

BIG Ball

By Leslie Bramm

WHY I LIKE IT: *Drama editor Janet Colson writes: And now for a warm and gooey welcome to a play about our favorite dysfunctional family, the Brumfayleurs.*

In the words of family patriarch Hugh Brumfayleur:

HUGH

That's pronounced *Fail-ure, Fail-ure*...It's French.

It's young Billy's birthday and the Brumfayleurs are celebrating by touting their version of the perfect life, which for this family includes physical abuse, humiliation, some particularly icky incest (isn't that redundant?), and so much more! To top it off (although there's really no such thing as topping it off in this play), Uncle Wade is being kept prisoner in a closet - with an overflowing bladder - and is eating his own flesh.

Playwright Leslie Bramm rocks the American Dream off its foundations by putting all of these madcap elements together in wildly unpredictable but frighteningly recognizable ways. And what's more American than heroine addiction, abortions, and daring to venture beyond all limitations of propriety?

Here's a taste:

HUGH

Yeah, but that's not gay.

(Again to audience.)

This is all an inside joke. Unless you know this author's work, and his need to humiliate his father by re-sexing such American icons of masculinity, you're just not going to get it...Where was I...Ah, yes...(cont'd)

(He does a grotesque blend of *Reagan* and *Wayne*.)

This is where European grotesque meets American absurd. Where macro-aggressions become meta-aggressions. The writing is brilliant, sharp, and dangerous. We're in awe. And unless you're afraid of ejaculation, it's too good to miss. This is BIG BALL.

Again from Hugh:

HUGH

We have a "perfect agreement", don't we? Perfect families don't discuss "little glitches".

Outrageous. Tragic. Hysterical. Frightening. Oozing with creative juices.

Five Stars.

(Spacing is playwright's own.)

Big Ball

(An American Grotesque.)

Characters:

HUGH BRUMFAYLEUR... The Father.

MADGE BRUMFAYLEUR... The Mother.

BILLY BRUMFAYLEUR... The Son.

SALLY BRUMFAYLEUR... The Step-daughter.

WADE BRUMFAYLEUR... The Uncle.

Time: Now.

Place: Somewhere in the mid-western delusion of America. In the suggestion of a living room, with the suggestion of a family.

In the tradition of classic European grotesque theatre. The characters should have their faces painted in macabre ways. Their costumes the same.

Setting: The suggestion of a Leave it to Beaver style living room. The stage is littered with tissues, overflowing ashtrays, candy wrappers, vodka bottles, used syringes, Pop Tart wrappers and walnut shells. Five televisions are on stage and should be used as end tables, foot stools, etc. Stage Right is WADE'S closet. It is suggested by a stationary door frame. Wade can be seen by the audience. In the closet is an overflowing bucket. The door has a series of locks, latches and chains running down one side. Stage Left is SALLY'S area. She uses one of the TVs' as a table. On it is a heroin set up and a pair of pink pompoms.

*At Rise: The family are all frozen in various all American family positions. BILLY ENTERS sits down in front of one of the Televisions and begins to eat Pop Tarts. He takes up a remote, and turns the TV on. The family snaps to life. They begin the rituals The rituals should have a row, row, row your boat cadence. They are-
SALLY "ties off" her Barbie doll and gets it high on heroin.
WADE is writing on the closet walls and weeping.
HUGH has a putting iron and cracks walnuts with it and swishes it down with a Diet Pepsi, belches and scratches his crotch.*

MADGE lights a cigarette and takes a swig off a vodka bottle and spits on the floor.

The rituals build in speed and intensity to the point where they become more ridiculous than they already are. A spot light hits BILLY. He leaps to his feet and screams like a wounded animal. This stops everyone in their tracks. BILLY'S bellow should have ample time to resound off the walls of the theatre. Finally the ensemble break the silence and sing...

ENSEMBLE

“Happy birthday to you
happy birthday to you
happy birthday dear Billy
happy birthday to you.”

BILLY stops the singing by changing channels. This also changes the family's direction. Lights, sound and action onstage should reflect the channel surfing he does. He will change these channels/actions numerous times throughout the play.

MADGE

We do have the perfect life, don't we dear?

HUGH

That's because life is so perfect.

MADGE

Always 70 degrees, always sunny.

HUGH

We have 2 cars. We have television.

MADGE

We have several televisions.

HUGH

God bless our *lies*, I mean, “lives”. God bless our country too.

MADGE

God bless our Christian God...Wait, Can God bless himself?

HUGH

Sure he can. He's God, and I should know...

(He whips out preacher's frock dons it.)

I'm the deacon remember?

(BILLY Changes channels.)

MADGE

We're good parents.

HUGH

We're even having the gosh darn birthday party to prove it.

MADGE

We have it perfect and that's all that matters.

HUGH

Absolutely perfect. Perfectly perfect.

(Suddenly stricken with horror.)

MADGE

What about his "little glitch"?

HUGH

Damn you. Damn you Madge. Damn you for bringing that up!

MADGE

The very bane of our existence.

HUGH

These are words, we agreed, that would never be spoken.

MADGE

Oh God, dear God, I saw it Hugh. I saw it!

HUGH

We have a "perfect agreement", don't we? Perfect families don't discuss "little glitches".

MADGE

He was in the shower. Getting ready for school. The door was ajar. I peeked. I know a mother shouldn't, but I did.

(She shrieks runs down stage and smacks BILLY in the back of the head.)

Sheet Stainer"! Damned Laundry Assassin!

HUGH

Easy there, calm yourself mother...Hey, I have an idea. We're good Americans aren't we? Let's do what all good Americans do and, forget the whole thing?

MADGE

You mean, pretend it's never existed?

HUGH

The more you pretend something doesn't exist, the less it does.

MADGE

But, he must have noticed that he's different. Unusual down there? I mean, he's not retarded for God's sake. "Minimally exceptional" is what his teachers say. But, he's not a drooling idiot or anything like that.

HUGH

Gosh dear, I can't imagine why you're still harping on about this. Especially since we decided to practice denial American style.

MADGE

But, I saw his manhood Hugh. In it's entirety.

HUGH

But, heck mother we're trying to make everything perfectly perfect.

MADGE

Is everything perfect? I mean, really, truly perfect?

HUGH

We should have no fear and no doubt. And why is that? Why is that?

MADGE

Because we're Hugh and Madge Brumfayleur.

HUGH

That's pronounced *Fail-ure, Fail-ure*...It's French.

MADGE

Yes, of course dear, we're French. Do you suppose I should start speaking the language of our people?

(BILLY changes channels. We hear a loud pounding.)

HUGH

Gosh dear do you hear that pounding? Must be Wade...Wade is that you?

WADE

Is that you, Hugh?

HUGH

It's Hugh, Wade.

WADE

Is Madge there?

HUGH

Right in her place Wade. We're both right in our places.

WADE

Well, gosh...It's been so long since we talked, you know? Brother to brother. I miss that. I miss not being in the closet. I miss it out there. I know you don't like to talk about it, I appreciate that it's a sore spot, but I have sore spots of my own. Quite a few actually. Closet sores. That's why I've been trying to get your attention these last few days. I know I'm being silly, but, well you see...I have to pee.

HUGH

Ah, pee you say?

WADE

I have to urinate quite badly.

HUGH

I hate having to pee.

WADE

Me too.

HUGH

All that pressure and discomfort. Then all you can do is think, about trickling water , or rain pelting a tin roof, coffee percolating.

WADE

That's why I was hoping that you'd let me out of here, so I can use the toilet.

HUGH

What about the bucket I gave you?

WADE

Well, to quote the good book Hugh, "My bucket runith over". It's like an ocean rushing through my body. Feeling it swell and crash against the shores of my bladder.

HUGH

Gosh Wade, it sounds serious.

WADE

My kidneys are throbbing, like they're going to burst.

MADGE

Who is it Hugh?

HUGH

It's my brother.

MADGE

You have a brother?

WADE

What am I supposed to do?

HUGH

"Do" Wade? You shouldn't do anything. Doing stuff. That stuff, is how you got yourself into this mess to begin with.

WADE

Blame the muse if you must.

HUGH

Remember what dad used to say? We'd be tossing around a foot ball, or playing fetch with Goldie. Remember. He'd take us each by the arm and say...

(LIGHTS dim to a spot on Hugh. He becomes a gross exaggeration of his father.)

Stop making excuses you worthless piece of shit! Be something! Do something! Stop sitting around crying! Stop your blubbering or I'll give you something to cry about! Do you hear me! Do you hear me!

(He acts out with near psychotic rage, his father beating him.)

Jesus is Lord, say it! Jesus is Lord, say it! Jesus is Lord, say it! SAY IT, SAY IT SAY IT!!!

(LIGHTS come back to normal.)

WADE

But, it's not too fun standing drenched in your own urine. I think that's where the sores came from.

HUGH

I don't imagine that it is. Bye now Wade...

WADE

Wait, Hugh! Isn't today a special day?

HUGH

It is indeed. Yes in-deedy. A very special day.

WADE

Maybe you could let me out, in honor of that?

HUGH

Come on now big brother. Where's that Brumfayleur family spirit? Man up and tough it out. Well Wade, I have to get back to the play now. Good luck to you. If you need anything else...

MADGE

"Hor vwa mon frier-in law"

HUGH

All righty, we'll be seeing you.

MADGE

This is so tres boring.

HUGH

All righty, we'll be seeing you. That was my brother. My big "bro".

MADGE

The man in the closet is related to you?

HUGH

Why yes, what did you think?

MADGE

I didn't know who he was.

HUGH

'Just some strange man living in our closet?

MADGE

I did wonder.

HUGH

Why would I keep someone I didn't know locked in the hall closet?

MADGE

Do I know why you do, what you do?

HUGH

Think Madge, wouldn't that be illegal? Keeping a perfect stranger locked away.

MADGE

I thought maybe that's where "skeletons" come from.

(BILLY changes channels.)

HUGH

Can we just go back to our perfect day, please? Quite frankly, between the glitch and my brother this is getting to be very tedious. Not to mention taking the play in a completely different direction.

MADGE

Okay, let's start again.

HUGH

All the way from the very beginning? From the opening "at rise"?

MADGE

No stupid. We're near quarter of the way through the piece. Let's pick up from a random "perfect life" bit.

HUGH

Okay. Hey guess what fat ass? We still have the perfect life.

MADGE

That's because our life is so perfect.

HUGH

We're having the perfect time.

MADGE

*Pur-fec-tea-own-ay...*How old is he now Hugh? Puberty? I remember puberty. Bleeding and eating, bleeding and eating. "Blea-ting", that's what Mummy used to say...Now, he's post pubesant. A real man finally. That long penis peeking at his toes, over the crest of his one normal ball.

HUGH

Sometimes you can be very creepy Madge.

MADGE

You're a fine one to talk.

HUGH

Doesn't count, she's a step.

MADGE

We can no longer deny it. Our *sin* is different, did I say *sin*, I meant our "son". The "I" and the "O" are side by side by side after all. Oh dear God, who to blame, who to blame?

HUGH

I say we blame it on him.

MADGE

Make it all his fault. Everything for that matter, past present and future, can all be his fault.

HUGH

That's the spirit. He's the one whose poked a tiny hole in the bubble of our *lies*...Sorry, didn't mean to drop that "V".

MADGE

The deceptive little bastard! He's doing it on purpose. That's how teenage boys are.

HUGH

Deceiving us!? You're right, gosh darn it! How do you like them apples? And after all we've done to him? And you know what my Daddy always said about *deception*...

MADGE

"Deceive me once, shame on you".

HUGH

"Deceive me twice"...

MADGE & HUGH (together.)

"And you're a Jew".

(BILLY changes channels.)

HUGH

I was thinking Mother, maybe it's time I had "the chat" with him?

MADGE

Father!

HUGH

The family wisdom passed down. From Father to son. From Brumfayleur to Brumfayleur...Yes mother, it's time for..."The Chat".

MADGE

Which is French for "cat". It's a shame *Whiskers* isn't a girl. You could have had a chat with your *chatte*.

HUGH

This is an important time in a Brumfayleur's *lie*...Damn it! Damn that "F".

(MADGE produces a disposable camera.)

MADGE

And "Viola". A Kodak moment to be sure.

HUGH

Oh you and your French Madge...All right...Boy...Well, I feel the need to share with you...No listen very closely.

(She snaps pictures.)

A man gets to a certain age...The age you're getting to...Well things start changing for him...See a man gets to a certain age...and...Well when I turned 18, for instance...I was a young man about your age. My father sat me down and we had this very same chat...Boy, a man...Well, a man is a man...I'm glad we had this little talk. I feel like this birthday thing is moving right along.

MADGE

I feel better.

HUGH

And what did my Mama always say about "feeling better"?

MADGE

"You're always feeling better, when you're not feeling bad".

HUGH
"So always think of happy things".

MADGE
"And stop acting like a fag".

HUGH
That was a good chat.

MADGE
Yes dear, it really hit home.

HUGH
So, I'd say we're done with this "chat" business then.

MADGE
Back on with our perfect life?

HUGH
Perfectly perfect.

MADGE
Absolutely perfect.

HUGH
But, But? You have that big but look on your face.

MADGE
But, wait! Life suddenly makes sense now. I understand. I change the sheets on his bed. I practically have to chisel them off. This explains quite a lot actually. I take the sheets down to wash them, I spritz them with that stuff. 'Removes blood, grass and wine they say. Come to think of it, it says nothing about *cum*...I hang the sheets out to dry and they look like one of those maps. One of those maps of the world stretched flat. He leaves large continents all over these sheets. I stare at these continents. This world on white...I don't know if a Mother should be seeing the juice of the fruit, of the fruit of her loins.

HUGH
It's hard to deny if you keep bringing it up...I mean, heck we just had the "chat". Cake comes soon, then presents, a birthday wish...

MADGE
I know dear, but...

HUGH

“Perfect party, perfect day”.

MADGE

I can just see him cumming. Like he was throwing these great ropes.
Swinging lariats of gooey white.

HUGH

I SAID, DROP IT YOU FAT BITCH! JUST SHUT UP! SHUT UP! SHUT UP!

(BILLY changes channels.)

This is what I'd call the perfect birthday.

MADGE

That's because our life is so perfect.

HUGH

Perfectly perfect, I'd say.

MADGE

So you've said. So you've said numerous times already.

HUGH

Gosh, just felt like saying it again, and please don't blame me for the symbolic repetitions in the text.

MADGE

But, what does all the repetition symbolize, I wonder?

HUGH

Who cares, Sally's about to enter.

(SALLY crosses to them. She is dressed like a cheerleader. She is junk sick.)

SALLY

My head is a disco ball. My eyes spit out candy colored lights. They dot the floor, as I march down the center of the auditorium. I've been waiting for this moment all my life.

MADGE

He's your fault. Your seed. Bad batter.

SALLY

I wanna be prom queen.

HUGH

My nuts are fine, thank you.

SALLY

To wear hot pink.

HUGH

Ah blame. A woman's third breast.

MADGE

I thought incessant chattering about mundane or redundant details was?

HUGH

No, that's her second vagina.

SALLY

I sail across the floor. My feet hardly touching the ground.

MADGE

Defective Hugh goo. That's what you dribbled inside me.

SALLY

I am perfection in a crushed pink, taffeta gown.

MADGE

Rotten right down to the basic mix.

HUGH

They're the same size, hang at an even angle. Right Sally?

SALLY

If I could be the most perfectly, perfect Prom Queen ever, only for a moment, I could escape where I am now. I wouldn't have to be here. I wouldn't have to be me...Look, my King, the star Quarterback, waits on stage, glowing in the lights of my eyes.

HUGH

In fact I would say it's more that dusty old, womb of yours.

SALLY

He could have any girl, but he chooses me. Me, Sally Brumfayleur.

MADGE

It was fine until you fouled it up. Made it unclean.

SALLY

We'll slip vodka in the punch, smoke cheap pot, dance to *The White Stripes*

HUGH

Mrs. Dusty Death Oven.

SALLY

And later when I've thrown up all over him and in his car he won't care. He's my king. He'll love me, covered in puke and all. And for those few hours the rest of the world will vanish. It's just me sleeping in the crux of his arm. Me and him, happy in this moment. Me, finally, finally, someplace I want to be.

HUGH

My balls are perfectly fine. That's all I'm going to say.

MADGE

You're an idiot. With a capital, I...D...I-

SALLY

"Gimmie an I, gimmie a D, gimmie an I-O-T!

(She pathetically tries to do the spits.)

Every girl wants to be just like me.

HUGH

Well, frankly my dear, you're quite dry. 'Much like sticking the 'ol "John Thomas", into the mouth of the *Mo-jave*. Tumble weeds, cow skulls, vultures perched. O'Keefe's craggy old face painting landscapes. A ghost town of a womb. Complete with salon door banging in the arid wind?

MADGE

And, you're a stupid, loser of a man. Empty in side and soulless.

HUGH

You're the perfect combination of dried crust and blubber.

SALLY

Mommy...Daddy...

HUGH

"Crubber", that's what you are.

SALLY

HELLOOOOO! EXCUSE ME! I EXIST!

HUGH

Well hey, look who's here. Hello Sister.

MADGE

Meanwhile Mother fixates on the TV, pretending not to notice and eats.

SALLY

Step-Daddy, I need to use the car.

HUGH

Well, honey, today is your brother's birthday.

SALLY

I'll show you my tits.

(He places his hand on her breast.)

HUGH

You're such a kidder.

(She removes it. He places it back, etc.)

SALLY

I need the car.

HUGH

But your brother.

SALLY

Step-Daaaaaaddy...

HUGH

Now honey.

SALLY

I have a date.

HUGH

Hmmm, Step-Daddy's jealous.

SALLY

It's my dealer.

HUGH

Hear that mother, sister's got herself a new boyfriend.

(MADE has her hands over her ears and makes blah, blah sounds.)

SALLY

How can I be the perfect, apple pie, American girl, without my SUV?

HUGH

To quote Mick, "We don't always get what we want. But if we try real hard"...

MADGE

And pray.

HUGH

"We soon discover, we achieve what we require".

(MADGE sings from same song.)

MADGE

"I saw Hugh today with an erection".

HUGH

We're family here. With a capital "F", and that means you sister-

(She flashes her tits to her father. He hands her the keys. SALLY takes them and sits back down.)
BILLY changes channels.)

HUGH

Ah, what a perfectly divine life we lead.

MADGE

That's because our life is so perfect-

HUGH

Still sunny?

MADGE

Last time I looked.

HUGH

It was sunny yesterday.

MADGE

It was on Wednesday too.

HUGH

The great thing about living in the suburbs? They cut down all the trees, then name the streets after them. I like that.

MADGE

I just can't unstick his testicles from my brain.

HUGH

We agreed to forget it, didn't we. We decided to move on. To not get hung up on his nuts, remember?

MADGE

"They" say, the testicle in question, doesn't have a shut off valve. Apparently after all these years the veins have begun to sheep-shag.

HUGH

Madge...

MADGE

And, the left one doesn't have a valve at all.

HUGH

Gosh dear. Have we forgotten, trying to forget, again?

MADGE

"Until it's empty", can you just imagine the sheer volume? We're talking cups of cum. A jorum of jizz. A veritable bucket of bukake.

(He reaches over and punches her
in the eye.)

HUGH

You brought that on yourself.

(He reaches over and punches her in the other eye.)

Sometimes a man has to solve his problems, his own way. I hate to hit a woman but, sometimes, you just gotta "smack that bitch up".

(BILLY changes channels. WADE speaks.)

WADE

Hugh...Hugh...Listen I was wondering if I could get a little food. I'm pretty darn hungry in here. Maybe some soup? A little bread maybe?...It's been awhile. Well...Gosh...I've taken to eating parts of my own body...And you know what? I don't taste too good. Yep...Yep...That's me, 'Oi Wade Brumfayleur, eating his toes and drinking his own urine. "To thine own self be food"...Hugh? Hugh?...Well, guess you're not home....All right...I'll just keep eating myself.

(BILLY changes channels.)

HUGH

We seem to have a quite the sticky wicket Madge.

MADGE

Oh dear, did he cum on the wicket as well?

HUGH

This is quite a conundrum. On one hand you have the boys balls. On the other-

MADGE

Your daughter's-

HUGH

Step-daughter's-

MADGE

Step-daughter's breast.

HUGH

We can't go around pretending we don't know it exists, when it obviously does.

MADGE

Wow, a moment of personal clarity, insight and self-awareness.

HUGH

Obviously we've been switched to a PBS type channel.

MADGE

He did that.

HUGH

The little bastard.

MADGE

Do you suppose he can control us that way?

(BILLY change channels. The lights do a weird backward looking thing. Hugh and Madge move quickly in reverse.)

HUGH

The little bastard.

MADGE

He did that.

HUGH

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WADE

Hugh...Hugh...Listen I was wondering if I could get a little food. I'm pretty darn hungry in here. Maybe some soup? A little bread maybe?...It's been awhile. Well...Gosh...I've taken to eating parts of my own body...And you know what? I don't taste too good. Yep...Yep...That's me, 'Ol Wade Brumfayleur, eating his toes and drinking his own urine..."To thine own self be food"...Hugh? Hugh?...Let me explain myself, if I can. I know I'm in here for a reason. I appreciate that it's something we can't talk about, but it's just that...Gosh, if we don't talk about it how can I ever get out? I miss the sunshine. The blue sky. I miss my family. I know that sounds strange, we are a strange lot. Strange in a normal kind of way. Meaning, our version of "strange" is in, actuality, normal by most definitions. At least the way we define ourselves. Does any of this make sense?...Hugh...Well, guess you're not home....All right...I'll just keep eating myself.

(BILLY changes channels.)

HUGH

We need to confront this head on Madge. Stare it right in the face...Now your observations have confirmed that the boy has a large testicle.

MADGE

Yes, dear.

HUGH

With the exception of hacking the thing off, I don't know what else we can do.

MADGE

Perhaps further research into the matter...

HUGH

I feel a "prop cue" coming on...

(She's produced a stack of *Reader's Digest*
.Magazines.)

MADGE

Ah, here!...I knew, I knew I remembered it being here. Proof, that my testicle obsession is justified...

(She reads.)

"What to do when your boy has one big ball"...This story comes from a Father in Topeka..."One day, quite by accident, I was working in the garage cleaning my shot guns when".

HUGH

Cleaning his shot gun, hmm...I like guns. Guns are fun and important.

MADGE

Apparently, he was working in the garage cleaning his shot gun when his son walked in..."He walked in and I saw he was crying. He said, "Daddy I think I have a problem." He then went on to show me something I thought I would never have to see. What no Father ever wants to see. The apple of his eye has a bad spot. His boy has one big ball".

(Grabbing the magazine from her.)

HUGH

Says here, he took the ram rod and promptly thrashed him.

MADGE

But, we don't own a shotgun or a ramrod.

HUGH

Wait! I know, I'll take the putter to him. Just like my father did to me.

(Doing a *Reagan* impression.)

HUGH

Boy...Boy..."Be-ready yourself for the wrath of Hugh"!

MADGE

Who's that supposed to be?

HUGH

Ronald Reagan.

MADGE

That was your best Reagan impression?

HUGH

I'm not an actor for God sake...

(Producing his head shot. He speaks an aside to the audience.)

But, ha, ha, I really am!

(To his son.)

"Listen to me pilgrim"...

MADGE

'Sounds more like John Wayne.

HUGH

Same difference...And I have it on good authority that the "Gipper" would get himself "Duked" on a regular basis.

MADGE

You're insinuating that Ronald Reagan was a "bottom"?

HUGH

Of course. John Wayne was no fag.

MADGE

But, certainly J.W. must have had the decency to use his hand on the 41st.
President?

HUGH

Yeah, but that's not gay.

(Again to audience.)

This is all an inside joke. Unless you know this author's work, and his need to humiliate his father by re-sexing such American icons of masculinity, you're just not going to get it...Where was I...Ah, yes...

(He does a grotesque blend of *Reagan* and *Wayne*.)

'Whether it's getting the lane in traffic he wants, killing a bunch of Indians or celebrating his son's birthday...Listen to me pilgrim, as a man of the Caucasian persuasion, you have the God given right to "insist your will". It's what we call in 'merica...See Madge, the way I did the 'America thing? With the apostrophe before the "A", so it's almost silent. 'merica. When you can do that, you know you're a real American...Well, back to the insistence. Now boy I insist you come over here immediately, so I can beat you with this putter.

MADGE

He doesn't seem to be moving.

HUGH

Boy...Here me now Boy! I insist!...You listen to me now...Are you listening? Hugh doth *insist*...

MADGE

Do you hear your father?

HUGH

You're helping me?

MADGE

Well of course. You're my husband and I'm supposed to love, honor and obey you.

HUGH

"Obey", you say, obey? Nudge, nudge, wink, wink. Looks like Herman the One-eyed German is aughtunged and ready to Blitzkrieg.

MADGE

Sally, your father needs you.

(Going back to his *John Reagan* voice.)

HUGH

"Well heck. With a fat woman standing beside him and the wind at his back, I guess there's nothing a white man can't do"...Well then, I'd say I've done a lion's share of "fatherly duties" today.

(BILL changes channels. SALLY crosses to her father. She is even sicker now.)

SALLY

Step-daddy I need a thousand dollars.

HUGH

Heck honey, that's a lot of smackers.

SALLY

I really need it.

HUGH

You're disregarding everybody else's feelings except your own. That's just plain rude, and selfish

SALLY

What about my feelings...Whose paying attention to those?

(He looks around to see who might be paying attention.)

HUGH

Hmm...Gosh, guess nobody is, I guess....Now, why would a young girl like you need all that money?

SALLY

For my abortion.

HUGH

We all know that's illegal in the eyes of God and some of these United States.

SALLY

I suppose you want a smack addicted, mongoloid, who might look a lot like you, tearing around the house?

HUGH

What happened to all that money I already gave you?

SALLY

That went for my last abortion.

HUGH
Heck that's a regular cornucopia.

MADGE
What does she want Hugh?

HUGH
A thousand dollars.

MADGE
Another abortion.

HUGH
Perfect families are more careful sister.

MADGE
Show him your ass Sally.

HUGH
Nope. We just can't be having abortions any time we feel like it-

(She lifts up her skirt and shows him her ass.)

HUGH
I...Ah...mmm....Well...Ah....

SALLY
The money?

(He reaches in his wallet and pulls out a thousand dollars.)

HUGH
Can't take it with you, I guess.

SALLY
Thanks step-daddy.

HUGH
Wait, a moment young lady...Did you do your homework?

SALLY
No, but I have been working from home. You can find my ad on Craigslist.org. I offer a full body massage with a happy ending. I also provide the following list of

services. BBBJ, Golden Showers, Roman Showers, Rimming, S&M, Spanking, and prostrate milking. I'm 420 friendly and speak fluent Greek, as well.

(BILLY changes channels. SALLY returns to her area.)

MADGE

Wait Hugh a thought! What if he's not ours?

HUGH

That's not just a thought honey, but, a full fledged non-sequitur. Now what do you mean by not ours?

MADGE

What if some how, by an act of God or clerical error, our real son got switched at the hospital, for this big balled boy.

HUGH

Then what became of our son, if that's not him?

MADGE

What if some how, by an act of God or clerical error, our real son got switched at the hospital, for this big balled boy.

HUGH

Then his balls are his own problem.

MADGE

And if he's not our real son, that means my obsession with all this is nothing more than the pining of a middle aged woman, over the glorious beauty that is youth. I'd say that was a healthy reaction. Unlike your obsession which is just plain gross. Hey another thought!

HUGH

Wow, two in one day. That's pretty good for a woman.

MADGE

Why don't we call out his name, that would get his attention. Names are good for that. We call out his name. If he doesn't respond, he's not ours, and technically not our problem. Agreed?

HUGH

Hey Madge, as much as I hate to admit it. That is an excellent idea on your part. Kudos. In fact I've been remiss in giving you your due. Many of the good ideas in this play happen to be yours and you deserve all the credit.

MADGE

I can't take all the credit. A lot of it is in the way I'm written. But, thank you honey, that's very kind of you

HUGH

It's always good, about mid-way through, to hit the audience with something they least expect.

(They coo and rub noses.)

All righty then, let's get this name business underway.

(He speaks to BILLY.)

Hey you...Ah...Hey Ah...Strangest thing. I can't seem to remember his name.

MADGE

You're such a dolt...Excuse me...Ah....Young man...The strangest thing just happened...Well, for the life of me I can't remember...

HUGH

We did name him didn't we?

MADGE

Well of course we did...I'm sure we did...I don't think you can leave the hospital without a name...Wait, stupid, I think it's Larry?

HUGH

I think it was *Lawrence*...Ah, Lawrence?...Hmm. He doesn't seem to be answering to either one. I think it's in the "L" family.

MADGE

Liddy?

HUGH

Lucky wasn't it Lucky?

MADGE

Les...Les...Lester.

HUGH

We would never name a child Les?...Lazarus...No wait, that's my penis.

(Blurting out.)

MADGE

Latrell DeShawn Jones!

HUGH

Madge, "Latrell DeShawn Jones"?

MADGE

Oh dear God. What if his name is Latrell DeShawn Jones? That could only mean one thing...

HUGH&MADGE (together.)

He's a "NEGROOOOOO"!!!

HUGH

How is that possible?

MADGE

He flinched.

HUGH

The U.P.S. guy! They like big women.

MADGE

I saw him. I said the name. His entire body shuddered in a "Shaftian" like tremble.

HUGH

Are you sure he's a Negro, have you ever seen him tip?

MADGE

A throbbing, thick, virile, black...

HUGH

WE BOTH JUST HAVE TO RELAX HERE!...I mean, "A man's home is... his house", after all.. "A man's got to find his manly pride. Now go over there and shake him by the shoulders.

MADGE

Shake him by the shoulders?

HUGH

To see if he's...You know ...

MADGE

I can't do that. I mean, God forbid you step on one of their shoes, let alone shake them by the shoulders.

(He clears his throat.)

HUGH

"Yo up G. What's the dilly yo"?

MADGE

Havens to Betsy! What are you saying?

HUGH

It's the special "Negro code".

MADGE

Where did you learn that?

(He picks up another *Readers' Digest* .)

HUGH

"In the unlikely event of a suburban Negro encounter always remember to know your code". See Madge, I've been studying.

MADGE

Oh dear God! Save us from this dark, ungodly, un-godliness.

(She yanks magazine from him.)

HUGH

Remember Jesus is on our side. We're decent. We're certainly white and we dress really comfortably. Now what do they say to do next?

MADGE

"In the event that the "code" fails, one should resort to "rapping"?

HUGH

Okay I know, it's that talk-sing thing. You know, you flail your arms in these quasi-simian, threats and...

MADGE

..."And terrify whitey to his very core".

(SOUND of a heavy Rap beat is heard.)

HUGH

Sort of makes you feel..."Primal", doesn't it?

MADGE

"Don't forget to use the word *Niggaz*".

(HUGH throws down.)

HUGH

"You dope, you fresh
you stupid fly
niggie dis me one mo time
and I think you gonna die

'Cause I'm lookin' for a shortie
who booty got mass.

Look at me again
I'll buss a cap on that ass...

Take it mother...

MADGE

Oh dear...
"Niggie give me this
Niggie give me that...
Niggie give me nuttin'
so I pull my Gat".

(She suddenly gets into it and is really good.)

Making lots of money
with the white man's way
My chains are all gold
But, I'm his muthafuckin' slave.

Puffy sells out
while Jay Z flinches
see, I'd bust those Niggas up
and make 'em both my bitches.

(The "music" stops suddenly.)

HUGH

All right Madge, that's enough.

MADGE

But, the "darker the berry"...

HUGH

Enough Madge. My Anglo-Saxon member can't bare up to your scrutiny.

MADGE

"Once you've had black you never go back?"

HUGH

I said, "that will do"!

MADGE

Yes, dear...He doesn't seem to be responding.

HUGH

That means...

HUGH/MADGE

He's not a Negro!

MADGE

I think a prayer of thanks is in order Deacon.

(BILLY changes channels. LIGHTS and music become holy.)

HUGH

God, and I don't mean some 8 arm elephant, kneel down on a rug, slap you with a shoe God. I'm not talking about a worship at sun down, bob to the east, dance naked around a fire, spray on, made in China, by one get one free, God. I'm talking about the true God. The lord of hosts. A big, 'ol, pissed off, white guy with a beard. A right to bear arms kinda God. A fire and brimstone, Chuck Heston, pry it out of my cold dead hands, semi-automatic, lock and load style lord...To that fag-hating creator of the heavens and earth, we wish to bestow our humble thanks for the aversion of a horrible tragedy. Yea though we walk through the valley of the shadow of black people, your rod and staff did bring us much comfort. We'd like to thank you lord in the name of your son, Jesus H. Christ...Amen...

(BILL changes channels. LIGHTS back to normal.
SALLY ENTERS. She is very sick now.)

Hey sister. Guess what, your brother's not a Negro.

SALLY

I need a thousand dollars.

HUGH

You're pregnant again so quickly? Gosh Sally, keep you knees together.

It's for my dope.

SALLY

A new boyfriend?

HUGH

No step-daddy, it's for my heroin.

SALLY

Well, we all need heroes in life don't we. Wait Sister, for your "heroine?" As in female icon? Hmmmm...Are you suggesting that you're a "lesbian"?

HUGH

Probably because of you.

MADGE

Well you know what my grandma always say about lesbians?

HUGH

"A Dyke's hand is like two in the bush".

SALLY

I'd like to *meat* this girlfriend of yours.

HUGH

You mean M-E-E-T, not M-E-A-T.

MADGE

I'm just reading what's written.

HUGH

Maybe it's a type-o?

MADGE

Step-daddy listen...

SALLY

Or, maybe the playwright is trying to make a feminist statement, about how women are objectified in our culture. By using *meat and meet* as an obvious pun.

HUGH

I don't think so dear, he's not that *cleaver*.

MADGE

Step-daddy. Father. Deacon.

SALLY

HUGH

Just don't go trying to marry this girlfriend of yours. I won't stand for it. Marriage is a sacred thing.

MADGE

"Sacred", is just "scared" with an inverted "C".

HUGH

You know, as a man of the cloth, I feel obligated to denounce homosexuality. But, gosh honey, when it's two girls...I guess it's different. Heck, doesn't seem like a sin at all, now that I think about it.

SALLY

No, listen step-daddy! Not *heroine*, "heroin". "China Red". "Bulldog". "White death".

HUGH

"Heroin"? Heroin...Ah, heroin you say?

MADGE

Which is really just "hero-in".

HUGH

Gosh, what a difference an "E" makes.

SALLY

My legs hurt, like I've been pelted with putting irons.

HUGH

Well sweets, Daddy doesn't have the scratch.

SALLY

If you don't give me the money, I'll go back to being bulimic.

HUGH

Honey.

SALLY

My ribs, my knees, my pelvis. I'll be like fondling a bicycle.

HUGH

Gosh honey.

SALLY

It'll be apples and *Exlax* again for dinner.

HUGH

But, you look so perfect now.

SALLY

I'll purge right here. I swear. I'll "poke and choke" right in front of your very eyes.

HUGH

Your mother's just had the carpet cleaned.

MADGE

What's she saying?

HUGH

She's threatening to vomit.

MADGE

Not on my carpet, I just had it cleaned.

SALLY

Step-daddy I'm in pain.

HUGH

Don't be silly Sally, 'cause it's too good to use just once, you're not in pain. I don't see any pain. Remember dear, If you can't see the pain then it cant hurt that bad.

SALLY

Wait! Another devisacle digression. I think I know why the playwright has us making references to the play, thus destroying the illusion for the audience. He's trying to pull them in and make them realize that we're really them, turned inside out. Wow! See that's what drugs can do for you.

HUGH

Now, back to the play...Honey, I swear. The Ministry is broke. It's not the same for step-daddy anymore. Gosh, it seems like nobody's interested in giving money to God these days. Well heck, there used to be a time when a man felt like taking care of his soul. It's the liberals. I said it before. They have this country tied up in a mess of liberal knots. It's getting so you can't fling a dead cat without hitting a smelly Chinaman or a damn democrat.

SALLY

You're a fucking liar.

HUGH

Now honey, that's a little harsh, wouldn't you say.

SALLY/MADGE (together)

Liar! Liar! Liar!

HUGH

You're not being very respectful.

SALLY

And you're a child molester.

HUGH

"Droit de Seigneur"!...And it's only girls, honey. Heck, I'm no Catholic!
And, as Martin Luther King once said, now there's a respectable negro.

MADGE

"I'm getting my black ass outta here"?

HUGH

No. That was the "I have a dream", check your history dear. No, he said,
"It takes a village to raise a child, but only one priest to molest him".
(She does a pathetic cheer.)

SALLY

Gimmie a "G", gimme an "O", gimme an "O, O, D"! What does it spell...GOOD
GIRL!...(cont'd)

(She tries to do the "splits" and collapses near her
mother. BILLY changes channels.)

SALLY

Mommy, Mommy, I don't feel good. It feels like I have hot quarters on my eyes.

(To the tune of "Love and Marriage".)

MADGE

I hate children, I hate children...

(SALLY wraps a belt around her arm. She searches
her arms for a vein.)

SALLY

How did this happen?

MADGE

Being a mother is a very difficult thing.

SALLY

Mommy, oh Mommy, it hurts.

MADGE

Children, war and the New England Patriots...

SALLY

There's like a war going on inside of me.

MADGE

The only three things I truly hate.

SALLY

I can't bend my legs straight.

MADGE

The little creatures are born so stupid and needy.

SALLY

I'm so ugly now.

MADGE

I didn't want either of them. A dog would have been fine.

SALLY

I used to be pretty. "Pretty Sally", remember?

MADGE

They *Gerbered* up all my time.

SALLY

Is this my fault? Did I do this to myself?

MADGE

It's my life...

SALLY

I want it to stop.

MADGE

My only life...

SALLY

I just want to stop hurting.

MADGE

I mean, what about doing something else with my time?

SALLY

I have an ache crawling all through me.

MADGE

Couldn't I have done something else?

SALLY

Everywhere, in my veins, grabbing at my calves.

MADGE

"They" say children are magical. Does that mean I can saw one in half?

SALLY

Maybe I could curl, curl up with my head in your lap? Maybe you could brush my hair? I could come over there. We could pretend couldn't we?

MADGE

Why can't I return the children that don't work properly? I kept the receipt.

SALLY

You could brush my hair. Like on TV. Put your arms around me. Make me feel like that, safe like that. Like on that show.

MADGE

Did you ever take your children to the park and wish that you could just leave them there?

(She begins to mine her legs for a vein.)

SALLY

Maybe you could...I mean, just for a minute?

MADGE

I tried it once, but like a wet retriever, she found her way home.

SALLY

I feel so fucking lonely.

MADGE

Can't stand them. Can't stand them. Can't stand them!

SALLY

I'm not going to cry...I'm not...I just wanna get "straight".

(She taps at the artery on her neck and cries in spite of herself.)

MADGE

No medals, no certificates. Not even a simple thank you note?

SALLY

I mean, I can't find a vein, man.

MADGE

When Hugh and I first met we dreamed of what we might be. What we might do with the time in our life. Doctor, lawyer, Indian "thief". But that was too hard, a commitment to our own dreams and screams, much too difficult, so we became parents instead.

SALLY

Mommy can I come to you?

MADGE

Well, what reward do I get now?

SALLY

Can I?

MADGE

Where's my prize? My "worlds best mom" statue. It isn't fair.

SALLY

Can I come over there?

MADGE

My pot 'o' gold. My lucky charms. My chance to kiss the blarney stone.

(SALLY reaches out her hand. MADGE automatically throws a handful of loaded syringes at her.)

SALLY

I could come over there and you could brush my hair.

MADGE

Lying Irish bastards.

SALLY

You could help me.

MADGE

They're just Puerto Ricans with red hair.

(She slips the needle into her neck.)

SALLY

Mommy...Mom...I need you...I mean...I can't seem to fix...Mommy...

(SALLY injects.)

MOTHERRR!!!...

(The drug takes her instantly. A warm rush, a pleasant itch moves around her body. MADGE finally acknowledges her.)

I have a problem Mommy.

MADGE

Gosh dear, let's hope it's not too tedious.

SALLY

It's a serious problem and it's only getting worse.

MADGE

You're too young for "serious problems" sister. I remember what my mother used to say to me...

(LIGHT dim to a spot on Madge. She does a grotesque exaggeration of her mother.)

MADGE

Stop you whining you fat, little whore! Go ahead, eat yourself swinish.! No man is going to love you. I wish you weren't born! I wish you were dead! Fat, little whore, Fat, little whore, Fat, little whore, Fat, little whore, Fat, little whore!

(LIGHTS back up to normal.)

SALLY

I need your help Mom.

MADGE

What's the matter now?

SALLY

I feel lost. Like I'm floating in space.

MADGE

Don't be silly Sally,

(Aside)

Because it's too good to use just once...That's the heroin talking.

SALLY

They make fun of me at school. They call me "Junky Sally Brumfayleur". You know what they say when I walk down the halls?

(She chants.)

"Junky Sally's at the prom
Junky Sally's drunken Mom
Junky Sally's teeth are bad
Junky Sally's, sex with Dad".

MADGE

Well, Junky Sally Brumfayleur, "Stick and stones", "Sticks and stones".

SALLY

Tell me that you love me?

MADGE

Certain things are simply "unspeakable", you know that.

(Sally starts to slip into a nod.)

SALLY

Help me mother please.

MADGE

See, that's unspeakable.

SALLY

Tell me mother?

MADGE

Simply unspeakable-

SALLY

Tell me-

MADGE

Absolutely Unspeakable-

Help me-
SALLY

Unspeakably, unspeakable-
MADGE

Even if you really don't mean it, say it.
SALLY

MADGE
Sally dear, dear junky Sally, there are certain things in life, that are just unspeakable-

(She looks at her daughter who has nodded off.)

Oh...That was easy.

(BILLY changes channels.)

Bad news Hugh. The Big Balled Boy is ours. Look at those pajamas.

HUGH
You're a fat pig Madge. Everything about you disgusts me. The way you look. That you drink gravy. I hate the way the moisture builds up in the rolls behind your knees. I hate that constellation of moles that dapple your neck. I hate the "Madge flab" that jiggles when you point. I hate everything about you Madge. I hate you and I only wish you had a twin sister, so I could hate you twice as much.

MADGE
My turn now?...You're a weak, frightened, man who's never succeeded at anything in his life. A terrified, dribbling, mess of a man is what you are..."Mess Man". Sounds like the name of a Super Hero. Here comes big old "Super Stupid Man". Able to stumble over failure in humiliating bounds. 'Cums faster than a speeding bullet. Look it's a bird, it's a "pain", it's a man bent over like a question mark, it's...it's...*Failure Man*.

(Singing.)

"Failure man, failure man
does what ever a failure can".

(He raises his fist to punch her, but is interrupted by pounding from the closet.)

WADE

Hugh...I know you're out there...Stop pretending you can't hear me...Hugh!

HUGH

What is it Wade? I'm trying to punch my wife in the face here.

WADE

Well Gosh little brother. I guess you know what it's about.

HUGH

Well Wade, we covered all that didn't we?

WADE

We did. Yes, but I'm afraid I have to pee even worse now.

HUGH

Now, now, big brother. I know you too well. You can't pull the wool over this ewe's eyes..."Ewe's eyes"...Wool..."Baaaa", get it?...Just remember what happened last time I let you out.

WADE

I don't believe in yesterdays Hugh.

HUGH

That's what you pretty much said last time.

WADE

I just have to pee.

HUGH

I hate to call my own brother a liar. I hate calling any man a liar, except Italians and Filipinos of course.

WADE

I'm begging you. I'm begging you little brother.

HUGH

Well Wade...I don't believe you. See, what I think's going to happen is; I open that door. You'll step out. Shade your eyes from the light and start immediately in on that darned *poetry*. The neighbors are talking Wade. Madge and I can't go anywhere without people asking; "How's that crazy verse-reading brother of yours"? I mean gosh, we have to live here don't we?

WADE

Well Hugh, poetry is weird that way isn't it? I mean, you have to have a lot of heart to read or write poetry. In fact, heck, I'd say it was down right impossible without it...And...Well...Here's the situation little brother...My heart...Well,

gosh...My heart is basically "empty". That is to say the pump reaches down into the well all right but, the well, gosh, it's dry. 'Just keeps sucking up air. I won't recite anything. I don't think I could...What if we made a deal?

HUGH

The very word to you Wade, is like whiskey.

WADE

You let me go pee little brother and if I so much as recite one phrase. One beat of pentameter, one breath of verse, I'll become your slave. Imagine that Hugh, your very own slave.

HUGH

If I let you out to pee and if you relapse into poesy in any way, you'll be my slave? Forever?

WADE

I swear on the Brumfayleur family jewels.

HUGH

No man in his right mind would risk all that. You wouldn't sell your freedom for a lousy poem would you Wade?

WADE

No way.

HUGH

You may have a "poetry problem", but you're no fool.

WADE

Just a quick pee.

HUGH

Very well, I'll do it.

(He unlocks the door. WADE emerges. He carries in his arms a sloshing bucket of urine. It sloshes over the rim. LIGHT FADE on the rest of the stage. He shades his eyes
He slowly tries to stand erect. He inhales deeply. A tear rolls down his cheek. He pisses himself. He recites a poem.)

WADE

This is a poem I wrote entitled "A birthday poem for Billy Brumfayleur from his Father who would never have the guts or the inclination to tell his son so his estranged Uncle ends up doing it for him". That's a run on sentence, sorry.

(His sense of release is profound.)

I tried to navigate this
strange living room,
naked and mostly in the
dark.

I realized...

We all wound somebody.

We all get wounded.

For some the ability to
inflict pain is simple.

Like brushing your teeth
or walking the dogs.

Then sometimes a person
will do something obvious
something vulgar
some thing cruel.

And so my son I
burned that bridge
to you. However,
A single heart can be
an immense place.
Time will find me that place,
in your heart, in my heart,

That perfect place
where we both can
be happy....(cont'd)

(LIGHTS up full. HUGH is swatting at him with the
putting iron. Wade retreats. The urine is sloshing
everywhere.)

WADE

No, no, Hugh please, please!!! Don't throw me back in there! I'll die Hugh
please...Hugh, Hugh, in the name of God man! Let me have my words!

(Corralling him back into the closet.)

HUGH

Unspeakable!

It's- WADE

Unspeakable- HUGH

It's just- WADE

Unspeakable- HUGH

It's just poetry Hugh- WADE

It's unspeakable Wade! HUGH

(He gets him back in the closet and locks the door.)

Damn shame. Damn shame...But hey! I got me a slave...Now where was I? Ah, yes, beating my fat wife.

(BILLY changes channels. Both MADGE and HUGH leap from their chairs and face off like Gladiators. She wields her vodka bottle while he thwarts her with his golf club. TV. Jingles start to underscore their battle.)

MADGE
You promised me it was going to be like a "rose garden".

(They circle each other.)

HUGH
I beg your pardon?

(She swings at him and misses.)

HUGH
It would have been, if you could have produced normally.

MADGE
Why don't you get sick in your perfect balls and die!

HUGH
Why don't you go suck down a gallon of cancer.

MADGE

Wait, stop!

(She lets loose a flood of crocodile tears.)

I'm a terrible Mother. I'm a terrible wife.

HUGH

Now, now, dear.

MADGE

I don't deserve a perfect husband like you.

HUGH

Now, now, dear. You're being too hard on yourself.

(She smacks him with the vodka bottle.)

MADGE

We're not really French, I know that now. It was just a ploy to mask your ridiculous, yet suggestive, last name.

(He grabs SALLY and uses her as a shield.)

HUGH

Stop bitching at me you sagging mound of withered old NAG!

MADGE

Don't start with me you stupid ass.

HUGH

If you just did something with your life. Pulled your own tremendous weight in some way. Is that so difficult?

(SALLY'S still on a nod. The needle stuck in her neck.)

SALLY

Gimmie a G...Gimmie an O...O..O...O...O...

(LIGHT up on WADE. He weeps. MADGE and HUGH continue to battle.)

HUGH

You're a bitch/cunt Madge, a "Bunt" actually.

Liar- MADGE

Bunt- HUGH

Liar- MADGE

Bunt- HUGH

Wait Hugh! It's the Smith-Jones. MADGE

(The Smith Jones stroll by.)

Well, howdy there neighbors! MR. SMITH-JONES

Smith-Jones...How goes it? HUGH

Lovely day isn't it. MRS. SMITH- JONES

Indeed it is. MADGE

Perfectly perfect I'd say. MR. SMITH-JONES

We were just saying that ourselves right honey. HUGH

You must give me that brownie recipe Betty. MADGE

I'll bring it to the Tupperware party. MRS. SMITH-JONES

I expect to see you on the links Brumfaylure. I shot two under last week. MR. SMITH-JONES

I'm ready for you Smith-Jones. HUGH

MR. SMITH-JONES

Well, we have to be off now.

MRS. SMITH-JONES

Bill's treated me to an anal bleaching for my birthday.

HUGH

You old rascal.

MR. SMITH-JONES

Take care now...

(They stroll off.)

Now there's good people.

MRS. SMITH-JONES

Madge is looking a little on the hefty side...

(They EXIT. HUGH and MADGE fall back to battle.)

HUGH

Wait everyone! I think it's time for a round of the rituals.

(They are a bout to begin when BILLY jumps up and uses his remote to PAUSE them. They freeze mid-rit.)

BILLY

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!!!

(Pointing to the TVs.)

This is my family! THIS IS MY FAMILY!

(Beat.)

A Sunday, in the summer. A father son fishing trip. Hugh rents us twenty-footer and we go. Me, Hugh and this salty old skipper are sitting there bobbing our lines...All of a sudden, over my shoulder, about 3 football fields away comes this blast! Like a shotgun blast. Then another one off to the right, BLAM! One from the left, BLAM! BLAM, right over there!. Salty says, "Them thar are whales. In these waters, probably Sperm Whales". Sure enough only a hundred yards away come a whole bunch of blasts and we can see 'em now. A small heard or pack or what ever you call them and they're circling us. It's so fucking cool! The blasts

coming one after another, fast! Do you see this?...Do you?...One of them is real close now. Real, real close. BLAM, and this gush of water shoots out, right in front of the sun, it fans back down, all gleaming like diamonds...Salty says; "These here whales feed in a circle", and he figured we were probably dead center in there dinner...All of a sudden one of 'em comes barreling down on us. He gets about 10 yards from the boat and, I swear to God, he comes straight out of the water, this monster wall of whale...He hangs there in the air, like a gigantic exclamation point! I can see his stomach, so close, grooved blue, crusted with stuff and streaming water...Then he hooks, cuts back down and dives. But before he goes completely under, his tail hovers. It smacks the top of the water and sends a sheet of rain into the boat an inch deep. Do you see that? Did anybody see that?

(He removes the needle from Sally's neck. He slaps her sharply across the face a couple of times. She wakes up.)

I love you little sister. I love you...You can stop this now.

SALLY

Really, just like that?

BILLY

Yeah...

(She EXITS with a smile. He begins to remove his clothes.)

Anyway, Salty says; "That's the old Bull and it seems he's asking us politely to leave", and he fires up the engines. WAIT! We can't leave"! He said they would start bumping the boat next and his old rig couldn't take it. "So what? Who cares? Sink it. Sink it all!...We're motoring away, and the bull is getting smaller.

(He is now naked.)

The next thing I know, I'm in the water. I don't even remember jumping in. I take off after the whales. I swim and swim. I swim until my arms ache and my legs are like rubber. My heart is pounding out of my chest, but I can breathe. I can breathe better. I can breathe easier. I'm there. I'm with them. We're rolling and diving and laughing...I see the boat. A little dot on the horizon...Then it's gone.. remnants of oil, gas, are all that's left. No trace of them at all. Just the blue, blue ocean...I dive under. I can hold my breath just like them, and I see crusty stuff clinging to my ribs. My feet...They're flat and blue and I don't have any toes, and this thing, I can feel it, between my shoulder blades. It puckers, then opens wide. I arch my back and let it break the surface. One thrust of my mighty tail and I'm off with this pack, this pod, this family of mine... I could hate them. My human family. I could hear their voices, in my head for the rest of my life. I could nurture this perfectly, perfect hate. 'Hate the world, hate myself. I could let that hate of

Hugh and Madge drown out everything else my life has in store...Or, I could do what any good whale does when confronted with this much ugliness -- swim away...Just swim away.

(He unlocks WADE'S closet.)

Just swim away...

(BILLY EXITS. WADE slowly emerges from the closet.
LIGHTS fade.)

Finis.

THE PLAYWRIGHT SPEAKS: *Thank you for reading Big Ball. I hoped it made you laugh, made you think, pissed you off, and maybe even offended you a bit. Tho in this day and age offending the American psyche is a difficult, if not impossible feat. We are a crass, obscene and perverse culture. We have eschewed our boundaries, our decency, and more over our compassion. This is reflected in the music we listen to, the TV we watch, law enforcement, our so-called "leadership", the Church, the nuclear family, and most of our other sacred institutions. The aim of grotesque theatre is to lampoon and at the same time expose the mythologies American culture struggles to maintain. Big Ball is a coming of age play. If there is a glimmer of hope for us, it resides in the individual. One person's ability to exercise empathy and forgive, while unlocking what is best in their hearts.*

AUTHOR'S BIO: Leslie Bramm is the author of 22 plays which have been produced, work-shopped and/or developed, regionally, internationally, off-Broadway, and independently by Variations Theatre Group, Three Crows Theatre, The Present Company, The Penobscot Theatre, The Actor's Theatre of Louisville, Emerging Artists, Theatre, Nicu's Spoon, The Edward Albee Last Frontier Conference, Rattle Stick, Reverie Productions, Playwrights Horizons/Tisch, Shelter Theatre Group, Gold Coast Theatre, The Province Town Players, and the Colorado Fine Arts Center. Bramm is the recipient of a Stanley Drama Award (Oswald's Backyard) A Paul T. Nolan Award (Islands of Repair) A Tennessee Williams Literary Award (Big Ball). Bramm is a two-time finalist for

the O'Neill Conference. His play A.B.C. was banned from the curriculum at SUNY college and adapted into the film "Be My Oswald". He co-wrote the screenplay "This is Not Here", with actor the Kevin Corrigan, based on The Memoir; "The Last Days of John Lennon". He is published by JAC Publications, Smith and Krause, Brooklyn Publishers, One Act Play Depot, The New York Theatre Experience and Indie Theatre Now. He was the literary director for Nicus Spoon Theatre Company, Variations Theatre Group, and Communications director for The League of Independent Theatres. He is also a longtime member of the Present Company (producers of fringenyc), at the Actor's Studio Playwright and Director's Workshop, and IATI Theatre. Bramm was lead singer of the indie rock band Diz Dam. He was kicked out of Julliard and studied playwriting with Aristotle, and The Beatles.