And where are you from?

MURRAY
Where I'm—?

CD
Yeah.

MURRAY
Where I'm fucking from?

CD
Correct.

MURRAY
What's that got to do? With any—?

CD
Hey, relax.

MURRAY
Goddamn! **THING.** You a racist?

CD
For the love of God.

MURRAY

This a case of America First?

CD

No! We're not going there! Go, get. Grab a seat.

MURRAY

(Covers his face)

Oh, fuck.

CD

Take it easy.

MURRAY

(Revealing his face)

FUCK.

CD

Take your time. Sit down.

MURRAY

Aw, fuck.

CD

I got that, yes, thank you. Whenever you're ready will be just fine. Just... breathe.

MURRAY

Fucking Ferguson! All right? That's where I'm from!

CD

Okay.

MURRAY

Not so. Not too okay, you ask me, Ferguson.

CD

Missouri?

MURRAY

Yeah.

CD

All right. And what've you done?

MURRAY

Nothing.

CD

Really?

MURRAY

(Spreading his hands, he shrugs)

I have not.

CD

Wow, that's remarkable!

MURRAY

It is?

CD

You'd be the first, yeah.

MURRAY

Well, anyway—I didn't do it.

CD

Not the first to have no experience—God, no! The first to admit it, by far. Then again, you're not, are you? You'll recant your testimony. Apply for the witness protection program, so to speak. "I'm sorry."

MURRAY

That was my brother.

CD

It was. That—?

MURRAY

Made me do it. 'Twas Tam.

CD

Tam.

MURRAY

Tamerlan, Tammy. He ain't heavy, he's my—why, why I wasted him.

CD

Wasted.

MURRAY

Uh huh.

CD

You've been drinking?

MURRAY

No.

CD

Doing drugs?

MURRAY

Not me, sir! I mean, ma'am, never. I'm as clean as a whistle! I'm straight, man! Who, me? Miss Eddie! I'm an A—an AA student! I mean, I don't attend, but I could, yeah, no problem! Just choose not to. "I prefer not to." That's me, Bartleby! Okay? You wanna discuss Eduard Limonov some more? A fascinating fascist, he is. His career as a gay prostitute in New York, man, wow. It isn't what you'd expect from a—I mean, I have nothing against. What you do beneath the sheets between consenting adults is absolutely, just fine with me.

(She is writing this down.)

Ditto with substance abuse. You can smoke or snort or whatever, stick needles in your labia for all I care.

CD

"Right."

MURRAY

Don't do it, though, you ask me.

CD

That's good. That's enough.

MURRAY

Just say—

CD

More than enough—

MURRAY

Say No.

CD

I might add. It's plenty.

MURRAY

I know I did. I said no! Before? Did tons of it. Oceans of it. Wasted oceans of time—"Mina!" No more. Who, me? It ain't me.

CD

"You're looking for."

MURRAY

I quit ages, eons ago, as a matter of fact.

CD

"Babe."

MURRAY

It was my Vietnam, if you will. And I survived it. The route I took, long way home, that's how I find myself standing here, last man, where I am. "Babe." I beg your pardon—babe?

CD

Bob Dylan.

MURRAY

All right. He in this too? Besides Wahlberg? Bob, too?

CD

(Touching his shoulder)

No.

MURRAY

So?

CD

His song. His "It Ain't Me, Babe."

MURRAY

Okay. All right.

(She breaks contact. He brings up his wrists, ready to be handcuffed.)

CD

What are you doing?

MURRAY

You're taking me in, right? To drill me some more, right?

CD

What?!

MURRAY

Take me to the station! Lay them cuffs on me! And squeeze them too tight while you're at it, the way you always do, until I—"I can't breathe." Strangulation by the bracelets! And remember to forget to read me my rights!

CD

This some kind of a joke?

(He lowers his hands.)

MURRAY

No joke. No.

CD

You on meth or something?

MURRAY

My only high is, besides my very own personal Jesus—my higher power that is—my only joy is in Method Acting besides.

CD

(Incredulous)

What?

MURRAY

Stay in character. Immerse yourself in it. Your role, embrace it.

CD

“Embrace—”

(Trying not to smile)

Who told you that?

MURRAY

At the national academy, they did. The tryouts, they—

CD

There’s no such thing!

MURRAY

Tryouts?

CD

For painters, maybe! For actors, negative. No, I’m sorry. No national academy—

MURRAY

For actors, too! There is! The national academy of—

(Waiving upstage)

Home. The national academy of—there is.

CD

In Missouri?

(Pointing at the AUDIENCE)

Down south—right?

MURRAY

Yeah. Right. No, as a matter of fact, wrong. It's Midwest, Missouri.

(Pointing somewhere between stage right and the AUDIENCE)

Right?

CD

Well, you should know. Since that's where you're from. Right? That's home, right?

(After a beat, he lifts his shirt, showing his stomach.)

MURRAY

"They are trying to kill me!"

CD

Hey! What are you doing? COVER YOURSELF! GET DRESSED!

(He complies.)

Jesus, man! I mean, what—? Where do you think you are?

MURRAY

Boston. Watertown, as a matter of fact. The suburb, the sticks.

CD

Who do you think you—?

MURRAY

My brother, he brought me here. Then he left. He left me here. I'm on my way, on my way, Tammy—he's already there. He's at the morgue. You can find him there.

CD

Who do you think you are?

MURRAY

I'm getting there!

CD

No, don't answer that!

MURRAY

I'm on my own now. But he won't speak. His code of silence is tighter than a choke hold now, unbreakable now.

CD

Stop talking! Please. Sit down! Would you just relax, mister? Please! And be sure to keep your clothes on! Or else, I don't know. I'm calling security? I'm calling an ambulance! Okay?

MURRAY

Okay.

CD

Okay. Now I'm not accusing you of anything... yet. I'm not the law! Or DA or, God forbid, the judge. No, I'm just a tiny

little clog in the massive “military-industrial-entertainment complex,” as they say. I’m just the messenger. I’m a measly casting director. Don’t shoot me! I am nothing, this is nothing. It’s nothing, if it’s not *fun*. Right? An audition for a role, it’s supposed to be fun, right?

(Having produced her phone, she swipes it a couple of times.)

It’s supposed to be rock ‘n’ roll.

(“Doin’ Time,” a song by Sublime, starts pulsing in the background.)

MURRAY

You say so.

CD

I do. Yeah, I say so! And I do have a say-so in the matter. How you spend your time. You wanna make a difference? Your choice, you choose. Go with the flow—or lose.

MURRAY

Wow. That’s deep. That’s—

(The volume of the music goes momentarily up.)

That’s a Lana Del Ray song!

CD

No. That one? That is a cover. This here's the real deal. In terms of poetry: this is the take. You should check it out.

MURRAY

Maybe I will. Maybe I won—

CD

Courtesy of a band called Sublime.

MURRAY

Cool.

CD

“Doin’ Time.” Yeah. It is cool!

MURRAY

Maybe I will. Maybe I won’t. Who are they again? Subzero? Subprime?

(She ignores him. The music fades into the background.)

CD

Look. What I was asking you before was about your career. As an actor. What have you done before?

MURRAY

Oh.

CD

Yeah. Not—

MURRAY

That's easy: nothing. I've done nothing!

CD

Really?

MURRAY

Um... yeah?

(CD makes a note in her papers. She is walking around him, appraising him, while he is turning with her. He isn't comfortable with anyone operating behind his back.)

What are you doing?

CD

Sizing you up. For a role? For the film. Trying to make a movie here, in case you haven't realized. It's my job. It's what I do.

MURRAY

And where are all the others? The other, I don't know, personnel?

CD

What you want, what you get.

MURRAY

Going solo? Wow, you have clout. They must really trust you.

CD

Or perhaps they are pinching every penny they possibly can. See, I come cheap. Maybe we're more alike than we realize—in that sense, at least. Price-wise.

MURRAY

(To the AUDIENCE)

Hear that? She's insinuating—it's that piece of shit scenario again! Like I'm—I'm it! Stuck under her shoe! Now is that any way to behave in an audition? Treat a fellow traveler?

(She shoots her pistol. He collects himself.)

CD

What was that?

MURRAY

Huh?

CD

You were saying just now?

MURRAY

Nothing.

CD

It's nothing again.

(Writing)

So nothing it is!

MURRAY

It is?

CD

Yeah.

MURRAY

What is? Please, miss, I'm not used to—what?

CD

Your name: Has No Such Thing. Hey, I'm just filling the boxes here. The paperwork is a bitch—still, someone's got to do it. Name: None Available. You a Buddhist?

MURRAY

No.

CD

A feminist, then, perhaps? Just trying to please, doing as you're told. No, I'm sorry: you're a Leninist. It was your big bad brother. It was Stalin that did it! You just got sucked in, into the black star Stalin! Around him, time slows down until it stops altogether. Get too close, you're gone forever. Nothing escapes, even light. He swallows it like a souse swallows his sauce.

MURRAY

Swallows what?

CD

His sauce, his booze. Revolution and you.

(She slaps him gently on the head with her clipboard.)

I'm kidding, of course.

MURRAY

Of course. Okay. Ha, ha!

CD

You might want to loosen up a bit there. No therapist, I, but in my time I've seen enough to see the signs. You have a serious—a major hang-up hiding there somewhere. You're not careful? It will jump out and scare someone.

MURRAY

“Right.”

CD

And it will happen at the worst possible moment. It always does. You'll be scared yourself when that happens.

MURRAY

I know.

CD

Well. That's a relief. All I'm saying, it's good to hear.

MURRAY

And I'm giving my all—doing my very best to sort it out here!
Right now—so if you don't mind? Please, and let me just do
my thing?

CD

Cool, I'm just, okay. Trying to break ice, is all.

MURRAY

Cool, okay. And I lost mine there. I am sorry.

CD

I'm also working out. Doing this, it's more like your cup of
tea, I guess. Rap battle practice? You aren't the only one here
that needs to work on their lines. What we need is exercise!
Not love, screw love. Can I confide in you?

MURRAY

What?

CD

Promise you won't tell?

MURRAY

What?

CD

Can you keep a secret?

MURRAY

Sure!

CD

I'm working on a script at the moment.

MURRAY

You are? Well, that's—

(MURRAY *flops in a bean bag chair.*)

CD

I'm only at the early stages yet, but I'm quite—

MURRAY

Just exhausting, is what it is.

CD

Quite confident about it. We'll see what's going to happen. But if all goes well, soon—soon I'll be able to leave all this behind.

MURRAY

Awesome. That is.

CD

The day job, film industry, these fucking papers. This Mud Chernobyl—all of it! Yeah, awesome. Indeed. Don't you think?

MURRAY

What's it all about?

CD

I beg your pardon?

MURRAY

Your script. Pitch it to me, please. Think of me as a big, bad, balding, fat, lewd producer—with a foot fetish. Maybe I'm into scatology, even.

(Stands up)

I'm a monster in a bathrobe. Sell it, sell your script to me. What's it all about?

CD

It's about the industry.

MURRAY

Film industry? Uh huh. Keep going.

CD

It's, it's semi-autobiographical. Based on my own experience in part, and the story, it's addressing the issue of, uh, self-censorship? PC, and—

MURRAY

IP?

CD

—the current—

MURRAY

CC?

CD

—climate of—

MURRAY

IPCC?

CD

—abject animosity.

MURRAY

It's about climate, your script?

CD

No. I said animosity.

MURRAY

Animus? Anima? That kind of thing?

CD

No.

MURRAY

I see, I see. It's an art movie. Terrence Malick on Downers. Two hours of ennui. No plot, no characters, no nothing.

CD

No.

MURRAY

The only thing on display is how clever he is. How clever you are. It's Lars Lerner all over again, rap battle practice! Topeka Drool Volume Two.

CD

There are characters.

MURRAY

Of course. Your cinematic answers to selfies. Leafing through a book—Lerner’s book—of pictures of you.

CD

THERE IS A STORY!

MURRAY

Of course. Of course there is. I’m sorry, I am. Please, proceed. I was over the line there.

(Falling back to the bean bag chair)

The line in the sand. Tell me about it, your script. Please. Tell me all about it.

CD

It’s a story about this, the current obsession with identity. This gargantuan confusion with—

MURRAY

Right! A film on—

CD

—confusing your sexual preferences—

MURRAY

Rabelais!

CD

—with political, making everything about—

MURRAY

Stay out of it.

CD

Yours, too! It does involve each and every one, these volatile times.

MURRAY

Then, on second thought—

CD

It's about discourse.
How we interact, talk to each other.
It's about disobedience.
To the Tyranny of Uniformity—

(MURRAY pretends to be nodding out.)

The overall Animosity that Abounds.

(He opens his eyes and stands up.)

MURRAY

May I suggest something?

CD

Sure. "Why not?"

MURRAY

Put me in it. Put a villain in—

Villain?
CD

Yeah.
MURRAY

You?
CD

MURRAY
I can act! See? The big bad bloodsucking producer—that's me! This way you can add a touch of MeToo in it—and your script will sell itself! Such a shame that Philip Seymour Hoffman isn't active any longer! But no matter, don't you worry. I can replace him. I was born to play him.

(Sings to the melody of "Born to Be Wild")

Born to be Harvey

Born to be Harvey

(Spoken)

See? "Hi ham Dracula."

That's Gary Oldman.
CD

So?
MURRAY

You're confusing your creeps.
CD

MURRAY

And the best creeps they are! There's no competition, none!
Well, there was Heath Ledger of course—

CD

Okay, all right.

MURRAY

Hands down, one of the very best he was! He was scary.

CD

Hey, thanks for the tip.

MURRAY

“You wanna know how I got these scars?”

CD

THANKS. I will think about it.

MURRAY

That's all I'm asking.

CD

Great. Now let's get back to business.

MURRAY

Let's.

CD

Your name.

(Checking her notes)

Is Doug Murray right?

MURRAY
Correct.

CD
Peaches.

MURRAY
As a matter of fact, it's not.

CD
No peaches?

MURRAY
No Doug, my name.

CD
No Doug? You gave me a false name?

MURRAY
Not exactly, no.

CD
No Doug is into quantum mechanics?

MURRAY
What? I'm sorry?

CD
Does No Doug do particle physics?

MURRAY

That's not my name! And please, miss. I have a condition in my right ear. It hasn't been diagnosed yet. I went to a doctor, an immigrant guy he was. Not up to his task, the language barrier and all. I'm not blaming him, you see. He must have been through Hell back there! Oh, no—no, no—I'm not one of them. No, no! It's just that, what he said. He said, "Better check your head," and, "Being gay makes you hard of hearing," and that made me—for just a moment there—I wanted to punch his face in.

CD

A cat in a box.

MURRAY

Sue the bastard, hajji motherfucker! That would have taught him! But anyway: my condition—sandbox? You're talking about—?

CD

No.

MURRAY

Well, I didn't think so.
How it works, it severely impairs my hearing.
My condition.
Calling me a sandbox, that'd be a slur. That'd be an insult.
You agree?

CD

It's a thought experiment.
It has dick to do with a sandbox.

Schrödinger's cat?
It's alive and dead at the same time.

(Music—"Carry on" by Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young.)

MURRAY

I'm not dead yet.

CD

Until you open the box, that is.

MURRAY

No.

CD

After? Well...

MURRAY

Not yet.

CD

I beg your pardon.

MURRAY

I'm not senile yet! I know I must appear so to you, blonde and pretty. "Life is a highway, I wanna ride it all night long!" You never expect it to happen to you. That's a given. Until one morning you wake up, and you see... your life being over. It isn't fair. I'm fucking fifty—and still I believe I'm twelve years old—on an adventure! Where the Wild Things Are, and the Creeps—

CD

Ah, shit.

MURRAY

Are Not—Miss.

CD

I'm sorry. If I did, truly, I mean, I didn't. It wasn't my intention to imply—

MURRAY

Miss. I am no creep.

CD

Of course not! I apologize. My bad. And it's missus.

MURRAY

For what?

You apologize for what?

For Letting Me On.

That's Hollywood for ya—the lay of the land! Stash your ring before leaving for work! Fucking hell! You're sending mixed messages! You're using your enhanced interrogation techniques on me.

CD

Okay, all right. I admit. I confess. I'm recently divorced. But I just, I forget it sometimes.

(He is hyperventilating.)

What's the matter? You having a panic attack?
Breathe! Take a deep. Close your eyes. In, out. In, out!

(He tries following the instructions.)

Look at me! No, don't! Close your eyes. Eyes Wide Shut. The Killing: focus on your breathing. Give it everything you've got. Inhale. Exhale. Say silently to yourself: "In. Out. In..."
Son of a gun, you never tried mindfulness before?

(He shakes his head. Too nervous to go on, he starts walking around.)

MURRAY

And now I've offended you! Shit, shit! I'm sorry... I'm sorry, and yet. No excuses, right? Mom was right!

CD

That's alright.

MURRAY

No, I ruined it! I ruin everything! I'm ruining it as we speak!

(He hits himself on the head a couple of times.)

CD

What are you doing? STOP! Ruining it? And what is it? That you think you're ruining? This movie? Hey, fuck this movie! Fuck Them All. Who cares about Hollywood? Their product? It's opium for the masses. Populism in Art is just as bad as in Life, Politics. It's even worse. Since people trust you with their time. It's all they've got. You're an artist, and that's

what matters. Fuck the industry! Every true artist that I can think of is at least compulsive obsessive. Have to be a neurotic of at least nine on the Richter scale. That's the price of admission. Everyone is a head case—not just Heidi—you can quote me on that. They care about nothing but themselves, these people.

MURRAY

I'm a tame person, really.

CD

The essence of an artist: she's never, ever satisfied.

MURRAY

An easygoing fellow.

CD

Or he.

MURRAY

That's what I am. A puppy.

CD

Hey, that's great! Why don't you? Why not—?

MURRAY

Yeah.

CD

Think of this as a job interview.

MURRAY

Never landed a job in my life!

CD

Not that, then. Okay. You like movies, though. Don't you?

MURRAY

Of course.

CD

Take Al Pacino for instance.

MURRAY

All right!

CD

His first film was *The Panic in Needle Park*. No one's heard of it, I know. We know this flick only for the screenwriting credit that went to Joan Didion and hubby, the happy couple. Anyway, you gotta start somewhere, right? The first day of shooting, it dawns and finds Al a nervous wreck. He's convinced himself that he's going to blow it. And there goes his career! So he does what he has to do. He shows up at a friend's door—someone who happens to live nearby, near the location, right? It's eight o'clock in the morning. Al asks if he can come in. "Sure, why not," the friend says, half asleep. "Can I get you something?" As a matter of fact, yeah. Al hasn't had his breakfast yet. And before the host can open his mouth again, Al makes a beeline to the fridge. He opens the door, scans the contents. He pulls out a bottle of white wine. Al opens the bottle, pours himself a big old glass. He

drinks the wine with one gulp. Glug, glug, glug. “Thanks! I gotta go. Bye.” Exit Al. And cut!

MURRAY

Oh wow.

CD

How his film career began. A true story.

MURRAY

But I don’t drink.

CD

So?

MURRAY

No, I’m just saying. There’s that. I don’t. I’m an AA—

CD

So what if you’re a nervous wreck?

MURRAY

Well, I wouldn’t say. I wouldn’t say a—

CD

You must use it.

MURRAY

Maybe, yeah, all right. Maybe “nervous,” all right. That I can live with. But I wouldn’t go as far as to say a *wreck*, though. I’ve got resources hidden, you know —

CD

(Overlapping)

You must use it. You're a wreck? Be my guest! Go on and do it, just do it! Be yourself and use it.

MURRAY

Being a wreck.

CD

Another example: *The Godfather*, restaurant scene.

(They both sit down.)

MURRAY

Shoot.

CD

It's almost too real to be completely honest. There is hardly any acting involved.

MURRAY

How do you know?

CD

I read it somewhere.

MURRAY

I see.

CD

He's a nervous wreck, again. When they start shooting—the scene, I mean. They start shooting the scene, and Al is about

to lose his shit. Like you were, before. But, instead of running away from it, he embraced it.

MURRAY

He embraced it.

CD

He embraced losing his shit.

MURRAY

How do you do that?

CD

Gotta face your fears. At some point, I guess. Sooner or later, I guess. You must face the music.

MURRAY

How do you do *that*?

(Suddenly, she tires of him.)

CD

I don't know. I'm no shrink. I'm no social worker.

MURRAY

You're not.

CD

I am not your mother.

MURRAY

No. You're good. You're good at what you do.

(He gets up. She lifts her hands to her face.)

CD

Well, I don't know.

MURRAY

Yeah. You excel at it!

CD

(Reveals her face)

“Excel” at—at my job? That's what I *ought* to do. Help people to achieve their full potential. Help them to be at their very best, like that, like another creep Roger Ailes put it. Sounds awfully grandiose, I know. Even so, sometimes I even believe it.

MURRAY

Ever thought of teaching?

CD

Nah.

MURRAY

I'm serious, you should. Give some serious thought to it. What you've done here to me. Like a coach. You have discipline. You have a firm hang of things—how they should, you know, go—and yet, at the same time, listen to me now. You've got such a loving and caring touch that I feel the earth move under my feet. Like the Carole King song, what's it called?

CD

“I Feel the Earth Move.”

MURRAY

It’s been exquisite, what it’s been thus far!

CD

Thanks. But I’ve got my—

MURRAY

You’d make a great teacher!

CD

Thanks. But I’ve got my plate full as it is, thanks very much. My job, my script, ya know. It’s enough.

MURRAY

Okay. Well, alright. But I’m just saying—

CD

Okay.

MURRAY

You should think about it! Think about it, is all I’m saying.

CD

I will. I will.

MURRAY

Good. Now. Where were we?

Your— CD

My name. MURRAY

I think we covered that already. CD

No. MURRAY

No? CD

You see, that one. The name I gave you? Doug Murray? It is not my true name. MURRAY

You did give me a false name after all. CD

No. MURRAY

Why? CD

I didn't do it! MURRAY

CD

There's that cat again. Dead and alive—

MURRAY

You don't understand.

CD

Please. Enlighten me. Would you? "Doug Murray" isn't your name, but it is not a false name either?

MURRAY

That's it.

CD

You don't know what your name is.

MURRAY

I do. Of course I do, but... but Doug Murray? It's the one I use for, for my acting career! My *nom de guerre*, if you will?

CD

You are a terrorist.

MURRAY

The job I got, my day job? Promise not to tell anyone, and I may, I may reveal some. Give you a tiny glimpse of it! All right? We have a deal?

CD

It's about identity. Politics, again.

MURRAY

It's about Anonymous! It's who we are! It's a government job, my job. The work I do, it's highly classified, so.

CD

I thought you were unemployed.

MURRAY

I never said that.

CD

You said, you did. And I quote, "I never landed a job in my life." Try to deny that! And yet, you're a spy.

MURRAY

In the house of love—yah! Therefore it is crucial, it is imperative that I use a code name! You know?

CD

Like Marilyn Monroe.

MURRAY

Well, yeah, but not quite. Not exact—

CD

Like Cary Grant? John Wayne?

(He points at her and nods.)

MURRAY

That's the one.

CD

All right, then. Let's move ahead—

MURRAY

There's just one more, a tiny little thing.

CD

Get out of here.

MURRAY

Now? I haven't—

CD

Please. Heaven knows I—

MURRAY

—I—

CD

—have been miserable before—

MURRAY

—haven't done “my thing” yet!

CD

—but this? This is a league of its own! May Morrissey drop dead!

(Pause.)

MURRAY

You never gave me a chance.

CD

True that.

MURRAY

So please. Please.

(She gestures, suggesting he get on with it.)

All right! Here goes nothing.

(Her phone rings. She answers immediately.)

CD

(On the phone—bored stiff)

Hi, Mark. Now's not a very good time to talk—

(The speaker at the other end cuts her off. She listens to him, stunned at first. She is getting more agitated by the second. He goes on, oblivious to this.)

MURRAY

My first, see, my Christian name is written in the same style and manner as the generic name of man's best friend—and I don't see this as a gender issue. Do you? When I say "man's best friend" you might think that I'm implying, pushing male privilege, that I'm a woman hater, you might think. Well, I am not. No way, José! Or Josephine.

(She looks at the phone. She is furious.)

Quite the contrary. I'm talking about the domestic animal, creature of the canine family—

CD

You dog!

MURRAY

Yes, yes. Almost there. Lose the first word from in front of it. Lose “you,” that is all, and—

(She hurdles the phone to the floor, smashing it.)

Hey, presto. There you are. Been there, done that. Before your time, the early days of my career. You could call it a workshop. You could call it a breakup. You could call it a psychotic episode. I smashed some phones, all right!

CD

He's not coming.

MURRAY

Lone Survivor Wahlberg? Mark, he's not—?

CD

He's bailing out! Bastard!

MURRAY

Well, you know. Tomorrow is another day.

CD

No.

MURRAY

He will turn up tomorrow.

CD

No. He's "lost faith," see, in us! He lost in his interest in this, the whole damn project! He's pulling the plug!

MURRAY

Well. Then, what's the use of waiting?
You ask me, we are doing just fine without him.
You and me, we are a team.

CD

No.

MURRAY

Fuck film! Films suck! You said as much yourself! Let's do theater! Live presence of a fellow human being, interaction with the audience—nothing can replace that!

CD

Nothing compares to you.

MURRAY

No? Okay, then. It's just me. "Just my imagination—running away with me."

CD

You're right.

MURRAY

I am?

*(“Get Ready,” a song by the Temptations
blasts from the speakers.)*

CD

Let’s do it! Who’s Mark? Who is he?

MURRAY

Mister Ten and a half, I suppose. The gay porn star, I suppose.

CD

Fuck him.

MURRAY

Right.

CD

We don’t need him!

MURRAY

No.

CD

We don’t need Mark!

MURRAY

Who is he?

CD

FUCK MARK.

MURRAY

That's right!

CD

FUCK HIM!

MURRAY

We both would, if we could, I believe. Maybe you have already, I don't know. I know I would, I were you. But let's just, let's just leave it at that for the time being—

CD

Leave it! And leave him!

MURRAY

Leave Mark!

(The music gets louder.)

CD

Fuck me! Let's dance!

(They do. Finally, she raises her pistol and fires. The song ends abruptly.)

CD

We will leave him far behind. No phone calls, no texting—until tomorrow morning. How's that sound? We have a deal?

MURRAY

Just my imagination. Run, running away with me again.

CD

We shall remain incommunicado until sunrise tomorrow! All right?

MURRAY

It happens 24/7. I don't know what to do.

CD

We've got *work* to do, Dog!

MURRAY

Indeed.

CD

We do.

MURRAY

We do.

CD

Well, I do, at least.

MURRAY

Me too. I think it's safe to say that me too. I'm a victim as well. Like Little Lindbergh.

CD

Little Lindbergh?

MURRAY

That's me. The crime that shocked the nation. The abduction and murder of a celebrity baby boy. I was abducted, I was kidnapped and killed. Substance abuse did it. Drinking and drugging, I wasted away my youth, my future. So I'm screaming bloody murder by now, and for a reason, don't you think? For a good reason!

CD

"Have you heard of the Little Lindbergh Law?"

MURRAY

Huh?

CD

The question that tells you you're bound to be killed. Have you heard? That question, the law?

(Deep in thought, he does not reply, as the lights fade.)

END OF PART ONE

REST AS THIS PLACE WHERE EVERYTHING APPEARS

TWO

After sex, CD and MURRAY are getting dressed.

CD

You chose that name yourself?

MURRAY

Huh?

CD

Dog Murray? D-O-G?

MURRAY

(Smiling)

It's good, isn't it?

(She stares at him. His smile melts.)

CD

There's a book out there. *The Strange Death of Europe*, it's called. You haven't, by any chance, read it?

(He shakes his head.)

Written it?

MURRAY

Huh?

CD

The Strange Death was produced by one Douglas Murray.
Ever heard of him?

(He shakes his head.)

MURRAY

Never heard of no No Ass Murray.

CD

That's what I thought. Had to make sure, though. Had to check if I'd been blessed with the presence of a genius.

MURRAY

No.

CD

Well, that's obvious. I just thought that maybe you were acting. Your training kicked in?

MURRAY

What does he say? Your boy No Ass, what's his point?

CD

His point is, in a nutshell it is, "Hold your head up. And trust your—"

MURRAY

So he has—?

CD

“—your feelings.” No. Trust your *instincts*, your gut. Don’t sell yourselves so cheap. “The West is the best,” after all.

MURRAY

Dude has written a self-help book for white supremacists? He’s put together a lite version of it. Fascism, that is.

CD

(*With a forced smile*)

What I thought.

MURRAY

You may build upon that. It’s okay, okay to cultivate hate. Your boy No Ass has brought Aryan Brotherhood to university! Although it’s nothing they haven’t seen before, right?

CD

You *have* heard of him.

MURRAY

Never. And I wish it had stayed that way.

(*Pause.*)

CD

And you’re reading for? What was it? The role you want? The part you’re after, it was—?

MURRAY

Jahar Tsarnaev.

CD

Get out of here.
And I mean it this time.

MURRAY

I'm sorry? My right ear, I've a condition—

CD

(Standing up)

NOBODY GIVES A SHIT! ABOUT YOUR NAME—YOUR
EAR—WE DON'T CARE!

Get it? This is no game! Everyone is busy! Not necessarily
evil, no. That could be the case, but most of the times, they
are just busy. They don't have Time for this! We don't—

MURRAY

I'm practically hard of hearing, I am.

CD

No. You're a thief. A common criminal is what you are.
You're stealing my script. And ruining my career while
you're at it.

MURRAY

I am?

CD

Yeah.

MURRAY

How?

CD

By bringing out the Sadist in me.

MURRAY

Okay.

CD

You release my inner Thatcher. You know, the Iron Lady? Iron Maiden? You on hunger strike? Very well, oh, boohoo!

MURRAY

I see.

CD

Do you?

MURRAY

I think.

CD

Don't think. Do what you're told. Die, Terrorist!

MURRAY

It's a power trip.

CD

And nobody told me.

MURRAY

Nobody told you.

CD

They didn't tell me it'd be this much fun.

MURRAY

I did. Well, I could have. That is why, the same reason I chose Jahar. The younger brother, the Lone Survivor, if you will, of the Marathon Bombers. That's who Mark ought to be playing! But of course, he can't. That would be a huge image problem for him, playing Jahar. So he has left it for me. And I am ready. Ready to be, become him.

(Beat.)

If possible. Please.

CD

I've no idea what you're talking about.

MURRAY

Jahar Tsarnaev.

(She stares at him. "N.W.O," the Ministry song is heard again.)

Lone Survivor the Marathon bomber. I wrote a monologue for him. And I'll just, well, I'll just do it. All right?

CD

He was nineteen.

MURRAY

At the time of the alleged crime, yes, he was.

CD

And you are?

MURRAY

Older.

CD

Yah!

MURRAY

But there are all kinds of. There are techniques to—

CD

Is that your ringtone?

MURRAY

—to digitally enhance your appearance.

CD

Could you please turn it off, please?

MURRAY

No! It's my theme music!

CD

Or answer the fucking phone! Jesus Christ...

MURRAY

It's the New World Order! By Ministry the band—and as close to the Anti-Christ as you can get! And yes, it's absolutely—it's elementary!

(The music grows louder. MURRAY takes quick breaths, preparing for his role.)

The world has gone crazy. The order of the day, it's Armageddon! Everyone and their pet hamster think they've got what it takes to—to be an Author! Like Anton Pavlovich! Like Master Chekhov! No. You lose. You're a loser! Ain't got what it takes! And you never will!

(Lights start flashing to the music, then focus on MURRAY.)

CD

Mary.

MURRAY

I DON'T WANNA DIE!

CD

Mother of God.

MURRAY

(Raising his hands)

Don't shoot! DON'T SHOOT! I have citizenship! I'm a certified U.S. citizen!

CD

And I am leaving.

(She exits. The music dies.)

MURRAY

I have a government stamp on it! And no fugazi, either! If you just let me use my hands, I could show it to you. Talking about my passport, you pervert! Do you know what they do to perverts like that in Gross? Grozny, capital of Chechnya, where I'm, my family's from? They throw you off of the roof! They've built skyscrapers for that purpose, and that purpose only! That's why I'm here. Not because I were a pervert, no—no way—but because it's impossible to dream over there. That's what Mom told us anyway, before she went back. Yeah, she went back there. Chechnya, Dagestan, she lives all over the place. She's been everywhere. I never been anywhere, any of those places, but, hey. What they say, what they tell me. Where I'm from.

(He puts his hands down.)

I'm a Caucasian par excellence. I'm from the North Caucasus—some call it the Russian Caucasus, but that is just bullshit. That is a lie. We take care of our own. You don't know where it is? You don't know where Caucasus is, North or South, for that matter?

(Points upstage)

North is a couple of yards thataway. Hey, don't mention it. It's no biggie, your ignorance, that is. No, sir. It figures. You're a Cop, aren't you? You can tell me. Repeat after me: "I'm a Cop. I'm a Pig. I'm ashamed of myself. And I want to die." And why is that? Why are you so depressed, so ashamed of what you've become? It's very simple: because

you're a racist. You're a fucking fascist, is what you are! Listen, everybody! There's a Pig present—

(Pointing after her)

And she's aiming her semiautomatic—is it a Glock? Can I see? “Why?” It's Kill o'clock, that's why! Anyhow, she's pointing her service piece at me! “Please, miss,” I say. Or missus, whatever she demands she be called this hour of the evening. “I don't wanna die. Help me. Please,” I plead. “I don't wanna die.” But she won't listen. No, her Crusader genes and Zionist surroundings are filling her brain with P and P! And that's pee and poop, folks, piss and shit! Speaking of which. I had mine, received my scroll—my Dead Sea Scroll I call it—I became a U.S. citizen in a solemn ceremony 11 years to the day after 9/11. Turned out to be the kiss of death, that day and stamp did. My brother Tam went ballistic. Have I told you about him, my older brother? Tammy never acquired it, citizenship, no matter how he tried. Some say he was ready to kill for it, and did.

(He sits on a table and grabs an imaginary steering wheel. He bounces in place. He is ready for action.)

Sorry, Sam! I forgot. We can't—I can't stop. O Uncle! I cannot stop, since you got me going! No, sir! I can't. It was the cops, they told me. Everyone and their pet hamster, they are telling me to give it up. “Be a Man, Jahar,” my coach said. My fucking yoga teacher went on national television to spread the word, sow the seeds of doubt. Had the nerve to question my masculinity in front of 327 million people! “Turn yourself in,” Miss Chandler said. “It is over,” she said. Bitch hadn't heard of Lenny Kravitz, I suppose! It ain't over till it's over! But they did succeed in part there. They distracted me there for a second. They confused me. That's

what they do. It's their job. They shoot at me, at us. Tam, are you there? Bubba?

(Aside)

He's crawled underneath the automobile now, I guess.

(He yells at the floor.)

Get out! Get in! Shit, I'm running you over as we speak!

(He stands up, stretches the waist of his jeans.

He addresses his ass crack.)

Tammy, what you doing down there?! Yo, no napping while waging jihad! Hey, retard! Grozny, do you read? Do you care?

(He lets go of his trousers and sits down at the wheel again.)

There's time talk. Then there's time stop. Now is the time to man up! Time to get, like, Boston Strong. Bang a Gong. Get it on. Get Real. And there's hardly anything as real as the entire police department lighting you up. As they empty their service weapons at you, all at once—I have to admit—it is kind of impressive. Beautiful even, in its way. It tends to—it kinda wakes you up. It does that to you. You start to think about your choices long and hard, man, long and hard. Mister 10 is not enough. Have to be Mister Ten and a Half..

(Stands up)

TAMMY! You moron, get out and get in!

(He barks a few times like a tiny dog, and then starts walking back and forth.)

Yeah, it's you all right. My brother, there you are, behind the car. Yap-yap-yapping again about something or the other—what's the matter now, little mutt? Too many cops around? They make you feel uncomfortable? Your spirit animal must be a Chihuahua. Anyway, never mind. I can't hear. Why? There's an all-American gunfight going down! OK Corral?

Doc Holiday, Wyatt Earp and those fuckers, they have nothing on us! Tombstone was some BB-gun-kid-shit compared to this shit!

(He stops and takes a handful of tampons from his pocket. He throws them at the AUDIENCE.)

Watch out! They are pipe bombs, those things! Going to explode any second now—

(He walks hurriedly right and left.)

Listen, listen. Guns go whack-whack, quack-quack, matter-of-fact. That is a constant. That is the undercurrent. Then, on top of that, a pipe-bomb starts a-singing. Bang a gong! And the cherry on top of it, giving the finishing touch to it all—the old pressure-cooker, it goes BOOM. Listen. *Metal Machine Music*, Volume Two. Hipsters, they love it! No one even remembers Ministry anymore! Al, you're a dinosaur! You're history! We are the second coming of the Punk Jesus! And he says, I say: "Brace yourselves. Be brave! You can put your own band together, too. You know we did, see? Need more instructions? Need to get into the thick of it, the details and shit?"

Ladies, please, cover your ears. This part is an exclusive for my faithful followers, those like-minded Tiny Hi-fi Hermits! Of Yee-haw Jihad, this is for you: All you have to do is check out *Inspire*, the al Qaeda magazine. Google it, all right? *Inspire*. It's online somewhere, where it ought to fucking be!

(He sighs.)

You're hurting, my brother, I know. I hear you—and still, I can't. The noise is just out of sight! It's out of this world. Something's got to give. And I'm sorry, bro, it's you. I have to take you out of this mix.

(He uses an imaginary remote control on his imaginary brother. He turns to the AUDIENCE.)

“And I can still hear her complain.” I’ve got some explaining to do. Not complaining, no—that’s my brother’s cup of tea. And my mother’s. My brother Tammy, underneath, is a male version of her. He is my mother, a rabid dog. Beware. Anyway, I was saying. It’s a hell of a job, driving and throwing pipe bombs—I’m no octopus! No, sir. Not before I reincarnate, anyway. It’s a monumental task in itself. Maybe adding it to the summer Olympics would help—you should leave out the task of trying not to crush your Mother under the wheels of this very nice automobile, though. That is just too much. The Korean kid that drove it, the Merc—brother, did he fly! Was he Japanese? And who gives a fuck? Where did he get a drive like this? Ho Lee Fuck, his name was. Couldn’t of been a day older than you, Mom. Look like a child, the Chink did. “Do you miss your little black Mercedes?” Do you, Ho Lee? Huh?

They shot it full of holes, the Boston PD did. Your Merc is a sieve these days, Ho Lee.

Is it fair? Of course not! But America first, is what I always say! We should have shot him. I told you, Bubba. Too late now! Bygones. But let me tell you, I tell you this. I am sorry. Yelling at you, insulting you, it was my bad. It was... uncalled for. You’re not a retard, not a moron after all. Are you? And yet, I do, do have to say: this is not the time or the place to check the oil. Ho Lee was driving his Black Benz SUV—his Sad Ubermensch Vehicle—straight out of the dealer’s.

(Suddenly optimistic)

Maybe he was taking it out for a test run? The Merc wasn’t his, after all! He was bragging to his friends, “What I got, I got, I got!” What he was texting as a matter of fact when we

jumped him, “I got, I got, I got.” He had stopped the car in order to text: “Yo! Come out and check out my ride!”

Well, we did. We answered the call.

Ho Lee, may I offer you a piece of advice? As a brother, one immigrant to another? Next time, text while you drive. And don’t show off, don’t brag. That is just disgusting.

The car was brand new, is what I’m saying.

(He gets on his knees, begging.)

Can we keep it?

Please, Tammy? Please?

(He gets up, angry.)

“No” can’t be the answer to everything. Just like Mom you are! Shit, I forgot. It’s been established already. You are Mom!

(He lets out a heavy sigh.)

I’m doing it again, I know. And they are trying to kill me, kill us as we speak. Talk later, all right? Motherfucker, get real and get in! I am outta here!

(He hits himself on the forehead, lightly, three times. He is using the heel of his hand.)

How silly of me! To act like that. Yelling at your brother... and your older brother at that... that shit, it’s *haram*. It is strictly forbidden in our culture! And I want you to listen, everybody, very carefully to what I’m saying now.

Among the mountain people, the first rule is to obey. Obey your elders. See where I’m heading with this? Even before his red head pops out, a boy is told to—he is literally born to comply. And that includes obeying his older brother. See?

(CD enters. She is wearing a black robe and carrying her clipboard.)

In my culture, you simply cannot escape that one. So, Your Honor, how about it? How about that parole?

CD

(Draws multiple x's in her papers)

Denied.

MURRAY

Hey, not so fast!

CD

We have to speed things up. We wasted way too much time on you already. Next!

MURRAY

That's not fair! Hey, your Honor, you weren't there! You don't know what I was going through!

CD

And we don't care.

MURRAY

That's the... the Sex Pistols you're quoting there.

CD

It's a shame.

MURRAY

A woman in your position, you want to be associated with them? Those thugs? Is it appropriate, is all I'm asking?

CD

Next!

MURRAY

Hey, I may file a complaint!

CD

Knock yourself out.

MURRAY

You don't understand! I had a handful back there! The situation was very—it was quite stressful, to be frank with you. And I'm no Frank Underwood! I'm not even close. I'm a very sensitive person, I am!

CD

And we appreciate that. Make no mistake, we do.

MURRAY

You do?

CD

So much so that we'll do everything in our power to put you out of your misery.

MURRAY

Very funny.

CD

No.

MURRAY

Very fucking funny that was!

CD

It wasn't supposed to be.

MURRAY

Well, it wasn't.

CD

That is the truth, funny or not. That is a fact.

MURRAY

You wouldn't know a fact even if you sat on it. And, come to think of it, you do! You do sit on it!

CD

I'm standing, see? Never mind. I'll let that one pass. Consider this instead. A skull pyramid. You find that funny?

MURRAY

I don't know what you're talking about.

CD

Your brother, his name. Where it comes from.

MURRAY

Tammy.

CD

You think he's great? Like the title of the play says?

MURRAY

What play? The title of what? Which one? Which—? Tammy the Wonderful Wynette? Ladies' Man the Party Animal? Golden Glove Champion That Didn't Get into the Olympics? All you had to do is call. But you didn't. Why? You didn't make him a citizen. Why?

CD

I'm talking about—

MURRAY

Tamerlan "Woe Is Me" Tsarnaev? That Turned into a Religious Fanatic? That's the one you're talking about! Is he great? I don't quite understand the question. Of course he is! Hey, why not? He's a martyr, isn't he? He's *shahid*. A martyr—I made him one.

CD

And that was well done.

MURRAY

I'm not so sure about that.

CD

It was. The U-turn, the way you floored it, ran him over like a dog—that was amazing! Truly. And you. How about you?

MURRAY

What about me?

CD

You want to be a martyr?

(She prepares to make a note in her papers.)

Just say the word. We'll make it happen.

(She looks at him, waiting for his word. He is about to say something, but decides otherwise. Finally, he bursts out in frustration.)

MURRAY

This shit: forget about it!

CD

We will. You better believe it.

MURRAY

(Getting his hopes up)

You will forget about it?

CD

We already did. We forgot all about it. We forgot about you. There's nothing to you any longer. Other than this, there isn't. And this, look at this. Are you proud of it? No, I don't think so. Your life—you wiped it away. It's all gone. Nobody cares. So screw it! And screw *you*. We forgot already, all about you. Instead, we remember—we celebrate Martin Richard, Krystle Campbell, Lü Lingzi—

MURRAY

You say you do.

CD

And Sean Collier. We do. And Dennis Simmonds—

MURRAY

You say you do, yeah.

CD

We do. We celebrate the lives of the victims.

MURRAY

You want to. And yet, but you can't.

CD

Very well. If these are the things that you need to tell yourself to somehow make it all—

MURRAY

You had to look up their names!

CD

ALL RIGHT? Then I have nothing to say to you no more.

MURRAY

Very well, then. I guess it's "farewell, my fair weather friend."

CD

And what if I did?

MURRAY

I'm sorry?

CD

What if I did look up their names? I have tens of cases a year!
I can't remember every victim's name—

MURRAY

You remember my name though. Don't you?

CD

I do.

MURRAY

And why is that? Why is it? Why?
It's because we the people, we love our villains!

CD

We may do that. Yeah, we may love our villains. But, at the
same time, we absolutely fucking hate, we detest cowards!

MURRAY

(Scoffs)

I'm no. I'm no—

CD

(In a squeaky voice)

“Please help me. They are trying to kill me. I don't wanna
die!”

(This gets to MURRAY, but he controls himself.)

MURRAY

Well. It isn't about me.

CD

Now you see.

MURRAY

It's about you—

CD

Now you don't.

MURRAY

You and your double standard!

CD

And what might that be?

MURRAY

You kill hundreds of thousands, and then—

CD

Hold it.

MURRAY

—and when we, we retaliate, kill three or four in retaliation—

CD

Five.

MURRAY

—you go absolutely raving mad! You go nuts! You and your fake moral outrage!

CD

You killed five. You seem so, quite carefree, highly liberal with your numbers. Not so when it comes to us. And please, do elaborate: where? We kill where?

MURRAY

Iraq. Afghanistan. Syria.

CD

Hundreds of thousands?

MURRAY

At least. The truth be told, the body count is probably in millions!

CD

Who gave you that number?

MURRAY

It doesn't matter. It's true, is what matters.

CD

Let me guess who. Let me just, let me try. It was one of these, all of them. Give me a nod if I'm on target, so I can yell, "Bingo," when I get five in a row. I'll get a free book by Jeremy "Skunk" Scahill. *Skunk at War*, it's called. the book. I've got five copies already, since these guys, they never change. Like clockwork, they are always the same.

MURRAY

Are you on drugs, Your Honor?

CD

No, but you must be. Otherwise you wouldn't swallow their shit!

MURRAY

Your Honor! That language! I'm absolutely petrified!

(She won't play along, so he retreats.)

Tell me. Who are they, those pundits you're talking about? I'm getting curious.

CD

Let me see. There's "Cuckoo" Chomsky, Edward "Al Aqsa" Said, Max "Boohoo" Blumenthal. Then Seymour "Stricken" Hersh, Glenn "Miller" Greenwald and Matt "Harvey" Taibbi. Then, of course, you have Julian "Asshole" Assange and his Army of Online Zombies. Sound like a band that one does.

(He is shaking his head.)

O my goodness! Dear Chairman Mao I got—BINGO!

MURRAY

I don't know who those good people are.

CD

Well, you should. Keep an eye on your useful idiots, my mama said. After all, they're very reliable. Will all scam at the first sign of trouble, the canaries in the coalmine of communism that they are. They will join the Administration on the spot! That reminds me, by the way, of your fake-news

number. It's all made up. Based on absolutely nothing, your body count is. Well, faith, perhaps—if you can call it that.

MURRAY

(To the AUDIENCE)

They just wouldn't listen. No matter how I tried to explain, no matter how hard—the result stayed the same. I didn't know what to do anymore!

CD

So you thought that claiming lives and limbs would be transformed into hearts and minds? By a magic trick, somehow? Killing and maiming would make the scales fall from our eyes?

MURRAY

Shut up! SHUT UP!

(Covering his ears)

I can't think in this noise! That all-encompassing yap-yap-yapping—you're like my mother! You two are exactly alike! You are my mother!

CD

I said I wasn't.

MURRAY

(Uncovering his ears)

And this isn't about me.

CD

And you said that.

MURRAY

Well, it isn't.

CD

Then pray, do tell. Who is it all about?

MURRAY

You.

CD

Me?

(He does not answer.)

Who, me?

MURRAY

(To the AUDIENCE)

I'm not in charge. You are.

CD

What do you mean?

(He kneels. He touches the floor with his forehead.)

How many times a day do you have to do that?

MURRAY

(To the AUDIENCE)

You were looking after me, always.

CD

Was it five?

MURRAY

Even there, under the car, you were doing it. You were arranging a getaway for both of us!

(He bows to the floor again.)

CD

And the two holy places are, I gather—

(She points at the AUDIENCE.)

That—?

MURRAY

And I couldn't see!

(Starting to weep, he keeps bowing. She turns and points in the opposite direction.)

CD

That way?

(He bangs his head on the floor, hard, three times.)

Hey! Didn't I tell you to stop that?

MURRAY

Show me the way again!

CD
The way?

MURRAY
Show me the way!

CD
Of Appeasement?

MURRAY
Do it now!

CD
You're confused.
(Pointing with her pistol)
North is that way. The East, there.

MURRAY
Please, brother.

*(She is pointing her pistol at members of the AU-
DIENCE.)*

CD
Where is he?

MURRAY
Tell me what to do!

CD

Where is Harvey—I mean Santa? He live that way? The North Pole is that way, right?

MURRAY

He don't live in no North Pole!

CD

Oh, no. No no no! Don't tell me that Santa has moved to Saudi Arabia, to Yemen, because of the climate! That would just, it would break my heart!

MURRAY

Santa lives in Finland! He always has!

(She considers this, then aims her pistol at the roof and shoots.)

CD

I think I've heard enough.

MURRAY

You have?

CD

Next you'll say something outrageous like he's white to boot, Santa.

MURRAY

Well? What do you think?

CD

At heart, I think you are Doug Murray. You just don't know it yet.

MURRAY

No. Fuck that!

CD

I think you're delusional.

MURRAY

Fuck the issue of, I don't know, my mental hygiene?

CD

Think that maybe you should address it.

MURRAY

Me and my girl. I mean, my role—

CD

The issue, you should.

MURRAY

What do you think?

CD

Deal with it somehow.

MURRAY

Jahar?

CD

Your emotional imbalance.

MURRAY

Not me! NO!

CD

Else, it will bite you.

MURRAY

I'm talking about JAHAR—

CD

Bite you in the ass.

MURRAY

Is it me? Am I him? Am I?

(Music—"Doin' Time" by Sublime.)

CD

I don't know. I mean, I believe there's been an abduction. You've hijacked the debate. You and your trauma. And it's not fair... you. Wanna talk to Ram Dass? Seek, I don't know, his spiritual guidance? Meet his father? You'd like that, you would. No, not him. The sad surrogate Volodya the Wee One? No, fuck him. Fuck Putin! Ramzan's real father Ahmad Kadyrov, may he rest in peace? You wanna see him? Shit, where's Gary Gilmore when you need him? Meet him too! Just say the word, and we'll make it happen.

MURRAY

Okay. Hell, yeah! Why not?

CD

Let's do this?

MURRAY

Here comes everybody. Here goes nothing! Let's do it.

(The music grows louder. CD produces the whip. MURRAY shivers. Lights fade.)

END OF PLAY

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MP

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