

# CAMOUFLAGE—A Play In Three Acts

*By Michael Glassman*

**WHY WE LIKE IT:** *Boi oh boi, do we love this one! An absolutely riveting edge of your seat drama that will make you forget everything but what you're reading. The dialogue is so good it hurts. 'I got hit with three golden showers last year...punks on the rooftop. I could hear them laughing'./'Get an umbrella.' And...'You're the step-brother from hell.'/ 'We all have to start somewhere.' And and and we can't forget 'I want to know why I'm the wood and you're the termite.' Outstanding noir theatre from talent with a capital 'T'. Five stars.(Spacing and syntax are the playwright's own.)*

## CAMOUFLAGE

### A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

#### Cast of Characters:

Charles Davenport	NYC police Chief Psychologist.. 55 years old
Rita Davenport	His wife, 46, Tony's step sister
Tony Stangler	Rita's step brother, 55
David Weinrib	Tony's former partner, 51

TIME: Monday 9am, July 1995.... Action over a 48 hour period.

#### SETTING:

We are in Charlie's disheveled office in New York City. On his desk is a picture of his wife. It is a hot day, the a/c is not working. A portable fan is on high. His tie is loose around his neck. His jacket is over the top of his chair. His phone starts ringing. He can't find the phone due to all the files on his desk. There's a knock on the door. When he does find the phone it stops ringing.

## ACT ONE

CHARLEY: *(harried)* Come in.

TONY: *(enters wearing black leather shoes, black slacks, short sleeve high end*

*polo shirt).*

How about those Yankees?

CHARLEY: I stopped caring when Munson was killed.

TONY: That was a heartbreaker.

CHARLEY: The department is under a lot of pressure.

TONY: I got a season ticket. Anytime you want to go to the stadium- -

CHARLEY: It's only a game...have a seat Tony.

TONY: What do you psychologists do for fun?

CHARLEY: Fortune telling.

TONY: Just two more years. I'm tired of wearing blue.

CHARLEY: I thought your color was green.

*(moves thumb and fingers together in front of TONY)*

TONY: I could come back.

CHARLEY: My schedule's tight.

TONY: *(points to a picture on the wall)*

That's New.

CHARLEY: Things change.

TONY: Retirement is making me nervous. I don't want to wind up waxing floors in a mall.

CHARLEY: Even one cop falling through the cracks is one too many.

TONY: I put in my time.

CHARLEY: *(Thumbing TONY'S file)* ...  
It's all here.

TONY: You're the head honcho. You can approve it.

CHARLEY: I don't override the staff.

TONY: The promotions? .. medals?.. the citation from the mayor..thats in---

CHARLEY: I was there, remember.?

TONY: So you know.

CHARLEY: Two more write up's last year.

TONY: Those...they're nothing..You're not supposed to - -

CHARLEY: I just told you the department's changed.

TONY: The department?

CHARLEY: Yeah, the department!

TONY: There's no respect out there. Democracy starts with res- -

CHARLEY: I don't need civic lessons.

TONY: I'm talking about life on the streets.

CHARLEY: This is not about---

TONY: You do a tour on the beat. You'll see.. The city's full of crazies. Innocent people are getting hurt.

CHARLEY: And you're protecting them?

TONY: I got hit with three golden showers last year...punks on the rooftops. I could hear them laughing.

CHARLEY: Get an umbrella.

TONY: We stick together, Charley.

CHARLEY: Solicitation of bribes?

TONY: That was a setup.

CHARLEY: I heard the conversation, Tony, it was no set-up.

TONY: You were a cop.

CHARLEY: I went by the book. My father was watching from his grave.

TONY: What book? You have to think on your feet. There's no time for Freud out there.

CHARLEY: I give a course on Freud at the academy.

TONY: *(slight laugh)*  
No wonder.

CHARLEY: It's not old fashioned to me.. Time honored ways to do things. There's a right way and a wrong way. I don't believe in giving free passes. I never

CHARLEY (Cont) dropped a college course or took one because the teacher was easy. I did what the teacher asked.

TONY: *(gets up to leave)*  
I've had enough of this. -

CHARLEY: Sit down! I'm not finished with you. I obeyed. I didn't ask for extra time. I didn't ask for make up tests.

TONY: Next time I'll bring an apple.

CHARLEY: You're going to need a flak jacket.

TONY: What are you telling me?

CHARLEY: Nobody gets to retire without doing the work. The right way. My way. No exceptions!

TONY: *(unbelieving)*  
What are you telling me?

CHARLEY: You spend more time defending yourself in court than defending the public.

TONY: You reek with self-righteousness, I smelled it as soon as I stepped off the elevator.

CHARLEY: I'm agreeing with the recommendation for dismissal.

TONY: Dismissal! .. I come here for a face to face... You blindsided me with- -

CHARLEY: I warned you last year... the year before that.. I have the- -

TONY: You're taking away my pension? You know that, right?

CHARLEY: You're dangerous, Tony.

TONY: You bastard. You're railroading me. Nobody treats me like this...do you hear, nobody!

CHARLEY: I'm just doing my job

TONY: *(reaches across the desk at CHARLEY, then backs off)*  
You're not turning my life upside down...I'm not like the others. I don't deserve this.. I could wring your god-damned neck.

CHARLEY: You're not on the beat now.

TONY: You wanna make this personal? It's real personal now.

CHARLEY: You're out of appeals. Take my advice. Don't waste your time.

TONY: *(points to wedding picture on CHARLEY'S desk)*  
Does Rita know about this?

CHARLEY: Your step sister doesn't work here.

TONY: This is not over.

CHARLEY: You're not holding any cards.

TONY: *(TONY storms out of office)*  
That's what you think.

CHARLEY: Protect and serve, Tony...protect and serve.

BLACKOUT

### ACT 1

SETTING: New York main public library. A sign on librarian's desk reads, 'INFORMATION.'

A computer is on RITA's desk along with scattered paper work.

TIME: Monday one p.m.

*Rita is attractive in a sedate way. Light colored clothes with a thin sweater over her shoulders. She is sitting sideways using a hand held mirror while applying lipstick. Her shift starts in a few minutes. She feels uneasy.*

*(TONY enters stage right, raps on her desk with his knuckles)*

RITA *(turns, sees it TONY)*

The men's room is in the back...behind fiction.

TONY I'm O.K.

RITA You don't belong here.  
*(TONY reaches into his pocket to show his library card)*

RITA *(looks it over)*. Expired...a long time ago.

TONY Is this where late fees are paid?

RITA Tony....What do you want?

TONY Your husband's about to end my career. If he does that I lose my pension.

RITA I'm sorry Tony but I don't- -

TONY I want you to get him to give me a clean bill of health.

RITA I've learned to stay out of his business.

TONY It's your business, now.

RITA Look Tony...I know how you can be but like I said I don't interfere with- -

TONY You will.. Believe me, you will.

RITA I don't owe you anything.

TONY Talk to him.  
*(RITA picks up desk phone)*

TONY He might be lunching

RITA I'm calling the guard.

TONY *(grabs the phone and hangs it up, takes out photos)*  
Calm down, Bubbles.  
I was going to show these to your husband, but I thought I'd start with being nice to you...let's get to the point. Look at this one.. the guy you're standing next to in - -

RITA *(When shown the photo RITA'S body position changes, tenses, her legs cross, hands run through her hair)*.  
That's not me.

TONY Did you forget who you're talking to?

RITA Where'd you get- -

TONY I'm a cop, remember?

RITA Give them to me.

TONY You gonna help me, right?

RITA Why? Because you have a picture of me and some guy in a Vegas club thirty years ago.

TONY Night clubs don't have cubicles with overhead mirrors.

RITA You can't use these to blackmail me.

TONY *(takes the photo, picks up some pins from her desk).*  
Where's the bulletin board?

RITA *(comes around to confront TONY)*  
You're crazy.

TONY Shhh. You don't want to disturb the bibliophiles.

RITA I'll ...I'll give you money... anything... please Tony

TONY *(reaches into an envelope.. brings another photo out )*  
I don't want money..

RITA I can't talk to Charley about --

TONY I gotta say, Rita... your husband's a lucky guy.. this one amazes even me.

RITA Animal !

TONY Charley gets tricks for free.

RITA You're the step-brother from hell.

TONY We all have to start somewhere.

RITA *(grabs the photo from his hands)*

TONY *(laughs)*  
When I hit 'send' they go right to his inbox. We're talking digital Rita.

RITA Tony.. please.. I don't want him to find out...I can't face- -

TONY I can't face losing my pension. Especially from mister high and mighty.

RITA I'm not risking my marriage.

TONY *(Reaches over desk for her calendar)*  
Today's what? Monday ..I'll give you 'till Wednesday..6pm.

RITA I can't find a way to- -



TONY: My manners are not what they used to be.

DAVID: When was that?

TONY You can target anyone with this couldn't you?

DAVID Target? What are you talking about?

TONY I want you to find something out for me.

DAVID *( starts shutting down the computer )*  
Not tonight.

TONY I'm talking to you.

DAVID *(stands, picks up cell phone , attaches beeper to his belt)*  
I've had my last conversation today.

TONY This is personal.

DAVID *(Goes to get suit jacket...starts putting it on)*  
Does it have to do with my family?

TONY If it wasn't for me you'd be dead.

DAVID My grandchildren thank you.

TONY I wasn't late when I pushed you out of the way of that bullet.

DAVID This isn't China. I don't owe you my life.

TONY I'm going to lose my pension if you don't help me.

DAVID I'm going home, please move. Tony, you should have been kicked off the force years ago.

TONY I risked my life for you.

DAVID He was just a boy.

TONY What are you talking about...He shot at us.

DAVID You didn't have to kill him.

TONY When are you going to get it through that 'cup' of yours? He was dead by his first birthday. Human trash..tell me I'm wrong.

DAVID How old were you when *you* died?

TONY You're too emotional, David. Guy's like you don't belong on the streets.

DAVID Guys like me?

TONY            You know what I mean.

DAVID          No Tony, I don't. Explain it to me.

TONY            You should've become a teacher or a doctor of some kind. An accountant, maybe. You would have made a good accountant. Sometimes you have to hurt people to make them understand. It's not in you to do that. Okay?

DAVID          If I didn't know you any better. What's the use. I can't tell you anything. Nobody can.

TONY            (gets closer to David)  
Charlie Davenport has his thumb on my jugular.

DAVID          What do you need me for?

TONY            It's clean, David. No prints, no DNA.

DAVID          (exasperated, points to the computer)  
Why don't you try reading the newspaper from the front for once. Live by the hard drive die by the hard drive. What goes in stays in.

TONY            Computers can turn up missing.

DAVID          I was just told I have cancer.

TONY            Jesus. Then it doesn't matter if you help me.

DAVID          This is not about you.

TONY            We're both looking for a way out.

DAVID          I'm not spending my last days on earth under indictment.

TONY            Trust me.

DAVID          I prefer to trust God.

TONY            Even now?

DAVID          I'm late for shul.

TONY            Anything David, anything. I want to know if he's fooling around.. or maybe he  
TONY (Cont) was a draft dodger..anything.. whether you think it's important or not.

DAVID          They need me for a quorum.

TONY            I need you too.

DAVID          (dims lights)  
It's getting dark . (goes over to candles and begins to light

them). Do you know what these are for?

TONY I've been to Jewish homes.

DAVID This one's for you.

(BLACKOUT)

## ACT 2

SETTING: Later in the day. Charley and Rita's bedroom. King bed in center,  
Lamp tables either side of the bed. Mirrored dresser stage left with fresh  
flowers  
and candles.

AT RISE: (CHARLEY'S sitting up in bed bare chested, feet under the covers reading  
a report.)

RITA (off stage talking from the bathroom)

You're staring at that report but not reading it. I know that look. I'll be there  
in a minute.

CHARLEY To tell the truth I've been at this so long policewomen are starting to retire.

RITA All on your watch. Charley.

CHARLY It started with just a few. I remember thinking...I wouldn't want to be married  
CHARLEY (Cont) to one.

RITA Is that what you think now?

CHARLEY If anyone in a marriage should have a gun it should be the  
guy...Policewomen . Pensions? I never thought I would live to see the day.

RITA What does that mean?

CHARLEY I didn't think they could do the twenty years.

RITA            You underestimate us.

CHARLEY        I read that more women prefer the superior position now.

RITA            What's that have to do with retirement?

CHARLEY        That kind of control can't help but filter into the job market.

RITA            Maybe it *started* in the job market and transferred to the bedroom.

CHARLEY        Whatever. There's a lot of guys out there who can't handle it. What's taking so long?

(Rita exits bathroom and dims bedroom lights. Wearing sexy negligee holding a tray with champagne bottle, and two champagne glasses. She places the tray on an end table then reaches over and turns on the CD . She had programmed it to play soft blues).

CHARLEY        What's this?

RITA            Librarians don't need guns.

CHARLEY        (puts papers down, looks at bottle label, nods approval)  
You look a lot like my wife.

RITA            Does that excite you?

CHARLEY        I'm not in the mood.

RITA            I'm feeling good tonight, Charley..open..you know..I'd like to try- -

CHARLEY        (pulls her closer but with a little tension)  
What's the point, Rita?

RITA            Whoops!  
(Rita jumps up and lights two or three candles already set in place)..  
Please don't ruin it. C'mon Charley.. remember how we loved to

RITA (Con)     dance at Roseland? Oh, how we *danced*! You swept me off my feet..

CHARLEY        I pulled my leg at the gym this morning.

RITA            (RITA reaches for CHARLEY's wrists. She tugs on them. He removes her hands )

CHARLEY        I don't want to dance.

RITA            Close your eyes. you're under my spell.

CHARLEY I told you my leg hurts.

RITA You know?

CHARLEY Stay out of it.

RITA I want you to give him a break.

CHARLEY You're so easy.

RITA He's my step-brother, Charley.

CHARLEY Think about what you're doing.

RITA Nobody's going to question you.

CHARLEY Business and family don't mix.

RITA He needs somebody on his side.

CHARLEY Last I heard a wife is family.

RITA I'm trying to keep you from making a mistake.

CHARLEY (Checks the level in the already opened bottle)

CHARLEY (Cont) You started without me. You're so sure of yourself tonight.

RITA A lot more of your cases are being appealed.

CHARLEY You never pushed that hyphenated brother on me before.

RITA I owe him.

CHARLEY I hate that you don't have the courage to tell me the truth. I make a living listening to people, Rita.

RITA Are you telling me to shut up?

CHARLEY You pushed me to get your nephew in the union. I got him in. He was a thief.  
I

CHARLEY (Cont) Had to answer embarrassing questions from guys who looked up to me.

RITA That has nothing to do with Tony.

CHARLEY (pulls at her ears)  
Open these Rita. It's us I'm talking about. You pushed a bad apple on me, now you're asking me to reach back into the bottom of the barrel. You're pushing too hard.

RITA I can't- -

CHARLEY I want to know why I'm the wood and you're the termite?

RITA I can't tell you. Isn't that enough.

CHARLEY Not now it's not,

RITA You've kept things from me...you're not perfect. You think you are...just do this for me, please.

CHARLEY I never said I was perfect.

RITA Neither am I, Charley, neither am I.

CHARLEY You want me to walk blindfolded through a minefield. I'm not going to help you with this. And, you know what else. I'm through signing for your loans and paying your credit card bills.

(RITA grabs the bottle and pillow...rushes to the door...turns to throw the champagne but changes her mind and throws the pillow at CHARLEY)

CHARLEY Keep the bottle. You're better at hitting it than throwing it.

(BLACKOUT)

## ACT ONE

AT RISE All is dark.. Spotlight comes up stage left on David in chair wearing a hospital gown and non slip yellow socks. He is short of breath, mild wheeze and slow to move. Tony is standing next to him.

DAVID (observes Tony's look of surprise on seeing David's condition).  
It'll pass.

TONY            Everything passes.

DAVID           (Pulls up gown to show stitches).  
                    Look familiar?

TONY            Same surgeon

DAVID           We're both made from the same thread.

TONY            Mine is gut.

DAVID           Hard to believe... isn't it?

TONY            You called?

DAVID           (Reaches under chair seat and pulls out a manila envelope..slowly  
                    offers it to Tony).

TONY            (Reaches for the envelope.. David's hand on one end Tony's on the other..  
                    stays that way for about three seconds... Tony takes the envelope).

DAVID            I hoped you wouldn't take it.

(BLACKOUT)

## ACT TWO

SETTING:        Charley and Rita's house. We are in the hallway.

TIME:            Evening

AT RISE         Rita is scurrying around. Nervous. Anxious. She hears the sound of a  
                    car door closing. Easing curtains aside she looks out the side window.

RITA             (opens front door slowly)  
                    I didn't think you would have the nerve.

TONY I brought the photos.

RITA What happened to a little chit chat before blackmail?

TONY In case you didn't notice, the time is 7 o'clock'. I gave you an extra hour.

RITA He's not home.

TONY I'm not blind.

RITA I need more time... a few more days...please Tony.

TONY You had your shot.

RITA You can't do this to me.

TONY When is he getting here?

RITA This whole thing is making me sick to my stomach. I need more time. I need another...

TONY (makes himself comfortable, looks around the room)  
Nice. I'm gonna wait right here.

RITA It's called taste, Tony.

TONY (shows off envelope).  
I'm going to hit him with these. How's that for a handshake?

RITA He'll be here any minute. GET OUT !

TONY You think laying down for your husband makes you respectable?

RITA When did blackmail get on the church's list of sacred rites?

TONY I'm not religious.

RITA I can't do it. Charley wouldn't cross in the middle of the street.

TONY Believe me, he doesn't have any boundaries....I know.

RITA What do you have against me?

TONY I can't wait to see the look on his face.

RITA Look at yourself for God's sake! You've turned into a monster. The mirror, there, LOOK! Do you like what you see? Are you proud of that man? Are you proud of what you're doing?

TONY Seeing gets in the way of business.

RITA I don't know why they adopted you.

TONY I was cheap labor. Your old man's farm slave boy. How did it feel having a step

brother dumped on you?

RITA Same way it feels now.

TONY Cruel bastard. We never got along. My happiest day was when I heard he lost the farm.

RITA You ran out on us.

TONY Am I hearing right? You're blaming me?

RITA You're a coward.

TONY When did you start walking on water?

RITA What's one more day? I'll talk to him.. I prom...

TONY I might be dead by tomorrow.

RITA You're going to die alone.

TONY I'm used to dying alone.

RITA He's not going to give in to you. I don't care how many men you've bullied; no matter what you reveal. He's not going to change his mind. Save your breath.

TONY Your husband doesn't stand a chance.

RITA Take your dirty laundry somewhere else.

TONY A whore telling me how to live.

RITA I don't do people's wash.

TONY We're talking about your laundry. Recognize the smell?

RITA I slept with men because I was desperate ...You know about desperate.

TONY My legs stayed closed.

RITA How dare you! I was never in that room. Their stink...their sweat hitting me between the eyes.. I was never in that room. I was listening to mom reading. Men..their fumbling hands, hairy backs..I was fishing with dad on the lake. They were there when they were there.. When they finished with me they were somewhere else like I was somewhere else. I was never in that room. They walked out—I used the bathroom. Scrubbed off empty cheap kisses.... I was never in that room...and for that you want to blackmail me?

TONY When is your husband getting here?

RITA . (grabs the envelope from Tony's hand.)  
For God's sake. I'm talking to a shark. ...  
( Tony pulls back.. it cuts Rita across the palm)  
Ahhh!

TONY You just can't stay out of trouble.

RITA I need to take care of ...

TONY Later

RITA It could get infected

TONY Spit on it.

RITA (spits on Tony)

RITA (Cont) *I was never in that room!*  
(Charley enters through the front door)

CHARLEY (to Tony) What the hell are you doing in my house?

TONY (gives Charley the envelope)

CHARLEY I'm calling the police.

TONY First see what the cat brought in.

RITA Stop !

CHARLEY (opening the envelope..looks at Rita suspiciously like, '*You know what's in here, don't you, ' expression).*  
What are you afraid of, Rita?

RITA (Rips envelope from Charley's hands)

TONY Careful Rita. I wouldn't want you to get cut again.

RITA (to Charley).  
Give him what he wants.

TONY ( to Charley).  
Do what she says.

CHARLEY Nobody tells me what to do in my own house.

RITA Oh God, Charley. I prayed you wouldn't find out. I should have told you. I...

TONY (to Rita with big grin on his face). Give it back to him.

RITA (hands Charley the envelope)  
I love you.

CHARLEY (Charley takes the envelope from Rita. He looks at the photos, Laughs)  
Good acting. Bad lighting. (tosses pictures on the floor)  
This? This is what you got?

RITA (on her hands and knees picking up the pictures) . . .  
What are you..You've seen these?

CHARLEY In the safe. The bag marked, 'grandfather's papers,'

RITA You knew all these years..I..I was the dirty one covering up my sins while you played mister high and mighty.. You bastard! How long did you have these?

CHARLEY What does it matter?

RITA What does it matter ? What does it matter? You had the power to free me..My guilt..confessions to Christ. It hurt, Charley..It didn't have to be that way..you could have made it go away. Instead, you kept me crying inside. Why didn't you help me? Not just me.. Us. (runs out through the French doors to the safe..opens and pulls out the envelope. She struggles to open it then begins ripping contents apart)

CHARLEY I needed to protect myself.

RITA This was all about you?

CHARLEY (To Larry).  
Now get out.

TONY (Throws Charley a second envelope. Charley opens it).  
Look at those and tell me what's the difference between us?

CHARLEY I'm not giving in to you. I'll have your gun and badge before you ever see a retirement check.

TONY From where I'm standing, I've got a strong grip right between your legs.  
(Rita is jolted away from her activity. She approaches both of them)

TONY (to Rita) .  
Don't you want to know about Mr. high and mighty?

RITA What are you talking about?

TONY Vietnam. Charley was there

RITA Is that true, Charley? How could you hide that from me?

TONY Tell her Charley. What did you do?

CHARLEY Damn you! I wasn't trained in chemical warfare.

TONY (Tony shows *Rita* one picture)

RITA That's you next to the graves, Charley.

CHARLEY Those children were innocent.

TONY What did you do?

CHARLEY We tried to use less.

RITA Less what?

CHARLEY Agent Orange, o.k.? How much did we need to do the job without collateral damage.

RITA Collateral damage?

TONY Tell her.

CHARLEY Dead women and children.

TONY Dead everybody. Well, not everyone died right away, isn't that true Charley?

RITA What did you do, Charley?

CHARLEY No more.....I've had enough.

RITA I want the answers, Charley...Me, your wife.

TONY You gave the orders.

CHARLEY You want more talk to the men in the squad.

RITA How many.. how many Charley? Ten, twenty, hundreds? How many bones are out there?

TONY Give her a number, Charley.

CHARLEY We stopped counting.

RITA Charley, you stopped counting? The first village...what you did wasn't that enough? Why didn't you stop?

CHARLEY I'm not proud of what I did. O.k.? You.. you can't hold something like this against me..nobody knew it would.. maybe they did but we didn't.. I swear. they told us it would clear things up. . save soldiers lives.. now, years later, go

blame me...it's not right. I want forgiveness, Rita. I want you to tell me you love me.

RITA I.. I really don't know, Charley. My head is spinning.

(BLACKOUT)

### ACT THREE

SETTING: Hallway, Charley and Rita's house

AT RISE: The next morning. Rita slept upstairs, Charley on the living room couch. Rita comes downstairs wearing a gray raincoat hauling two suitcases. Charlie is drooping against the stage left wall. He's wearing his disheveled army uniform. A bottle of whiskey Between his legs. Around him – an uncapped vial with pills sprawled on the Floor. He is back in Vietnam.

RITA Charley....Oh, Jesus.

CHARLEY I did those things.

RITA (picks up empty vial) How many did you take?

CHARLEY Keep your head down.

RITA I'm not the same any more.

CHARLEY There's no pattern. The next one could land in your lap.

RITA I don't know what to do with you.

CHARLEY I can't remember what they taught us about camouflage.

RITA Charlie.. What have they done to you?

CHARLEY I don't want to go in the black bag.

RITA This isn't...

CHARLEY The radio.. Where is the radio?

RITA Radio? What radio Charley?

CHARLEY What are the coordinates, Rita..? the map..get the map..I have to know

CHARLEY (Cont) where we are.

RITA There is no map, Charley.

CHARLEY He stripped me... in front of you.

RITA It's not important now.

CHARLEY He shoved his filthy hands into our guts.

RITA Don't stop Charley. Let it out.

CHARLEY Carry me to the clearing.

RITA (*Rita picks up the vial to see how many pills were prescribed*)  
How many? Fifteen! Have you taken any? (Charley drunkenly shrugs)  
(*Rita begins gathering the pills from the floor and counts them*)

CHARLEY I got two right away.

RITA One, two, three...Oh, Charley

CHARLEY The rest are hiding

RITA Four, five, six, seven, eight..

CHARLEY Careful where you step Rita. They could blow- cut you in half.  
I've seen it happen. (Tries unsuccessfully to smack the pills from her hand).

RITA Nine, ten, eleven! Charley, you took four.. did you take four? Jesus Answer me!

CHARLEY (with his arm raised high he opens his hand. Two pills fall to the floor)  
Bombs away! .

RITA Two?

CHARLEY (anguished) I told you I got two.. Where are you guys?

RITA I found the strength I need, Charley

CHARLEY I'm going back.

RITA No. No. . Stay here. This nurse will take care of you.

CHARLEY Rita..Stop.. please...shhhh..I'll be o.k. Don't talk anymore. They're all around us. My buddies will get us out.

RITA We're alone Charley. It's just the two of us.

CHARLEY: (coming out of his fog places his fingers around *Rita's* wedding band).  
This is a lucky ring. I told you that when we got it. Remember?

RITA You can't imagine what it's like for a girl to wake up and know that day she's going to pick out her wedding ring.

CHARLEY That was.. what kind of day did we call it?

RITA A beach day.

CHARLEY The sun was shining on us that day.

RITA I should have listened more closely.

CHARLEY What he did.. that's not how I wanted it to happen

RITA It was a good thing, Charley. I couldn't hear you before then..(twirls ring. reads inside band). Eternally yours..What did that mean when we weren't speaking the same language?

CHARLEY I'm sorry.

RITA I thought I was a smart girl. I just keep finding out how stupid I really am.  
A person should wake up each day a little smarter than the day before.  
I'm not asking much..just a (holds the tips of two fingers close together but not touching).

CHARLEY Rita, where have you been? I missed you.

RITA The current moves so fast.

CHARLEY You're staying right?

RITA I didn't get in until now

CHARLEY You can love somebody you don't know

RITA We pretended, Charley.

CHARLEY            I need you, Rita.  
RITA                You gave in to Tony so we can have a second chance.  
CHARLEY            The nights are long.  
RITA                Not any more. (slowly wraps her body around his).

THE END

**THE PLAYWRIGHT SPEAKS:** *The inspiration and dialogue of the play was influenced by the short, snappy 'film noir' genre of the 40' and 50's found in books and films written by the likes of Raymond Chandler and James Cain. Thanks to 'Fleas on the Dog,' This is the first time the play has seen the light of day since written two years ago.*

**BIO:** *Michael Glassman is a former high school teacher who, for the last ten years, has written poetry, short plays, flash fiction and creative non-fiction. He has been published on line in: Society of Classical Poets, The Voices Project, Foliate, and Hitchlit. His work has appeared in print in the Chronogram magazine, Cutthroat Journal of the Arts, and the Karpeles anthology series.*