



The Purple Rose Theatre Company



by Jeff Daniels

The Tropical Pickle

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The Purple Rose Theatre Company

is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit professional theatre registered with the federal government and the state of Michigan. Founded in 1991, the PRTC operates under a SPT Tier 7 agreement with Actor's Equity Association.

The Purple Rose Theatre Company
137 Park Street
Chelsea, Michigan 48118
www.purplerosetheatre.org

“Perfection is in our possession and yet, it is only a perilous possibility; its paradise our pasquinade; its epitome our poetic parody as we pertinaciously pursue our impassioned pilgrimage onward, on our quest for the Impeccable Pickle.”

— Heinz Shankleferd

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Originally produced by The Purple Rose Theatre Company (1992)
Jeff Daniels, Executive Director
Guy Sanville, Artistic Director
Alan Ribant, Managing Director
The production was directed by T. Newell Kring.

The Tropical Pickle premiered at The Purple Rose Theatre Company in Chelsea, Michigan, on May 15, 1992. The play was directed by T. Newell Kring; the set and costume design was by Greg Gillette; the lighting design was by Dana White; and the stage manager was D. D. Segrest. The cast was as follows:

SARA LEE..... Karen Kron
PEGGY LEESandra Birch
BOB LEE Wayne David Parker
DWAYNE DARLINGTONMatthew Letscher
ED BONETTI.....Guy Sanville
SPORTY SHANKLEFERD III..... Randall Godwin
VIRGINIA VAN BRINKER-SMYTHE..... Susan Arnold

The Tropical Pickle was subsequently produced by Big Pickle Productions at The Gem Theatre in Detroit, Michigan, on February 28, 2001. The play was directed by Guy Sanville; the set design was by Andrew Gorney; costume design was by Colleen Ryan-Peters; the lighting design was by Dana White; the properties design was by Danna Segrest; and the stage managers were Anthony Caselli and Debra S. Dykeman. The cast was as follows:

SARA LEE.....Michelle Held
PEGGY LEESandra Birch
BOB LEE Wayne David Parker
DWAYNE DARLINGTON Ryan Carlson
ED BONETTI..... Joseph Albright
SPORTY SHANKLEFERD III..... Randall Godwin
VIRGINIA VAN BRINKER-SMYTHE..... Robin Lewis-Bedz

CHARACTERS

BOB LEE forties, Plant Manager for the Shankleferd Pickle Company
PEGGY LEE forties, BOB's wife
SARA LEE seventeen, PEGGY's daughter
DWAYNE DARLINGTON
early twenties, SARA's boyfriend
ED BONETTI
forties, former Quality Assurance Director for the Shankleferd Pickle Company
SPORTY SHANKLEFERD, III
forties or fifties, CEO and President of the Shankleferd Pickle Company
VIRGINIA VAN BRINKER-SMYTHE
thirties, SPORTY's date

PLACE

BOB and PEGGY LEE's home in Macomb County, in a suburb north of Detroit, Michigan

TIME

Early spring

Note: Permission required to use Sly & the Family Stone's "I Want To Take You Higher" and Betty Comdon, Adolf Green and Julie Styne's "The Party's Over."

THE TROPICAL PICKLE

ACT 1

The slightly sunken living room of BOB and PEGGY LEE's home in Maple Oak, Michigan, a small town north of Detroit. A couch, Barcalounger, dining room table, chairs, a closet near the front door and interior doors leading off to the kitchen and bedroom. The phone rings. Clad only in a slip, PEGGY bursts out of the bedroom door stitching a pair of pants.

PEGGY *(phone)* Hello! Ed, hi, what is it? No, he's not here. I don't know. I have to go, I have to change. I have to change. Ed, no, listen, Ed, this is not—no, well, that's between you and Bob ... Well, I wish there were something I could do but I can't because I have to change because if I don't I'm going to be late for my own dinner party. Marinated Flank Steak.

SARA, PEGGY's daughter, enters with an attitude wearing an apron with the inscription "Don't Blame Me, I'm Just The Cook."

SARA Don't help. Really. I'll do everything.

SARA throws a tablecloth over the dining room table and starts back into the kitchen.

PEGGY *(phone)* No, not tonight. Call him tomorrow. *(to Sara)* Did you remember to add the chopped onion? Sara?

SARA Yes, Mother.

PEGGY The chopped onion?

SARA The recipe said it was optional. God!

PEGGY *(phone)* Ed, I have to change. *(to SARA)* It needs the chopped onion!

SARA Hello! It was in parentheses!

PEGGY That's what makes the dish! (*phone*) I have to change.

SARA Who's on the phone?

PEGGY Set the table.

SARA Is that Uncle Ed again?

PEGGY Set the table.

SARA Can I talk to him?

PEGGY (*phone*) Have I what? ... No, I've never broken my leg. I imagine it would be very painful. I have an idea. Why don't you call Bob tomorrow and tell him about it because right now I have to change. No, I have to change, Ed. I have to change, I have to change, I have to change, I have to change, I have to change! (*hangs up the phone*) Just what the world needs, another needy man.

SARA Do you have to change?

PEGGY You can have an attitude all you want with me, young lady, but when Mr. Shankleferd gets here, you turn into Shirley Temple, you understand me?

SARA What attitude?

PEGGY You Know Who's been a You Know What all day today.

SARA You Know Who would be a You Know What all day, too, if You Know Who were only making two-fifty an hour to cater this dinner party, Mrs. Don't-Lift-A-Finger-Treat-Me-Like-A-Servant-Make-Me-Do-All-The-Work.

PEGGY Are you following the recipe? Tell me you're following the recipe.

SARA I'm experimenting.

PEGGY Just follow the recipe.

SARA I'm not a cook. I'm a caterer.

PEGGY Fine. Tell the caterer to follow the recipe.

SARA There's a big difference between a cook and a caterer. A caterer makes more money. A lot more money. A lot more than two-fifty an hour.

PEGGY We're not discussing this.

SARA I could make more at McDonald's.

PEGGY So go work at McDonald's.

SARA begins taking off her apron.

PEGGY Sara. What are you doing?

SARA I'm going to work at McDonald's.

PEGGY Get back here.

SARA I quit.

PEGGY You can't quit.

SARA Have a good dinner.

PEGGY Don't be ridiculous. That's enough. Get back to work.

SARA How much?

PEGGY What?

SARA I quit, remember? If I come back to work for you, it's sure not going to be for two-fifty an hour.

PEGGY Don't you dare do this to me.

SARA Make me an offer.

PEGGY Sara, I swear to god.

SARA Ten.

PEGGY Ten what?

SARA Ten bucks an hour.

PEGGY We agreed on two-fifty!

SARA Big Mac? Happy Meal? Chicken McNuggets?

PEGGY Fine! Five dollars an hour, and that's final! I don't want to hear another word about it!

SARA Ch-ching!

PEGGY Five dollars an hour. You take the zip right out of my day, you know that?

PEGGY goes back to hemming the pants. SARA puts her apron back on.

SARA When do you want me to marinate the meat?

PEGGY It's not enough I give you a golden opportunity to do something nice for your father, not to mention make—

SARA He's not my father for the hundredth time.

PEGGY —some spending money, forgive me, your stepfather. What did you say about the meat?

SARA It's Marinated Flank Steak, right?
 PEGGY Yes.
 SARA So, when do you want me to do it?
 PEGGY When do I want you to do what?
 SARA Marinate the meat.
 PEGGY Last night.
 SARA Last night?
 PEGGY Last night!
 SARA Oops.
 PEGGY Oops?
 SARA You didn't tell me I had to do it last night!
 PEGGY It has to marinate for twenty-four hours!
 SARA How was I supposed to know that?
 PEGGY It's in the recipe! Didn't you read the recipe?!

SARA I'm a caterer! I can't tie myself down to some
 cookbook!
 PEGGY Aaaah! Where's the marinade? Where's the
 marinade!!!
 SARA In the sink in a bowl!
 PEGGY You stick the bowl in the microwave and zap it
 for two minutes. No more.
 SARA Two minutes. No more.
 PEGGY Then take it out and you start basting that flank
 steak as if your life depended on it because it does.
 What about the hors d'oeuvres? Tell me you made the
 hors d'oeuvres trays the way I asked you to?
 SARA Yes!
 PEGGY And the Jello? Did you spell his name right?
 Sporty Shankleferd, III.
 SARA The third, I know.
 PEGGY S-P-O-R-T-Y S-H-A-N-K-L-E-F-E-R-D—
 SARA (*with Peggy*)—A-N-K-L-E-F-E-R-D, okay, okay!
 PEGGY —the third! I-I-I! With the Roman numerals! Tell
 me you didn't forget the Roman numerals!
 SARA They're all there, Mother! In Wild Cherry!

*PEGGY holds up the pants. Two pants legs hemmed
 together.*

PEGGY Dammit it all to hell!
 SARA He probably won't even notice.
 PEGGY Where are my pills? I need my pills. It's rich
 people. I always get this way around the rich. Stop!!
 SARA Aaaah!
 PEGGY Stop! Stop! Stop!
 SARA I'm not doing anything!
 PEGGY What are you wearing tonight?
 SARA Whatever caterers wear.
 PEGGY Where's that outfit your stepfather hates?
 SARA The one that got me grounded?
 PEGGY Wear that.
 SARA He said I look like Madonna.
 PEGGY Perfect! And high heels! Get a pair of my high
 heels out of the closet!
 SARA I can't cater in high heels!
 PEGGY I can't believe I didn't think of this sooner. Your
 stepfather's new boss, he's young, he's rich, he owns
 his own company. They're all into younger women. It's
 a fact, I read it in *Redbook*.
 SARA I'm seventeen.
 PEGGY It's easy. I'll teach you.
 SARA Mother!
 PEGGY First, you tease him. A casual touch of his leg.
 Brush against his arm. He says something he thinks is
 funny, and you're there with a light, little laugh. Ha, ha.
 Ha, ha.
 SARA Are you listening to yourself?
 PEGGY And when you present the food, present yourself.
 As if you were on that tray.

SARA is heading towards the kitchen.

PEGGY Where are you going?
 SARA Therapy.
 PEGGY Sara, I'm begging you. As your mother. As a
 fellow woman. As someone who hasn't had a decent
 vacation in eight years. If you never do anything else for
 me for the rest of your life, please, do this tonight.

SARA Ten bucks an hour.
 PEGGY Ten ... ?
 SARA Big Mac? Happy Meal? Chicken McNugget?
Suddenly, the door opens. BOB LEE, home from work.
 BOB They upgraded Larry's parking spot!
PEGGY flashes ten fingers at SARA and mouths a silent "That's it!" A happy SARA disappears into the kitchen.
 BOB Put a memo up, smack dab where everybody could see it. You'd think Christ himself had joined the company.
PEGGY goes back to her chair to continue hemming.
 BOB First thing Monday morning, Larry parks in Executive Row. A big, fat reserved spot with "L. Kleinschmidt" painted right on the asphalt. Do you know how long I've had my application in for Executive Row?
 PEGGY You're late. Where've you been?
 BOB Years! *(disappears into the kitchen; o.s.)* And where does Bob Lee, Plant Manager, park his car? Where I always park my car! Right next to the dumpster! *(bursts out of the kitchen with two beers)* I'll tell you something, and it's not pretty. The man has single-handedly turned sucking up to the boss into an art form. He should write a book. Go on *Oprah*.
 PEGGY Take off your pants. These are almost done.
 BOB Lemme put it this way. If Sporty were to come to a sudden stop, Larry'd be halfway up his ass. Y'know, if Heinz were still alive, I would be a shoo-in. Larry wouldn't have a prayer.
 PEGGY Well, Heinz is dead, dear. We have to do what we have to do.
 BOB I wouldn't have to get down on my hands and knees and kiss the backside of some third generation

pickle heir, I can tell you that! Heinz Shankleferd was, is and always will be Shankleferd Pickles. He was the one and only Big Pickle. It's tragic. It's beyond tragic.
 PEGGY It's very sad. Take off your pants.
BOB takes off his pants. He wears boxer shorts, black socks, a shirt and tie. SARA comes out of the kitchen and goes back to work on the dining room table.
 BOB Man works with pickles his entire life, ends up drowning to death in a vat of vinegar? I still don't know what that's supposed to mean. What's it been? Two months?
 PEGGY Not even.
 BOB Seems like two days. Twin Cities Foods made another offer.
 PEGGY You're kidding.
 BOB That's the rumor, we're all walkin' on eggs, I don't wanna talk about it.
 SARA Ed Bonetti called again.
 PEGGY Don't you have somewhere else to be?
 BOB *(slightly panicked)* What'd he want?
 PEGGY He said you'd know.
 SARA Know what?
 BOB He's not coming over, is he?
 PEGGY I think he just needs someone to talk to.
 BOB Good, old Papaya Ed. Get this. End of the day today, I come screamin' outa the office, I got fifteen minutes to—
 PEGGY *(to SARA)* Go baste.
 SARA I'm going, I'm going.
 BOB —get ready and I still gotta get to the car wash! I have zero time, na-da.
 SARA Why'd you have to go to the car wash?
 PEGGY Mr. Shankleferd drives a Porsche.
 BOB It's important I have a car that at least looks brand-new sitting in my own driveway, little girl. The great Heinz Shankleferd, god rest his soul, he always

said, "If you want to take care of your life, start with your automobile." Especially if you still have to park back by the dumpster, and you better believe somebody's gonna hear about that first thing Monday morning!

SARA This table cloth has a stain on it.

PEGGY It has a what?

BOB Meanwhile, I'm racing through the parking lot. Who do I see? Ed, The Patron Saint of the Unemployed standing in the parking lot for god knows how long—

SARA Look.

PEGGY Oh, my god.

SARA That's where Aunt Geraldine sat last Thanksgiving. She insisted on feeding herself, remember?

PEGGY God, that woman.

BOB Been gone almost a month now and there he is, just standing in the company parking lot right next to my car.

SARA I could put a plate over it.

PEGGY No, we can't do that. If Mr. Shankleferd moves his plate, he'll be staring at Aunt Geraldine's bile.

BOB I come up to him, I'm in a hurry, I say, "Hey, Ed." He says, "Hey, Bob." Like he's settling in for a long conversation. Meanwhile, I have no time, na-da, so he says, he says, "We gotta talk."

SARA This is our only good table cloth.

PEGGY What about the one with the lace we use at Christmas?

BOB I'm tellin' a story here!

PEGGY and SARA stop and stare at BOB.

BOB I now have fourteen minutes to wash my car—

PEGGY and SARA turn away.

SARA Aunt Geraldine took it. She said it was hers.

BOB I say to him, "Ed. Buddy. Pal. Friend. I'm supposed to be somewhere else right now. Can I call ya?"

PEGGY I don't need this right now. I truly don't.

SARA How about a clean bed sheet? Y'know, with the elastic corners?

PEGGY Just put a plate over it. *(goes back to the chair to finish hemming)*

BOB I say to him, "Call me tomorrow!" And he stands there lookin' at me like he's gotta handful of sleeping pills in one hand and a bottle of Scotch in the other, and he says, "I wanna show ya somethin'."

PEGGY Show you what?

BOB Who knows? So I said, "Ed, you and me, we go back a long way. Too long. Too long to go into now." So I jump in the car. I start it up. I put it in drive. I look up and there he is standing directly in front of my car! I say, "Ed, you're gonna have to move." He says to me, he says, "Tonight. I wanna show ya tonight." I throw it in reverse so I can back outa there, but I can't back up because I'm wedged up against the dumpster! I turn back around. Ed's still goin' on and on, and I'm thinkin', "This is crazy! I can't be doing this. I gotta get to the car wash. I'm late for the dinner of my life." So I said, "To hell with it," and I did it. I just did it.

PEGGY You did what?

BOB I hit the accelerator.

PEGGY and SARA Bob!

BOB What was I supposed to do?

PEGGY You ran over Ed?

BOB No, I didn't run over Ed.

PEGGY Thank god.

BOB I just clipped him.

SARA What!

BOB I had to get to the car wash!

PEGGY You ran him down so you could wash your car?

SARA Is Ed dead?

BOB No, Ed's not dead!

PEGGY You broke his leg!

BOB I did not.

PEGGY You broke his leg! He called here. I talked to him. He said he had a broken leg!

BOB He's lying. I saw him trying to get up in the rear view mirror. He's fine.

PEGGY That's a hit-and-run!

BOB It was not a hit-and-run. It was a "hit Ed and run," there's a difference.

PEGGY What?!

BOB There's a moral here, people! There is nothing, nothing I won't do to make tonight's dinner a success! Yes, maybe it cost a man the use of his left leg, I don't know, but more importantly, Sporty Shankleferd will be here in less than sixteen minutes, and you're not done.

SARA Who's not done?

PEGGY Not done what?

BOB You're not done with my pants for tonight. I'm standing here. I don't believe what I'm seeing! You're not done!

PEGGY What are you gonna do? Run me over?

BOB They're gonna be here in —(*checks watch*)— now less than, fine, going on fifteen minutes, and you're not done hemming my pants.

PEGGY You don't run people down with your car, Bob! It's against the law!

BOB I told you weeks ago. Weeks ago, I told you, "I feel like I'm wearing someone else's pants! Can you please—

PEGGY They're almost done. Relax.

BOB —fix my hems, they drag." A simple request made weeks ago. What the hell have you been doing?

PEGGY Nothing, Bob. I've done absolutely nothing for weeks now. How 'bout yourself?

BOB Nobody move.

PEGGY My god! In case you haven't noticed, I'm not wearing much of anything at the moment, either!

BOB is rubbing his chest.

SARA What's wrong?

BOB I'm having chest pains.

PEGGY Is it your heart?

BOB No, it's my large intestine! Of course, it's my heart! I'm gonna drop right where I stand.

PEGGY Well, before you do that, try these on.

BOB I'm serious, Peg. I can't breathe.

SARA Oh, my god!

PEGGY and SARA rush over to BOB.

PEGGY Are you sure? You're not really having a heart attack, are you? Tell me you're not having a heart attack!

SARA Oh god, don't die! Is he going to die?

PEGGY Bob! Talk to me! Should I call a doctor? Sara, call 911!

SARA grabs a nearby phone.

SARA What's their number?

BOB and PEGGY 911!

PEGGY He-he-he-hooo, he-he-he-hooo ...

SARA (*phone*) Yes! Help! My stepfather's having a heart attack! Yes, right now!

PEGGY He-he-he-hooo ...

SARA (*phone*) 1415 Meadowlark Lane in Maple Oak!

Suddenly, BOB belches from someplace deep within. PEGGY and SARA jump back.

SARA Oh, god!

PEGGY Bob!

SARA That is disgusting!

BOB Must've been the Reuben I had for lunch. It's okay, I'm all right, thanks for caring.

PEGGY I just cleaned in here!

SARA (*phone*) What?

BOB I thought it was the Big One.

SARA (*phone*) His blood type?

BOB Who the hell's on the phone?

PEGGY The Big One. (*comes out of the kitchen with a can of air freshener*)

SARA (*covering mouthpiece*) It's 911!

BOB Gimme it.

PEGGY He's not having a heart attack. He's fine.
PEGGY sprays BOB directly in the face.

SARA They'll think I made the whole thing up!
 BOB Gimme the phone.
 SARA No! You'll say something!
 BOB Gimme the damn phone!
 BOB *(grabs the phone out of SARA's hand; to phone)*
 Hello, this is Bob Lee. I'm the girl's father.
 SARA Stepfather.
 BOB *(phone)* She made the whole thing up.
 SARA Bob!
 BOB *(phone)* Sorry for the confusion. Have a nice night.
(hangs up the phone)

SARA You humiliated me in front of 911!
 BOB I didn't humiliate you. I used you. There's a difference. *(re: dining table)* Now. What's happening over here?
 SARA Mother!
 PEGGY I'm hemming.
 SARA You could be bleeding to death, barely alive, looking up at me, begging, and I won't make the call!
 BOB How comforting to know I'll die bleeding out of every orifice with you standing over me refusing to help. Moving on.
 SARA Liar!
 BOB Now, you hold it right there, little lady! I may be a lot of things, but a liar is not one of them. Ask anybody. Peg?
 PEGGY He's right. He's a lot of things.
 BOB See?
 SARA Then how come your eye is spazzin' out?
BOB's left eye is twitching, almost spastically. This occurs whenever BOB lies. BOB turns to PEGGY, points to his eye for confirmation. PEGGY nods.

BOB Dammit!
 PEGGY If you have to lie tonight, Bob, put on a pair of sunglasses. You won't give yourself away.
 BOB Can we please get back to the agenda at

hand, please? *(to SARA)* Did you stick to the seating chart? *(pulls out a piece of paper from his briefcase diagramming the seating for the dinner)*

SARA Yes, I stuck to the seating chart, Mr. Humiliation-Bleed-To-Death-Next-Chance-You-Get-And-When-You-Do-I-Won't-Make-The-Call.
 BOB Save it for my eulogy, Sara.
 PEGGY Is he bringing a date?
 BOB No, he's coming stag. Of course, he's bringing a date! *(to SARA)* I mean it, don't go ballistic on me tonight.
 PEGGY What's her name?
 BOB Something-Something-Something, I don't know, I'll think of it.
 PEGGY I don't think I know her.
 BOB Of course, you don't. You don't—*(to SARA)* There's an all expense paid trip to Miami riding on this dinner. Hold up your end.
 SARA Hey, I want you two to go to Miami, believe me. I have plans.
 PEGGY What is she wearing?
 BOB Who?
 PEGGY His girlfriend.
 BOB How should I know?
 PEGGY I have to know what she's wearing!
 SARA Big plans. Whole house to myself? You bet I want you to fly to Miami and go to the National Condom Convention.
 BOB and PEGGY Condiment!
 BOB The National Con-di-ment Convention.
 PEGGY Sara, please. Not tonight.
 BOB The Shankleferd Pickle Company is a member of the con-di-ment industry. Do me a favor and show an interest in what I do for a living, will ya?
 SARA Will Ketchup and Mustard be there?
 BOB I don't appreciate your sense of humor, young lady.
 SARA Get one of your own. It'll make it easier.

PEGGY is studying BOB's seating chart.

PEGGY Where am I?
BOB What?
PEGGY Where am I in this?
BOB Down at the other end.
PEGGY You're talking about down at the other end of the table?
BOB Yes, I apologize for opting for the slang "down at the other end." I just assumed you knew I meant "down at the other end of the table"! Work with me here!
PEGGY Why am I sitting down here?
BOB It creates a balance. It's symmetrical.
PEGGY Would it make it more symmetrical if I sat in the kitchen?
BOB You're just down at the other end of the table, for crissake!
PEGGY Look at this! Look where you've got me sitting. I'm thirty feet away!
BOB You're not either thirty feet! Sara, run out to the garage and get my tape measure! That is not thirty feet!
SARA Twenty bucks an hour.
PEGGY What?!
BOB What's she talking about? Twenty bucks an hour?
PEGGY We already have a deal!
SARA Deal? What deal? I don't remember any deal.
BOB Who's gotta deal?
PEGGY Twenty dollars an hour is totally out of the question.
BOB Why's she wearing an apron?
SARA whips off her apron.
SARA What apron?
BOB Why's she not wearing an apron?
PEGGY Because I hired her to cook the dinner tonight.
BOB Cook the what?
SARA I'm not a cook, I'm a caterer.
PEGGY The dinner!
BOB You're cooking the dinner!
PEGGY No, I need to be out here mingling with the guests.

BOB I don't need you out here mingling! I need you in there cooking the most important dinner of my life!
PEGGY Sara can handle it. Can't you, Sara?
SARA I can handle anything at twenty bucks an hour.
BOB Are you out of your mind?
PEGGY Bob, we agreed she needed to have more responsibility. This is a perfect opportunity.
BOB The girl's never cooked a meal in her entire life!
SARA Every Father's Day I make you breakfast!
BOB And every Father's Day I feed it to Ruffles, remember? Damn dog spends the rest of the day in the rose bushes seein' Ralph and Huey!
PEGGY Who's Ralph and Huey?
BOB imitates violent vomiting; exhaling on "Ralph" and inhaling on "Huey."
BOB Ralph and Huey! Ralph and Huey!
SARA *(to Peggy)* Big Mac? Happy Meal? Or Chicken McNuggets?
PEGGY She can do it, Bob. The dinner will come out fine.
BOB I can't believe you're doing this to me only—
(checks watch)—eleven minutes before they get here!
SARA We gotta deal or what?
PEGGY Yes!
BOB No!
SARA Twenty bucks an hour. Going once, going twice—
PEGGY Deal!
BOB No!
SARA Sold! To the lady who wants to mingle! Ch-ching!
SARA grabs her apron and skips into the kitchen.
PEGGY Stick to the recipe!
BOB Are you trying to kill me? I'm asking. I really want to know.
PEGGY Yes, Bob. I'm trying to kill you. I just can't believe it's taken this long. Now. Who are the people sitting in these chairs?
BOB What chairs?
PEGGY These chairs.

BOB Those chairs?
PEGGY These two chairs right here. You. Mr. Shankleferd. His girlfriend with no name. These chairs. And me. I want to know who's sitting in these two chairs because if they aren't world leaders, you're going down.
BOB You're missing the point.
PEGGY To hell with the point! You want me sitting as far away as you can get me because you're afraid I'm going to say something that'll ruin the evening!
BOB That is not true. You are a vital key to the success of this evening.
PEGGY Then why am I sitting in a different time zone?
BOB crosses to the Barcalounger and sits.
BOB You're sitting where you're sitting because that's the way it's gonna be because I said so. Deal with it.
PEGGY Because you said so.
BOB You got it.
PEGGY crosses to the coffee table and moves it out of the way.
BOB Peg? Honey? What are you doing?
PEGGY walks toward BOB, who is up and backing away. They circle. PEGGY never so much as raises a fist.
BOB You haven't been taking your pills, have you? Have you? Honey, please, c'mon. What are we doing here? Huh? What is this?
PEGGY I haven't had a decent vacation in eight years, Bob.
BOB I know. And I feel terrible about that.
PEGGY Eight long years.
BOB I'm going to do everything I can to make it up to you.
PEGGY You want to make it up to me?
BOB More than anything in the world.
PEGGY Get me Miami.
BOB I will.
PEGGY I mean it, Bob. I want Miami. In my hands. Tonight.

BOB And I'm going to be the one who puts it there. Okay? Okay, honey? Let's just, the both of us, let's just calm down, nice and easy, okay?
PEGGY Miami.
BOB Miami.
BOB goes to PEGGY slowly. He leans in and bravely kisses her lightly. No punches were thrown.
BOB There, that's better, isn't it? Isn't that better?
PEGGY It's the most sex I've had in a month.
BOB Tonight. I promise.
PEGGY Oh, goody.
BOB Just keep thinking. Miami! Say it.
PEGGY Miami.
BOB There ya go. Say it again. Go ahead.
PEGGY Miami.
BOB Beautiful. The sun and the surf and the sand of Miami. Just the two of us for three nights at the Fountainbleu Hotel in the sun and the surf and the sand of Miami.
PEGGY Don't lie to me, Bob.
BOB All day long you can lay in the sun and the surf and the sand of Miami while I hold court at the convention with all the other movers and shakers of the condiment industry and then, at night, the two of us will rendezvous at the Fountainbleu in our very own, very private one-bedroom suite and ... shuck oysters.
PEGGY I love it when you talk dirty.
BOB Shuckin', shuckin', shuckin' oysters!
PEGGY Bob!
BOB Boom lacka lacka lacka!
PEGGY Bob, don't!
BOB Boom lacka lacka lacka!
PEGGY I have to change!
BOB Boom lackalackalacka! Shuckin' oysters in the sun and the surf and the sand of Miami!
BOB and PEGGY fall into a tangle of arms on the couch. SARA comes out of the kitchen with a

basket of rolls. BOB and PEGGY are too turned on to notice.

PEGGY Oh, god! Boom lacka lacka lacka!

BOB Boom lacka lacka lacka!

PEGGY's hands are squeezing the blood out of BOB's ass. BOB's nose is buried between PEGGY's breasts. SARA rushes over to the curtains on the front window.

PEGGY Boom lacka lacka lacka!

BOB Boom lacka lacka lacka!

SARA pulls the cord to shut the curtains. The curtains, along with the curtain rod, the brackets—everything having to do with the curtains—come crashing down onto SARA's head.

SARA Aaaah!

PEGGY Aaaah!

BOB Aaaah! What was that?!

PEGGY Oh, my god!

BOB Sara?

PEGGY Oh, my god!

BOB Sara, are you all right?

SARA No. Call 911.

PEGGY Oh, my god! Oh, my god! Oh, my god!

PEGGY runs off with BOB's half-hemmed pants. BOB goes to the curtains.

BOB What are you tearin' down the curtains for? How many times have I told you, "You don't pull the curtains, you pull the cord." Help me here. Pick up that end.

SARA doesn't move an inch.

BOB C'mon. Pick it up.

SARA Boom lacka lacka lacka? Boom lacka lacka lacka?

BOB I said, that's enough! Quick. Run out to the garage and get my hammer.

SARA How much?

BOB What?

SARA How much to get the hammer?

BOB Just get the hammer, Sara.

SARA Bob, let's not kid each other. I'm here. The hammer's out there. And the only thing that's gonna get me from here to there is this. *(rubs her fingers together)*

BOB No, no, no. You care about tonight.

SARA No. I care about this. *(rubs her fingers together again)*

BOB No, you care. If not for me, for your mother.

SARA Caring costs money, Bob.

BOB Could you not call me Bob tonight?

SARA That's your name.

BOB Not tonight. Tonight call me Dad. Or Daddy. That's even better. Call me Daddy.

SARA Daddy?

BOB Yeah. It sounds nice. Y'know, in front of the guests and everything.

SARA Tell ya what. I'll call you Daddy and I'll get your hammer all for the low, low price of thirty bucks an hour.

BOB That's funny.

SARA I'm glad you like it. We gotta deal, Bob?

A knock on the door.

BOB God, no! Not yet! They can't be here yet! Help me with this! Quick!

SARA Thirty going once, going twice ...

BOB Deal! Thirty bucks!

The door opens.

BOB Aaaah!

DWAYNE DARLINGTON, SARA's boyfriend, pokes his head in.

DWAYNE Howdy ho!

BOB Dwayne!

DWAYNE Evenin', Mr. Lee.

PEGGY bursts out of the bedroom, wet from a shower, with one bath towel wrapped around her

head and one held in front of her body.

PEGGY Bob, what happened? Are you—(sees Dwayne)—
aaaah!

*PEGGY bolts back into the bedroom, her bare ass
the last thing DWAYNE sees before the bedroom
door slams shut.*

BOB What the hell you doing here, Dwayne?
DWAYNE Thought I'd stop in and say howdy-ho.
BOB Howdy ho. Now get the howdy-ho out of here.
DWAYNE (to SARA) We gotta talk.
SARA We're not speaking, remember?
BOB You two have another fight?
DWAYNE We made up last night.
SARA You wish.
BOB Dwayne, Sara's busy tonight.
SARA I'm catering, if you must know.
BOB God willing.
DWAYNE Smells delish.
SARA Marinated Flank Steak, as if you care.
DWAYNE Steak sandwiches? Cool. I'll gladly work for
food, Mr. Lee.
BOB Is hell freezing over?
SARA Why don't you just go over to Tiffany Spencer's
house and have her make you one of her sandwiches?
DWAYNE I told you. I don't know nothin' about that.
BOB Kids.
SARA I saw you, Dwayne!
DWAYNE She had to hang on! It's a Harley!
BOB Some other time. C'mon.
SARA Two faced liar! (to Bob) Daddy! Kick his ass!
BOB What?
SARA Kick his ass!
BOB I'm not gonna kick anybody's ass, and watch
your mouth!
SARA (pulls out a bill) Here's ten bucks! Do it!
BOB Get that away from me.
SARA (storming off) Mother!

BOB Sara!

SARA is gone. BOB turns to DWAYNE.

DWAYNE Howdy-ho.
BOB Howdy-ho. Dwayne? ...
DWAYNE Mr. Lee, can I ask you a question?
BOB What?
DWAYNE Why no pants?
BOB You let me worry about where my pants are!
(calling off) Peggy! Where are my pants!
DWAYNE I'll make you a deal. I'll be in charge of fixin' the
curtains, and you be in charge of findin' your pants.
BOB All right. You fix the curtains. Then you leave.
DWAYNE After I eat a steak sandwich.
BOB Fine. After you eat a steak sandwich out in the
kitchen where no one can see you.
DWAYNE You gotta deal, Mr. Lee. You won't be sorry.
BOB I'm sorry already. All right. I want this done right.
*BOB hands DWAYNE the curtains. The curtains are
sliding down the rod towards DWAYNE.*
BOB Wait, wait, wait! Here. Set that down. (hands
Dwayne a bracket) First, I want you to pound these
brackets back into their original holes up on the wall.
See the holes?
DWAYNE These are screws.
BOB I know. Pound 'em back into the wall in their
original holes.
DWAYNE But they're screws.
BOB So what?
DWAYNE You don't pound screws. You screw screws.
You pound nails.
BOB The holes are already there.
DWAYNE You want that I should get a screwdriver?
BOB No. I want that you should pound the screws
back into the wall.
DWAYNE They won't hold.
BOB The holes are already there.
DWAYNE If you pound 'em in, they won't hold.

BOB Dwayne, I don't have time to—
 DWAYNE I'll pound 'em in if that's what you want.
 BOB Yes! That's what I want!
 DWAYNE It's just I thought you wanted it done right. You want me to pound the screws, I'll pound the screws.
 BOB Pound the goddamn screws!
 DWAYNE They won't hold.
 BOB *(to heaven)* Lord, take me now.
 DWAYNE You want that I should put your car in the garage? It's just sittin' in the driveway. I almost ran into it with my Harley.
 BOB Don't you dare touch that car! I just fought a World War to wash that car!
 DWAYNE You're the boss, Mr. Lee.
 BOB One minute, people! We have one minute!
DWAYNE has one motorcycle boot off and is trying to pound the screws in with the heel of his boot.
 DWAYNE Mr. Lee, can I talk to you about somethin'? Y'know, mano a mano?
 BOB What is it?
 DWAYNE It's kinda personal.
 BOB What?
 DWAYNE Okay. Who's your best friend?
 BOB My what?
 DWAYNE Your best friend. I know who mine is. Who's yours?
 BOB Uh, I don't—Ed. Ed Bonetti.
 DWAYNE Did you know him a long time?
 BOB Yes. Ever since the fourth grade.
 DWAYNE The fourth grade?
 BOB Yup. We go way back.
 DWAYNE Do you love him?
 BOB Dwayne.
 DWAYNE I loved my best friend.
 BOB That's nice.
 DWAYNE Knew him a long, long time.
 BOB Well, I've known Ed a long time, too, so there ya go.
 DWAYNE Yeah, but you didn't have to kill him. *(goes back to working on the curtains)*

BOB Peggy!
 PEGGY *(o.s.)* I'm not coming out!
 BOB Whaddayamean you're not coming out? What about my pants?
 PEGGY *(o.s.)* Ta-bun-up?
 BOB What did she say?
 DWAYNE Ta-bun-up?
 BOB Ta-bun-up?
 DWAYNE Ta-bun-up?
 BOB What the hell you talkin' about, ta-bun-up?
PEGGY sticks her head out of the bedroom, holding out a roll of masking tape.
 PEGGY Here!
 BOB What are you—what is this?
 PEGGY Tape 'em up!
 BOB Tape 'em up?
 PEGGY They'll never see it!
 DWAYNE Howdy-ho, Mrs. L.
Embarrassed, PEGGY disappears back into the bedroom.
 BOB Oh, "tape 'em up!" I'll just "tape 'em up!"
The phone begins to ring. BOB starts ripping the masking tape off the roll by the yard.
 BOB "Tape 'em up," she says! *(to Peggy)* Weeks! Weeks ago, I told you!
 DWAYNE Told me what, Mr. Lee?
 BOB Shut up! *(to Peggy)* "Hem my pants!" I said.
 DWAYNE After I finish the curtains.
 BOB Shut up! *(checks watch)* It is now seven-thirty, the Shankleferds are due at our front door, and I'm not wearing any pants!
 DWAYNE You want to get that, Mr. Lee?
 BOB Can I? Let me! How 'bout I get that? *(phone)* Howdy-ho? Hello! ... Who is this? I can barely—Sporty! How are ya? Listen, dinner's on the table, we're just gettin' ready to sit down and—what's that? ... Oh, god.

Okay. Did ya turn left at the 7-11? ... No, there shoulda been a light right after the ... Okay, no problem, tell ya what let's do. Let's just kinda talk our way back to the highway, all right? You took the Maple Oak exit and then what? ... Okay, I think I know what it is, Sporty. You're in the wrong town ... Yeah ... No, those are my directions, it's just, I assumed you knew I lived in Maple Oak ... that's in Macomb County, that's right ... Right, good, got it, just get back on 59, go east and you'll run right into—good, sounds good. Sorry for the mix up! You bet, see ya then!

BOB hangs up. PEGGY comes out of the bedroom wearing a dress.

DWAYNE Who's Shorty?
BOB Sporty!
PEGGY What's wrong? Something's wrong? Who got hurt?
BOB He thought I lived in Bloomfield Hills.
PEGGY Who thought we lived in Bloomfield Hills? Why would Ed think we lived in Bloomfield Hills?
BOB Sporty.
PEGGY Sporty thinks we live in Bloomfield Hills?
BOB He says to me, "Where'd I get the idea we were neighbors?"
PEGGY We don't live in Bloomfield Hills.
BOB Lemme know when you've caught up.
PEGGY You never told me Sporty lived in Bloomfield Hills.
BOB I told you.
PEGGY If Bloomfield Hills had been mentioned in this house, I would've remembered it. What part of Bloomfield Hills does he live in?
BOB The rich part! What other part is there?
PEGGY I have to change.
BOB Again?!

PEGGY I look like I live in Maple Oak!
BOB You do live in Maple Oak!

The doorbell rings.

PEGGY Aaaah!
BOB Aaaah!
DWAYNE Aaaah!

Simultaneously, BOB and PEGGY hit the floor. DWAYNE leaps from the chair. Three people lie prone on the floor. The doorbell rings again.

PEGGY I have to change! (*starts to crawl, combat-style, towards the bedroom*)

BOB No!

BOB grabs PEGGY by the ankle and hangs on. PEGGY attempts to drag BOB with her across the room. A human anchor.

PEGGY Let go!

BOB Peggy!

PEGGY Let go of me!

PEGGY kicks BOB away and crawls into the bedroom. The door slams shut. More loud knocking.

DWAYNE You think it's Shorty?

BOB Sporty! Sporty—

DWAYNE Sporty, right. Sporty.

BOB —Sporty, Sporty! Of course, it is! He was in the driveway the whole time! It's his idea of a joke! (*to door*)
Funny! Very funny!

DWAYNE Mr. Lee, if we don't answer the door, he'll think something's wrong.

BOB Wrong? What could be wrong?

More doorbell ringing.

BOB Wait a minute! I got an idea!

DWAYNE What?

BOB You answer the door.

DWAYNE Me?

BOB Answer the door and when you see Sporty, say, "Hi, come on in, I was just leaving."

DWAYNE What about my steak sandwich?

BOB Your what?

DWAYNE My steak sandwich! You promised me a steak sandwich if I fixed the curtains.

BOB Fine, fine! After you leave, go around back and tell Sara I said to make you a sandwich.

DWAYNE Steak sandwich.

BOB Steak sandwich! All right. Now what are you gonna say?

DWAYNE "Mr. Lee said to make me a steak sandwich."

BOB No! At the front door! What are you gonna say at the front door?

DWAYNE "Hi, come on in, I was just leaving."

BOB Go!

DWAYNE runs to the front door. BOB disappears into the bedroom. DWAYNE opens the door.

DWAYNE Hi. Come on in. I was just leaving. *(walks out)*

ED BONETTI walks in carrying a bowling ball bag. A white plaster cast covers his left leg from hip to toe.

BOB (o.s.) Thought you had me fooled, huh, Sporty? That's funny! In the wrong town, my eye! You know, if I didn't know you so well, I'd have been ... *(comes out of the bedroom)* ... Ed.

ED Bob.

BOB Ed.

ED We just did that.

BOB You're not supposed to be here.

ED You're right. I should be dead. A statistic. See, I got run over by some guy who went from zero to sixty in about ten feet. Maybe you know him?

BOB That was you? 43.

ED Bob.

BOB I don't believe it! I thought you were a dog or a small pony ...

ED Your eye's twitchin'.

BOB Dammit!

ED I gotta get off this leg. *(hobbles his way into the room to sit)*

BOB Ed, no! You can't sit down!

ED I have to. I'm hemorrhaging.

BOB All right! Just tell me what you want! You name it, it's yours!

ED Flank steak.

BOB What?

ED I want some Marinated Flank Steak. I love flank steak.

BOB Money! I'm talkin' money, name your price, how much? A hundred?

ED Get outa here with that.

BOB Two hundred? More? You want more?

ED Don't insult me. Run me over, but don't insult me.

BOB *(emptying wallet)* Here! Three hundred bucks! Take it! It's yours!

ED *(pocketing bills)* Okay.

BOB All right. You're outa here. Let's go.

DWAYNE (o.s.) Mr. Lee said you have to make me a steak sandwich.

In the kitchen, DWAYNE and SARA argue. Their conversation is buried underneath BOB and ED's dialogue. Only SARA's "Then sell the bike!" should stand out.

ED I gotta show you somethin'.

BOB No, you don't.

SARA (o.s.) In your dreams I'm gonna make you a sandwich!

ED It was the papaya.

DWAYNE (o.s.) Steak sandwich.

BOB Dwayne! I need help in here!

SARA (o.s.) I'm not makin' you nothin'!

ED You can't use papaya, but something—

BOB Get out here!

ED —like papaya, something that tastes like papaya—*(takes a large pickle out of a nearby jar)*—some kinda papaya substitute and you got yourself a Tropical Pickle that'll make millions.

DWAYNE (o.s.) Look at all that flank steak! You got plenty extra!

BOB Ed, I'm begging you.
 ED Bob, imagine taking a bite out of a dill spear,
 closing your eyes and suddenly you're in the South Seas!
 Haven't you ever wanted to go to the South Seas?
 BOB C'mon, you're outa here, let's go.
 ED Where's that kid who told me, "Go out and find
 me somethin' that hasn't been done, that can't be done,
 that shouldn't be done and then go out and do it!"
 DWAYNE (o.s.) C'mon talk to me, Sara!
 ED Where'd he go?
 SARA (o.s.) Go! Out! Now!
 BOB That's what I'd like to know! Dwayne!
 DWAYNE (o.s.) How're you gonna hear my side if you don't
 talk to me?
*ED starts eating the pickle. As he chews and talks,
 he sprays pickle juice all over. A pickle shower.*
 ED Where's that kid who manned the Finish Table
 because he loved the smell of the brine—
 SARA (o.s.) Go tell it to your little precious Tiffany!
 BOB Ed, please!
 DWAYNE (o.s.) I don't care about her, I care about you!
 ED —where's that kid who worked the return so he
 could eat the overflow—
 SARA (o.s.) You care about me? You really care about me?
 ED —and when they caught him and demanded to
 know why, he said—
 DWAYNE (o.s.) You know I do.
 BOB Dwayne!
 SARA (o.s.) Then sell the bike!
 DWAYNE (o.s.) I haven't had a good enough offer!
 ED —"Because they're "The Best Tasting Pickles In
 The Heartland."
 SARA (o.s.) Sell it for the parts!
 BOB Dwayne!
 DWAYNE (o.s.) You don't sell a Harley for the parts!
 ED Where's that kid who chewed my ass out,
 accused me of not givin' a damn—

SARA (o.s.) You have to choose, Dwayne!
 ED Just pickin' up a paycheck—
 BOB Dwayne!
 SARA (o.s.) Me or that bike!
 ED —and even though you pissed me off and I had
 to beat the hell out of ya in front of the whole plant, you
 made me think!
 DWAYNE (o.s.) I gotta get back to work.
 BOB Get some therapy, will ya? Dwayne! Dwayne,
 get out here!
*BOB runs to the kitchen door and calls for DWAYNE.
 As he does so, ED whips out a pair of handcuffs.*
 DWAYNE (o.s.) You still owe me a steak sandwich!
 ED Go find him, Bob! Find him and bring him back!
 Before it's too late!
 DWAYNE (sticks his head out of the kitchen) You want me
 to leave again, Mr. Lee?
 ED (handcuffing himself to the Barcalounger) Don't
 stop now, Bob. We've come too far.
 BOB What the hell are you ... ? (charges at ED in the
 Barcalounger)
 ED Perfection is in our possession, Bob!
 BOB (to Dwayne) Help me find the key! He's gotta—
BOB and DWAYNE rifle through ED's pockets.
 ED Say it with me! Perfection is in our possession
 and yet—
 BOB —have one on him somewhere!
 ED —it is only a perilous possibility; its paradise
 our pasquinade—our pasquinade, Bob! Remember our
 pasquinade?—its epitome our poetic parody as we—
 BOB Anything?
 DWAYNE Nothing!
 ED —pertinaciously pursue our impassioned pil-
 grammage—our pilgrimmage, Bob!—our pilgrimmage
 onward our our quest—
 BOB Ed! Gimme the key, okay? You gotta gimme the
 key, Ed!

ED —yes, our quest for the Impeccable Pickle! The Impeccable Pickle, Bob!
BOB You gotta gimme the key, Ed! Where's the key?
ED We gotta find the Impeccable Pickle!
BOB Goddammit! Where'd you hide the key?!
ED *(stares up into BOB's face)* You're the key, Bob. You're the key.

And with that, DWAYNE whips out a syringe, pops the cap off the needle and plunges it into ED's arm.

ED Aaaaah!
BOB What are you doing? What the hell are you doing?!
DWAYNE He won't bother you now, Mr. Lee.

BOB pulls DWAYNE away. As DWAYNE and BOB watch, ED's body jolts. NOTE: the "jolt" is like an electrical shock which for the moment or moments it occurs, makes the body flail uncontrollably and the speech spastically garbled. After the jolt passes, the body and speech are instantly normal.

BOB What did you just do?
DWAYNE Put him to sleep.
BOB With what?!
DWAYNE *(reading label)* Youths In Asia.
BOB Euthanasia?! Where the hell did you get that?
DWAYNE My veterarian.
BOB Your vet's a drug dealer?
DWAYNE Scraps died.
BOB Who the hell's Scraps?
DWAYNE I don't want to talk about it.
BOB Is he your dog? I didn't know you had a dog.
DWAYNE *(emotional)* Well, I don't anymore, do I?
BOB Okay, I'm sorry. I'm just trying to, all right, so your dog died ...
DWAYNE He had a name!
BOB I'm sorry. So Scraps died ...
DWAYNE *(emotional)* You're bringing it all back, Mr. Lee! Isn't it enough that he's gone?! He's not a dead horse! You don't have to beat him!

ED's body shudders. Another jolt.

BOB Aaaaah!
DWAYNE Aaaaah!

Finally, ED is still again.

BOB Oh, my god. Is he ... ?
DWAYNE No, it was a dog dose. It makes you very relaxed.
BOB We gotta get him outa here. Sporty can't know he's here. C'mon. It's on rollers. We'll wheel him right out to the garage.
DWAYNE How we gettin' there?
BOB Through the front door.
DWAYNE We ain't gonna make it.
BOB On three. One!
DWAYNE We ain't gonna make it.
BOB Just lift the chair.
DWAYNE I'll lift the chair.
BOB Two!
DWAYNE But we ain't gonna make it.
BOB Three!

With great effort, DWAYNE and BOB roll the Barcalounger towards the front door.

BOB Watch it! Watch it, watch it, watch it!

When they get the chair to the end of the sunken living room, the chair jams against the raised landing near the front door. BOB is caught in between the landing and the chair.

BOB *(a death scream)* Aaaaah! *(hobbles around the living room, dragging his leg)*
DWAYNE You all right, Mr. Lee?
BOB I can't feel my leg!
DWAYNE *(pulls out another syringe)* You want some Euthanasia?
BOB No! *(sees the syringe, gets an idea)* Wait a minute! Gimme that! *(grabs the syringe)* How long's he out for?
DWAYNE I don't know. Couple minutes. Depends how much I give him.

BOB Grab that afghan!
BOB points over at the afghan. DWAYNE grabs it. BOB grabs his coat.

BOB Lay it over top of him!
DWAYNE lays the afghan over ED. BOB pulls the afghan over ED's head and then covers ED's feet with his coat.

BOB Perfect! Okay! Have you ever been a waiter? Y'know, waited tables? You know what a waiter does? Do you know what a waiter is? Have you ever eaten in a restaurant?

DWAYNE Okay.

BOB Good! I want you to be the waiter for tonight's dinner. Can you do it?

DWAYNE Whoa.

BOB You can do it, I know you can. All you gotta do is serve the meal, clear the table and every couple of minutes stick a needle into Bonetti!

DWAYNE What are you gonna tell Shorty?

BOB Sporty! Sporty! Sporty!

DWAYNE Sporty, right.

BOB You let me worry about that! You just make sure he doesn't wake up, okay?

DWAYNE Roger.

BOB And if this works, there's an all expense paid trip to Miami for me and a fifty dollar bill for you. How's that sound?

DWAYNE I'll do my best, Mr. Lee!

BOB I've seen your best. You gotta do better than that. Now, go into my bedroom. In the dresser, second drawer on the left, put on one of my white shirts. There's a pair of black pants hanging in the closet! And a black tie, grab a black tie! One of the clip-ons! Wait, wait, wait! Can you speak French?

DWAYNE French?

BOB French. The language. The country. The mustard.

DWAYNE I can swear in French.

BOB Sara! *(to DWAYNE)* Go ahead. Say it.

DWAYNE Say what?

BOB Swear in French! Lemme hear it!

DWAYNE Um, let's see ... *Mengez les noisettes de ma merde.*

BOB Perfect! Pretend it means "Your taste is exquisite!" Can you say that?

DWAYNE "Your taste is exquisite."

BOB No, in French! Swear in French, but make it sound like "Your taste is exquisite."

DWAYNE "... taste is exquisite." Right, okay. *Mengez les noisettes de ma merde.*

BOB Keep workin' on it. Go! Wait! One more thing. Whatever Sporty wants, Sporty gets.

DWAYNE Whatever Sporty wants, Sporty gets.

BOB If Sporty says, "Waiter, I want you to lick my shoes?" What are you gonna do?

DWAYNE Lick his shoes?

BOB That's right.

DWAYNE I don't know about that, Mr. Lee.

BOB Don't worry. I'll be right down there beside ya.

DWAYNE I'll make you proud, Mr. Lee.

BOB Attaboy. Remember. You're from France. Act like it. *(pushes DWAYNE towards the bedroom)*

DWAYNE *Mengez les noisettes de ma merde, mengez ... mengez ... mengez les noisettes ...*

As DWAYNE disappears into the bedroom, SARA comes out of the kitchen, carrying a tray of glasses of water for the table.

SARA Having another heart attack, ho-hum, who cares?

BOB Where are the hors d'oeuvres?

SARA They're called pickles on a tray. God.

BOB And when the marinade is done, I want to taste test it? You hear me?

SARA I'm experimenting, Daddy.

BOB No experimenting!

SARA Something with a tropical theme?

BOB No! Nothing tropical! Sporty doesn't want to

hear the word “tropical”! He wants Marinated Flank Steak! That’s it!

SARA Who’s that in the Barcalounger?

PEGGY (o.s.) Aaaaaaaahhh! (*comes flying out of the bedroom half-dressed in a different dress*) Dwayne’s in the bedroom taking off his pants!

BOB He’s changing! Surely you recognize the procedure!

PEGGY I’m still in the bedroom!

BOB He’s gonna be our waiter tonight.

SARA He’s what?

PEGGY He’s going to be our what? Bob, no!

SARA Have you lost your mind?

BOB Having a French waiter shows class!

PEGGY Dwayne’s not from France! He’s from Hamtramck!

BOB Miami. Say it.

PEGGY Who’s that in the Barcalounger?

BOB Don’t worry about that. Where’re your pills?

The doorbell rings.

PEGGY Aaaah!

BOB Aaaah!

PEGGY I’m not ready! I’m not ready! I’m not ready! I’m not ready!

BOB Sara, quick! Calm down your mother!

Without missing a beat, SARA takes one of the glasses of water and douses PEGGY directly in the face. BOB is searching the living room. PEGGY staggers.

PEGGY I’m wet!

BOB pulls a small paper bag out of his brief case. He helps PEGGY breathe into it.

BOB He-he-he-hoo. We’ll find them, just relax. He-he-he-hoo.

PEGGY He-he-he-hoo. You’re blowing it.

BOB He-he-he-hoo. No, I’m not, he-he-hoo-hoo, trust me, everything’s gonna be, he-he-he-hoo, fine.

PEGGY He-he-he-hoo.

The doorbell rings.

SARA I’ll get it!

BOB and PEGGY (scream) Noooo!

BOB Wait for me to get my pants on! Where are my pants?!

SARA Twenty bucks. (*her hand on the doorknob*)

PEGGY Zip me up first!

BOB (*to SARA*) Wait!

SARA This is me opening the door.

BOB All right! Twenty bucks!

SARA does another “ch-ching.” DWAYNE rushes out of the bedroom, dressed in BOB’s white shirt, black pants and black clip-on tie. The clothes don’t fit properly.

BOB Okay, everybody just stay calm! All right? Just pretend everything is fine!—

BOB quickly reaches behind PEGGY’S back to zip up her dress. The zipper doesn’t budge with BOB’s first thrust. EVERYONE stands there hyperventilating.

PEGGY Is it stuck? Don’t force it, if it’s stuck.

BOB If they happen to ask about the man in the chair, just say—

BOB is looking away when he thrusts the zipper up the back of PEGGY’s dress. Like a barracuda, the zipper sinks its teeth into PEGGY’s bare back.

PEGGY Aaaaaahhhhhhhh!

PEGGY leaps away from BOB, throwing her hands behind her back, trying to unzip the zipper herself. BOB goes to PEGGY to help with only one of his legs through his pants.

BOB Peggy!

Frantically, PEGGY tries to work the zipper out of her back as she spins away from BOB, screaming all the way.

SARA Mother!

PEGGY Aaaaaaaaahhhh!

The doorbell rings again.

BOB Lemme help!

PEGGY Get away from me!

PEGGY stumbles onto the couch. BOB lunges after PEGGY. PEGGY hits the back of the couch, knocking the couch over, PEGGY going with it.

SARA Aaaah!

BOB Peg!

PEGGY pops up from behind the couch and careens in another direction.

SARA Daddy!

BOB Dwayne!

DWAYNE goes for PEGGY.

PEGGY Aaaaaahhhhhh!

PEGGY bounces off DWAYNE and veers straight for the dining room table.

BOB Nooooo!

Like a runaway train, PEGGY crashes headfirst into the dining room table. An explosion of plates, glass, silverware, candlesticks, rolls, butter. The front door opens. SPORTY SHANKLEFERD III and VIRGINIA VAN BRINKER-SMYTHE enter. The LEE's living room is a disaster. The only thing missing is smoke from the wreckage. PEGGY lies motionless, sprawled on top of the dining room table, its two downstage legs having snapped off. With the last bit of energy she has left, PEGGY reaches back and jimmies the zipper loose. Her body sags, sliding down the broken table. SPORTY and VIRGINIA stand there, stunned. SPORTY looks at BOB. BOB turns away. Blackout.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

The lights come up fast.

SARA Come on in!

SPORTY is dressed conservatively and carrying a bottle of wine. VIRGINIA is conservatively overdressed. She wears a mink wrap.

SARA Have any trouble finding the place?

BOB stands up from behind the chair. Never having fully gotten his pants on, BOB scrambles into them now.

BOB Sporty! How are you? Glad you could make it!

SPORTY Bob? What happened here?

SPORTY, VIRGINIA, SARA and DWAYNE all look at BOB.

BOB Sex.

SPORTY What?

BOB Sex. We just had sex. Gotta little carried away, you know how it is.

SARA Y'know, Boom lacka lacka lacka, boom lacka lacka lacka.

VIRGINIA *(re: PEGGY)* Is she all right?

BOB Tired. Just tired. She's quite a woman. And I'm quite a man. Wait a minute, I'm being rude. Lemme introduce you.

SPORTY Are you sure she's up to it?

SARA Hi, I'm Sara Lee and no, I won't be serving pound cake. *(pulls VIRGINIA's mink wrap off and hangs it up in the closet)*

DWAYNE *(waving)* *Mengez les noisettes de ma merde!*

VIRGINIA *(to Sporty)* What did he say?