

JESUS HOPPED THE A TRAIN

for David Hoghe
(1963–2000)

Jesus Hopped the A Train was originally produced by the LABYrinth Theater Company, John Gould Rubin, and Marie-Therese Guirgis at Center Stage, NY, on July 8, 2000, and subsequently produced by the LABYrinth Theater Company, Ron Kastner, Roy Gabay, and John Gould Rubin at the East 13th Street Theater on November 29, 2000. It was directed by Phillip Seymour Hoffman; sets were designed by Narelle Sissons; costumes by Mimi O'Donnell; lights by Sarah Sidman; and original music and sound by Eric DeArmon. The production stage manager was Babette Roberts.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Angel Cruz	John Ortiz
Valdez	David Zayas
Mary Jane Hanrahan	Elizabeth Canavan
Charlie D'Amico	Salvatore Inzerillo
Lucius Jenkins	Ron Cephas Jones

SETTING

The action of the play takes place in New York City's criminal justice system, largely in the yard of a special twenty-three-hour lockdown wing of protective custody on Rikers Island.

CHARACTERS

Angel Cruz, thirty years old, Latino
Valdez, thirties to forties, Prison Guard
Mary Jane Hanrahan, thirties, white, Public Defender
Charlie D'Amico, thirties, Italian-American, Prison Guard
Lucius Jenkins, forties, African-American

ACT 1

Scene 1: Manhattan Correctional Center, "The Tombs." Darkness. Late night. Angel Cruz, alone, tries to pray.

ANGEL: "Our Father, who art in heaven, Howard be thy name. Howard? How art? How? How-now? Fuck! Mothahfuckah . . . fuckin'. "Our Father, who aren't in heaven" . . . who aren't? Fuck! who—"Our Father who art (who art!), Our Father who art in Heaven, how-, how-, how-, howl-ed, how-led, howling, howl, howl, Thurston Howell, fuckin', fuckin', shit!

INMATE #1: Shut the fuck up!!!

ANGEL: "Our Father who art in heaven, how-, how-, how-, *fuck*, how-, how-, how-, *goddamn it*, how-, how-, how . . .

INMATE #1: "How, how, how" my ass, mothahfuckah! Niggahs tryin' to sleep up in this mothahfuckah!

ANGEL: "Our Father—"

INMATE #1: Shut the fuck up!

ANGEL: "Our Father—"

INMATE #1: Shut the fuck up!

ANGEL: "Our Father—"

INMATE #1: Shut the fuckety-fuck up!

ANGEL: You shut the fuckety-fuck up!

INMATE #1: You shut the fuckety-fuck up!

INMATE #2: Both a y'all, shut the fuck up!

INMATE #1: (*To #2*) Who you tellin', "shut the fuck up"? *You* shut the fuck up!

ANGEL: "Our Father—"

INMATE #2: (*To #1*) I know you ain't tellin' me shut the fuck up!

ANGEL: "Our Father—"

INMATE #1: (*To #2*) I'm tellin' you and that prayin' niggah shut the fuck up!

ANGEL: "Our father who art in heaven—"

INMATE #2: (*To #1*) Don't tell me shut the fuck up!

INMATE #1: (*To #2*) Shut the fuck up!

INMATE #2: (*To #1*) You shut the fuck up.

INMATE #3: All y'all niggas best shut the fuck up!

ANGEL: "Our father who art in heaven—"

INMATES #1, 2, & 3: *Shut the fuck up!*

ANGEL: Hal— Hal-hallowed! *Hallowed* be thy name!

INMATE #3: We'll see you up at Rikers, mothahfuckah!

ANGEL: "Thy Kings will come—"

INMATE #1: Shut the fuck up!

ANGEL: You shut the fuck up!

INMATE #1: Shut the fuckety-fuck up!

INMATE #2: We gonna kill you, Cruz!

ANGEL: I'll kill all a y'all! I'll kill all a y'all little bitches!

(A GUARD enters, club in hand.)

GUARD: Hey! What's goin' on in here?

INMATE #1: Crip out.

INMATE #2: Crip out.

ANGEL: Whatch'all tryin' ta say? You Crips? Fuck the Crips!

GUARD: Hey!

ANGEL: Fuck Crips!

GUARD: Cruz, since this is your first night with us—

ANGEL: "Our Father, who art in heaven—"

GUARD: Hey!

ANGEL: "Our Father, who— who— who . . ."

GUARD: Cruz!

ANGEL: "Our Father—"

GUARD: Shut the fuck up!

ANGEL: Fuck you!

GUARD: What?

ANGEL: "Our Father—"

GUARD: Fuck me?!

ANGEL: "Our Father who art in heaven—"

GUARD: Fuck me?!

ANGEL: "Hallowed be thy name, Hallowed be thy name—"

(The GUARD enters ANGEL's cell.)

GUARD: Did you just say "Fuck me"?!

(Lights crossfade.)

VALDEZ: I know an ex-con who did seven years for murdering a nice hot dog vendor. He slept soundly every night, undisturbed by his conscience. He now lives at Gun Hill Road in the Bronx, so beware if you happen to be around that area. He has no regard for human life, including his own. I would like to take his late-model Sport Utility Vehicle and drive it through his front door, accelerate past his bathroom, and come to a violent, crashing halt right on top of his head, but the law prohibits me. Instead, I simply wish that he dies soon and pain-

fully. Whenever I see him, I say, "I wish you die soon and painfully." Before I became a corrections officer, I worked for the Department of Sanitation hauling garbage. It used to amaze me, the valuable items people would cavalierly discard. It angered me. Couches, alarm clock radios, family photos. I often wanted to go to people's apartments and throttle them. One time I saw a guy throw out a very nice color television set. I asked him if it still worked. He said yes. I asked him why he didn't just give it away instead of trashing it. He smirked at me. I slapped him. People think everything is replaceable. Everything is not replaceable. People believe they go through life accumulating things. That is incorrect. People go through life discarding things, tangible and intangible, replaceable and priceless. What people do not understand is that once they have discarded an irreplaceable item, it is lost forever . . .

Scene 2: Manhattan Correctional Center, legal consultations room. Mary Jane and Angel (beaten up) midstream.

ANGEL: What I want is a fuckin' lawyer! Is it possible, in this nightmare—I mean, what the fuck is this?—Even on TV they get a lawyer—

MARY JANE: I am a lawyer, I'm your lawyer—

ANGEL: I wanna real lawyer!

MARY JANE: I am a real lawyer, and you are my real client.

ANGEL: Fuck that!

MARY JANE: You wanna see the paperwork?

ANGEL: Fuck the paperwork! Why didn't you check the paperwork before you came in here talkin' all kinda shit when you didn't even know who you was speakin' to?

MARY JANE: Look, I am sorry for the mix-up, I—

ANGEL: The "mix-up"? Is that what just happened before? We had a little "mix-up"?

MARY JANE: I said—

ANGEL: Do you always have these little mix-ups? Or do you just never know who anybody is?

MARY JANE: I'm sorry!

ANGEL: I ain't Hector Villanueva!

MARY JANE: I know that.

ANGEL: Hector Villanueva: *No aqui!*

MARY JANE: Okay, what I need from you—

ANGEL: Need? You gonna sit there and talk to me about what *you* need? I'm incarcerated, lady! Why can't we talk about what I fuckin' need?!

MARY JANE: What do you need?

ANGEL: I need a damn lawyer!

MARY JANE: Which is why I'm here—

ANGEL: This is bullshit! This is racism is what it is, racism! If I was white, I'd have mothahfuckin' Perry Mason sittin' here wit' the little glasses and the beard talkin' fuckin' strategy. Instead they give me some bumblin'-ass Wilma Flintstone don't even know who I am!

MARY JANE: You're Angel Cruz, you're thirty years old, you live with your mom on Tiemen Place, West Harlem. You have one felony prior, a robbery, you were sixteen. You work as a bike messenger. You had a year of college, you played soccer—

ANGEL: I never played soccer!

MARY JANE: You're charged with attempted murder, I know that.

ANGEL: Attempted murder?!

MARY JANE: That surprises you?

ANGEL: Ya see, bitch? Dass exactly what I'm talkin' 'bout! All I did—

MARY JANE: Stop!

ANGEL: *All I did was shoot him in the ass.* What the fuck is "attempted murder" about that, huh?! Stupid ass!

(MARY JANE rises, begins collecting her things.)

ANGEL: What are you doing?

MARY JANE: I'm leaving.

ANGEL: Why, 'cuz I called you a bitch?

MARY JANE: No, because you just confessed to me.

ANGEL: Confessed? Confessed what?

MARY JANE: You just admitted to me that you did the shooting.

ANGEL: No I didn't!

MARY JANE: You just said, "All I did was shoot him in the ass."

ANGEL: So?

MARY JANE: So now you get your wish: I can't adequately defend you now, so you'll get another lawyer.

ANGEL: What if I don't want another lawyer?

MARY JANE: You just got through haranguing me—

ANGEL: "Haranguing"?

MARY JANE: Haranguing: it means—

ANGEL: I know what the fuck it means. Whaddya think? I'm a Puerto Rican, therefore I'm a mothahfuckah who can't know shit?

MARY JANE: Yeah, that's exactly what I was thinking—

ANGEL: I know a lot a fuckin' shit!

MARY JANE: Well then, know this: When the next lawyer walks in here, tomorrow, or the day after, try not to *confess* to him—

ANGEL: Tomorrow?

MARY JANE: Because when you confess to your lawyer, Angel, it means we can't put you on the witness stand—

ANGEL: Hold up—

MARY JANE: Because if we did put you on the witness stand, we would be suborning perjury and I'm sure, of course, that you know what "suborning" means, but on the off chance you might've missed that vocabulary word during your high school years at Power Memorial, let me refresh you: it means if you're lying up there, we can't know about it—

ANGEL: Okay.

MARY JANE: And if we do know about it, we're obligated to inform the court.

ANGEL: So—

MARY JANE: And if we don't inform the court and someone finds out about it, then we get in a lot of trouble!

ANGEL: If you had toal me this shit before—

MARY JANE: And another thing: If a public defender confuses you with someone else, it might be because they have dozens of other cases and they made an honest mistake! This is the criminal justice system you're in now. Mix-ups happen here!

ANGEL: So whatchu gonna do about it?!

MARY JANE: What am I gonna do?

ANGEL: 'Cuz I ain't got till tomorrow—

MARY JANE: Let me give you a little tip: The trick, Angel, is not to have a lawyer who makes no mistakes, but to get the lawyer who A) makes the least mistakes, and B) is either green

enough or masochistic enough to actually give a shit about their clients.

ANGEL: So which one are you?

MARY JANE: I'm neither.

(MARY JANE *exits.*)

Scene 3: The yard. Protective custody, Rikers Island. Lucius Jenkins, an older inmate, is in an outdoor cage burning through the end of a vigorous workout. D'Amico rises from his seated post.

D'AMICO: Still workin' out, huh, Lou?

LUCIUS: Feelin' good, Brother Charlie, in fine feather! How'm I looking?

D'AMICO: Lookin' good, Lou.

LUCIUS: Ever tell you I was a champion swimmer and springboard diver in high school?

D'AMICO: Were ya?

LUCIUS: Back in the day, brother, back in the day. Olympic caliber. Got a cigarette for me, brother?

D'AMICO: Sure thing, Lou.

LUCIUS: Gimme another one for behind my ear . . . The Lord loves ya, Charlie.

D'AMICO: Thanks, Lou . . .

LUCIUS: Dig that sun, Charlie.

D'AMICO: Yup.

LUCIUS: Sun shines on me, sun shines on you.

D'AMICO: Yup.

LUCIUS: It ain't sunnier over there by you, is it?

D'AMICO: Nope.

LUCIUS: You got dat right. Praise be!

D'AMICO: Could I ax you sumtin', Lou?

LUCIUS: You ain't messin' up again, are ya brother?

D'AMICO: Nah, it's just, I heard you turned down an interview, some kinda life story on Court TV?

LUCIUS: Television's the number-one narcotic we got going on up here in America! Keeps a man idle and stupid. Might as well pump heroin into the airstream. Same difference . . . TV! Ha! "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?" "Who Wants to Kiss My Narrow Black Ass?" I'd say that's a lot more like it. And that's pretty much what I told them TV folks.

D'AMICO: Yeah, well, my wife's a little disappointed, thought I might get a little screen time, somethin' to tell the relatives.

LUCIUS: You did thank her for that fine shepherd's pie she made me?

D'AMICO: I did.

LUCIUS: Tell her sorry 'bout the interview, Lucius don't do no TV . . . unless, of course, they bring that Connie Chung up in here, kinda like her, Lord forgive me . . . Say, Charlie, about them Oreo cookies—

D'AMICO: You didn't see them? I left them in your cell.

LUCIUS: Yeah, brother, I found them all right, and God Bless Ya for it, but the thing is, they got these *other* kinda Oreos—

D'AMICO: What kind?

LUCIUS: They got this kind that's dipped in fudge, that's the kind I was talkin' about the other day.

D'AMICO: I'm sorry, Lucius, I didn't realize—

LUCIUS: Quite all right, brother, quite all right. Now here's the thing: these fudged-dipped little concoctions, they come in chocolate fudge and vanilla fudge—

D'AMICO: Chocolate and vanilla.

LUCIUS: I like the vanilla fudge, that is to say, The Vanilla Fudge, that's where my preference lies, if ya get my meaning.

D'AMICO: Not a problem, Lou. I'll juss tell my wife; she'll be happy to do it.

LUCIUS: Your wife's a fine woman, Charlie.

D'AMICO: I know.

LUCIUS: But then again, why wouldn't she be, since you such a fine gentleman yourself.

D'AMICO: Thanks, Lou.

LUCIUS: And I mean that sincerely.

D'AMICO: Me too.

LUCIUS: Praise be. So whatchu think, Charlie? I'm a beat extradition?

D'AMICO: Sure, Lou. Why not.

LUCIUS: Juss like you gonna beat what needs beatin', right?

D'AMICO: Damn straight, Lou.

LUCIUS: "We all gonna beat . . . what needs to be beat . . . so we can snatch vict'ry . . . from the jaws of defeat"!

D'AMICO: I like that. Who said it?

LUCIUS: Your mother.

D'AMICO: What?

LUCIUS: *I* said it, Charlie, juss made it up now.

D'AMICO: Oh.

LUCIUS: Gotta stay wit me, baby—

D'AMICO: I'm here Lou—

LUCIUS: Sharp minds think alike.

D'AMICO: "Sharp minds, Sharp products."

LUCIUS: What's that?

D'AMICO: You never heard that before?

LUCIUS: Nah, man.

D'AMICO: Really?

LUCIUS: Who in the world said that?

D'AMICO: Your grandma.

LUCIUS: My . . . ? Oh now, Charlie, you are a wicked, sinful man—

D'AMICO: That I am.

LUCIUS: If my ol' granny were here now she'd flatten you like a thin-crust pizza, you could believe that!

(VALDEZ enters, eating from a box of Oreos.)

VALDEZ: Officer D'Amico! Superintendent Callahan wants to see you in his office.

D'AMICO: What for?

VALDEZ: I'm afraid I am not privy to that information.

D'AMICO: All right, let me just secure the prisoner back to his cell—

VALDEZ: He wants to see you now.

D'AMICO: Like, right this second?

VALDEZ: Pronto. His words, not mine.

D'AMICO: Okay. Uh—

VALDEZ: I'll secure the prisoner.

D'AMICO: Do you know how to do it?

VALDEZ: Do I know how to do it? Yes, I think I do.

D'AMICO: Lucius doesn't give us much of a problem—

VALDEZ: I'm sure he won't.

D'AMICO: Okay then.

(D'AMICO exits.)

LUCIUS: Didn't catch your name.

VALDEZ: Valdez.

LUCIUS: Valdez?

VALDEZ: Correct.

LUCIUS: Fine day today, huh Valdez?

VALDEZ: Splendid. Step away from the cage.

LUCIUS: You don't mind if I linger a little, do ya, brother?

VALDEZ: Linger?

LUCIUS: Enjoy a few more minutes of this heaven-sent autumn breeze, just, you know, till Charlie gets back?

VALDEZ: "Charlie" will not be returning.

LUCIUS: Gone for the day?

VALDEZ: Gone. Step away from the cage.

LUCIUS: You a churchgoin' man?

VALDEZ: I worship the devil. Away from the cage.

LUCIUS: Thing is, I'd really prefer—

VALDEZ: You'd prefer?

LUCIUS: Just a coupla more minutes, put my thoughts in order—

VALDEZ: When you're back in your cell, you're gonna have all the time you need for reflection. Last time: Step away.

LUCIUS: Yeah, I see your point, big man, I do indeed. Thing is, up here in P.C., up here, it's a little different than downstairs. We gotta different kinda vibe going on—

VALDEZ: "Vibe"?

LUCIUS: Yeah, brother man, it's a different kinda feel—

VALDEZ: "Feel"?

VALDEZ: Works out nicely for everybody.

VALDEZ: Oh . . . well let me, if I may, tell you now about *my* vibe, *my* feel. My “vibe” is: Step away from that cage before I come in there and club you to death.

LUCIUS: 'Nuff said, brother, 'nuff said.

(LUCIUS assumes the position. VALDEZ enters the cage, cuffs him.)

VALDEZ: Nah, nah, I juss told you about my vibe. Now lemme tell you about my “feel.” Now stand up. Thank you. My “feel” is this:

(VALDEZ spits in his face.)

VALDEZ: Thass my feel. It's a “different kinda feel,” I know, but it's *my* feel. And if you gotta problem with my feel, then you are gonna get a taste of my vibe. Are we clear on the “Vibe and Feel” thing now?

LUCIUS: Affirmative.

VALDEZ: This is not Jellystone Park. I am not the Park Ranger. There will be no more Oreo cookies in your picnic basket. There will be no more picnic. Got that, Superstar? I do not like infractions. There will be no more infractions. At this moment, I give you zero respect because that's where your balance stands. Zero . . . That's why I can spit in your face. That's why I am currently eyeballing you in an aggressive manner, eating your cookies. That's why I can tell you that in my mind, you're a worthless psychopathic piece of shit, a scrawny old H.I.V. faggot, a skin-poppin' ugly, gangly bag of bones—an eyesore. “Black Plague”: That's what they call you, right? “Cuz you black and you killed a lot a mothahfuckahs”? I heard you give out autographs.

LUCIUS: Prayer cards.

VALDEZ: You think you some kind a superstar, Mr. Superstar?

LUCIUS: I'm a God-fearing man.

VALDEZ: Don't be a God-fearing man, be a Valdez-fearing man. I heard they wanna put you on TV; lemme tell you something about that: I enjoy TV. I would go so far as to say that I love TV. I gotta big-screen TV in my den, I watch it often with popcorn and Pepsi. If I ever see you on the TV being a superstar, it will upset me. And if that happens, I'm gonna come back to work here the next day and I'm gonna do a little “Vibe and Feel” on your ass. Understood?

LUCIUS: Yeah, man.

VALDEZ: Say, “Affirmative.” Say it!

LUCIUS: Affirmative.

VALDEZ: Goddamn right, Superstar. If you do not fuck with me, Mr. Superstar, I can guarantee you a garden-variety miserable existence. But if you do decide to fuck with me—ever—I will show you a world where mere misery is like toasting marshmallows 'round the campfire in your long johns. You get me, Superstar?

LUCIUS: The Lord will provide.

VALDEZ: Excuse me?

LUCIUS: I mean, “Affirmative.”

VALDEZ: I don't give a fuck what you mean. When they extradite your ass to Florida, you can resume your shenanigans. Until

then, believe this: If you ever try to wave a Bible in my face, I'll shove it right through your teeth. And don't you ever ask me for no cigarette, 'cuz I don't smoke. Move it out!

Scene 4: Mary Jane speaks

MARY JANE: When I was fifteen, there was this father/daughter dance at the elite private girls' school in Manhattan that I went to as a charity case-slash-financial aid recipient. My mother had wisely arranged for her brother, Uncle Mikey, to take me to the dance, but at the last minute, my father decided that him not escorting me himself might be one of those things that might scar me in later life—so me and my father left our two-family house in Sunnyside that evening; me in a dress my parents couldn't afford, and my dad in his Irish all-purpose navy blue suit with a pair of black socks we had convinced him to borrow from the neighbors. When we got inside the ballroom, I took a quick look around and became instantly embarrassed to the point of humiliation by the fact that my dad was the only father on the Upper East Side that night whose suit pants didn't have cuffs. But within an hour, everyone was calling him "Danny," even the headmistress, who hadn't called me anything but "Miss Hanrahan" in three years. And he was dancing, and chatting; he had even stuck by the agreed-upon two-beer rule, or so I thought . . . At some point in the evening, one of the other fathers made an offhand comment that my father took exception to; a heated discussion ensued, and my father ended up stabbing the guy with a dessert fork, breaking the skin. What the guy had said was unimportant; actually, what he said was, he was reminiscing about where he had grown up as a kid and he remarked that "It used to be a good neighborhood, you know, white, now, forget it, I went back there last month, it's half white, the rest: blacks and Italians." My mom's Italian.

EMS was called, and the dance? Well, let's just say the stabbing concluded the dancing portion of the evening . . . My father's justification for the assault, after explaining how he didn't *immediately* attack him, and how he had given the "rich jerk" ample opportunity to apologize, and how he won't tolerate a bigot no matter where he is, and "What if your mom or 'Rasheed from the Deli' had been there?" and how he still doesn't understand why I need to go to that stuck-up school anyway. In the end, what he finally said was "It was just a fork." And he said it, I've now come to realize, with just that same look of incredulousness on his face that Angel Cruz had on his . . . as if the whole world was crazy and he was the only sane one. I hated my dad for the whole mortifying incident, but the dysfunctional side of me was proud of him—actually I'm still kind of proud of him—and I'm not convinced that there's something wrong with me for feeling that. I had no idea why Angel Cruz had "just shot him in the ass" but I felt something—something—and I needed to know what it was. And even though I was no longer obligated to him as his counsel, and despite the fact that the rational side of my brain was very much convinced that he had, in fact, attempted to murder Reverend Kim, and, yes, of course, even if he hadn't literally attempted murder, you still can't run around shooting people just like you can't go around stabbing people with dessert forks, I know all that, but I gotta admit that somewhere inside of me, and I don't know if it's the good side, or the side that I saw a therapist twice a week and went to ACOA meetings for, but somewhere inside of me is a place that believes that sometimes you *can* do those things, or at least, *somebody* can, or *should*, and that one man's neurotic is another man's hero, and who, ultimately, can say which one's which with any real certainty at all?

Scene 5: The yard. Protective custody, Rikers Island. Lucius Jenkins is in his outdoor cage jogging furiously in place.

LUCIUS: Lord I believe, aid thou my disbelief! Lord I believe, aid thou my disbelief! Devil get thee gone, Devil go away! Usurp the Serpent, Lord, he crawlin' up my leg! Irrigate the Bile, Lord, ketchin' in my neck! Take away the vengeance, Lord, swirlin' in my vein! Lobotomize the evil, Lord, slinkin', in my brain! Can't go back, can't go back, can't go back, can't go back! Watch me kick my knees up to Heaven: 12345678910! 12345678910! Through the Grace, I jog in place, where once was sloth, now I'm cookin' broth! Cookin' broth, Jesus, Check the recipe!: Old Testament Backwards!: "Malachi, Zechariah, Haggai, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Nahum, Micah, Jonah, Obadiah, Amos, Joel, Hosea, Daniel, Ezekiel, Lamentations, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Song a Songs, Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, Psalms, Job, Esther, Nehemiah, Ezra, Chronicles 2, Chronicles 1, Kings 2, Kings 1, Samuel 2, Samuel 1, Ruth, Judges, Joshua, Deuteronomy, Numbers, Leviticus, Exodus, and Genesis mothahfuckah"—pardon my French! Make me a mustard seed, Jesus! Hold the damn mayo, gimme the mustard!! Ain't talkin' 'bout ketchup, I wants the mustard. Don't relish the relish, don't need ta embellish, ain't tryin' ta get it on—juss pass the Grey Poupon! You like that one, Jesus? Gonna drop and give ya twenty, Baby! Watch me now . . . "one two three four, cuz I love you Lord, I'll do some more" (ya watchin'?) "eight nine ten eleven, endure the pain, get ta heaven" (observe the rigid form) "fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, eight, get me saved before my date"! Up and Adam, Adam and Eve . . . Miles to go, Miles to go! "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few"! "Harvest: plentiful, workers: few!" I'll work hard, I'll produce a fine harvest! Gimme sumpthin' ta work with, and we'll transform misery into ministry, make a prison a palace. "Lord make me an instrument of thy peace." Thy will be done! Deliver me from evil, Lord,

Thy will be done! Deliver me from me, Lord, Deliver me from *me!*

VALDEZ: Time!

LUCIUS: I'll sprint for ya, *faster*, I'll sprint to Valhalla and back, *faster . . .*

VALDEZ: Time's up!

LUCIUS: (*To VALDEZ*) No it ain't! Sprint to Golgotha two times, *faster—*

VALDEZ: Away from the cage, Jenkins!

VALDEZ: *To Florida or the Promise Land, faster—*

VALDEZ: Cease now!

LUCIUS: (*To VALDEZ*) Time ain't up, check your Timex! Ridin' with ya—

VALDEZ: You want a fuckin' war?

(*LUCIUS stops, assumes the position, VALDEZ enters.*)

VALDEZ: I could dismantle that camera, assault you into a coma, and suffer no penalty! In fact, I would proly be applauded . . . This little charade you're playin', this communication with God: It's a farce!

LUCIUS: Well now—

VALDEZ: Sheer folly.

LUCIUS: You believe in God, Valdez?

VALDEZ: I believe you are about one more syllable out your mouth from death, mothahfuckah.

LUCIUS: I—

VALDEZ: No more God out here in the Yard.

LUCIUS: What?

VALDEZ: Do you need me to correct your hearing problem?

LUCIUS: *Do you know who I am?!*

VALDEZ: Do *you?*

LUCIUS: I got rights! It's in the Constitution!

VALDEZ: What, you didn't hear of the latest judicial ruling? The Supreme Court ruled in the case of "Valdez versus The Skinny Black Faggot" that the separation of Church and State can only be superseded upon the separation of the Skinny Black Faggot's limbs from his withered torso. In other words, I am the Constitution. And you, you're a Skinny Black Faggot. Questions? Comments? (*looking up*) "God"? Do You beg to differ?! (*To LUCIUS*) Whoa! Wait a second, Mr. Superduperstar: do I detect a droplet of rage somewhere behind those Con Man's eyes? Silence? I like that. Thass promising. Some people call this place the V.I.P. Lounge, that is inaccurate. You are here not because you are a V.I.P., you are here because the rest of the livestock downstairs wishes to cannibalize you. You are livestock in storage and I am a cowboy currently in charge of just one cow. Check your ass when you get back to your cell: It says: "Valdez, property of." God hates you.

Scene 6: Manhattan Correctional Center: legal consultations room. Angel alone, more beaten up. Mary Jane enters, tentatively.

MARY JANE: Hello, Angel—

ANGEL: What are you doing here?

MARY JANE: Came to check in on you.

ANGEL: Check in on me?

MARY JANE: You don't look so good.

ANGEL: The fuck you care?!

MARY JANE: Angel—

ANGEL: Yo, I gotta visitor coming, so—

MARY JANE: I didn't see anyone else's name in the log book—

ANGEL: Log book?

MARY JANE: When I signed in—

ANGEL: They prolly ain't here yet.

MARY JANE: Do you know who's coming?

ANGEL: Not exactly. Somebody.

MARY JANE: Regular visiting hours are, uh, over.

ANGEL: Over?

MARY JANE: Yeah.

ANGEL: Oh.

(Pause)

MARY JANE: Angel, I'm sorry about yesterday.

ANGEL: What?

MARY JANE: I said—

ANGEL: What time did visiting hours end?

MARY JANE: About a half hour ago.

ANGEL: Was there people down there when you came in?

MARY JANE: Yeah.

ANGEL: So people could be down there, but maybe they don't get in?

MARY JANE: It happens a lot.

ANGEL: Did you, was there any white guys down there?

MARY JANE: Umm.

ANGEL: Like a guy my age with, like, black hair, curly, kinda look like me but white? Maybe he was wit' some Chinese-lookin' people, Korean?

MARY JANE: I don't think I saw anyone who looked like that, but—

ANGEL: No big deal.

(Pause)

MARY JANE: I could check downstairs—

ANGEL: Yo, is there sumpthin' that you want?

MARY JANE: I, uh, I brought some food—

ANGEL: Food?

MARY JANE: I got some chicken, potato pancakes, coleslaw, I also got some Ring Dings in here someplace and some donuts—

ANGEL: You didn't bring no deviled eggs?

MARY JANE: Deviled eggs?

ANGEL: Some deviled eggs and a little blanket, we could have a fuckin' picnic—

MARY JANE: Angel—

ANGEL: And we could invite some nice guests! Who you wanna invite?

MARY JANE: I'm just—

ANGEL: Tell you what: I'll invite *my* lawyer, and you could invite fuckin' "Hector Villanueva," and we'll party, 'cuz thass what this is, right? A fuckin' party? Let's . . . let's go get some "opera music" and some Popsicle sticks and go see the fuckin' Shakespeare in the Park—

MARY JANE: I could leave if you want.

ANGEL: Who's stoppin' you?

MARY JANE: But then they'd just return you to your cell.

ANGEL: Return me to my . . . Did you juss fuckin' threaten me?

MARY JANE: Did you shoot Reverend Kim with the intention of killing him?

ANGEL: Are you makin' fuckin' threats?

MARY JANE: You went there to kill him, didn't you?

ANGEL: You ain't my lawyer no more.

MARY JANE: I know that—

ANGEL: I got another lawyer now, much better than you. Got a beard and everything.

MARY JANE: I know.

ANGEL: Little half glasses, whaddya call them, bifocals? Nice suit, Smart. Langdon Brown!

MARY JANE: I know Langdon.

ANGEL: Dass right! Man's even writin' a screenplay! You ever write a fuckin' screenplay?!

MARY JANE: I'm too busy practicing law to write screenplays.

ANGEL: Yeah well, Langdon Brown, he don't need ta practice, he already got that shit down!

MARY JANE: Yeah, well . . .

ANGEL: He toal me all about you too! Toal me I could sue you if I wanted, make a complaint. Dass why you brought me chicken, right?

MARY JANE: I brought you—

ANGEL: 'Cuz if you wanted to bribe me, you shoulda brought me steak!

MARY JANE: This—

ANGEL: Big ol' steak, with a pair a Nunchucks—

MARY JANE: I'm—

ANGEL: Chainsaw inside the baked potato— Where you goin'?

MARY JANE: Like I said—

ANGEL: You're a fuckin' bitch, you know that?

MARY JANE: I wish you all the best—

ANGEL: I don't need your wishes or your "sorrays" or your chickens or your anything! I don't need anything!

MARY JANE: Angel—

ANGEL: Get the fuck outta here! Go on! Get out!

MARY JANE: Did you shoot Reverend Kim with the intention of killing him?

ANGEL: I shot Reverend Kim in the ass with the intent to bust a cap in his lyin', bullshittin' ass!

MARY JANE: I don't believe that for a second!

ANGEL: I doan give a shit what you believe!

MARY JANE: What really happened? Were you ready to do it, but then you got scared and aimed low, is that it?

ANGEL: Aimed low? I aimed for his damn ass and hit it. Mothahfuckah got an ass like a water buffalo, it ain't hard to locate!

MARY JANE: But you wanted to kill him—

ANGEL: I wanted to shoot him in the fuckin' ass, lady! How many times I gotta say it?

MARY JANE: Why?

ANGEL: It was something I could do, ah-right?! These mothahfuckahs, like Reverend Kim, they run around, talkin' shit, talkin' "God," and they *steal people*! Steal mothahfuckahs right out from your face. And what can you do about it? Nothin'! You go to The Law, you know what the law do? The law do fuckin' nothin', that's what the law do! You try to go to a outside agency, make a complaint: "They stole my friend," you know who you talkin' to? You talkin' to the same mothahfuckahs who stole him in the first place! Juss like the, whad-dyacallit, Scientologists and the Cult Awareness Network!

MARY JANE: Scientologists?

ANGEL: Read the fuckin' paper, lady! Scientologists sued the Cult Awareness Network, bankrupted them, and took over the damn Cult Awareness Network! Same office! Same phone number! But when you call the mothahfuckahs up, you speaking to one of them! Now what kinda help you think they gonna give you?

MARY JANE: So you went out, you got a gun—

ANGEL: C'mon now! They didn't steal my friend *yesterday*! I didn't juss smoke a vile a crack, and bum-rush the show "guns a blazin'!"

MARY JANE: But you were high!

ANGEL: Look, I seen a seventy-five-year-old grandmother from Astoria get sent to penitentiary for trying kidnap her granddaughter from Reverend Kim's church! I kidnapped my friend Joey myself!

MARY JANE: When?

ANGEL: Two months ago! Two years in the makin'! Surveillance, kidnapers, fuckin' deprogrammer—you know what that is, right?

MARY JANE: I—

ANGEL: Dass a expensive mothahfuckah: expensive and useless.

MARY JANE: It didn't work out.

ANGEL: Deprogrammer said Joey had an unusually strong faith, some bullshit—didn't stop him from cashin' the check!

MARY JANE: And you did this all yourself?

ANGEL: Nah, but, it's amazin' how people act. One day they all, like, "Yeah, bro', whatever ya need," next day it's, "Yo, fuck that niggah, B, got better things to do." People, they forget.

MARY JANE: But not you.

ANGEL: Dass my friend! If someone's your friend, like, a real friend, how you supposed ta juss forget about him? You got any friends, lady?

MARY JANE: Mary Jane—

ANGEL: You got any friends, "Mary Jane"? 'Cuz we got a friend, Eustace, he's doin' life in Arizona, but we stopped hangin' wit him when we was like eleven. And we got this other friend, Crazy Legs, he died a cancer at twenty-two, and dass hard, but at least he's dead! At least we could account for him, ya know? We'd go to the park, Grant's Tomb, smoke a joint, we'd save the last hit for Crazy Legs, put the roach to the side. But Joey? He juss gone. Bang: out! It'd be one thing if he was out for some good reason, like if he was an astronaut in space chasin' the cure for AIDS, but what he out for? He out for bullshit! He out 'cuz Reverend Kim sold him a straight-up lie—

MARY JANE: According to you—

ANGEL: According to *me*?! Do you know what Reverend Kim say? He say he's the Son of God! I mean, how big does your fuckin' balls have to be to sit there with a straight face and claim some shit like that? Son a God? Yo, even if there was a Son of God—which, I mean, get real—but . . .

MARY JANE: You don't believe in God?

ANGEL: Ah-right, I'm a put it like this: If there was "another" Son of God runnin' around here, juss pickin' up where his older brother left off, tryin' ta save our ass, He sure as shit ain't Reverend Kim! How many Sons of God you know drive a Lexus? Or got million-dollar stock portfolios? Or go skiing in Aspen? 'Cuz I'll tell you right now: If Jesus Christ existed, and I ain't sayin' he did, but if, by some miracle he actually did, the mothahfuckah didn't ski!

MARY JANE: Not in Israel he didn't—

ANGEL: Not in Israel, not nowhere! Swear ta God, I can't understand why Joey don't see that! Dumb-ass mothahfuckah! It's so obvious, so clear, I mean, you wanna hear the fuckin', the know what I'm sayin'?—the, the irony? The irony is this: Me and Joey, we got, like, the telepathy. He always know what I'm thinkin' and vice versa the other way. I know what girl he like before he know it! He know what I'm gonna say, it ain't even come out my mouth yet! People think I'm crazy to have got involved in this shit the way I have, two years of my life and all that, maybe a lot more now, but, for real: If the situations was reversed, and it was me in that cult, no doubt in my mind Joey woulda done the same thing for me, only he prolly woulda did it better. He wouldn't a forgotten about me—

MARY JANE: How about now?

ANGEL: "How 'bout now" what?

MARY JANE: Where's your friend Joey now? You're in jail! Where's Joey?

ANGEL: It's 'cuz a—

MARY JANE: Because of what?!

ANGEL: He . . . he captured!

MARY JANE: He's not captured, you're captured! You been here—
what?—Three days?

ANGEL: Maybe he don't know I'm here—

MARY JANE: What? He doesn't read the papers?

ANGEL: I don't know what he reads—

MARY JANE: Did it ever occur to you, Angel, that we, as individual people, are responsible for the individual choices that we make? And regardless of how close we may *think* we are to someone else, we have very little control over their choices, and absolutely zero responsibility for the consequences those choices bring on them?

ANGEL: Zero?

MARY JANE: That's right, zero!

ANGEL: Maybe for you—

MARY JANE: No! Not just for me, for everybody! If somebody joins some stupid cult, whether they're a good person or not, whether I love them or hate them, or think they're better than me, or think they've been manipulated, or abused, there's nothing I can do about it! Nothing! And it doesn't matter if that person is a total stranger or my sister; they aren't going to leave unless they want to, no matter what I think or feel!

ANGEL: Dass bullshit—

MARY JANE: My father was still smoking cigarettes while he was in an oxygen tent! I begged him to quit all my life—did it stop him from killing himself?

ANGEL: Maybe you shoulda tried harder!

MARY JANE: Harder than what?

ANGEL: Or maybe you didn't really give enough of a fuck to really try to help him!

MARY JANE: Should I have gone to the chairman of Philip Morris and shot him in the ass? Would that have helped him?

ANGEL: Maybe you should ax yourself that question!

MARY JANE: That's ridiculous.

ANGEL: Is it? My friend Joey should be doing what you're doing! He should be a public defender, or a drug counselor, helpin' the people, fuckin' whatever! But where is he? He's out! Gone! And why? Why is he not here? Why? Do you believe that Reverend Kim is the actual Son of God? That a man deported from his *own* country and convicted of tax evasion in *this* one could even *speak* for God, let alone *be* God? That a man who *steals* people, has them selling flowers on the street, gettin' rich off them, what the fuck? Look me in my eye and tell me that a man like that should be allowed to do what he's doing! With a fuckin' government-approved tax-exempt status and a full police escort!

MARY JANE: Angel—

ANGEL: Where's my mother's full police escort when she gets off the subway from work after midnight and has to walk home

alone? Where's Mother Teresa's Lexus? And how 'bout you? You a public defender, and if you're any good at lawyering at all, you could prolly make a lot more money working someplace else, right? But you don't do that, do you? So where's your mansion? Where's *your* frappacino, swimming pool, mistress, Son-a-God fuckin' wonderland?! He stole my friend. I shot him in the ass. Now I'm fucked in jail, and he's eating banana cream pie in some plush hospital bed reading his *Wall Street Journal*! Juss like the chairman of Philip Morris! Your pops, he six feet under, fuckin' maggot food now, where's the chairman? I'll tell you where the fuckin' chairman is! Out there on the eighteenth green sippin' a Heineken, wiping the crumbs from his shrimp-salad sandwich off of his cashmere sweater, and he's smiling, unaffected. Or am I just being "ridiculous"?

(Pause)

MARY JANE: Everything you're telling me, Angel, it sounds like a real good motive to wanna murder somebody.

ANGEL: My question to you was: Is it ridiculous? Guard!

Scene 7: The yard, protective custody. A month later. Mary Jane speaks as Lucius Jenkins and Angel Cruz are being led into their cages.

MARY JANE: I had to concede that what Angel was saying was *not* ridiculous. What *was* ridiculous was the fact that I regularly earned acquittals for hardened career criminals: crack dealers, arsonists, murderers even—people with jaw-dropping rap sheets—and then, six months later I'd be asking bail for the *same* guy for the *same* offense or *worse*! Angel wasn't a recidivist felon, he was a civilian. I believed I could get Angel an acquittal without having to put him on the stand. I believed

that the jury, if led, wouldn't convict Angel despite all the evidence. I could have plea-bargained Angel's case; that would have been easy, *routine*—most of those young district attorneys feared me because I was that rare public defender who could ruin them by taking an open-and-shut case to trial and win anyway 'cuz I am—I was—a goddamn excellent attorney! I wouldn't plea-bargain Angel's case because right after our second meeting, he went back upstairs and was assaulted by two other inmates—beaten and raped. I wouldn't plea-bargain Angel's case because three days later, when the Associated Press reported that Reverend Kim had been rushed back to surgery and that he had *died* on the operating table, Angel was found unconscious in his cell the next morning with a bedsheet tied around his neck. I wouldn't plea bargain Angel's case because after Angel spent the next seventy-two hours in a prison psych ward and before being transferred to a special twenty-three-hour lockdown wing of Protective Custody, I sat Angel down and informed him that the D.A. had filed for first-degree felony murder and that the charge carried a mandatory sentence of "Life without the Possibility." And Angel looked at me, and said, "Without the possibility of what?"

(VALDEZ reenters, leading ANGEL to his cage.)

VALDEZ: But if you *do* decide to fuck with me—*ever*—I will show you a world where mere misery is like toasting marshmallows 'round the campfire in your long johns. You get me there, Droopy Dog? Hey! You like to pout? Thass okay, you could pout. Don't pout too much, though. I might start feelin' bad and have to come in there and . . . pet you. (To LUCIUS) Superstar? Florida . . .

(VALDEZ retires to his post upstage center.)

LUCIUS: Hey there, youngfella . . . I say, hey there, brother . . . What's your name? What's your name, man? Not up for conversatin'? Dass okay, I understand . . . Don't make much sense to stare at the ground like that, though. You oughta be enjoyin' this sun while you can feel it, brother. Don't come out but one hour a day for us up here. One hour . . . I take my hour too. Don't matter if it's snowin', rainin', fire and brimstone, nuclear attack, they gonna bring me out here! I'm a take my one hour, you could bet on that! I love me some sun. Love it! You know, they got a country over there in Europe gets almost no sun whatsoever? It's true. That's a bunch a pale Europeans drinkin' coffee over there, ain't no denyin' that. Feel bad for 'em. Takin' no sun's like drinkin' no milk, depletes a man. Not a good prescription for mental health, I'll tell ya that right now. Dass why you gotta take your one hour no matter what. Some men, they stop takin' their hour, next thing ya know—well . . . I take my hour, and you should too! Don't talk for a month, never talk again, but take your damn hour, enjoy whatever type a weather been provided . . . especially sun. Yes sir . . . 'specially the sunshine. Didn't useta feel that way 'bout the sunshine, back in the day . . . betcha didn't know dat. No sir . . . No way. Could ya juss tell me your name? Ya do speak the King's English, doncha, son? I don't know much Spanish 'cept; "Yo quiero uno eight-ball de Ko-kai-Yeno"! Useta say that all the time!

VALDEZ: You two ain't makin' love over there, are ya?

LUCIUS: Mothah—See now, thass wrong! Wrong! Man tryin' ta vex me! Man tryin' ta . . . Damn!!

(Pause)

ANGEL: Angel.

LUCIUS: What's that?

ANGEL: Angel.

LUCIUS: Angel? I like that name. Thass a fine name. Say, Angel, would ya like a cigarette?

ANGEL: Nah.

LUCIUS: Nah?

ANGEL: No thanks.

LUCIUS: You're smart ta say no. Learnin' the ropes. But see, me, I don't want nuthin' in return for this cigarette, know what I'm sayin'? I'm not lookin' for a wifey. Don't close my eyes and pretend you're my Aunt Mary . . . C'mon, son, have a cigarette.

ANGEL: Nah . . .

LUCIUS: Now whaddya think? My dick's big enough to reach into your cage over there, wrestle ya to the ground, and insert itself up into ya? Hell, even Goliath wasn't hung that strong. We in lockdown, kid. No contact never . . . This is juss a friendly gesture, fact, it ain't even a friendly gesture, it's what ya might call "humanitarian aid." Smoke Lucky's?

ANGEL: Nah.

LUCIUS: They'll bring ya luck. Tell ya what I'm gonna do.

(LUCIUS looks toward VALDEZ.)

LUCIUS: I'm a throw this here Lucky over to you with the matches. After ya light that Lucky, I'd appreciate it if you'd send the matches back my way. Okay? Here goes . . . There . . . Ya got it?

(ANGEL looks toward VALDEZ.)

ANGEL: Nah . . . here.

(ANGEL tosses cigarette and matches back to LUCIUS.)

LUCIUS: What'cha doin', youngblood? C'mon baby, take it easy . . . Easy . . . dass a gift, me to you, ain't nothing. No cause for alarm, no fire in the hole. Doan worry 'bout that fool over there, he eatin' Cheese Doodles. C'mon, this is simple like arithmetic, brother. Okay? Journey of a million miles, it commence itself on that first step. Oh, c'mon . . . it's a cigarette, amigo, not a engagement ring. Okay? Check out my "Hawthorne Wingo" now:

(LUCIUS arcs a perfectly soft hook shot with the cigarette/matches. They land at ANGEL's feet.)

LUCIUS: Heaven sent, amigo, heaven sent.

(Pause)

ANGEL: Thanks.

LUCIUS: Thank you, brother, thank you. Could ya send over the matches, please? Merci . . . Taste good?

ANGEL: Mmm.

LUCIUS: Like ya knew that it would! Smokin's good for ya, doan let 'em tell ya otherwise: Lets a man stay humble. 'Cuz I figure, if a man successfully casts all his demons aside, he might get cocky, start thinkin' he's invincible, perfect, or somethin'. A man might start thinkin' he don't have ta depend on, well . . . on Higher Entities. Surgeon General is the general of what, anyway? He the general of the surgeons! Surgeons make money doin' them cancer operations! Sound like there's a little reverse psychology goin' on. Higher Entities, they doan bother wit the double-talk, they come correct, jack . . . yes they do. Say, look at that seagull! Nice, right? I ain't bothered to look at no wildlife in some time. Dass a nice flyin' bird. Nice sun too. Hey, this is all right, ain't it? Two gentlemen retirin' to the smokin' garden. No ice tea, but thass okay. I'm Lucius Jenkins, ya heard of me, right?

ANGEL: The guard, he told me not ta—

LUCIUS: Ya need ta forget about that guard, truss me. That man is troubled, still searchin' for hisself. You need ta remember one thing here, son: Us, you and me, we here 'cuz we have ta be. Got no choice in the matter. But that man over there, he doan haveta be here but he here anyway! Now what that say 'bout him? This is New York City, a man could work anywhere! Where he at? An doan tell me he raisin' a family, 'cuz I'll wager every cigarette, postage stamp, ramen noodle I got that man's single! I mean, look at him! Would you get up under him? Only time he get laid, he gotta go to the ATM.

VALDEZ: Eight minutes!

LUCIUS: Man's a damn pleasure seeker. Our pain, dass his pleasure. Dass some Sodom-and-Gomorrah jazz right there. Man ain't nuthin' but a test a faith. Ignore him.

(Pause)

LUCIUS: Say Angel . . . you ever heard that story concerning the mongoose and the black-eyed squirrel? See, there was this mongoose, okay? And this mongoose—this cat was smooth, right? Couldn't tell this mongoose nuthin' 'bout nuthin'. Brother had it all figured, okay? Till one day, he was out hunting for the venomous snakes, which, thass what mongoose do, they hunt all type a dangerous snakes—cobras, asps—so dig it: This brother's out on the hunt, right? when here comes this little black-eyed squirrel. And this squirrel, he was—how you say?—he had been ousted from his community, okay, shunned, on account of—

ANGEL: I can't—

LUCIUS: "Can't"? Can't what?

ANGEL: I can't, I can't . . . sleep. I can't. In there, do you sleep?

LUCIUS: I sleep.

ANGEL: You breathe an' shit?

LUCIUS: Mostly.

ANGEL: How?

LUCIUS: How? Dass a test a faith too.

ANGEL: M-Man.

LUCIUS: Hey.

ANGEL: I . . . I ain't made for this—

LUCIUS: Hey! Don't let that man see ya weak, brother.

ANGEL: This is fucked.

LUCIUS: C'mon now, son, pull it together.

ANGEL: I . . . I can't—

LUCIUS: Breathe! You can breathe out here, can't ya? Shoot, come on now. Breathe.

ANGEL: Doan wanna—

LUCIUS: No talkin', just breathin'! Everybody gonna make it juss fine, everybody gonna breathe and sleep. Ya breathin'?

ANGEL: Yeah.

LUCIUS: Keep doin' it then!

ANGEL: I . . . I—

LUCIUS: Have a cigarette, son, it'll help ya. Here, already lit, built for puffin'. Believe me, jack, you talkin' to a brother understands!

ANGEL: Fuck.

LUCIUS: Things can change, Angel. I changed. Like I said before—about the sun?—I love me some sun now, but I used ta hate the sun. Can ya imagine that? How's a man gonna live in Miami Beach, he don't like the sun? Shoulda moved somewhere else, I suppose, but thass a lot a work, a lot a planning. "Where should I go?" "What I'm goin' to do when I get

there?" "Do they sell cocaine in Alaska?" Stuff like that. Too much work. You still breathin'?

ANGEL: Yeah.

LUCIUS: Ok, so, lissen careful: there I was, Miami Beach. Paradise, right? Little apartment complex they got over there, second floor, view of the ocean, the ladies, everything . . . The ladies down there in Miami, Angel? Like nobody's business, brother—awesome, incredible . . . Rent was cheap—didn't pay but four hundred bucks a month on that little place. Did I mention it had a little terrace? Well, it did. Never went out on it. Cocaine in Miami? Plentiful, jack. Extremely plentiful. And cheap. Real cheap. Dirt cheap. For all intents and purposes, the shit was free. Pardon my language, but that's what cocaine is: Shit . . . horseshit . . . Anyway—Oh! And Quaaludes? Them little 714's? Like takin' aspirin, baby. Take two, call me late for dinner. Heroin, Dilaudid? Juss pick up the phone! Thirty minutes, home delivery! Hated the sun though, hated it. I'm not talkin' 'bout "Gee, I wish it wasn't so sunny," I'm talkin' hate. Pathological Dracula shit . . . Deep . . . Came a time, I stopped goin' in ta work if it was too sunny. Useta call in sick, order a pizza and a twelve-pack for \$8.50, how ya gonna beat that?! Delivery boy, he was all right, little Equadarian kid, useta pick me up a little somethin' on the way, a nice bag, coupla pornos, whatever I wanted, useta blow a little smoke wit' him, he'd leave happy. Nice little system. One day, he stopped by . . . I killed him. Killed him with a cowboy boot. I mean, I was wearin' the boot at the time, thass how I killed him. After I killed him, I didn't know what ta do so I chopped him up, threw him in the Dumpster, right next door. Next door! Can ya imagine that? And ya know what happened? "Nuthin' . . . Not a damn thing. Kept waitin' for the sirens, they never came . . . So I called up the pizza shop, toal 'em; "I never got my pizza." You know what

they did? They sent me another one. For free. Now, to me that's a peculiar turn of events, doncha think? Unnatural . . . I'll tell ya why I killed him. I killed him 'cuz he left the door open, said the place stunk, needed some air. But when the air came in, the sun came with it. Now, I think . . . I think that was a very unusual thing for me to do, killing that boy, don't you? Highly unusual. And . . . nuthin' happened! Nuthin' . . . One day, I finally got up the gumption to leave Miami, but by then, I had killed five people. Five . . . killed three more up north, over here, but they was all white. Funny how people start payin' attention when white people start droppin' . . . And all a this, 'cuz I hated the sun. My enemy. The sun . . . I had everything in the world down there but I didn't have nuthin'. Now I got nuthin' but I got everythin'. I love the sun now. Love it. Before? Hate. Now? Love. Dass a conundrum, Kemosabe. When ya get back to your cell? Doan lie down. When ya can't do nuthin' else except lie down? Then ya gonna lie down and dig on what I juss toal ya . . . reflect . . . Every hour, I'm a bang on my wall three times, let ya remember you ain't alone, okay?

ANGEL: Yeah.

LUCIUS: Hold up, today's Monday, right?

ANGEL: Is it?

LUCIUS: Yeah, don't drink the soup. You'll be up all night.

(VALDEZ *descends.*)

VALDEZ: Are there infractions goin' on over here?

LUCIUS: No sir.

VALDEZ: That cigarette Droopy Dog's draggin' on, you give it to him?

LUCIUS: Yes sir.

VALDEZ: That would be an infraction.

LUCIUS: Aw c'mon, man.

VALDEZ: Did you just say something, Superstar?

LUCIUS: How's a man supposed ta know it's a infraction to give another man a cigarette, when there ain't never was no other man here 'cept me till now?

VALDEZ: You didn't read the manual?

LUCIUS: The manual?

VALDEZ: The manual states quite clearly—

LUCIUS: Fuck your damn manual!

VALDEZ: Take a day off from the yard, both of you, so you can reflect on infractions.

LUCIUS: Bullshit, mothahfuckah!

VALDEZ: Two days!

LUCIUS: I'm gonna—

VALDEZ: A week! Perhaps your "Higher Entity" can sort this out for you. Cruz!

ANGEL: I didn't say nuttin'—

VALDEZ: They releasing you.

ANGEL: They are?

VALDEZ: Just kidding. Away from your cages, girls, let's go.

(Crossfade)

MARY JANE: On the first day of Angel's trial, I was staring at a mountain of compelling evidence pointed squarely against my case. The D.A. had so much evidence and so many eye-witnesses to work with, he knew he couldn't lose. Every piece of evidence he introduced, I found a way to cast the slimmest shadow of doubt. And his witnesses? They were all church members. I buried them one after the other. In court, I constantly had to suppress the urge to smile. On November eighteenth, the D.A. invited me for dinner and drinks at Patsy's. I knew what was coming. He offered Angel this: Plead manslaughter, he'd recommend the minimum sentence, Angel does eight years, everybody wins. I turned him down flat. He told me to talk it over with Angel, and get back to him in the morning. The next morning I told him: "Sorry, no deal." I never consulted Angel in the matter, never even mentioned it. I knew I had a win . . . I knew it.

ACT II

Scene 1: The yard, days later.

MARY JANE: When I turned down the D.A.'s offer of a deal that morning, I was not humble, and I did not suppress my smile. And then, I made a mistake: I overlooked a prosecution eye-

witness who was on the list to testify. He was a British Ph.D. candidate doing his thesis on Living Religions who had been at the church that night. I had assumed he was some kinda bearded flake from the land of academia, but he wasn't. He was clean-cut, credible, and amazingly, had experience as a witness. He corroborated all the previous testimony of all the previous witnesses who I had previously discredited and I couldn't shake him up. In a moment of weakness, I went to the D.A., looking for a deal, which of course, "Fuck you, bitch!" "Fuck you bitch"—well okay, fine—but that still didn't change the fact that Angel did not intend to cause Reverend Kim's death. This was not first-degree murder. The law may not have seen it that way, but the fact is the law is fallible. Angel had tried every means at his disposal to bring back his friend. And when everything failed, he still didn't give up. He made a foolish, perilous statement, but it was a statement. I find honor in that. I wanted to find honor in myself. And so I did. And it was right—Goddamn it, it was right.

(Crossfade)

LUCIUS: *(To ANGEL)* Long time no see, brother. How'd Cruel and Unusual Punishment treat ya?

VALDEZ: *(From his post)* I heard that!

LUCIUS: Wit' all due respect, Valdez, if it's a infraction to breathe God's air, juss tell us now and we'll asphyxiate ourselves.

ANGEL: Yo, doan start no shit—

LUCIUS: That man ain't nuttin' but a apparition! *(For VALDEZ)* An' we gonna conversate about whatever strikes our damn amusement, believe that! Maybe we gonna speak on the mating

habits of the Yella-Bellied Sap Suckah; maybe we'll conduct a symposium on some Butterscotch Puddin'!

ANGEL: Yo bro—

LUCIUS: Hey, Valdez! A.C.L.U.'s a fine institution, ain't it?

ANGEL: A.C.L.U.?

LUCIUS: *(To ANGEL)* You think we back out here early 'cuz Ol' Valdez is tender-hearted? *(Miming being on the phone)* Hey, Valdez! My lawyer's on the phone, it's for you! Ha! Want me ta tell him you in the shower soapin' up your privates? Ah, what's a matter, brother: Constitution got your tongue? Ha! *(phone)* "Now what's that, Mr. Cooperstein? Yes, sir, I'll be sure to tell him. No, no, quite all right. You have a nice day too, Mr. C." Hey, Valdez! Mr. C. say to remind ya that we could talk about anything under the sun 'cept for conspiracy and treason, and if ya got a problem wit' dat, he say he got a cousin owns a Dairy Queen, could prolly get you a job flippin' burgers or sweepin' up.

VALDEZ: Fifty-four minutes!

LUCIUS: God loves ya, Valdez, ya know that, right?! He loves ya and He gonna leave the light on for ya too, always does! God love ya so much, even makes me wanna love ya, in fact, I do love ya! Angel love ya too, ain't that right, Angel?! We love ya 'cuz God love ya. And make no mistake, soldier, God, Jesus, Jehovah, Yahweh, the Holy Ghost, they L-O-V-E-Y-O-U. Praise be! Ha!

VALDEZ: Do you believe in God, Cruz?

ANGEL: What?

VALDEZ: You heard me.

ANGEL: I . . . uh—yo, this ain't got nuthin' to do wit' me.

LUCIUS: It okay, son, tell the man.

ANGEL: Look—

VALDEZ: It's a simple question, Droopy Dog.

ANGEL: I ain't fuckin' Droopy Dog!

VALDEZ: Then answer the question! Do you believe in God?

ANGEL: Dass my business.

VALDEZ: It's funny. Some people, they got big balls when they're high on narcotics, brandishing weapons, killing a man, but take away the drugs and the guns, ask them a simple question, and what happens? They revert back to what they really are, ain't that right, Droopy Dog?

LUCIUS: Someone need ta give you a hug, Valdez.

VALDEZ: If there's a God, Superstar, you ain't never gonna meet him! Very soon, Mr. Superstar, very soon, you gonna be Flyin' the Friendly Skies. All your lawyers, and your notoriety, and your delusions of grandeur, they all add up to zip. You are a defect of evolution like a three-legged dog, and when you get to Florida, they gonna put you down!

LUCIUS: That makes ya happy, don't it?

VALDEZ: Happy? Why should I be happy? They gonna feed you lobster, strap you down, put you outta your misery. What's

happy about that? No. What makes me happy is lookin' at you right now and seeing the sheer terror in your eyes. Because that terror will haunt you *every day* until the State of Florida relieves it with a lethal injection! And that terror, along with whatever misery I can provide, is the only justice that the families of your victims are ever gonna get!

LUCIUS: I'm a pray for you, man.

VALDEZ: Then pray. Me? I'm feeling a bit parched; I think I need a beverage. And being a free man, I think I'll run down to the staff cafeteria and choose from a wide assortment of refreshing drinks. Perhaps I'll purchase a Kit-Kat and a Bear Claw, something to tide me over, till I leave here and go eat whatever I want for dinner.

LUCIUS: Hope you're monitoring your cholesterol—

VALDEZ: What?

LUCIUS: Wouldn't want ya ta drop dead before you've been saved.

VALDEZ: "Saved"? I am a good man because I choose to be! End of story! Not because I fear God. Not because I wanna go to some Holy Playground when I kick the bucket! I go to work, I pay my taxes, I observe the law. I didn't kill eight people! I don't need to be "saved"! Do you really believe that there's a thing called God? Or is it that your pain is so unbearable that you force yourself to create a belief in order to medicate that pain? And if there is a God, Superstar, do you honestly believe that you are free from the burden of what you've done? And if there isn't a God, then what are you really? 'Cuz in a meaningless existence, your only function was to be a source of pain and death, like cancer or a plane crash! You renounced your humanity when you claimed your first victim! Now

what are you? I think you know, Superstar. I look at you, and I *know* that you know! And the most compassionate advice I can give you is this: When you get back to your cell, bang your head against the wall until your brains spill out, only, please, do it after six so I don't have ta clean the shit up! Now I will be back . . . shortly!

(VALDEZ *exits.*)

ANGEL: Yo, doan listen to that mothahfuckah, he don't know shit.

LUCIUS: I know.

ANGEL: Man's a fuckin' asshole.

LUCIUS: Misguided.

(*Pause*)

ANGEL: You think the sun's gonna come out before our time's up?

LUCIUS: You don't believe in God, huh?

ANGEL: I didn't say that.

LUCIUS: God said to Peter: "Before this night is through, you gonna deny me three times. Peter say 'Not me, Lord, I could never deny you.' Then dawn came, the cock done crowed, and Peter had denied his Lord three times on the night a his arrest."

ANGEL: I know that story—

LUCIUS: When Jesus died on the cross, you know who was there wit' him? I ain't talkin' 'bout Roman soldiers and the blas-

phemin' crowd, I'm talkin' 'bout: who was there *for Him*? I'll tell ya who was there. His Mother, Mary Magdalen, coupla aunts, and some street walkin' ho's. All women. The twelve Apostles? Hiding in fear. His pops, St. Joseph? He was at the bar talkin' 'bout "Pour me another wine, Lazarus." It was the women showed up for Jesus. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, them cats had time ta make up for their sins, how much time I got? Thass why I'm a speak my mind! Thass why I ain't gonna let no mustachioed Roman soldier squelch my positive self-expression! Every day I got left, I'm a live free. I'm a open up that gift God give me each and every day, save me the wrappin' paper so's I could package up my gift and pass it on. Ain't gonna live in fear no more! I'm a show up for Jesus like he showed up for me!

ANGEL: You want a cigarette, man?

LUCIUS: Them things'll kill ya, brother. Now, how is it you ain't a believer?

ANGEL: Look man, this ain't a conversation you wanna have with me.

LUCIUS: Some of the greatest saints, they was nonbelievers, having the crisis of faith right up to the end.

ANGEL: I'm not havin' a crisis.

LUCIUS: Lemme pose to you a little hypothetical, brother: What if God existed?

ANGEL: I really ain't up for this, bro.

LUCIUS: Lemme juss kick it like this then, shortpants: If I were ta say to you, today, that God not only exists, but has a plan for

ya, brother, that you are here, right here and now, because God planned for this to be, truly, the first day of the rest of your life—

ANGEL: Yo, man—

LUCIUS: Hear me out: If I said that the life you will live from this day forward will be happy, joyous, and free, and with Divine Purpose—

ANGEL: Juror number one, she likes me.

LUCIUS: What?

ANGEL: I'm sayin': In my trial, I think that juror number one likes me.

LUCIUS: Yeah, well, so long as jurors number two through twelve like you too, then you got no problem, but in the meantime—

ANGEL: Nah, man, I mean, she *likes* me.

LUCIUS: Yeah, so what?

ANGEL: I'm juss' sayin' she likes me, what's wrong wit' dat?

LUCIUS: Don't you take no disputatious attitude on me—

ANGEL: What's wrong with juror number one wanting to get with me?

LUCIUS: Get with you? Well, hey now, Casanova, that's very special, I'm happy for ya, but I'm a tell you right now, either

you got your signals crossed or that female is emotionally disturbed—

ANGEL: 'Cuz she likes me?

LUCIUS: What kinda churchgoin' woman gonna make goo-goo eyes at some criminal defendant?

ANGEL: Why she gotta be a "churchgoin' woman"? Why can't she juss be a woman, like, she's a woman and I'm a man?

LUCIUS: Oh, you think you a man, huh?

ANGEL: I'm juss sayin' she likes me.

LUCIUS: I bet she's fat.

ANGEL: She ain't fat, man.

LUCIUS: You seen her standing up? I rest my case.

ANGEL: Yo, juss 'cuz you ain't got no woman—

LUCIUS: I gotta woman! And she's called The Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and she's a source of comfort and understanding, a solace in a sea of turpitude!

ANGEL: Yeah well, juror number one ain't fat.

LUCIUS: She go to Jenny Craig, believe that! I seen 'em all!

ANGEL: Whatchu seen lately to be the judge a anything?

LUCIUS: I see a fool standin' before me, tell ya that for free. I see all I need to see. Don't ya get my dander up now, son. Don't you

danderize me! And don't you never change the subject on me again when I'm pursuin' a line of thought like I was subsequent to your pointless little interruption. Talkin' about girls? Shoot. You see any girls here?

ANGEL: I'm juss sayin'—

LUCIUS: Say! Say! Say! What I'm sayin' is, if you horny, go in the corner and whack your pee-pee, juss leave me out of it.

ANGEL: And I'm sayin' I ain't interested in any conversation about God.

LUCIUS: You don't like God?

ANGEL: I didn't say that.

LUCIUS: I'm not saying that you did. I'm asking you a question, a direct question: Do you like God?

ANGEL: I don't know God, okay? You know him, or you think you know him—

LUCIUS: Think I know him?

ANGEL: Whatever, you know him—

LUCIUS: No, no, no, son. It's not "whatever." Either I know him or I don't. What do you think? Do I know him?

ANGEL: I don't know—

LUCIUS: "Don't know"? Don't try to jive me with "I don't know." Of course you know! You juss too feeble-hearted and trifling

to lissen to what you already know to be true in your damaged heart! I look like a fool to you?

ANGEL: It ain't like that, man—

LUCIUS: Or maybe you juss think I'm insane, "Black Plague," "Boogie Man," "Boo Mothahfuckah! Comin' to eat you up!" That it? You think I'm some kinda cancerous plane crash?

ANGEL: You're cool, man, you're cool—

LUCIUS: Cool? You lucky they got a cage between us, talkin' 'bout "cool"! Be anything you wanna be in this life, son, be a damn atheist, arsonist, lowlife, heretic, Antichrist, politician, cable TV installer, any kinda general miscreant tickles your T-bone, but doncha ever be cool! And doncha ever try to tell me that I'm cool, 'cuz I juss won't stand for it! Be blazin' or be freezin', but doncha ever be cool! Cool? Shit! That's juss a waste of my time, and I care about my damn time! Do you hear me? I said, do you hear me?

ANGEL: I'm . . . I'm sorry—

LUCIUS: I didn't ask you were you sorry. I take one look at you and I can tell you frankly, you one of the sorriest people I ever seen. I asked you, do you hear me?

ANGEL: I hear you.

LUCIUS: Do you *hear* me?

ANGEL: I ain't the fuckin' enemy, man.

LUCIUS: You need to inspect yourself, so you can respect yourself, little man!

ANGEL: You know what? Why don'tchu just inspect your fuckin' self, mothahfuckah.

LUCIUS: You need ta get straight wit' the Lord, pancho.

ANGEL: You straight with the Lord, Lucius?

LUCIUS: August 4th, 1996, I was out there at night, dark night, black. Before I knew it, the sky filled wit' light, some kinda meteor shower, eclipse, somethin' out a nowhere I felt God! No rational explanation 'cept I felt Him. Felt his Light. Powerful light! And on my knees, I begged His mercy and forgiveness! And the funny thing is, I had felt it before, that feeling. A few times. But I never attributed it ta God. I always thought, when it happened, it's the smack, or the cocaine, some kinda deja-who—wasn't none of that! God had touched me, but I juss thought it was the wind . . . God forgives me for what I done, and he'll forgive you too if ya ask him.

ANGEL: You ain't straight wit' shit.

LUCIUS: And you know that how?

ANGEL: Doan make me fuckin' hurt you, man.

LUCIUS: Hurt me? How a little Chihuahua like you gonna harm me?

ANGEL: You could call me fuckin' names, talk down to me like I'm some fuckin' schoolkid, it don't change the facts!

LUCIUS: Curse, curse, curse! Chirp! Chirp! Chirp! That's what you is—a little dumb sparrow, chirpin' in the wind!

ANGEL: Valdez was right about you.

LUCIUS: Chirp, chirp, chirp—

ANGEL: You killed eight people, man. You a damn psychopath! A fuckin' nut job talkin' 'bout God, talkin' 'bout Kingdom of Heaven; you can talk shit all you want, say your prayers twenty-four hours a day, it don't mean shit!

LUCIUS: Doan mean shit, huh?

ANGEL: Dass right.

LUCIUS: Prayer doan mean shit?

ANGEL: You deaf, mothahfuckah, thass what I said!

LUCIUS: If prayer doan mean shit, then how come I was awoken the other night to hear a sorry little bitch stutterin' over some prayer in between chokes 'n' sobs 'n' snorts from inhaling the little puddle a tears on his damp little prison pillow? If prayer doan mean shit, then what the fuck were you doing Tuesday last? Or Monday? Or lass Saturday after lunch for that matter? 'Cuz I don't think it was Valdez I heard, and you the onlyest mothahfuckah up in here besides me. So, do prayer mean shit, or don't it? You tell me . . .

ANGEL: It's a habit, dass all.

LUCIUS: That ain't no habit. Cocaine, dass a habit! What you was doin' was somethin' else . . . Know what I think? I think you need to stand up right now and open your heart to Jesus. That pain and anguish and sadness inside ya, it ain't leavin' by its own volition. It got a nice home inside a you rent-free! Why the fuck it gonna leave without being kicked out? It's time to serve them mothahfuckahs their eviction papers, Angell! It's time to liberate the profound and genteel man that is you.

This prison, these cages, they ain't shit, brother! Inside my heart and my mind, I am sailing on the Pacific on a fine schooner basking in the light of life. You ever been to the Pacific Ocean? It's real nice, Angel—

ANGEL: Dat ship you floatin' on, it ain't made a nothin', Lucius.

LUCIUS: Ain't sprung a leak in nearly two years, day I found God, right where you standin'.

ANGEL: And you don't think that's juss a little bit convenient?

LUCIUS: Oh, it's convenient!! Who tryin' ta say it ain't convenient?

ANGEL: I'm talkin' 'bout findin' God in prison.

LUCIUS: Anyplace where you can have your life resurrected, thass a damn convenient place.

ANGEL: After you killed eight people—

LUCIUS: Thass between me and God.

ANGEL: And thass very convenient too!

LUCIUS: Well God juss happens to be a very damn convenient individual, brother! I coulda had God when I was six, sixteen, thirty-two, thirty-five, he wasn't goin' nowhere! It happens I didn't get him till I was forty-two; a suicidal, multiple homicidal drug addict starin' down at Death Row! Would I have preferred to find him at twenty-five? Hell yeah! But I didn't! Now why's everyone wanna turn and blame God for that?

ANGEL: Ain't no one blamin' God here. You killed those people, not God.

LUCIUS: I ain't never said I didn't.

ANGEL: I doan wanna talk about this!!

LUCIUS: What'd you do to get in here anyway?

ANGEL: Dass my business.

LUCIUS: I know what you did. I seen it on the TV. You killed a man.

ANGEL: I didn't kill him!

LUCIUS: Now how's that?

ANGEL: Worry 'bout your own shit!

LUCIUS: You killed him.

ANGEL: No I didn't!

LUCIUS: Man's dead, ain't he?

ANGEL: I juss shot him in the ass.

LUCIUS: And then what happened?

ANGEL: Fuck you mean, "Then what happened"? He fell down, screamin' like a little bitch, they grabbed me—

LUCIUS: What happened to *him*?

ANGEL: He went to the hospital—

LUCIUS: Then what happened?

ANGEL: They made a operation on his ass, he was fine—

LUCIUS: "Fine"?

ANGEL: I juss shot him in the fuckin' ass!

LUCIUS: Then how'd he end up dead, jack?

ANGEL: Doctors! Fuckin' medical malpractice! Shit, what's so fuckin' hard 'bout takin' a bullet out a mothahfuckah's ass? Ya take a knife, a fuckin' scalpel, whatever, ya open the ass, ya find the shit. What's the "complication" 'bout that? "Complication"? Juss open up the ass, whatever's not ass, take the shit out! How's it my fault some drunk mothahfuckah can't tell the difference between a bullet and a man's ass?!

LUCIUS: So the doctor was drunk?

ANGEL: Prolly! You know how them mothahfuckahs be!

LUCIUS: So, how'd the man die then?

ANGEL: Like I said, "complication"! First doctor—mo-fuckin' Dr. Dolittle—he obviously ain't did the job right, they had ta bring the mothahfuckah back, put him on the operatin' table, "simple procedure," but the mothahfuckah dies!

LUCIUS: Die from what?

ANGEL: Heart attack! How the fuck? I mean, this mothahfuckah, Reverend Kim, he say he the Son a God! How's a real Son a God gonna let himself go out like that?! 'Cuz if I was God, and I sent my son down here to do a job, and he came back talkin' 'bout "Yeah, Pop, they shot my ass, and, my heart, it juss couldn't take it," I'd slap the mothahfuckah upside his

head! I'd tell him, "You better look in the mirror kid; now I gotta send your sister down to do a man's job!" Mothahfuckah oughta be ashamed of himself! They hung Jesus from a cross! Banged nails into his feet and hands—

LUCIUS: But you ain't shot Jesus' ass, did ya?

ANGEL: Hell no!

LUCIUS: You shot a man.

ANGEL: And I'd do it again.

LUCIUS: Not the Son a God, a man. Man died.

ANGEL: And dass my fault?!

LUCIUS: Did you shoot a man?

ANGEL: Get the fuck out my face.

LUCIUS: Did he die?

ANGEL: Not 'cuz a me!

LUCIUS: If ya didn't shoot him, would he be dead now?

ANGEL: You killed eight people, mothahfuckah! Who you talkin' to?!

LUCIUS: You shot a man. The man died. Ain't no man no more.

ANGEL: But—

LUCIUS: But what? Dead is dead, son. I know you know that.

ANGEL: It's not my fault.

LUCIUS: Meaning what?

ANGEL: Meaning it ain't my fuckin' fault!

LUCIUS: Now that's juss plain illogical. That's like me tellin' you dat a hippopotamus knows how ta fry himself some eggs.

ANGEL: That man deserved to die.

LUCIUS: No human man deserves ta die!

ANGEL: Why, 'cuz "God" say so?

LUCIUS: Dass right.

ANGEL: When exactly did "God" say that shit?

LUCIUS: Bible say—

ANGEL: Fuck the Bible! Bible ain't no autobiography, man! "God" didn't write the shit! Buncha mothahfuckahs wrote that shit. Apostles didn't write no Gospel, and Jesus, that mothahfuckah never wrote one damn word! Not even a fuckin' post-card! Dass a fact! Ain't my fault the man died, but he dead now, so what? He juss one man outta a billion, people die every day.

LUCIUS: Ain't murdered every day.

ANGEL: Nah, they gotta run into *you* first to earn dat distinction.

LUCIUS: Or you!

ANGEL: I did somethin' had to be done!

LUCIUS: Then accept it! You man enough to do it, then be man enough ta stand behind it! But you can't really stand behind it, 'cuz you know it's wrong! You know it!

ANGEL: Do you know it's wrong ta kill a man?

LUCIUS: 'Course I do.

ANGEL: Then why you got lawyers fightin' extradition for you?

LUCIUS: I'm gonna do life here in New York State anyway! I pled guilty. I took responsibility! Why I gotta go to a place where they tryin' to kill me?

ANGEL: I thought you was straight wit' God, man?

LUCIUS: I am.

ANGEL: If you straight, then why you gotta fear death, mothahfuckah? Alls you gotta do is die, then you gonna be in Heaven wit' "God," right? Ain't that the ultimate goal? If that shit is true like you say, then what's the fuckin' problem then? God forgives you, right? You juss stood there in my face an' toal me that shit. So what's the dilly, yo? You try to tell me you floatin' on the Pacific wit' your sailor cap on?! Dass bullshit! You don't act like no inner-peace mothahfuckah I ever met! You act angry and crazy.

LUCIUS: I'm in prison, jack!

ANGEL: You killed eight people yo, your ass *should* be in prison! Tell me: "Be a man"! Why doan you be a man, go die like ya supposed to? You gots the God Insurance, what else you need?

LUCIUS: Ain't got no more time ta waste on imbeciles—

ANGEL: You afraid ta die 'cuz your ass know only two things gonna happen when you do die: Either nuthin', or somethin' bad! Ain't no God, ain't no light!

(VALDEZ enters.)

VALDEZ: Peanut chew?

ANGEL: Take me outta here, Valdez!

VALDEZ: Away from the cage, convict.

(VALDEZ enters cage, cuffs ANGEL.)

ANGEL: I ain't no convict!

VALDEZ: Not yet.

ANGEL: Not yet, not ever!

VALDEZ: Dat ain't what I hear.

ANGEL: Never!

VALDEZ: Spittin' in the wind, son!

ANGEL: Rather spit in it than lissen to it!

LUCIUS: "You could cast out the devil, but ya can't cast out God!"

ANGEL: I ain't got God and neither do you.

LUCIUS: I'm a perfect child a God and so are you. He got a plan for us all! Valdez too!

ANGEL: Hurry up and *die*, mothahfuckah!

VALDEZ: You know what, Droopy Dog? I'm beginning to like you.

Scene 2: Visitations Area: Rikers Island. Two days later.

MARY JANE: "God's fucking Plan"?

ANGEL: I'm juss sayin'—

MARY JANE: Saying what? That God's plan is you should spend the rest of your life in prison? What kinda plan is that?! It's the District Attorney's plan, Angel, that's whose plan it is, not God's! What is wrong with you?

ANGEL: I didn't say I believed the shit.

MARY JANE: Well, hey—how very skeptical of you!

ANGEL: I think Lucius was juss—

MARY JANE: "Lucius"? What, you're on a first-name basis now?

ANGEL: I see the mothahfuckah every day. He the only one I got up there—

MARY JANE: Oh, well then, by all means, mingle! Mingle with the deranged psychotic serial killer!

ANGEL: See, he ain't really like that—

MARY JANE: What?

ANGEL: I know—

MARY JANE: Do you have any idea who Lucius Jenkins is?

ANGEL: I know, he killed eight people, right?

MARY JANE: Eight that we know of!

ANGEL: He told me eight.

MARY JANE: He told you eight? What does that mean?! "Case closed, Lucius told Angel eight"? And what, eight's not enough for you?

ANGEL: I hear you, all right. Let's juss get back ta business.

MARY JANE: Maybe Lucius should be your lawyer!

ANGEL: Yo, I was juss makin' conversation!

MARY JANE: When you're acquitted, Angel, when we're sitting in a bar together drinking beer and eating chicken wings, *then* make conversation! Unless you wanna just have a conversation now, exchange recipes, talk philosophy, forget the whole thing!

ANGEL: You tryin' ta back out now?

MARY JANE: Are you?

ANGEL: Yo, I'm here, Mary Jane.

MARY JANE: I am putting my career on the line for you, Angel, my vocation! So you better be damn sure your head's screwed

back on before I even think about putting you on that witness stand and suborning perjury!

ANGEL: I'm down wit' the program and I'm gonna thank you till my dyin' day, believe me.

MARY JANE: I could lose my license! They could toss me in jail!

ANGEL: I'm already in jail and I'm gonna get out any way I can, swear ta God!

MARY JANE: D.A. asks you a question, what do you do?

ANGEL: Pause five seconds.

MARY JANE: Then what?

ANGEL: Answer the shit.

MARY JANE: Answer how?

ANGEL: "Yes," "No," or "I don't know."

MARY JANE: And then what?

ANGEL: Stop.

MARY JANE: Stop what?

ANGEL: Stop talking.

MARY JANE: Why?

ANGEL: 'Cuz I might say some shit I shouldn't say.

MARY JANE: What if it needs to be said?

ANGEL: I don't know—

MARY JANE: Do you wanna spend the rest of your life in prison?!

ANGEL: Whadda you think?

MARY JANE: I don't know, Angel! What should I think?

ANGEL: I wanna get the fuck outta here.

MARY JANE: God won't have a problem with that?

ANGEL: Ask fuckin' God.

MARY JANE: I'm asking you.

ANGEL: Fuck God! He ain't got nuthin' to do wit' this.

MARY JANE: How do you know that?

ANGEL: I don't know—

MARY JANE: I can't work with "I don't know"! If I'm gonna put you on the stand and risk my job, then I need to know that you know!

ANGEL: I know.

MARY JANE: No you don't.

ANGEL: I do know, really, truss me—

MARY JANE: It's not about trust—

ANGEL: Aaight, look: that mothahfuckah Reverend Kim, he was a false prophet, fuckin' heretic, cashed in on God's name, fucked up not just Joey, but a lot a fuckin' people, right? God should understand why I brought the mothahfuckah down, and if he don't, then . . . fuck him! I'm juss a ordinary man, I ain't no martyr, and if that's God's plan for me, then you know what? Fuck the damn plan! And thass how I know, all right?

MARY JANE: You gotta problem with lying?

ANGEL: I love to lie, tell me what to say.

MARY JANE: Tell me a lie.

ANGEL: About what?

MARY JANE: Anything. Lie. Right now.

ANGEL: Ah-aight . . . I invented electricity.

MARY JANE: Stop messing around!

ANGEL: I ain't messin' around. I invented the shit!

MARY JANE: Do you know how electricity works?

ANGEL: Not exactly.

MARY JANE: Then that's a dumb lie! Tell me a smart lie.

ANGEL: Like what?

MARY JANE: My father drank Jameson's.

ANGEL: Dass a lie?

MARY JANE: He drank Bushmills. But it's a smart lie because my father was a first-generation Irish Catholic who supported the I.R.A., and Bushmills is known as a Protestant whiskey because it comes from the North. So it would be logical to assume that he wouldn't be caught dead drinking a Protestant whiskey, even though he did. That's a lie built on truth. That's why it's a good lie. Because it's true. Now tell me a true lie, Angel.

ANGEL: Ah-aight . . . I tried ta kill Reverend Kim that night.

MARY JANE: What?

ANGEL: I mean, it's a lie 'cuz I didn't try ta kill him, but it's true 'cuz . . .

MARY JANE: Because what?

ANGEL: It's true 'cuz . . . 'cuz it kinda makes sense that I might have wanted to, right?

MARY JANE: I'm the D.A., you're you: "Did you shoot Reverend Kim?"

ANGEL: No.

MARY JANE: Look me in the eye when you say it. "Did you shoot him?"

ANGEL: No.

MARY JANE: You're lying!

ANGEL: Whaddy want me to do, say yes?

MARY JANE: I want you to believe what you're saying.

ANGEL: But it ain't true.

MARY JANE: Make it true! "Did you shoot him?"

ANGEL: No.

MARY JANE: Why can you say that?

ANGEL: I don't know.

MARY JANE: Think about it.

ANGEL: 'Cuz . . . I ain't like that?

MARY JANE: Why not?

ANGEL: It ain't in me.

MARY JANE: Why not?

ANGEL: I'm not, you know—

MARY JANE: No I don't. You're not what?

ANGEL: I'm like, guns scare me.

MARY JANE: Guns scare everyone.

ANGEL: Nah, I mean, like, holding one.

MARY JANE: Why's that?

ANGEL: 'Cuz a somethin' that happened once—

MARY JANE: So it would make sense to you that you would never hold a gun again?

ANGEL: Yeah.

MARY JANE: Okay. "Did you bring a gun to the church that night?"

ANGEL: Nah.

MARY JANE: Say no.

ANGEL: No.

MARY JANE: Good. Now why would it make sense to you that you wouldn't shoot Reverend Kim?

ANGEL: 'Cuz it's wrong?

MARY JANE: What's wrong?

ANGEL: Shootin' someone.

MARY JANE: Fair enough. "Did you shoot Reverend Kim?"

ANGEL: No.

MARY JANE: "You shot him, didn't you?"

ANGEL: No.

MARY JANE: "Did you ever think about hurting Reverend Kim?"

ANGEL: No.

MARY JANE: Say yes to that.

ANGEL: Why?

MARY JANE: Because you only have to lie twice: when he asks you if you had a gun on you, and when he asks you if you shot Kim. Everything else, tell the truth.

ANGEL: It won't make me look bad?

MARY JANE: It will make you look truthful. The jury wants to acquit you, Angel. They just need to hear you say sincerely and believably that you didn't do it, and they will clear you.

ANGEL: And they could do that?

MARY JANE: It's called jury annulment. Even if it was totally obvious that you did it, the jury can refuse to convict, and that's it. End of story.

ANGEL: And no one can say shit?

MARY JANE: No one.

ANGEL: Even though it's wrong?

MARY JANE: You think what you did is wrong?

ANGEL: You mean, technically?

MARY JANE: Last month you didn't think you did anything wrong!

ANGEL: I ain't sayin' it's wrong, but, technically, the truth is: I shot him, right? Technically, thass kinda wrong, isn't it?

MARY JANE: What are you saying, Angel?

ANGEL: I mean, what do you think about it?

MARY JANE: It doesn't matter what I think.

ANGEL: What if I said that it mattered to me?

MARY JANE: Do you wanna stop the trial, plead guilty?

ANGEL: I wanna know what you think.

MARY JANE: Our jury, Angel, they want to acquit you because it's right, not because it's wrong. They don't think you deserve "Life" or anything close to it. No one blames you for Reverend Kim's death except the State of New York! And what is that? It's an institution! It's a set of rules set up to apply to each and every circumstance, as if they're all the same. They are not all the same. The jury knows that. And they will clear you of all charges, from murder on down, because they understand what happened here beyond the "technicalities" and they empathize. Not because of your dazzling smile, but because, under the same circumstances as you, they might have done the same damn thing themselves. You made a statement, Angel. And they are going to back that statement up. Your testimony will supply reasonable doubt. And that's all they want. And that's what I think. Make sense?

ANGEL: Huh?

MARY JANE: Does it make sense to you?

ANGEL: Oh . . . Yeah . . . Yeah.

MARY JANE: Are you sure?

ANGEL: I was juss—

MARY JANE: Just what?

ANGEL: Thinking.

MARY JANE: About what?

ANGEL: Joey.

MARY JANE: Oh.

ANGEL: We useta, me and Joey, we useta sneak out our house on Sunday nights, jump the turnstiles. And we would hop down onto the subway tracks, walk through the tunnels, lookin' for shit, makin' adventures, playin' like we was G.I. Joes . . . Pick up a empty can a Hawaiian Punch or some ol' beer bottle for fake walkie-talkies, and we'd have our snow boots on so we could be astronauts. And we would pretend we were the last two survivors on earth and that we came from the future . . . stupid . . . the future . . . like in that *Planet of the Apes* movie with the two guys? Only we had no weapons, juss chocolate milk. And we'd get so lost in our games and our discoveries and our made-up stories . . . so many stories: lookin' for ghosts, lookin' for apes, lookin' for fortunes, runnin' from rats, talkin' 'bout girls, talkin' 'bout Thelma from *Good Times*, talkin' 'bout daydreams, talkin' 'bout Bruce Lee versus Evel Knievel, talkin' in words that wasn't even words . . . and . . . and it would always surprise us when we saw the lights . . . even though we could feel the train coming, but it was the lights. The closer those lights came, rumble of the tracks, sound a the conductor's horn blarin' at us, we'd get so excited we'd freeze—two seconds of freezin' cold . . . hypnotized . . . holdin' hands, waitin', waitin', then: *Bang!* We'd jump off the rails, hug the wall, climb back up the platform, start run-

nin'—runnin'—tearin' ass clear across town back to Riverside or Cherry Park. One time . . . one particular time, when we was holdin' hands right before we jumped off the rails, somethin' happened, and we couldn't let go, couldn't untangle ourself from each other, and we were inside that light, and . . . we both saw skeletons and radiation, and we was paralyzed in a way that I juss can't explain, till somethin' blew us apart, juss blew us, and we landed safe. We didn't move for a long time. We was cryin', and Joey ripped his brother's coat . . . We wasn't speakin' till we got to our block and Joey said that it was the light that ripped us apart and saved our lives . . . Joey said, "Jesus hopped the A train to see us safe to bed."

MARY JANE: Do you believe that?

ANGEL: We was juss kids.

MARY JANE: Yeah . . . Well, you're on an A train right now, Angel, and if there's a Jesus on board it's me.

ANGEL: I know.

MARY JANE: D.A. asks you a question?

ANGEL: Pause five seconds.

MARY JANE: And then?

ANGEL: Answer it.

MARY JANE: How?

ANGEL: "Yes," "No," "I don't know."

MARY JANE: And then?

ANGEL: Stop talking.

MARY JANE: Because?

ANGEL: He gonna try ta fuck me up.

MARY JANE: If you want to explain something?

ANGEL: You'll ask me in the redirect.

MARY JANE: Did you bring a gun to the church?

ANGEL: No.

MARY JANE: Did you shoot Reverend Kim?

ANGEL: No.

MARY JANE: Did you ever want to hurt him?

ANGEL: Yes.

MARY JANE: What's God's plan for you?

ANGEL: Chicken wings and beer.

Scene 3: Charlie D'Amico speaks.

D'AMICO: Lucius Jenkins was executed by the state of Florida on June third . . . Me and the wife, Mary, we took a plane down to Tallahassee to be there for Lou since he didn't really have nobody except a sister in East St. Louis who couldn't attend because of somethin' or other. I didn't get to talk to Lou or nothin', we were just permitted to witness the death . . . It was quick. The thing that freaked me out the most was they

had this clock on the wall in the room where Lucius was. It was hangin' right above the hospital gurney and it said "Standard" on it, juss like the clocks we had at Rikers. I kept starin' at that clock and at the little red hand goin' around marking the minutes and the big black hand clickin' them off. I felt like I could hear it clickin' through the Plexiglas. I kept thinkin' how I'd stare at that same clock at work wanting it to move faster, and now here I was in Florida wishin' it could move slower or just stop. I hated that clock mostly 'cuz I felt it was fuckin' redundant . . . When they brought Lou in, he was silent. He didn't ever say nuthin', which surprised me. The only thing he said was: They asked him if he had a final statement to make and he said, "No, sir." He only looked out at us once. He looked right at me and I tried ta smile but it was like he didn't recognize me, and for like a split second I was pissed; I was thinkin', "This trip cost us like a thousand bucks, at least he could acknowledge our fuckin' presence, ya know?" It's crazy, but that's really what I thought. My wife, Mary, had just the right expression on her face though, and she cried real real quietly, so as not to upset the families or take away from the thing that was happenin' right in front of us . . . I tried real hard to figure out what he was feelin' or thinkin', but it was real hard to tell from lookin' at him. It almost looked as if he wasn't feelin' nuthin'; and I thought I knew him too well to believe that that could really be the case, but . . . I was wrong. It turns out Lucius must of found himself another Oreo cookie man, 'cuz when the coroner did a toxicology on him, they found substantial traces of heroin and cocaine in the bloodstream. Lucius died high as a kite. When it was over, me and Mary went to this diner across the street from our motel that advertised itself as having "Tallahassee's Finest Southern Fried Chicken." We ordered two plates, and when the waitress brought it over, we got all excited 'cuz it looked so big and juicy and plump, but when I stuck my fork into this big plump fried chicken, it deflated like a balloon.

We got the check, went back to the motel, ordered a pizza from Domino's, called my sister-in-law so we could talk to the kids. When we got off the phone, Mary kissed me—like she really meant it. I kissed her back, and we went to bed and made love for the first time in six months. When the pizza guy came, we pretended we weren't there . . . I could tell you that Lucius Jenkins helped me stop drinkin', 'cuz he did, that he convinced me to look into startin' a pool-cleaning business wit' my brother-in-law, which we also did, and that he got me fired off my job which turned out to be a huge blessin' in disguise; and that stuff is all important and true, but really, I only knew the guy for three months, which ain't a lot, and if someone were ta say that he just used me or whatever, that he was a lunatic, I prolly couldn't argue back much. Ask me about drinkin' and jails, I'll tell ya a lot. Ask me about pool cleanin', I'll take my chances against anybody. Ask me about Lucius Jenkins, there ain't a hell of a lot I can say 'cuz there ain't a hell of a lot I know. All I really know about Lucius Jenkins is that I liked him.

Scene 4: The yard, midstream.

ANGEL: Yo, why ya gotta be a little bitch for? C'mon, man! Lucius . . . Yo, Lucius . . . You stupid, man. You actin' like—you know who you actin' like? You actin' like a little fuckin' kid! Silent treatment . . . Thass baby shit! I had a friend, he useta do the same shit. He be mad at me, he wouldn't say nuthin', juss be silent like a mummy. You a mummy, man? Mofuckin' King Tut? Stupid, man . . . Tryin' ta punish me? Ain't I punished enough already? Aaight, fuck you too! I ain't never talkin' to you again, ever, dass it! Ain't nuttin' interesting 'bout you anyway! You boring!

(Pause)

ANGEL: I'm leavin' here soon anyway. Coupla more days, you ain't never gonna see this face again! Never! Gonna get some chicken wings and beer! Dat shit gonna taste good too! Ice cold beer, gonna burn my throat on the way down, mofuckin' Heineken! Nice flamin' hot wing—gonna dip dat shit in the bleu cheese, shit gonna be the shit! Gonna go to the bar: fuckin' Cuba Libre! Gonna get my lawyer drunk, make love in the bathroom standin' up! Gonna bring juror number one too, mofuckin' orgy!! Gonna leave the bathroom, tell the waitress, Cuba Libres everywhere! *Libre*, Mothahfuckah!! Whatchu think 'bout dat?!

(Pause)

ANGEL: Whatever I wanna do, I'm a double do dat shit! You like movies? I ain't talkin' 'bout no Charlton Heston Moses bullshit, I'm talkin' 'bout mothahfuckin' real movies! I'm a go to a spot, pick up a big-ass bag a some proper smoke, roll the most gigantic El you ever fuckin' seen, blaze that shit up till it's ash, and go see every fuckin' movie out there! Tom Cruise, Al Pacino, Jackie Chan: I'm a see all dat! I'm a get a popcorn so big, that shit gonna look like a two-story building! I'm a get a Coca-Cola—that shit gonna be refreshing!

VALDEZ: Eight minutes!

ANGEL: Ain't never gonna hear that voice again neither! I'm a be Honolulu, Hawaii, doin' the dog paddle! I'm a be back to school, meet my wife—Love at First Sight—buy a carpet and a toaster! I'm a do all a that! You say sumpthin', man? Whatchu said? Even if you ain't said nuttin', I know you thinkin' some shit! Thinkin' some stupid shit . . . Whatchu thinkin'? I *know* what you thinkin'. C'mon, say it. C'mon, mothahfuckah, talk! Yo, whatsamatter, you afraid you ain't

got nuthin' ta say? Afraid I'll knock your nonsense right out the fuckin' park?! Whatchu gotta say?!

(Pause)

ANGEL: Fine! Be like that!

(Pause)

LUCIUS: Smell like rain.

ANGEL: What?

LUCIUS: I say, it smell like rain.

VALDEZ: Seven minutes!

ANGEL: *(To VALDEZ)* It ain't been no fifty-three minutes, Valdez!

LUCIUS: He ain't talkin' 'bout how much time you got. He talkin' 'bout how long I got before they escort my ass to the van downstairs.

ANGEL: You goin' ta court?

LUCIUS: Florida.

ANGEL: Florida? Today?

LUCIUS: Why? Was you plannin' ta bake me a cake?

ANGEL: Yo . . . nah, juss, you know . . . I'm juss 'sayin' . . .

LUCIUS: Sayin' what? "Sorry"? People don't appreciate no human life! I'm tryin' ta stay alive, make a contribution, everybody outraged: "How dare he wanna live!" Now, I'm a go die; you think it's gonna make one bit a difference? People still gonna be pissed off: "Why he got a bed?" "Why can't we torture him more?" "Why he eatin' a damn cheeseburger?" Fuck 'em.

ANGEL: I'm . . . You can't appeal dat shit?

LUCIUS: I accept God's will.

ANGEL: But what if dat ain't God's will?

LUCIUS: A lesser man might raise dat question.

ANGEL: I ain't lesser.

VALDEZ: Six minutes!

LUCIUS: Nah, you perfect. You gonna go home, smoke a joint, everything gonna be okeydokey.

ANGEL: Dass right.

LUCIUS: Wake up in the mornin', eatin' your Fruity Pebbles, talkin' 'bout "Gee, Mommy! What a scary dream I had."

ANGEL: Doan see why not—

LUCIUS: "I didn't *really* kill no man." "I don't *really* have ta take no responsibility." "God gonna work out a special payment plan for me."

ANGEL: Yup.

LUCIUS: See, I wasn't aware God took the damn Discover card! But I guess if you're "Angel Cruz," well, it's just different, huh? Everybody else pay cash, but "Angel"? He juss walk right out the store and God'll juss put it on his tab, ain't that right?

ANGEL: You juss jealous I'm gettin' out—

LUCIUS: What I got ta be jealous for? You got Beelzebub doin' your thinkin' for ya; meanwhile I got the Voice a God sounding sweetly in my ear tellin' me, "Ya done good, Lucius, now come on home."

ANGEL: "Ya done good"? Lucius, what the fuck "good" you ever done ta make God say some bullshit like that?

LUCIUS: Why doan you ask Him yourself if you're so innerested?

ANGEL: I'm askin' you.

LUCIUS: And I'm tellin' you: I ain't no long-distance phone operator! You gotta question for The Man, you need ta dial direct, jack!

ANGEL: What's so "good" 'bout killin' eight people?!

LUCIUS: "Eight people," "Eight people," dass all anyone ever wanna say!

ANGEL: Dass 'cuz—

LUCIUS: Y'all love ta get all up in Lucius business, doncha? Makes y'all feel cozy and safe! "Lucius killed eight people, he bad! We ain't killed no eight people, we must be good"! Shoot, dass some humorous knee-slapper y'all perpetratin' on yourselves—and dass my word right there!

VALDEZ: Five minutes!

LUCIUS: Every night, kid, every night, without fail, on the cement ground, knees bruised, ligaments twitchin' an tortin', neck achin', I prayed for you. Asked God, "Make Angel *who he is*, not how he actin'." I cried.

ANGEL: Yeah, well—

LUCIUS: Somethin' wrong wit' dat?

ANGEL: You could do whatchu want—

LUCIUS: That ain't what I asked ya—

ANGEL: I'm sayin'—

LUCIUS: Son: me prayin' for ya, is there somethin' wrong wit' dat?

ANGEL: It ain't wrong—

LUCIUS: Is it "bad"?!

ANGEL: I didn't say that—

LUCIUS: Is it "bad"?!

ANGEL: Nah.

LUCIUS: Is it "good"?

ANGEL: Dat don't mean—

LUCIUS: Don't mean, don't mean! Did it ever occur to you once . . . *ever* in all these days 'n' nights we spent together: Did it ever occur to you, Angel, ever, ever . . . to pray for me?

(Pause)

VALDEZ: Four minutes!

(Pause)

LUCIUS: See? Dass what I thought . . .

ANGEL: Lucius—

LUCIUS: Doncha "Lucius" me now! Shoulda "Lucius"-ed me then!

ANGEL: God don't hear me.

LUCIUS: God hear you and you hear God! You doan like what he sayin', dass the real story!

ANGEL: I don't know what He's sayin'!

LUCIUS: Get on your knees right now, ask the Lord's forgiveness, I dare ya!

ANGEL: Yo—

LUCIUS: Do it!

ANGEL: And then what? I get on my knees; "Forgive me, forgive me, forgive me"; and then what?!

LUCIUS: You know what!

ANGEL: Ain't gonna change nuttin'!

LUCIUS: Coward!

ANGEL: I ain't no coward!

LUCIUS: Then prove it!

ANGEL: I ain't gots ta prove shit.

LUCIUS: God say—

ANGEL: You don't know nuthin' 'bout God—

LUCIUS: I know everything about God! It's people like you, cryin' in the darkness, waitin' on the lightning, meanwhile you got the flashlight in your own damn lap; you're the ones don't know shit about God! God say, "Come to Me and Be Free"! How much more red carpet rollin' y'all need?! People wait on faith like it's some kinda gift! Ain't nuttin' like that! Faith is like a little blade a grass, fights it way through the concrete tryin' a get his-self a little drink a water! Faith ain't no Puerto Rican Finger Puppet waggin' my head like a fool! I am my own man! I am a Soldier of Christ, and the light a God shines on me and in me in perpetuity, jack!

ANGEL: *You killed eight people—*

LUCIUS: So what I killed eight people? They juss people!

ANGEL: What?!

LUCIUS: If God didn't mean for them people to be killed, how would I have the ability to kill them?

ANGEL: Them people never did nothin' wrong.

LUCIUS: Never said they did.

ANGEL: You did that shit on your own.

LUCIUS: Yes I did.

ANGEL: Not God, you.

LUCIUS: Dass right.

ANGEL: Your own free will.

LUCIUS: Hold up now! Was it my free will to be molested and sodomized, abused and violated from the age a five? Was it my free will to turn ta drugs and alcohol as a result a that shit? Was it my free will to be a undiagnosed manic-depressive paranoid schizophrenic?! Nah, people doan wanna hear 'bout none a that! All people wanna do is cry for the victims! What about my victimization?

ANGEL: That ain't—

LUCIUS: They put some faggot-ass rock star on VH-1 talkin' 'bout his battle wit' addiction, everybody cry! Some movie actress, she got inceded once or twice, she so "brave" to come forward! But me? I'm juss a Black Plague! Ain't no "disease a addiction" for me, it's "free will." Ain't no "brave comin' forward" for Lucius, it's Florida and Death fuckin' Row!

ANGEL: You crazy, man—

VALDEZ: Three minutes!

LUCIUS: Jesus' last words was "Forgive them, Father, they know not what they do." Now I'm tryin' ta take the Jesus perspective on this whole deal, forgive the people, but it's hard. Everybody act like they down wit' God, but didn't God say killing's wrong?

ANGEL: Killing's wrong for everyone else, but it's okay for you?

LUCIUS: I killed a little boy, chopped his pee-pee off and fed it to him. Beat him to death with his own baseball bat, he was screamin', "Mommy, Mommy." It didn't feel wrong. It felt good!

ANGEL: That's 'cuz you fucked in the head, man!

LUCIUS: If that's true, then, what's your excuse?

ANGEL: I ain't makin' excuses—

LUCIUS: How'd it feel when you killed that Reverend Kim? Was it good for you too?

ANGEL: How you gonna enjoy killin' a little kid and think God could ever wanna shine a light on you?

VALDEZ: Two minutes!

LUCIUS: God loves me.

ANGEL: He loves you more than he loves an innocent boy?

LUCIUS: Do God love you more than he loved dat Reverend Kim? Huh? Answer my damn question!

ANGEL: Maybe he does—

LUCIUS: "Maybe"? "Maybe"? That ain't no answer! Mothahfuckah, get up on that witness stand tomorrow, tell the judge, "*maybe*" I shot that Reverend—see what he gonna tell ya! *Maybe* Time is over, this is Grown Man Time right here! You shot and killed an unarmed, defenseless sixty-five-year-old man. Pe-riod. The End. You know it, I know it, God know it! *And*, you did it in a church! You could dance the Lambada 'round it all night, string a forest full a Christmas trees with all the "maybe's" you could pull out your turned-out, lyin' ass—and it will never be different from how I just said it! *Shit!* (*To God*) Try ta offer a dyin' fool in the desert a drink a water, Lord, and all he could say is "maybe"!

ANGEL: I'm goin' home, Lucius—home—and I'm gonna have my life, ya fuckin' lunatic!

LUCIUS: Bitch, you *are* home! *And* the life you have is miserable and worthless and done! *And* I'm a tell you somethin' else: Proud! Hateful! Selfish! False! Cowardly! Slippery! Vengeful! Weak willed! Without remorse! Neither fish nor fowl: *Evil*—mothahfuckah—

ANGEL: Thass . . . Nah! Fuck dat! Nah!

LUCIUS: The Evil took ya, Angel—took ya so good, you don't even know you gone!

ANGEL: I ain't gone nowhere!

LUCIUS: Oh, you gone, all right. Gone! Bon voyage, Baby Capone—enjoy the chicken wings!

ANGEL: You don't know me! You don't know nuthin'!

LUCIUS: Okay.

ANGEL: You don't know my heart! I'm *all* heart!

LUCIUS: Was.

ANGEL: All your words! All your bullshit! All this time! All this time, I thought you maybe knew sumpthin'—

LUCIUS: I know you killed a man.

ANGEL: Yeah! Yeah, dass right! Yeah! I killed a man. *One* man!

LUCIUS: One's better than eight?

ANGEL: It's different.

LUCIUS: How?

ANGEL: I ain't like you!

LUCIUS: You juss like me!

ANGEL: I know who I am! I'm good!

LUCIUS: You ain't good!

ANGEL: Mothahfuckah, I don't feed little children their dicks, then say it felt good! I don't say shooting the Reverend Kim felt good! I know what I did! I know how I feel—

LUCIUS: I "know" how the Reverend Kim "feels"—motherfucker feels dead!

ANGEL: I'm goin' home!

LUCIUS: You ain't nuthin' but a pigeon-hearted little bitch—thass your nature, thass your character, thass who you are!

ANGEL: You don't know me!

LUCIUS: Yeah, you might be lookin' at me, but you talkin' 'bout your own self, ain'tcha?!

ANGEL: I ain't, I won't, wouldn't . . .

LUCIUS: "Won't, wouldn't" what? What?

ANGEL: (*To VALDEZ*) Valdez!

LUCIUS: Valdez can't save ya!

ANGEL: (*To VALDEZ*) Valdez, take me outta here!

LUCIUS: You ain't no man! You ain't shit, you don't stand for shit, and your life is a wasteful embarrassment!

ANGEL: Valdez!

LUCIUS: Oldest juvenile delinquent I ever seen! Still squirt dog water, doncha?

ANGEL: Fuck you.

LUCIUS: Got no vocabulary neither! Unrepentant no-class sinner!

ANGEL: Yo, Valdez!

LUCIUS: Run back ta the darkness, ya blind bat!

ANGEL: I ain't nuthin' like you!

LUCIUS: Proud, proud, proud!

ANGEL: Never was, never will be!

LUCIUS: Chirp Chirp Chirp!

ANGEL: Valdez!

VALDEZ: One minute!

ANGEL: C'mon, Valdez!

VALDEZ: One minute!

ANGEL: Valdez! Please!

VALDEZ: One minute!

Scene 5

MARY JANE: When I used to be a lawyer, I would wake up cranky as hell every morning at five a.m. and I would fantasize about sleeping in, calling in sick, having a "me" day. I was resentful about the demands of the job, the lack of recognition, the lack of a life, the fact that it was "hard." Once I got disbarred, I suddenly had all the time in the world, and I didn't want it . . . I didn't want it at all. Angel's redirect had been masterfully constructed, and he was masterful. He was wiping away tears, looking the jury right in the eye, and most of all, he looked and sounded completely sympathetic and believable. I got emotional. I tried not to show it, but it just spilled out. I was proud of him. I was prouder of myself. And why not? It was my defining moment and . . . I held on to it a split second too long. Angel started sobbing, and I was vaguely thinking, "Okay, get him off the stand," but before I could react,

because the truth is I really was getting off on how emotionally involved the jury was getting over all this, before I knew what was happening, Angel started talking. He told the judge not to blame me, that I was just trying to help. I tried to cut him off; I said, "No more questions," but Angel kept on talking . . .

ANGEL: "Hail Mary—

MARY JANE: And talking . . .

ANGEL: "Hail Mary—

MARY JANE: Angel will be eligible for parole in 2038 . . .

ANGEL: "Hail Mary, you're a lady, talk to your fuckin' Son." I doan, I doan mean that . . . I juss . . . I juss wanna be good . . . I wanna be, I wanna be a good man, Mary, I wanna be a man . . . Saint Anthony? Saint Anthony! "Saint Anthony, Saint Anthony, please come around, somethin' is lost and . . . I juss . . . it's 'cuz . . . I stole John Hameric's jacket, God. I know you know that, but I stole it, and I didn't mean it, even though I did mean it 'cuz I was jealous that he had that jacket and I didn't—and he cried and cried, and I threw that shit in the Hudson and I never toal him 'cuz I blamed Sidney Betincourt and then Sidney Betincourt kicked John's ass and I never said shit and I am so fuckin' sorry! I am so fuckin' sorry, God, and please, do somethin' good for John Hameric wherever he is, make somethin' good happen to him, please, let him hit the number or find some money or get a new jacket, God! Somethin! Make him have a good life 'cuz he loved that fuckin' jacket, God, that fuckin' stupid Spiderman jacket. I can't believe . . . I wish . . . I'm so sorry. I am.

(VALDEZ enters.)

VALDEZ: Cruz!

ANGEL: I am so sorry, I am so so sorry—

VALDEZ: Let's go, Cruz.

ANGEL: I *am* a man, God! I am a man that is sorry.

VALDEZ: Cruz!

ANGEL: I am a man and I am so, so sorry.

VALDEZ: Cruz! Time!

ANGEL: Really, God, I'm . . . I . . . Valdez . . . Valdez, I'm sorry—

VALDEZ: Step away from the cage.

ANGEL: I'm, I'm sorry, ya know, Valdez. Valdez, I'm sorry.

VALDEZ: Quite all right.

ANGEL: I—

VALDEZ: Yes . . . yes . . . away from the cage.

(ANGEL assumes the position. VALDEZ enters, cuffs ANGEL, and leads him out of his cage.)

(End of play)