

*Act 1, scene 1*

*RON is at home. RON is an entrepreneur. He owns and operates a collection of bulk-candy vending machines that are placed in a variety of commercial settings.*

*He works his route nearly every day of the week traveling between the Laundromats, muffler shops and factory break-rooms where his machines are located. The inventory to restock his machines are packed in a duffle bag and a rolling suitcase. He wears jeans, a pullover golfing windbreaker and a baseball cap.*

*RON's apartment: A one-bedroom apartment. The room where he sits and sorts coins and vending machine inventory is occupied mainly by an inappropriately too-large or too-small table. The walls of the room are painted a broken white with a knock-down texture. There is shadowed evidence where pictures once hung. The walls are empty.*

*RON is at the table working. From off-stage there is an online instructional video playing, offering tips on "growing your vending machine business". Additionally, music can be heard playing thin and high from headphones cast aside. On the table there are boxes of bulk candy, plastic prize-bubbles and small stuffed animals. RON takes a zippered canvas bank bag filled with quarters from his rolling suitcase and drops it on the table. He leaves the room and returns with some empty paper sleeves for ten-dollar quarter rolls. He sits down and unzips the canvas coin-bag and pours out the quarters. A cloud of fine, chalk-white dust rises from the pile of quarters. RON gathers a handful of the quarters, examines it closely, blows on it, and coughs quietly as a cloud of dust drifts over the table.*

*Act 1, scene 2*

*Scene: The bar. Downstage left is the corner of a bar. The countertop is a laminate with a battered tucked vinyl front. Upstage a BARTENDER sits, watching parts of the barroom not visible on the stage. There are three barstools arranged around the corner of the bar. The bar is illuminated in part from an obscured television screen. The audio from the television is heard playing low---it is a sports-news-and-highlights show and it mixes with a juke box playing softly from offstage. TED is sitting at the bar talking to the BARTENDER*

TED: There was this sheet of black smoke spilling across the ceiling. I woke up, and it was hot. But quiet. I could hear crackling. Like a bonfire. It was a bonfire. And I looked up and there was something moving on the ceiling.

BARTENDER: What was it?

TED: It was dark and it was really hot, and there's this crackling sound, and I stare up at the ceiling and the whole thing is moving, like flowing. I think I'm dreaming. I can't move. I'm just staring at the ceiling in my condo and it's, like, flowing, like a river. And then I kind of wake up and I realize, hey, that's smoke. My condo is filling up with smoke. And this smoke was like black mud. It covered the whole ceiling and it was pouring out of the walls or something and it flowed across the ceiling. That's what I'd been looking at. It flowed across the ceiling like a river of black. Black. Like a black river.

BARTENDER: It flowed.

TED: It did. I thought I was dreaming.

BARTENDER: You thought you were dreaming.

TED: I thought I was dreaming but then finally I could hear somebody scream. And I got out.

BARTENDER: You got out.

TED: I did.

BARTENDER: You could see someone screaming? They screamed?

TED: Yeah. Hear and then see.

BARTENDER: Who was that?

TED: I don't know. A girl. I don't even know how she got in. But she was standing there. And she screamed.

BARTENDER: What was she screaming?

TED: "Fire!"

BARTENDER: That's it?

TED: "Fire!"

BARTENDER: You got out?

TED: I got out.

BARTENDER: Where did the girl go?

TED: I don't know but there was a death.

BARTENDER: The girl?

TED: There was a death in the building. Actually first there was a death and then the fire.

BARTENDER: A crime was committed.

TED: It came out after. He killed himself. And then came the fire.

BARTENDER: What? Who?

TED: A hoarder. The hoarder. His place was filled with everything so this fire had plenty to work with. You've heard of these hoarders.

BARTENDER: Who?

TED: The hoarder.

BARTENDER: Who was he?

TED: He set a few little fires around his place and climbed into bed and put a gun in his mouth and then bam (*very loud noise is heard off stage*). But that didn't wake me up. It was the girl screaming.

BARTENDER: What?

TED: The girl screaming woke me up.

BARTENDER: So who put this gun in his mouth?

TED: The hoarder that's who. A cop told me the guy's girlfriend died, and the hoarder couldn't handle it.

BARTENDER: That's what the cop said. That's why he hoarded?

TED: Hoarded?

BARTENDER: That's what you said, he hoarded. Did he hoard because his girlfriend died?

TED: I don't know that. The cop said maybe the hoarder didn't want anybody to see all his stuff. So he tried to burn it all. So he put a gun in his mouth. He couldn't bear the idea of anyone getting all the stuff he had.

BARTENDER: That's what the cop said? What about the girlfriend?

TED: I don't think he even had a girlfriend. This cop had a lot of theories. Not exactly helpful.

BARTENDER: So you got out. What happened to your place?

TED: I got out.

BARTENDER: I suppose you feel lucky.

TED: Lucky? I don't want this to define me.

BARTENDER: This?

TED: (indicates box on the bar) Yes this. This like this.

BARTENDER: (looks inside box) That is burned. Is that an antique?

TED: It's a diving trophy. It is sentimental.

I'm going to get back on track. I'm going to get it restored, bridge over this event. It is sentimental, that's all.

BARTENDER: What do you mean?

TED: There's too many ways to be defined. A hoarder burns the building down and puts a gun in his mouth. Picture it. That won't be part of my legacy. Not exactly acceptable.

BARTENDER: Yeah. *(looks in box)* Before it looked like this what did it look like?

TED: *(pausing)* It's an NCAA diving trophy.

BARTENDER: *(pausing)* It was.

TED: What do you mean it was. It still is.

BARTENDER: It's looking a little burned.

TED: But it is still an NCAA diving trophy. Which can be restored. It does not change by this accidental circumstance. It can be restored. I won't let this define me. I'm going to get it restored. Simple. Get back on track.

BARTENDER: Don't let this define you.

TED: The fire?

BARTENDER: Right. So where do you get something like that fixed?

TED: Restored.

BARTENDER: Restored.

TED: I don't know. I might just call around.

BARTENDER: I might know somebody who works at a trophy shop. Or she did. She used to come around. And we'd talk. I think she said she worked at a trophy shop.

TED: *(pause)* Say, you do a lot of women off the internet?

BARTENDER: I do alright. You?

TED: I like to break those things into three buckets: There's the ones that don't look anything like they say. There's the ones that have serious baggage. And then there's the ones that have serious luggage who work it like a machine.

BARTENDER: Right.

TED: Luggage and buckets my friend. Which bucket is the one at the trophy shop?

BARTENDER: The trophy shop? (*pause*) Hard to say. How about you? You must meet a lot of women in your line of work.

TED: How is that?

BARTENDER: Being a mailman.

TED: I laugh for eight hours every day.

BARTENDER: That sounds like a lot.

TED: Let's just say that is not an exaggeration.

BARTENDER: Okay then. Another vodka?

*Act 1, scene 3*

*Scene/transition: PAM appears in one of the upstage rooms and engages in a variety of repetitive behaviors (handling a pink glass pipe, brushing her hair, lighting and smoking a cigarette, changing her outfit, striking ballet poses, etc.). She eventually gives a "tutorial" on the application of eye make-up. Throughout this scene various shadows of men become visible---they appear to be watching her, listening.*

PAM: This is a new coaching aide I've adapted: I snap this (*snapping an elastic band on her wrist*) to focus on my dreams. That brings me to looking at my past. My past memories. You start in the past to discover your present. And then you own it.

When I was a kid my parents used to have big parties in the summer. They were the life of the party. It started in the morning and all day long people would come. Into the night. We had a swimming pool, one of those metal kinds set up in the yard. People would bring their kids. My dad would fill up the pool in the morning and it would take almost half the day to fill. And it would be freezing cold water but we'd play in it anyway. All the kids who came to this party, there were a lot of kids. I guess there were lots of parties but I kind of just remember it like one party. I mean they were all kind of the same. It was summer and there was the pool and people would start coming over in the morning and even by the next morning there'd still be people there. I'd get up in the morning and go see, just go look at the backyard. Sometimes I'd have a friend who stayed over. And we'd just go to bed whenever we wanted, and we'd wake up and the party still was there. But quieter.

I remember one time going out into the yard in the morning and there was some of my Dad's friends sitting at the picnic table. And my Mom was sitting with them. They were being kind of secretive. I don't know what happened when I was sleeping but everything looked different.

I just watched them. I remember my Dad wasn't there. They saw me and thought I wanted to go swimming. I still had my swimsuit on. There was this friend of my Dad's and he actually got in the pool and tried to clear some of the crap out. There was a bunch of junk floating in it. Some cans. A shirt. A tennis racquet. It was cold out. The pool looked nasty. But this guy actually got in the pool and was wading around trying to clean it out. He

had all his clothes on. He was laughing and talking to me, and everybody else, they sat at the picnic table and watched. My Mom didn't say anything she just sat there looking at me. Then my dad came out and told everybody to leave. He told me to get dressed. Then my Mom just sat there looking at him.

*(PAM is now in a swimsuit. She continues applying eye make-up)*

When you draw this line on be careful about this taper. Taper from thick to thin not thin to thick. That is the most common mistake. That is if the eye is your best feature. You can make it your best feature. The eye is what everyone looks at. The eye. In the face.

*(snaps elastic band on her wrist)*

I have a real hard time putting myself first.

I have a real hard time putting myself first and getting what I need.

I want to get 100,000 hits, have them see who I am. I want to see what it feels like to have that many hits. Watching you. It might wake you up at night.

I think about my dreams all the time. I want to be an entrepreneur.

*(as PAM speaks, RON appears and begins to maintain a bank of candy & gum machines)*

All I want is to know someone is there when I call. That someone is there when I come home. That they are there when I walk in the door. I want to know that if I get run over on the street someone will come to claim me, will come to get me. Because if you get run over on the street everyone stops to look, but no one wants to touch you. They might feel sorry for you but they really don't want to touch you. Because you might bleed on them. Because you might sue them. Or something.

*(RON's phone begins to ring)*



*Act 1, scene 4*

*Scene: Ron is in the back hallway of a big-box retail environment. This could also be a cement stairwell with the metallic sounds of strike-bar doors opening, voices echoing, distant echoes of muzak and store announcements over a public address system drifting close by. Other voices other rooms. He stands there with his rolling luggage and a laminated name badge ("VENDOR") as he talks on the phone. The other voice, male, is clearly audible and is smooth and very poised.*

VOICE: Come on and say it.

RON: Okay.

VOICE: Come on. Just like me. Just like I said it. It's so easy. Say it.

RON: Okay.

VOICE: Ronald. Can I call you Ron?

RON: Okay.

VOICE: Ron.

RON: Yes.

VOICE: Okay. Say it Ron.

RON: Yes. Okay.

VOICE: It's a contract with your future Ron. Right now. Right here. It's so easy.

RON: Okay.

VOICE: A little step that is just so big Ron. Really big.

RON: So this is a big step?

VOICE: Say it. Ron.

RON: "This is a big step".

VOICE: Not that Ron. The weekly success goal. Like we talked about. The Week Three Goal. Say it.

RON: Oh. Yes. Say it?

VOICE: Yes Ron just say it.

RON: Okay. I'm looking to transform my debt into wealth. With my silent sales force working. As I sleep.

VOICE: *(long pause)* Congratulations Ron.

RON: Thanks. That was good?

VOICE: Yes. Now go celebrate Ron.

RON: Celebrate?

VOICE: You deserve it. You really deserve this.

RON: Okay.

*(Ron hangs up the phone and stocks a candy machine)*

*Act 1, scene 4a*

*RON encounters pilfer video, as far upstage PAM brushes hair, applies eye make-up*

*RON is again alone in his 'Apartment'. He is shining his shoes. The following monologue is heard as a voice-over: his own voice recording on a telephone answering machine or voice-mail. Again the table where he works is piled high with carnival-prize stuffed animals. From off-stage, playing to rooms that are never revealed, is the soft pulsing glow and shifting rhythms of an unseen television. RON alternates between shining his shoes and loading his bags, shining his shoes, etc.)*

*Gradually RON's movements are quieted by another voice, a tinny, small voice coming from an unseen source. As he listens RON stops shining his shoes and stares, and closely watches the following 'tutorial', his face bathed in softly-changing colored light.*

YOUNG MAN (*voice-over*): Okay. I'm going to show you how to get all the goddamn candy that you want using just one quarter. First, go get one of these. I just used, like, a visine bottle. Take the top off. It's kind of hard. But you can do it. So. Okay. So like you get the top off. If it's not empty, then empty it. Okay. So now you dry it. Use a q-tip or something. Now. You need baby powder. It can be, like, it's kind of baby powder but any powder that's like baby powder but only the really, like chalk. It doesn't have to smell like baby powder. And you got to get it into the bottle. The dry bottle. If it's not dry, then it won't work. Okay. So I like put the powder on a folded piece of paper and use it. Like that. So now you have this eye-dropper filled with baby powder. And I'm going to show you how to get all the damn candy you want for just one quarter.

*(there is a musical interlude---aggressive death metal rock---and then the room-tone ambience of a crowded shopping mall. The YOUNG MAN'S VOICE continues)*

Okay. So I found this machine, it's like in a mall near my dad's house. So, here's how you do it. You put the quarter in your hand and put some baby powder on it, and then you put some into the coin slot, some baby powder, and then you put your powdered quarter into the slot, and then you just turn it, and see, it like jams the machine or something and you can keep turning

the handle. See. So you do have to use one quarter. That's how you get all the damn candy that you want. With just a little work, that's how you can get all the damn candy you want. Thanks for watching, and leave a comment, and subscribe because I will be adding some more tutorials soon. Peace.

*RON sits not moving. High, thin aggressive music continues from headphones mislaid somewhere offstage*

*Act 1, scene 5*

*TED is on the telephone. He is at the bar. His mail pouch is on the floor beside him, and the box containing his burned trophy is on the bar.*

TED: How do I project my strengths to these assholes?

*(listens)*

Standing around in a circle. I said standing around in a circle We were. The three of us. No. There were four. Why does he only look at me. I begin to feel a little strange for the others. They all look at me. "What is my name." "What can you tell me about yourself."

What can you tell me about this: so I saw her. Okay, I saw her. Let's just call it that. She snaps a rubber band on her wrist every time she has a negative thought. Or something. Mostly, she smokes, and teaches eye-liner techniques. So what.

Tell me her name. What is her name?

So back to these assholes. You know what that brings to mind? I will tell you: We stood in a circle. I didn't know how to stand. What leg to put weight on. I couldn't figure out what leg to put weight on. That would best. To project my strengths. I have to find a way to translate my debt into wealth? I've heard that before.

But what about this. There is a way to hold your head that tells everyone who is in charge. You walk into a room and you own that room. Everybody looks up. It's not like the conversation stops. Everyone's internal conversation stops and they stare. At you.

That is what I am saying. I know I have it stamped on my forehead. I got to go.

*(TED takes another phone call)*

TED: This is Ted.

TROPHY SHOP: I'm looking for Ted.

TED: This is Ted.

TROPHY SHOP: Ted this is Fred Brown at Crown Trophies.

TED: Right. Good. I'm looking to get a trophy fixed.

TROPHY SHOP: Fixed?

TED: Restored. The trophy has been damaged.

TROPHY SHOP: Damaged? What do you mean, restored?

TED: It was damaged in a fire.

TROPHY SHOP: I see. So the trophy was burned. In a fire?

TED: The trophy was burned in a fire.

TROPHY SHOP: I'm afraid we don't do that.

TED: Don't do what?

*(TED stands and paces about trying several ways of standing as he talks and listens)*

TROPHY SHOP: We don't fix trophies.

TED: Then why did you ask how it was damaged?

TROPHY SHOP: I was curious.

TED: You were curious?

TROPHY SHOP: You don't hear that one everyday.

TED: I'm looking to get back on track here.

TROPHY SHOP: With the trophy?

TED: It's sentimental.

TROPHY SHOP: We don't fix trophies. But tell me this, I'm trying to help you. Tell me again what happened to the trophy.

TED: It was burned. In a fire. Not my doing.

TROPHY SHOP: What kind of trophy did you say it was?

TED: Diving.

TROPHY SHOP: Diving? As in 'swimming and diving'?

TED: Yes.

TROPHY SHOP: I'll tell you what I'd like to do. At the very least I might be able to polish it up. What kind of diving trophy did you say it was? In other words, is the figure brass or plastic? Is it a large trophy?

TED: There's no figure. There's no plastic figure. It's an NCAA championship trophy. 10 meter platform. It's a big wood and crystal, leaded glass crystal, it's a walnut and crystal trophy.

TROPHY SHOP: Oh. Okay now. I am familiar with the standard. A handsome piece. Is it yours?

TED: What do you mean?

TROPHY SHOP: You are aware these are often stolen.

TED: No. I was not aware.

TROPHY SHOP: Yes. And fenced.

TED: *(pause)* This is my trophy. I don't think a polish will do.

TROPHY SHOP: Now I've heard of trophies getting new silver plating. We don't do that.

TED: There is no silver plating on my trophy.

TROPHY SHOP: How can you tell?

TED: How can you tell what?

TROPHY SHOP: If it's silver.

TED: I told you it's walnut and leaded crystal.

TROPHY SHOP: That's the part that got burned?

TED: I mean, it all got burned.

TROPHY SHOP: Did you say how it got burned?

TED: No. Do you mean, I mean it got burned in a fire.

TROPHY SHOP: Have you thought of replacing it with a new piece?

TED: Piece?

TROPHY SHOP: It is replaced. It is sentimental. TED: What do you mean replaced?

TROPHY SHOP: Another trophy is made.

TED: How can you replace a trophy. There's only one trophy. I mean, for me, I just want to have this one.

TROPHY SHOP: A replacement is called for. The trophy is a story.

TED: The trophy is a story?

TROPHY SHOP: Yes. It is a story you tell yourself.

TED: The trophy is a trophy. I just want to get it repaired, if that is possible. If it's not, then, okay, I just want to get back on track with this.

TROPHY SHOP: The trophy can tell that story too.

TED: So it can be a totally different story, I mean trophy? But it's the same, the recognition part is the same? Even if it's a totally different trophy?

TROPHY SHOP: Yes. Now that is something we can do for you. We can make you a replacement. Why don't you bring in the original. And we can talk about it. I'd like to see it. And together we can decide about how to go forward replacing it.

TED: I would like to go forward with this thing. It's not that important. I just want to go forward with this thing.

TROPHY SHOP: Of course. Just bring it in.

TED: Just bring it in?

TROPHY SHOP: We'd love to look at it.



*Act 1, scene 6*

*Scene/transition. RON is working at home: unpacking inventory, organizing his vending supplies and rolling quarters and etc. As he works, passing in and out of view, this monologue is performed both by recorded voice-over and by RON recording new thoughts directly into a hand-held tape recorder.*

RON: Welcome to challenge. Right here. That's as best put as you can actually put it.

I seek one thing. Absolute personal freedom. And mobility. I want to find the restaurant open in case I want a sandwich. It's a natural fit. I want privacy too.

Grosses come down to momentum.

Avoid the obvious questions and objections. Some try to get you started on your internal conversation. They try to get you started on doing that multiplication dreaming. In your head. When I first started in I had that inner conversation. I want to make others have that inner conversation. Don't fall in love with the fantasy before you see whether you like the reality.

Not that I can't work with others. I just like the freedom. I'd like to buy an RV and scuba dive. Absolute personal freedom. Say it. That's it.

*Interlude: another male voice comes on as a telephone message. RON continues to work and it is unclear whether he is hearing this:*

*VOICE: I just called to let you know I will be making this little report. Don't hang up. You might listen to what I have to say. I said you might listen to what I have to say. Listen, I might just have a little something to report. On you, asshole. A little something to report on you. It might. It will not be too cute. Yes I said cute. It means it will hurt. I'm going to make a little report, you know that? And I suppose while I am at it, I just might as well supply all the evidence that's piled up. You know what I mean by evidence.*

RON: How did I do it? I got my start through a rash of fluff-filled photocopied reports. And a husband and wife team that owned a handful of Hot Nut machines in a couple of local bars. Welcome to challenge.

Went on to single-turn gum machines. My bedrock. My silent sales force. But I do have expansion on the horizon.

You see some good margins in arcade games. Skill cranes.

The little teddy picker-claw machines. People can't resist them. The best part is the little yellow box inside. You calibrate the pay-off. Set the pay-off to precision. Absolute personal freedom.

There is theft. The old machines are weak. The clutch, the coin box. I need to get ahead of that. There are pockets of this on the rise. I need to get new machines.

But here's another picture I'd like to paint in your eyes real quick. A money trend.

Pornography. What is that? I know this guy. He was big on porn. How is that? It just flowed into his eyes. He showed me some things. Not exactly acceptable. But the money is there. He thought that I'd like it. He said I seemed like the kind of guy. We spent some time. What did he want from me? He thought we could go into business. There was money he said. So I looked.

It's sharp like a nail and you stare at it. You look right into it, you want it and stabs your eyes and you can't get enough. It rearranges you and makes a home for itself, tightens up everything. There was money he said. It's like a ringing sound in your ears. It sounds like a motor breaking apart. That's what I saw. That's what I heard. How do you get close to that?

Business models. Metrics. Welcome to challenge. You have to get out there and take it. Talking about vending I mean.

And he told me this. You don't want to show her you are interested. Not at all interested. It is better in fact if you insult her. If I'm not mistaken he proved that is foolproof. Very few people actually know about this and that is actually why it works so well. You'd be surprised. You'd be highly surprised. He'd get them.

I work hard. I research. That's the thing about me. People see that. And people will see that.

*(as RON continues to talk TED appears in silhouette, as though on his mail route, but lurking, watching---but not watching RON per se)*

*Act 1, scene 6a*

*Scene: The Bar. TED is seated at Bar talking to BARTENDER*

BARTENDER: So what did you do?

TED: Diving. I told you.

BARTENDER: Driving.

TED: Diving.

BARTENDER: Diving. I said diving. Want another?

TED: Yeah. Vodka.

BARTENDER: Vodka.

TED: Not driving. Driving is not an Olympic sport.

BARTENDER: Olympics.

TED: Yeah. And NCAA. Olympic trials.

BARTENDER: You'd think they'd have racing in there.

TED: In where?

BARTENDER: In the Olympics. Indy cars. That is athletic enough for me. Plus the pageantry.

TED: The pageantry?

BARTENDER: What kind of diving did you do?

TED: Platform. Ten meters. Which is thirty feet. Three-story building. So, basically I dove off of three story buildings.

BARTENDER: Into water?

TED: Yeah. Into water. Like you've seen.

BARTENDER: Yeah? I had an uncle who was involved in athletics.

TED: Oh really?

BARTENDER: Yeah. He designed a videotape gizmo which star athletes could use to review their performances.

TED: Really. What do you mean “star athletes”?

BARTENDER: Yeah. He marketed it to the NFL.

TED: What did he call it?

BARTENDER: I forget. But, you know, it was a video tape gizmo that star athletes could use to review their performances. I would think that a diver could use it. He marketed it to the NFL.

*(RON enters. TED and BARTENDER both look at him)*

TED: Well how is that different than a video camera? I have the footage of my dives. Slow motion footage. High-speed slow motion footage.

BARTENDER: I don't know. I was a kid. I haven't seen my uncle for a long time. He could never admit he'd wasted the best 25 years of his life. What can you do? It's a risk to be a businessman.

TED: *(laugh)* Be a mailman. Laugh for eight hours a day.

TED: *(to RON)* How about you friend? You look like a businessman. Is it any good?

RON: I'm a consultant.

TED: That's where the money is. You laugh all day?

RON: I'm a consultant.

*(RON says nothing)*

*(TED adjusts his posture, exits, looking closely at RON. TED leaves)*

*Act 1, scene 7*

*Barroom: RON takes a seat and begins talking to BARTENDER.*

RON: I make money as I sleep.

BARTENDER: (*to RON*) What are you talking about? What are you saying?

RON: I make money when I sleep.

BARTENDER: Okay.

RON: I didn't say it's going well.

BARTENDER: No. You didn't say it was going well.

RON: It's not as easy as you think. I'm out on a limb with some new machines. Got the credit stretched a little tight. But I'm working on a deal.

BARTENDER: That's good.

RON: I'm working on some deals. But here's the thing: I think I'm getting ripped off.

BARTENDER: By your associates?

RON: Associates? Do you know people seem to get a kick out of tampering with candy machines? You wouldn't believe it.

BARTENDER: Really.

RON: Yes.

BARTENDER: Like what?

RON: Like what do you mean what?

BARTENDER: Like how?

RON: Like how? They stick things.

BARTENDER: Like what?

RON: In the machines.

BARTENDER: They stick what?

RON: Like things. Like shims, cardboard, metal. Baby powder.

BARTENDER: I'll be darned. *(RON's phone begins to ring)*

RON: What?

BARTENDER: That's you.

RON: What did you say?

BARTENDER: Baby powder. They stick baby powder in candy machines.

*(RON exits to take phone call. He takes his luggage)*

*Act 1, scene 7a*

*As PAM exits, RON enters the 'Trophy Shop' with a new candy & gum machine. He places the new machine and stocks it with candy and gum.*



*As he works with the machine PAM is seen entering from upstage. She carries a large box. She stops, puts box down and begins to brush her hair. She is unseen by RON*

*Act 1, scene 8*

*Scene/transition: The Trophy Shop. There are several glass cases filled with trophies. They come in all sizes and permutations. There are brass and silver athletic figures representing soccer, basketball, swimming, baseball, football, etc. There is a pair of bronzed cleats and a bronzed baseball mitt. There are*

*blue/red/white/green ribbons with satin rosettes; silver, gold and bronze medals hanging from thick satin ribbons; engraved crystal paperweights, desktop plinths, globes and bowls; varnished wooden plaques with engraved brass nameplates, etc. It is all brightly lit. The cabinets are lighted from within and glow like sparkling, frozen aquariums.*

*PAM finishes brushing her hair and picks up the box as she begins speaking.*

PAM: “What do I really want? I want to have a really good car. I want to avoid unhappy and unlucky people. I want my mom to be happy. She deserves it. Who decides who deserves anything? I mean, I deserve it. I can really feel that. That’s my big secret. I know I deserve it. I can feel that. It’s in my heart that I deserve that. I think the way to deserve it and to get your happiness is to want it bad enough. And avoid unhappy and unlucky people.

Make a list. One: “Live more fully”

*(TED enters the trophy shop. He’s in his postal uniform with his mail satchel over his shoulder and he carries the cardboard box containing the burned trophy)*

TED: I sit around and laugh for eight hours and then I go home.

PAM: *(pause)* Hi. Are you dropping off the mail?

TED: Hi. I don’t drop off the mail.

PAM: What?

TED: I don’t drop off the mail.

PAM: I thought you were the mailman.

TED: What do you think?

PAM: What? Okay. Am I supposed to sign something? Are you dropping off the mail?

TED: I don’t drop off the mail.

PAM: You don’t drop off the mail?

TED: I deliver the mail.

PAM: Oh. Okay.

TED: I only have a couple minutes.

PAM: Okay. Do you want me to sign something?

TED: I only have a couple minutes.

PAM: Okay.

TED: Your nose wrinkled up when you said that.

PAM: What?

TED: I talked to a guy here about getting a trophy restored.

PAM: Oh. We just sell trophies. And corporate recognition awards. And Successories.

TED: Successories?

PAM: Yeah. Would you like to see them?

TED: Yes. I do want to see them. But I only have a couple minutes. What is a Successory?

PAM: It's like 'Employee of the Month'. But nicer. Successories.

TED: What could be nicer than employee of the month?

PAM: Successories.

TED: *(pause)* I talked to a guy on the phone. Is he here?

PAM: No. But can I help you?

TED: He told me to bring a trophy in. To get it restored. He said he could do a restoration on a damaged trophy.

PAM: Oh. Okay.

TED: But he's not here. Look I just have a few minutes....

PAM: Who?

TED: The guy I talked to on the phone.

PAM: Okay. So what did you need?

TED: He told me to bring this in. He said he could restore it. *(TED opens the box so PAM can see inside)*

PAM: *(she peer into the bag for a long moment)* Oh. Okay. We just sell trophies and corporate recognition awards. And engraving. We do engraving.

TED: I was told to bring this in. To have this piece restored.

PAM: Piece?

TED: This trophy.

PAM: Oh. Well if you want to leave it. And what did he say. What did you want him to do to it?

TED: He said he'd take a look at it. I need to get it restored.

PAM: What happened to it?

TED: Look I only have.....

PAM: ....Okay. Did you buy it here?

TED: No. *(pause)* I didn't buy it. It's a trophy. I won it. This, I won this. It is a piece of history and I want to get it repaired. Restored. This is not a Successory.

PAM: That's not what I meant. Do you know if it came from here?

TED: It came from the NCAA in California. Olympic trials.

PAM: Okay.

TED: Okay. Where have I seen you before?

PAM: Excuse me?

TED: I only have a couple minutes and the owner of this trophy shop said --he said---he would love to have a look. At my piece. He was familiar with the standard. That is why I am here. When is he back? I'm not here to drop off the mail. Today I'm looking to get back on track. *(pause)* And what's your name?

PAM: *(pause)* Why don't you give me your name and I can tell him you came in. Do you want to leave it?

TED: I'm looking to get back on track.

PAM: Okay. Why don't you just leave it and I will tell him you came by. But I don't think he can fix it.

TED: Why take that stance? Have I seen you somewhere before?

PAM: Where? No.

TED: Your nose just did that thing again. It's very cute.

PAM: What?

TED: Ted Swann. Two N's.

PAM: What?

TED: My name. I will be back. I think I know where I've seen you. Let's talk about it when I come back in. Can I get a slip for this?

PAM: A slip.

TED: Like a deposit slip, something that says I brought it in.

PAM: You can just leave it.

TED: I need a deposit slip, or like a receipt, a tracking number. Don't you enter it into your system?

PAM: I can fill out an order form.

TED: Yeah. An order form...*(as he exits, leaving box on the counter)*.....I know where I have seen you.

*(PAM picks up both boxes and exits upstage)*

*Act 1, scene 9*

*As PAM exits trophy shop RON enters from upstage with his rolling luggage. He again begins to service the candy machine.*

*As he works, the LOAN OFFICER appears from upstage, and addresses RON directly thru the scrim wall.*

LOAN OFFICER: Hello Ron.

*(RON stares at the gum machine)*

LOAN OFFICER: Ron?

*(RON digs for his telephone)*

RON: Yeah, this is Ron.

LOAN OFFICER: Ron thanks for waiting. It's a mad house over here. A looney bin. *(pause)* So let's talk about your loan.

RON: My loan. Excellent.

LOAN OFFICER: *(pause)* Excellent. I have your application right here. *(pause)* So how did you get into the candy business?

RON: You mean vending.

LOAN OFFICER: You are ready to take it to the next level.

RON: Yes I am.

LOAN OFFICER: So you are in the candy business? Sales?

RON: Yes. The vending business sales and locator sales.

LOAN OFFICER: Yes. Vending. Excuse me. The vending business.

RON: Is this part of the application?

LOAN OFFICER: Yes. Giving out a loan is entering into a relationship. And it's good to know a little about who you are getting involved with. In a relationship. Don't you think?

RON: Excellent.

LOAN OFFICER: *(pause)* If I call it "candy business" does that upset you?

RON: I got into the vending business from an associate.

LOAN OFFICER: An associate. *(pause)* Okay. That doesn't help me. I'm looking for models here.

RON: Models?

LOAN OFFICER: Business plans. Documentation. Models. Business modeling.

RON: Okay. I bought the business from him. From this guy I knew.

LOAN OFFICER: You bought the business?

RON: Yes.

LOAN OFFICER: Now when you say you bought the business, what does that include?

*As RON talks he loads, unloads, loads, unloads his luggage*

RON: I bought the machines. And I bought his routes. The routes and his machines basically. And a little stock.

LOAN OFFICER: Stock?

RON: Candy.

LOAN OFFICER: Excellent. And when was that?

RON: A couple years ago.

LOAN OFFICER: Excellent. So you get the machines, the routes and some stock, and you are running the business a couple years, and how are things going now?

RON: Good. Things are real good.

LOAN OFFICER: *(pause)* Excellent. I see here on your request for \$5000 is to replace some of your current stock of machines. Candy machines. *(pause)* How would you describe your motivation for doing so?

RON: My motivation?

LOAN OFFICER: Sure. Your impetus.

RON: My impetus is to replace the machines.

LOAN OFFICER: Oh. Is that a reinvestment?

RON: Yes. It is a reinvestment. Some of the machines are old.

LOAN OFFICER: How old?

RON: Ten years.

LOAN OFFICER: Is that old for a candy machine?

RON: They aren't all candy machines.

LOAN OFFICER: Excuse me?

RON: Yes. It is old.

LOAN OFFICER: Okay. So would you describe your loan request as a business expansion, or a reinvestment?

RON: *(pause)* Can it ever be both?

LOAN OFFICER: Let me put it this way: are you growing the business, or are you investing in its current footprint? Are you expanding?

RON: Footprint?

LOAN OFFICER: Footprint.

RON: What do you mean footprint?

LOAN OFFICER: When I say 'footprint', I may mean exposure. How is your exposure?

RON: It's good.

LOAN OFFICER: *(pause)* You know what I mean when I say "exposure"?

RON: Yes.

LOAN OFFICER: *(pause)* Let's go back to expansion. How are you expanding?

RON: More machines. Newer machines. Arcade machines.

LOAN OFFICER: Okay. By 'expansion' I might mean are you keeping the same basic 'footprint': for instance, replacing old machines with new ones, but not buying new ones and keeping old ones. That would be an expansion. *(pause)* Are you following me Ron?



RON: I'm buying old ones....no, I'm buying new ones and getting rid of old ones.

LOAN OFFICER: *(pause)* So you're keeping the same basic footprint?

RON: Yes.

LOAN OFFICER: No expansion?

RON: No. I'm replacing the old machines. But some expansion. I want to do some expansion into some more skill cranes.

LOAN OFFICER: Skill cranes?

RON: Claw machines, treasure chests. Teddy pickers.

LOAN OFFICER: *(pause)* Teddy picker?

RON: You know, the crane games. Arcade machines.

LOAN OFFICER: I see. So that is what the loan is for? For crane games, and arcade stuff?

RON: When I expand. But I first have to replace some single-turn machines. My bedrock.

LOAN OFFICER: *(pause)* Excellent. "Bedrock". Why?

RON: Why?

LOAN OFFICER: Yes. Why are you replacing the old machines? Your "bedrock".

RON: Safeguarding my investment.

*(as RON talks he finishes packing his duffel bag and rolling cart)*

LOAN OFFICER: "Safeguarding your investment". What do you mean by that?

RON: I'm getting robbed.

LOAN OFFICER: What? *(pause)* What do you mean you are getting robbed? Is there a crime being committed?

RON: I need to get ahead of that.

*(RON begins stocking an arcade crane game with stuffed toys from his duffel bag)*

LOAN OFFICER: What do you mean you are getting robbed?

RON: I need new machines.

LOAN OFFICER: The old machines are getting robbed.

RON: The old machines are very easy to steal from. I need to get ahead of that. I'm getting jacked. My machines are getting jacked. My bedrock.

LOAN OFFICER: What do you mean?

RON: Jacked.

LOAN OFFICER: How? Explain jacked if you can. I'm sitting at a desk over here. I know nothing. "Bedrock" I understand.

RON: How? There are tutorials all over showing how.

LOAN OFFICER: What do you mean? Tutorials?

RON: The latest thing is baby powder.

LOAN OFFICER: The latest thing is baby powder? Baby powder tutorials?

RON: If you put baby powder in the coin slot on gum machines the clutch is released and won't re-trigger.

LOAN OFFICER: The clutch? Re-trigger?

RON: I just want to replace my old machines.

*(RON has completed stocking the arcade-crane-game and packs his bags again)*

LOAN OFFICER: How do you get baby powder in the coin slot?

RON: You make a flat funnel with a toilet paper roll and pour it in. Or an eye dropper.

LOAN OFFICER: You pour the baby powder in?

RON: It's on the internet. It's everywhere.

LOAN OFFICER: With a toilet paper tube?

RON: Yes. Or an eye-dropper.

LOAN OFFICER: Or an eyedropper? What, filled with baby powder?

RON: It's everywhere.

LOAN OFFICER: And the machine just keeps paying out candy?

RON: Yes.

LOAN OFFICER: I'll be darned.

RON: Is this part of the application?

LOAN OFFICER: *(pause)*.....I'll be darned.

RON: What?

LOAN OFFICER: Ron, I'd be lying if I told you I didn't want to try this myself. Right now, just out of curiosity. No offense. I just typed in "baby powder candy machine." *(pause)* I'm looking at it right now.

RON: What?

LOAN OFFICER: Ron, you do not exaggerate.....*(the sound of a video tutorial comes faintly over the phone)*.....That clutch has definitely not re-triggered.

*Act 1, scene 10*

*PAM appears from downstage entrance and walks slowly upstage as she delivers this 'tutorial'. She smokes repetitively from a pipe between thoughts, in a smoothly coordinated motion which becomes dance-like. She punctuates this with the application of eye-liner. She alternates occasionally with the application of eyedrops. As she talks, the shadows and silhouettes of isolated figures appear to crowd in, to listen and to observe her.*

*As the monologue progresses, a low, off-key ambience begins to rise underneath her voice.*

PAM: You know I can hear your car coming around the corner. It has a sound I can recognize after all these times. When you came before. I think I can even smell your car, the smell it makes. I hear it go past and then 30 seconds later the smell of your car drifts through my open window. So it is you diving past, slowing a little when you go by my house. And speeding up again, just a little, going away. Incredible.

I know that some people see these and think that I am some kind of slut.

If someone asked me to describe myself as a building, I'd say a building with a lot of windows.

Okay. So what is love? I want to answer the big question. It's me being me, and him loving me. For being me. Really that's the big secret. I believe in telling all your secrets. Nothing else matters. It's like the secrets are a mountain. And you have to climb them. I can truly say, I did. Different people call it different things, but it is the same thing. I am so lucky to have found it. I know what you are thinking. You are wondering how I did it. Here's what I did. You can do it too. I put myself out there. For him to find. And he found me. There are lots of ways to put yourself out there. I put myself out there. I put myself out there on so many levels.

*(a strange, metallic sound is heard in the background. It is quite loud. She pauses for a beat, then resumes...)*

Okay some people get mad at me for talking about this. They think it kind of ruins it to talk about it. I say they are wrong. If you don't talk about it that is wrong. If you don't find some way to share it then that is totally wrong. If I am given this, given love, and I just keep it and don't share it, that is totally wrong. And everybody who knows me knows I'm not like that.

*Act 1, scene 11*

*RON awakens at gum machine. In 'the Bar' again.*

*BARTENDER enters*

RON: Do you know what you need in here?

BARTENDER: I need some slot machines.

RON: Here's an interesting item. Listen. I have a machine that I think might work.

BARTENDER: (looks at gum machine) Not the kind of slot machine I need.

RON: I understand the concerns about square footage. I really do.

BARTENDER: I didn't say anything about square footage.

RON: I want to start the multiplication dreaming in your head.

BARTENDER: We have a pool table.

RON: Yes, but what I haven't mentioned is, have you considered charity vending?

BARTENDER: What is multiplication dreaming?

RON: I want to get that started in your head. Charity vending. And a real light footprint with these machines.

BARTENDER: Footprint?

RON: You have a pool table. Excellent. Have you thought to add to that exposure with a teddy picker?

BARTENDER: *(pause)* No I have not thought of that. Do you want another vodka?

RON: I like to be well aware of my shortcomings and I am pretty sure that's not one of them.

BARTENDER: What are you saying?

RON: This might be an opportunity. For all of us.

BARTENDER: How is that?

RON: We could be Wishmakers.

BARTENDER: *(looks around)* Here?

RON: What I haven't mentioned is that these are charity vending machines. Charity vending. The proceeds benefit, can benefit the Wishmakers. Yes. And a real light footprint with these machines.

BARTENDER: Like I said....

RON: Not the entire proceeds.

BARTENDER: No? Like I said....

RON: I know what you are thinking.

BARTENDER: (pause) I'm thinking about slot machines.

RON: I am expanding. I know I can get what I want.

BARTENDER: Slot machines?

RON: Moving around in the world and getting what you need and taking it from the world and bringing it back to your own little place, setting it at their feet. He did it.

BARTENDER: Who?

RON: He'd come up on that porch and through the door, and bring a little piece of the world. We'd just look at him. And the house would be all complete with him there. And us there all looking at him and the day would be over, and it was night.

BARTENDER: Who?

RON: That's something I remember about my father. He'd come home and even though he'd work like a dog all day he'd be the best he could be for us. He'd come in and just be the best he could be. He'd made something out of nothing out of wherever he'd been that day, working. Anyone who saw him that day saw him working and being the best man in the room.

BARTENDER: Sounds like he was.

RON: What? Like he was what?

BARTENDER: Best man in the room.

RON: He beat the dream, he beat the looters and moochers fucking mickey-mockers again, beat them at their own game.

BARTENDER: Who did? What dream?

RON: He did it. I know I can get what I want. I know I can get what I need.

*(RON's phone rings....)*

BARTENDER: Okay then. *(to RON...)* That's you *(indicating phone)*



*(TED enters as RON exits to take phone call)*

BARTENDER: *(to TED)* Another vodka?

*Act 1, scene 12*

*Scene: 'the Bar': RON has just exited to take phone call. TED enters from offstage pool table, carries pool cue. As he talks to BARTENDER he powders his hands with talc. TED looks at the rolling luggage. As they talk the off-stage television screen flickers.*

TED: *(to BARTENDER)* You know what you need in here?

BARTENDER: What? Slot machines?

TED: *(pause)* Yeah you do. *(smiling)* Luggage and buckets my friend.

BARTENDER: *(pause)* What do I need in here?

TED: A VIP room.

BARTENDER: What?

TED: That's what you need in here. A VIP room.

BARTENDER: Oh yeah.

TED: Yeah.

BARTENDER: What do mean, a VIP room?

TED: You rent it out for special parties.

BARTENDER: Sounds like fun.

TED: It is. Lots of places have a VIP room.

BARTENDER: Then why do I need one?

TED: Don't you want to compete? You rent it out for special parties.

BARTENDER: So where would I put it? And why would I call it a VIP room? This isn't exactly a magnet around here for VIP's.

TED: It's a name. It says something. It can just be a room, but if you call it the VIP room, it says something different.

BARTENDER: Yes it does say something different. So in your mind who gets into this VIP room?

TED: It's a name you give to a room. It's giving people a little taste. Jerry Seinfeld will only go into a club with a VIP room.

BARTENDER: A little taste?

TED: Yeah.

BARTENDER: What's "a little taste"? "A little taste" of what?

TED: Of what it might mean.

BARTENDER: Of what what might mean?

TED: Of what a VIP means. People are willing to pay extra for that. So what if you don't have VIP's here. If you make a VIP room you would be able to rent it out.

BARTENDER: I have a pool table.

TED: I'm not telling you anything you don't know, right?

BARTENDER: I hadn't thought of it. Did you ever get that trophy fixed?

TED: It doesn't mean anything. But it's sentimental. It's an opportunity to move on, get back on track. I'm getting it restored.

BARTENDER: That's what I mean. Getting back on track. So what do you mean, restored?

TED: Like an antique, like a painting. Like a clock. Like a valuable coin. Like an heirloom. That's called getting it restored.

*TED exits, chalking pool cue*

*Act 1, scene 12a*

*Light comes up on RON as he takes phone call. He stands upstage of the downstage scrim-wall. He answers his phone*

RON: Hello, Ron's Vending Locators, this is Ron.

ALBERTO: *(voice-over)* Is this Ron?

RON: This is Ron.

ALBERTO: Ron my name is Alberto and I'm with the Wishmakers. Is this a good time to talk?

RON: *(pause)*. I'm in a meeting. Can I call you back?

ALBERTO: Do you know why I'm calling?

RON: No.

ALBERTO: Really?

RON: Yes.

ALBERTO: Yes you know, or yes, really, you don't know?

RON: I'm going to call you back.

ALBERTO: You're Ron the vending machine guy, right? I mean you run a bunch of vending machines and I'm calling you from the Wishmakers Foundation because your machines have our stickers on them. And that's fine and we don't know who you are Ron. We don't have any records of a Ron running our candy machines. The Wishmaker charity vending machines.

RON: *(pause)* Great to talk to you. Who gave you my name?

ALBERTO: Several business owners Ron. They were all enthusiastic about you.

RON: I should look into that.

ALBERTO: We don't have any records of your donations. Our stickers are on your machines. People think. People might think they are giving to us. Buying candy from us, to give charity donations to us. We don't know who you are. You are using our labels. Possibly using our labels to sell candy.

RON: The stickers were on the machines when I bought them.

ALBERTO: You bought the machines? From who?

RON: I see what you are getting at. But is that important?

ALBERTO: It's our decal. People are quite familiar with it. It is how people know us. We are a very well known children's charity. We are the Wishmakers Ron.

RON: Yes. I am familiar.

ALBERTO: Of course you are. Everyone is. We are the Wishmakers Foundation. But we don't know who you are Ron. Actually this is a matter of fraud. A very serious matter. Do you realize that?

RON: Hey, let's clear this up.

ALBERTO: Hey Ron.

RON: What.

ALBERTO: What's it feel like to defraud a children's charity?

RON: I've been meaning to contact you. You see, those machines had those stickers on them. I meant to call you. To take the labels off. I took over the route from an associate. He never told me. You'd think he'd mention that. It all came to me that way.

ALBERTO: That's not what we were told.

RON: What do you mean?

ALBERTO: The manager at the muffler shop—nice guy---he told me specifically, in specific, that you sold him on the idea of placing a gumball machine to aid Wishmakers Foundation. He'd never had a machine before. Like many, he loved the Wishmakers Foundation. Definitely.

RON: He said that?

ALBERTO: I'm talking about the muffler shop. You know the one.

RON: *(pause)* What do you want?

ALBERTO: What do I want?

RON: Let's clear this up.

ALBERTO: This isn't right.

RON: The labels were on the machines. I took over the route. I bought the route. It was a turn-key route.

ALBERTO: That's not what we heard.

RON: I don't care what you heard.

ALBERTO: Excuse me?

RON: I'd like to make a donation.

ALBERTO: I'm afraid it's too late.

RON: Too late.

ALBERTO: This is a serious matter. Our good name. That's what we are. A good name. The Wishmaker. We do good things for children, children

who are suffering. And people bought candy from your machines, not ours, thinking they were making wishes come true. But they weren't. Ron, do we have to make an example out of you?

RON: What example?

ALBERTO: You have inflicted actual damage on the Wishmaker name.

RON: Don't make an example out of me.

ALBERTO: How do I know you won't just do it again?

RON: I'll take the stickers off. I'll make a donation.

ALBERTO: Slow down.

RON: How much.

ALBERTO: Now just slow down here. Listen to me. As you know the Wishmakers foundation is a nationwide, nationally recognized charity brand. Trusted. We can't afford to get our name into petty fraud battles and what-not. And neither can you. How do you think your other customers would react? Not kindly. That's how. So this is what we are going to do to clear this up. I am going to call you tomorrow. I'd like to handle this for you Ron. We are going to do some thinking on our end over here. And I want you to do some thinking on your end. And Ron, I want you to come up with a number. You'll have that number prepared when I call you tomorrow.

RON: What number?

ALBERTO: You said you wanted to clear this up. Do you want your name dragged into the courts? Come up with a number that you think clears this up and we just might be able to keep this out of the courts. This could ruin you Ron. Think about it. Think about a number. Here is the thing Ron. We can't know what that number is. But this number must undo some significant damage. The number will want to do that. You need to look deep inside, and tell us. We need a number that motivates you Ron. And motivates us. If we think it is close and begins to undo the damage to the Wishmaker name, then there is a good chance for you that this is over.

RON: Wait—

ALBERTO: --Okay, wait? Before you say what I think you are going to say, ask yourself: what is that number. If our numbers are close, then we might be able to forgive this Ron.

*(RON's light goes dark)*

*Act 1, scene 12b*

*(light comes back up 'the Bar' as TED enters. He continues to powder his hands with talc and chalk the pool-cue)*

TED: *(to BARTENDER)* You know what is good about my job?

BARTENDER: What's good about it?

TED: I'll tell you what's good about it. I laugh for eight hours and then I go home. I get to walk around all day with nobody bothering me and I get to spy on all the housewives sitting around in their pajamas. The neighborhood is deserted. All the kids are gone. All the husbands are gone. All the housewives, in their pajamas all flopped open when I come to the door.

BARTENDER: Really?

TED: Really what?

BARTENDER: Do they come to the door like that?

TED: I see things.

BARTENDER: Like what?

TED: People. Alone. Women. By themselves.

BARTENDER: What do you mean?

TED: I mean people alone. People by themselves just alone with nobody watching them. In their houses. Who is there to see? I mean there I am and I walk down the sidewalks and there's nobody there. I'm all alone just walking down the sidewalks and I go up to each house and the windows of the houses. I'm uniformed. I know a lot about human nature that you'd find highly surprising. I look into the windows there, the doors cracked open. I see things. I see people who don't think anyone is watching, and it is impossible to describe what it is they do.

BARTENDER: What do you mean?

TED: People walk in circles.

BARTENDER: In circles?

TED: They walk in circles and they eat like animals, they eat like dogs going through the trash, with food falling everywhere.

BARTENDER: Who does?

*(RON is visible in upstage room walking in circles)*

TED: People. People who are alone do. This is what I see when I'm on my route looking into the windows and the inched-open doors, people stand alone in their rooms and they walk in circles and they pick at all their orifices and they eat like dogs and you'd be highly surprised by the things I see. I walk my route and laugh for eight hours. If you could only see.

BARTENDER: And then what?

TED: I walk my route. I look into every house. I leave something at every house. There are things I have seen that would shock you. There are empty rooms. People disappear. From one day to the next. One day she might be there for you and the next day she will be gone. The door of the house is standing open and everything inside is gone. Just some impressions left crushed into the carpet, just some marks left over time on the walls where a



chair bumped every time they pushed back from a meal. But they are gone and these houses are just empty.

BARTENDER: What do you mean?

TED: There'd be women on the route that just, let me say, would be happy each day to see me coming up the walk the smell of coffee and toast kind of like hanging in the folds of their bathrobes let me tell you about laughing for eight hours and then going home. But when these houses empty out no one seems to take their place.

BARTENDER: What houses?

TED: There was one, okay, so there are too many to count, right, but there was one and let me tell you she just vanished and if it hadn't happened to me I'd never believe the story but it was a house halfway through the route perfectly situated, for me, you know, and she'd leave the door open and not every time but if the door was open she'd leave the door open and she liked it if at first I just looked in, like every time was the first time, and let me tell you this went on for awhile but well, just last week I went up the walk and the door was open, but more than normal, for our little scenario, and I pushed it open and, nothing.

BARTENDER: Nothing?

TED: There was nothing in the house the door was open and everything was gone. Every stick of furniture, gone, just the impressions, like just the outlines of the furniture in the carpet, but everything gone and I walked through the house and everything was gone, completely gone. I even went out and checked the house number and it was the house, it was her house but now it was completely empty. And I could look wherever I wanted, go into any room, and stand there, and look. I even had her mail, her husband's mail, I had her husband's mail, I had it in my hand and there was nobody in that house. There was nothing left everything, everyone was gone.

BARTENDER: Empty.

TED: (*pause*) The only thing left was a coffee cup on the window sill. A full cup of coffee too. Sitting there, like a message to me.

BARTENDER: How was that a message to you?

TED: We'd drink coffee together.

BARTENDER: So there was a cup of coffee on the windowsill? Inside the kitchen?

TED: Yeah.

BARTENDER: Was it hot?

TED: No. It was ice cold.

## *END OF ACT ONE*

### *Act 2, scene 13*

*RON has retrieved his rolling luggage from 'the Bar' and is again on the phone as he makes the rounds on his vending machine route. As he talks he begins restocking an arcade-style crane game. His duffel bag is open and he is loading small stuffed animals, mascots of popular animations and etc, into the machine. He continues to work as he talks on the phone. The ambience becomes the quiet off-hours of a shopping mall. The VOICE we hear on the other side of the telephone is the same VOICE as the opening scene (the 'debt into wealth' motivator).*

VOICE ON TELEPHONE: Ron. That's an unfortunate stance.

RON: What are you talking about? Who is this? What stance?

VOICE: Your stance. I am talking about a contract, and your stance. We have a contract Ron. Your realize this.

RON: Realize this. Realize what contract?

VOICE: Ron, this is me, debt-into-wealth, we're working on this together. Who did you think this was? Of course you realize this Ron. You're a business man. We are both business men here. Ron.....

RON: Yes. I'm sorry.

*(RON has opened the coin box on the crane machine. He scoops up a handful of quarters and notices these too are coated in white talc)*

VOICE: You're sorry?

RON: What contract are you talking about?

*(RON blows a cloud of fine white powder off the handful of coins)*

VOICE: Ron. Why are you taking this stance? I need to process this. We need to take this to the next level. Let's put this in a couple different buckets....

RON: ....Buckets?....

VOICE: ...The card I have on file...

RON: What card?

VOICE: *(pause)* Ron. The card. I have your card on file. From when we set up your account. Ron, I need you to breathe. Transformations can be stressful. I know. I've been there Ron. Believe me.

RON: You can't use that card.

VOICE: What do you mean? Ron it's the card we have on file. We are already to go forward here. I'm ready to release your future right here Ron. What part of transforming your debt into wealth don't you like Ron? I have everything set up here.

RON: I'm sorry.

VOICE: This is what I'm going to ask you to do Ron.

RON: What contract are you talking about?

VOICE: Ron. Listen to me. I want you to forget I called. For a couple days. Meanwhile I am going to phase in the transformation. As per our contract.

RON: We don't have a contract.

VOICE: Yes we do. Ron, we do have a contract.

RON: What contract?

VOICE: I'm confused Ron. You made a commitment, a contract, to transform your debt into wealth. I have it right here in front of me. The contract, the account, everything. I've got my finger on the trigger Ron.

RON: The what?

VOICE: I'm going to pull the trigger. You're going to forget I called. Meanwhile, your transformation will go on in spite of you. I can't believe I'm doing this for you given this stance of yours. But that's what I'm going to do, to fulfill our contract. It will go in spite of your fears. Now, you want that. I know you do. We've talked about that Ron.

RON: Okay.

VOICE: Look Ron. This will help you get through this. Remember I said it would be difficult? Welcome to challenge. Are you ready for a little tutorial? This will help. Are you ready?

RON: Tutorial?

VOICE: Listen to me Ron. I want you to get a fresh \$20 bill. Now I mean, go to the bank and ask them---demand from them---a fresh, never-circulated \$20 bill. Banks are the point of origin for this, the mints make delivery, and I want you to get one of these, starched, a fresh \$20 bill direct from the mint, at the bank, demand it. Okay?

RON: Okay.

VOICE: I want you to put that \$20 in your wallet. And keep it in there. I want you to always keep that \$20 from today, that fresh one, in your wallet. You have \$20 you can take to a bank and exchange for a fresh bill, now, today?

RON: *(looking at the handful of quarters, and peering into his canvas bank bag)*  
Yeah.

VOICE: Okay, now listen, this is key: I want you to do this right now, not tomorrow, not next week, but right now: go to the bank, any bank, and get a fresh \$20 bill and put it in your wallet. And Ron, are you listening?

RON: Yes.

VOICE: I want you to keep it there. You know why?

RON: Why?

VOICE: You will keep it there because I want you to be able to look back at this day. And you know why else?

RON: Why else?

VOICE: Because like attracts like Ron. Universal law. It's a law of the universe. Always will be. That freshly minted \$20 bill becomes a magnet for more money. Think about it. Money is always attracted to money. Why do the rich get richer? Ron, it's the magnetism of wealth. Even that \$20 in your wallet. Have you got a \$20 in there?

RON: No. I just have quarters.

VOICE: Quarters? Well get a \$20 bill in there.

RON: A fresh one from the bank.

VOICE: What?

RON: You said a fresh one from the bank, right?

VOICE: That's right. Get one. Get one there.

RON: Okay.

VOICE: Ron.

RON: Yes.

VOICE: It's going to be okay. You know that.

RON: Yes.

*(as he opens the coin box on one of the machines he is showered with a spray of white powder, talc-like, baby powder, that drifts slowly away as a puff of white smoke as he examines the machine....He blows on the handful of quarters in his hand and raises another cloud of fine white dust. He looks around as the ambience fades down, and as the light fades down there is a bright flash of light from far upstage, as though a door were opened revealing a bright place beyond*

*RON exits upstage)*

*Act 2, scene 14*

*Scene opens with TED on his mail route. He is in uniform and carries his mail bag, sorting through a handful of mail and etc. His uniform has several white talc spots. He stops at the edge of a doorframe/is observed peering into a window, through the gap in a closed window blind: he bends forward to observe something in an off-stage space that we cannot see. For long moments he remains very still, in an awkward, secretive posture, the mail-bag dangling pendulous. As he makes his observations a voice-over telephone conversation plays: it is TED and a friend (who does not appear in the play)*

TED: So nobody knows what its like. That's what I keep telling myself. Nobody, nobody, nobody knows what that is like.

FRIEND: Yeah.

TED: And everybody want to know. Everybody looks at you and wants to know what it is like. They might think they know. They want to be there like I was there and know what it's like. And I have to remember that.

FRIEND: Yeah you do.

TED: What?

*(PAM appears upstage, again carrying large box. She puts the box down and again brushes her hair)*

FRIEND: I said "yeah you do."

TED: Yeah I do.

FRIEND: You've got it stamped on your fucking forehead.

TED: I've got a lot of ideas and I could tell them a lot of things. I have a lot of things to say. I need to say them. Because I know what they are.

FRIEND: Sure.

TED: It's not like I ever want to be there again. No. I've been there. I know what it's like. I never want to be there again. What does it mean for me? I just had to look at my intentionality. What does it mean for me. I'd like to curb some things in my life. And then I'll know. Like I know now. I used to wait for what I wanted. Now I see something I like, and I just take it.

*(TED is now at the 'Trophy Shop': he pockets his phone as he enters. He looks around at the trophies in the case. He tries several ways of standing in the room. He notices the gum machine. He examines it. He begins to look for something in his bag)*

*PAM enters carrying large box*

PAM: *(she sees TED, she watches him for several beats)* Oh hi.

TED: *(turns to PAM)* I just have a couple minutes.

PAM: What?

TED: I just have a couple minutes.

PAM: For what?

TED: Your nose wrinkles when you laugh.

PAM: Did I laugh?

TED: I could make you laugh.

PAM: I don't know.

TED: Could I make you do something else?

PAM: *(pause)* Are you here for your trophy?

TED: I came to see if you have restored my trophy.

PAM: He looked at your trophy and he says he can replace it. He can make a new one. I guess some parts got melted and he can't really fix melted. He can replace melted.

TED: So he can't fix melted.

PAM: He said he could replace melted.

TED: (*pause, moving close to PAM*) So when you told me he could, what was that about?

PAM: I said he could? I said he could what?

TED: You told me you restored trophies here.

PAM: I did? I never said that.

TED: So what is it that you do here?

PAM: I work here.

TED: The last time I was in here you told me you restored trophies.

PAM: We didn't talk about that. He looked at it. He said it was a nice trophy. A nice piece. A real trophy.

TED: What do you mean "real"?

PAM: He said it was too bad it got burned. Because it was real. And he said he couldn't fix it. He could try to replace it.

TED: So why do you take that stance?

PAM: Stance? What do you mean, stance?

TED: So where is he?

PAM: Who?

TED: What did you say your name was?

PAM: It's Pam. My name is Pam.

TED: (*pause*) Where have I seen you before?

PAM: So should we talk about your trophy?



TED: You want to talk about my trophy? What if I told you I was here just to drop off the mail?

PAM: Oh. Okay.

TED: I'm just teasing. I deliver the mail. But not here. Not to this trophy shop. Not on my route. I only have a couple minutes and I am here to speak with the owner about a trophy restoration.

PAM: I know that is why you are here. Let's talk about your trophy.

TED: So why do you think I even want to get this fixed?

PAM: I don't know. Why?

TED: Why do you even think I'd have this thing about a trophy? Do you even know? Do you even know what's it like to want something, to look at it, from really far away? To see, like it's clear in your mind, to see all those steps you will have to take to get there and to even be able to know what those steps are? This is about that. That's just a little part of my story. It's not about burned or melted or broken or melted. Or stolen. I'm just getting some things back on track here. I don't even know what we are talking about. You were talking. I only have a couple minutes.

PAM: Why do you keep saying that?

TED: Because nobody knows what it is like. To be there, to be where I was. Do you even know what that was like?

PAM: No. What what was like?

TED: Your nose just wrinkled. I would like to propose something.

PAM: What do you mean?

TED: I'd like to see you in a different setting. I get the feeling this setting holds you back. I got some people you should meet. I still can't place where I've seen you before. You sure you don't model? You know models? You have no idea who I am do you?

PAM: No.

TED: I have some friends you should get to know.

PAM: Get to know?

TED: So what's your name? Look, a lot of people ask me what it was like.

PAM: What what was like?

TED: The olympics.

PAM: You were in the olympics?

TED: We should spend more time together. But I have to run. Pam. I will call you.

*(TED exits downstage. PAM takes up both boxes and moves upstage behind downstage scrim wall. She begins to brush her hair again, back to audience.*



*Act 2, scene 15*

*RON is at crane machine. He watches PAM.*

PAM: I only have a couple of minutes. I do my best to stay positive. And keep an upbeat outlook. I try and see the good in things. I try and find the good in things. Sometimes it takes a lot of work. I do rituals to elevate my mood.

I'm not really religious. But I am spiritual.

*(pauses)*

When I look out the window, is that my life? Are the things I look at, are they my life? There are some trees out the window, there are three big trees out the window and they are big and round, like a shape, they are tall and big and round and I can see them out the window.

*(PAM continues to perform increasingly repetitive actions: smoking, applying eye make-up, putting on a coat and taking it off, etc.)*

*(As PAM talks the silhouettes of figures appear, seemingly watching her, listening)*

They are beautiful. These trees. They are just kind of there. The wind blows the trees and birds circle around and disappear into their branches. It gets dark. Then they are like three big dark round shapes out the window. Is that my life? I look at these trees, I mean, if they could, they could see me through the window. Looking at them. They could see this girl in a window looking at them. Now that, is that my life? I am looking out my window at these round dark shapes in the sky, and, they are kind of looking back at me. So, in basic terms, is that my life, is that a part of my life?

*(lights and sound come up on 'the Bar')*

People have been asking for more tutorials. I'm thinking about more tutorials. What do you think people? Am I a slut? If only you knew. People don't have to look. As long as he looks. And when I come into a room he says my name and if he doesn't then that cuts me dead. I'm just trying to bring something fun and different. To this....place.

*(RON has disappeared and PAM is now in 'the Bar')*

People start to expect certain things from you. And if you don't give it to them, they won't come back. It's strange. I don't know. It's nice. People have been asking for more tutorials. I'm thinking about more tutorials.

*(PAM takes a seat at 'the Bar')*

*Act 2, scene 16*

*PAM has entered 'the Bar' and takes a seat. She is alone. The lights and the sounds of 'the Bar' slowly fade as BARTENDER enters. PAM watches him. As he works at various tasks he begins to talk and never actually acknowledges PAM.*

BARTENDER: What do I mean? I'll tell you what I mean. I want to see this all happen from above. If that was possible. To see it happen from some great height.

The figures black like ants against the white snow.

It was incredibly bright that day. A wide white frozen river and she and I went out there. We were supposed to go with the sister and some other people but no one else showed up and I was so happy. I'd wanted to be with her alone, make time, we were kids. It was a thrill.

What do I mean? Listen to me. What I mean is this. You just can't tell from where it will come. Here it is.

I went out first on the lake and I was skating around. It was a river but it looked like a lake. That spot we always took off to.

We were alone. She was a long time at the car getting her skates on and finally I stood there and watched her coming out. She skated out and I stood there watching her. She was looking down at her skates and she was so small and it was a thrill. I started towards her so she wouldn't have so far to go and then she stopped and I don't know why but I think I stopped too.

And then I could see why she stopped and then I could hear. There was a sound like a gun fired a mile away. And then she was gone. She put her arms

up in the air as she went straight down, like she'd stepped on a trap door. She looked towards me, but I don't remember catching her eye. She didn't make a sound. What do I mean? We were out there alone in the country and it was a beautiful day. I was a hundred feet away. After I could hear a crack ripple like a mile down the river like an echo and then nothing.

*(BARTENDER exits. PAM sits alone as 'the Bar' ambiance resumes slowly. TED enters)*

*Act 2, scene 17*

*PAM is alone at 'the Bar'. Music plays from an unseen room---scored in part to the scene: rising or falling as they talk. These natural sounds begins to fade and drop away, and eventually what is left behind is the ambience of an empty room.*

*(TED enters, chalking pool cue)*

TED: *(to PAM)* So if you were a building, how would you describe yourself?

PAM: If I was a building.

TED: Really. Be careful how you answer.

PAM: Why?

TED: Because it will tell me more than you will ever know. About yourself. I will know. I might be able to control you depending how you answer.

PAM: Really? What's the question?

TED: How about if you were a song?

PAM: What?

TED: A color. How about if you were a color. What color would you be?

PAM: Color. I don't know.

TED: If you were a movie, what movie would you be? I mean, to like describe your entire personality, your goals, dreams, secrets.

PAM: My secrets?

TED: I'm just telling you this. Be careful how you answer.

PAM: Why?

TED: Because I will know something about you that, it goes deep. These things, they go deep. Which professional sports team describes you best.

PAM: *(pause)* The Miami Dolphins.

TED: Excellent.

PAM: And pink. The color pink.

TED: *(pause)* Can I get you another drink?

PAM: How high is 10 meters?

TED: That's not what I meant.

PAM: I mean, how tall is 10 meters.

TED: A three-story building. That high. Think about it.

PAM: What's like the highest anyone has ever dived?

TED: You mean like a stunt man?

PAM: Like a diver. Like you. What's the highest place you ever jumped off?

TED: I don't jump. I dive. *(pause)* I bet you are a dancer.

PAM: Yeah I meant dive. Why? You think I look like one?

TED: Look like what?

PAM: A dancer.

TED: I still can't figure out where I know you from.

PAM: The trophy shop.

TED: You ever take a personality test?

PAM: Okay. What kind of personality test.

TED: There's one that starts with a staring contest. Want to try it?

PAM: Okay.



TED: So there's this midget. And he's brought up on rape charges. And he goes before the judge, and the woman....

PAM: This is a personality test?

TED: *(pause)* Your nose just wrinkled when you said that.

PAM: It did?

TED: This is just something I'd like to paint for your eyes real quick.

PAM: What?

TED: A little joke.

PAM: What's it about?

TED: A woman, a midget and a bucket.

PAM: I don't think I want to hear it.

TED: Why not?

PAM: The midget's on trial for rape. That sounds strange.

TED: And the woman is huge. Get it?

PAM: No. So the midget, what, raped her? This is a joke.

TED: Yes. And the judge couldn't figure out how he used the bucket.

PAM: Oh yeah. How did he?

TED: It's just a joke.

PAM: I know. But how did he use the bucket?

TED: He didn't stand on it. That's a clue.

PAM: So this is more like a riddle than a joke?

TED: This is a joke. About a woman, a midget, and a bucket.

PAM: I know. I just don't get it.

TED: What don't you get?

PAM: Jokes. So what's so funny about a midget raping somebody?

TED: Are you kidding me?

PAM: What?

TED: That is so funny. A midget raping anything is funny. And the bucket!

PAM: I don't think it's funny.

*(pause)*

TED: That was the personality test.

PAM: That was it?

TED: Want more? If you were a building, what kind of building would you be?

PAM: I don't know. I actually do know. But what about you?

TED: You know the answer to what kind of building you would be?

PAM: What about you?

TED: So the color pink, Miami Dolphins, and what? What kind of building?

PAM: Tall. With lots of windows.

TED: *(pause)* Have you ever been hypnotized?

PAM: No.

TED: My uncle once hypnotized a kid at a swimming pool. He told the kid to get in the pool and walk on the bottom all the way to the far end. The kid got in the pool. They had to pull him off the bottom of the deep end and pump his lungs out. He almost died. He didn't remember being hypnotized. My uncle was never found out.

PAM: I don't think I want to be hypnotized.

TED: Maybe you want to meet my friends. They think they might know you. Did you work in the industry?

PAM: I work in the trophy shop. What industry?

TED: Don't hide anymore.

PAM: Okay.

TED: (*pause*) I called the trophy shop.

PAM: Why?

TED: What do you mean why? To go forward. On track. He's going to go forward with the replacement. It's important to the story.

PAM: To which story?

TED: To the story I moved on from.

PAM: From what? Are you trying to hypnotize me?

TED: (*pause*) From the diving. You asked about the diving. It's something I did and I moved on. It wasn't for fun. It wasn't nice. It was for the competition. I competed. Now I look for fun. I go to work and laugh for eight hours.

PAM: You were in the Olympics. What was the best part?

TED: Watching yourself.

PAM: Watching yourself?

TED: Watching it afterwards. They'd tape all the dives, slow motion, a special high-speed camera doing really slow motion. You'd study these tapes.

PAM: What do you mean?

TED: It was an out-of-body experience is what I mean. You'd sit there for hours watching yourself in slow motion. You learn things about yourself you never thought possible. Let me say that is what it's like. The bigger the better. California, Florida, Texas. Singapore. Those are the places where I competed.

PAM: Okay. I can see that.

TED: I'm sure you do. You like to travel? I've just got a couple minutes. I'm meeting some industry friends here tonight. They might know you. Pam.

PAM: I don't think I know them.

TED: Sure. I will be right back.

*(TED exits upstage. PAM leaves 'the Bar' and exits upstage, walking slowly as though underwater. Silhouettes of men crowd near her as she walks upstage to a far, distant bright door)*

*(one of the figures begins to swing a club, the other silhouettes watch. The swinging grows more wild, then slows. TED emerges downstage from the shadows. He looks around at the Bar. He is alone. His phone rings. He adjusts his posture)*

TED: *(into phone)* Did I tell you? Did I have it stamped on my fucking forehead? What do you mean? That was her. What do you mean she left? I told you that was her. I've seen her. You've seen her. She knew all about the industry. She was like hypnotized. I did that. What do you mean she's not there? *(TED goes back upstage)* Do I still get paid? *(TED begins swinging club in silhouette again)*. Where did she go?

*Act 2, scene 18*

*RON enters with his rolling luggage. No one is there. The ambience is different. There is not the jukebox soundtrack coming from the other room, nor the sound of the television.*

*BARTENDER enters. He's carrying a jar of pickles.*

RON: I have an interesting item for you. Have you thought of installing a breath-a-lyzer?

BARTENDER: A breath-a-lyzer?

RON: Coin-operated.

BARTENDER: No. I have not thought of that.

RON: Coin-op breath-a-lyzers. The alcohol industry is one that does not suffer in times of strife. Alco-Checkpoints. It could be a way to clean up for a short-term cycle.

BARTENDER: What's a short-term cycle?

RON: It's "in the short term". These machines could have killer return if you had a spot near the exit. Set them up near the exit.

BARTENDER: Killer return.

RON: Now that we are talking about some possibilities. Have you ever thought of locating an arcade skill crane here?

BARTENDER: Skill crane. We have a pool table.

RON: A skill crane offers complete control over your profits. You would get a part of those profits. And have complete control over them. There's a yellow box inside.

BARTENDER: A yellow box.

RON: Yes we control two settings. You and me. There's an interaction between the two controls. Claw strength increases for every attempt. Strong claw grows over the play cycle. The yellow box.

BARTENDER: They are going to feel closer every time.

RON: Not only do we want the item when it is made scarce, we want it most when we are in competition for it. *(RON's phone begins to ring)*

BARTENDER: *(to RON)* That's you.

RON: It's a treasure chest. *(his phone keeps ringing as he exits to take the call)*

*BARTENDER picks up his white ice bucket and exits. Background music from unseen sources plays as before, lights glow from unseen sources as before, but TED is alone. The stage is empty as TED enters with a pool cue-stick. He powders his hands with talc. RON's rolling suitcase is there. TED looks at it, and with a quick decisive motion he opens it up, and takes from it a stuffed animal. He pulls another, and another from the rolling suitcase. He stands there looking at them as the BARTENDER enters. He watches TED for a moment, and then RON enters.)*

RON: *(looking at TED and the BARTENDER)* What's this?

TED: *(looking at BARTENDER)* We weren't sure you weren't some kind of pimp. *(Holds up toys)* What kind of consultant are you?

RON: Inventory.

TED: What?

RON: You are going through my stuff.

TED: We weren't sure you weren't some kind of pimp. Which does not explain what kind of consultant you are.

RON: I told you. That's inventory.

TED: For what?

RON: The pick-up machine.

TED: The pick-up machine.

RON: The arcade skill crane.

TED: Those any good? Business-wise? I can never beat those fucking things.

BARTENDER: They have a yellow box. You can completely control the profit. The payout. You can completely randomize the payout. Right? He was telling me.

*(BARTENDER pours a shot of liquor for TED)*

TED: *(looking at BARTENDER)* Randomize or control? Which is it?

BARTENDER: What?

TED: Those are two very different things. Randomize is kind of the opposite of control. You see what I'm saying?

RON: Why are you going through my bag?

TED: What's a yellow box?

RON: It's inside the machine, the claw machine. It's like a black box.

TED: *(looking at BARTENDER)* Then why is it yellow?

BARTENDER: It's yellow. You can completely randomize the payout. People really go for that.

RON: You'd be highly surprised. When people are in competition for one of these *(holds up stuffed animal)* they become highly desired.

TED: So you set some controls.

RON: That's part of the game. People want it. And the more they fail, the more they want. Highly randomized.

BARTENDER: It's the adjustment of the claw strength.

RON: *(to BARTENDER)* Claw strength increases over the play cycle. I'd tell anyone that. *(pause)*

*(to TED)* Don't go through my stuff.

TED: Forget it. *(TED retrieves pool cue)*

BARTENDER: *(to RON, watching TED)* So you set the claw with the yellow box?

RON: *(to BARTENDER)* Be prepared to abandon a machine whose claw is really weak.

BARTENDER: Because we set it weak.

*(BARTENDER and RON watch as TED again dusts his hands with talc)*

TED: *(to RON)* So you are in business for yourself. I actually admire that.

RON: *(pause)* I'm building a small business.

TED: How small? Is it small?

RON: It's small now. And it's building now. Some new opportunities.

TED: *(looking at the rolling suitcase)* What kind of opportunities?

RON: I put those in two kinds of buckets...

TED: Two kinds of buckets?

RON: Yeah....

TED: Wait. You know what would work? You know there's a real way to make real money with one of those crane games.

RON: How?

TED: Artificial vaginas.

RON: What?

TED: You ever seen an artificial vagina?

RON: Sure. Wait.

TED: What do you mean, 'Wait'? How about a fi-fi?

RON: What are you talking about?

TED: I'm talking about fi-fi's. That's what I'm talking about.

RON: I thought you were talking about artificial vaginas.

TED: Same thing. It's quite a commodity in prison.

RON: Artificial vaginas are they allowed in prison?



BARTENDER: They allow artificial vaginas in prison?

TED: I don't want to find out. But you want to know how to make real money? You sell artificial vaginas in special vending machines. It's done in Singapore. No shame. *(to RON)* Tell me, what do you do?

RON: What do I do?

TED: You have vending machines. Try placing artificial vaginas in a crane game machine. See what happens. They do it in Singapore. Combine the little yellow box with an artificial vagina. That might be like a real money magnet. Hey I've got some friends you should meet.

RON: *(pause)* Did you say "Money Magnet"?

TED: I'm talking about the vending machines in Singapore.

RON: They are actually called "Money Magnets"?

TED: What are you talking about?

RON: They have crane games stocked with artificial vaginas?

TED: Of course they do. And ones with school girl panties.

RON: I don't think my locations would go for that.

TED: Are you saying the people in Singapore are more advanced than we are? Than your locations? Because that isn't true. You know it. They are incredibly disciplined in Singapore.

RON: I have never been to Singapore.

TED: Ever been to prison?

RON: No.

BARTENDER: *(to TED)* Have you ever been to prison?

TED: *(long pause)* I am a federal employee. Do you think the federal government is in the business of hiring convicts?

BARTENDER: I don't know about that.

TED: Is that directed at me?

BARTENDER: What do you mean?

TED: You said "I don't know about that". Like, I am a federal employee and you said you don't know if I was a convict. In principal, you are saying that I just might be a convict, one that the federal government hired. In effect that's what I'm hearing you say.

RON: He didn't say that.

TED: Did I ask you?

*(a terrible, very strange sound occurs offstage, the sound of something breaking, something violently, suddenly pulled apart)*

RON: What the hell was that?

*(BARTENDER goes to investigate)*

TED: I think he did kind of say that. People don't like mailmen, you know. Not like they used to. I think he was saying that. That's okay. I'm getting into other things. Like you.

RON: What do you think that was?

TED: What what was?

RON: That fucking sound.

TED: I don't know. You don't know either. I think it sounded like something very big breaking apart, something that was spinning very fast and it just broke apart. *(pause)* I don't know what he expects to do about it. *(pause)* Hey you like jokes?

RON: Are you serious?

TED: About jokes? Yeah. Ever hear the one about the midget who raped a fat woman using a bucket?

RON: I think I have.

TED: You have? So you get how he did it?

RON: How he did it? Did what?

TED: Hey, forget that, I just have a minute, I just have a couple minutes, I've got to go meet some people, but let's make a bet. (*staring at RON*) Hey. Let's make a bet. This is great. You want to make a bet with me?

RON: What kind of a bet.

TED: You like to bet. You're a businessman. You like to bet. Let's make a bet.

RON: What's your bet? I don't like to bet.

TED: I will bet you I can jump over this bar. Jump onto this bar. Jump over this bar from a dead standstill.

RON: That's pretty high.

TED: Right. So you'll take that bet.

RON: I didn't say that.

TED: But you'd like to take it.

RON: I didn't say that.

TED: One hundred bucks. I am going to jump onto this bar from a dead standstill. Spring up onto this bar. \$100.

RON: I don't.....

TED: \$50. You don't think I can do it. I will stand right here and your \$50 says I can't make the leap. A standing jump. Come on I'm making it easy for you. Your \$50 says I can do it. Come on. Let's make a little wager here. Let's get this going.

RON: You think you can jump....so you're going to stand where?

TED: Right here. Like I said. From here, to the bar. No running approach.

RON: That's pretty high.

TED: \$50. (*BARTENDER re-enters*) Ready? Let's put it down.

RON: From there?

TED: Yes. \$50.

BARTENDER: What's this?

TED: It's a bet.

BARTENDER: What's a bet?

TED: He's betting that I can't jump onto the bar from right here.

BARTENDER: Jumping onto the bar.

RON: From where he's standing.

TED: \$50.

BARTENDER: You can't do that.

RON: That's what I said. \$50.

BARTENDER: No.

TED: You want in?

BARTENDER: No you can't jump onto my bar. I will throw you out. What the hell. You can't jump onto the bar. Does this look like a nut-house?

TED: Come on. You want in.

BARTENDER: I said no.

RON: Come on let him try.

BARTENDER: I will throw you both out.

*(RON's phone starts ringing, BARTENDER and TED look at RON)*

BARTENDER: Your phone is ringing.

RON: *(stepping away, glances at phone, silences it. TED and BARTENDER exchange a look)*

TED: Tell you what. Okay. How about this. Even better. This is even better. I'll bet you \$20 that I can drain this shot glass while it's under your hat. Without ever touching your hat.

RON: No way.

TED: \$20. Go ahead.

RON: Go ahead what.

TED: Cover the shot with you hat.

*(RON's phone starts ringing again. BARTENDER and TED look at RON)*

BARTENDER: Your phone is ringing.

RON: *(Silences phone without looking at it. Takes off hat and places it over the shot glass)*

TED: *(picks up a straw from bar and tucking it carefully under the hat, without touching the hat, he rather elaborately makes like he drinks the liquor from the hidden shot glass. RON and BARTENDER watch as he swallows and smacks his lips)* Pay up. \$20.

RON: *(looking between TED and BARTENDER)* You expect me to fall for that?

TED: Come on. I only have a couple minutes. Pay up. \$20. *(RON's phone starts ringing again. He silences it)*

RON: How did you, wait....

TED: Go ahead, check it out. It's done.

*(RON picks up the hat to see that shot glass is still full. TED grabs the glass and quickly drains it. BARTENDER and RON stare at TED)*

TED: \$20.

*(RON starts to step away)*

TED: *(picking up pool cue)* Come on. Be a man. A businessman. Fair and square. \$20.

*(RON takes out his wallet. The \$20 he retrieves from there is crisp, new and fresh from the bank. It is his \$20 "money magnet". As he places it on the bar his phone begins to ring again. He quickly departs)*

**END OF ACT TWO**

*Act 3, scene 19*

*Scene: Trophy shop.*

*TED retrieves an eye-dropper bottle from his mail pouch. He injects a little baby powder into the coin slot and manipulates the mechanism. Gumballs spill all over the floor.*

*Act 3, scene 20*

*(PAM is revealed upstage playing the crane machine. All of the prizes appear to be covered in white dust)*

PAM: I always knew I'd find it. It's the thing you always dream about even from when you are very small. You dream of finding exactly what you need. You know what it is. How did it get there?

Lean forward when I talk. Then I'll know. I'll tell you some things. I'll tell you what I believe in. And that might even start right now. When we talk. When you listen to me talk. We can talk, have conversations.

*(as PAM talks RON slowly re-enters and recovers his rolling luggage and the stuffed animal arcade prizes from the bar. He exits)*

And I'd like to picture you that way too. I can picture you that way. I can see you really look at me. There's something. It comes to me.

*(RON enters 'Trophy Shop' and begins to scrape the decals off the gum machines)*

RON: I like to watch her comb her hair. It's actually a brush. She brushes her hair. I like to watch her brush her hair. She could do it for hours. She does. I actually feel something inside me as I watch her brush her hair. Something in the back of my throat. It makes a small tearing sound when she uses the brush. I mean the brush makes that sound. Not really tearing. It doesn't tear her hair or anything. It just makes that sound.

*(RON goes upstage and watches PAM through the clouded glass of the crane machine)*

PAM: So.

RON: I just have a couple minutes. So. It's not what you think.

PAM: What do I think?

RON: That it is about you. That it is about how I feel about you. It's not how I feel about anything. It's not about feeling, at all. That doesn't matter. I would say your name.

PAM: Oh.

RON: There's only one thing that matters. And that's what I am going after. I'm getting closer every day. I'm close to it right now. Do you know,

I'm so close. It's not hard. I always thought it was so hard. It's not hard. The thing that surprises me is how clean it is. It's incredibly clean. I can wash my hands in it. It's that clean. I can feel you. I will be able to feel you. I will go through that door. I will swim through that glass. To success. And I will be able to feel you.

*Act 3, scene 21*



*Scene: Barroom. TED is seated at the bar, talking to the BARTENDER.*

TED: I can remember what it was.

BARTENDER: What 'what' was?

TED: I resented he had my success. I wanted him to be dependent upon me.

BARTENDER: Who?

TED: When he wasn't, I forgot who I was. I lost my height. I came down to his level. And he was up on my level. He was above my level. And I was down on his.

BARTENDER: Yeah. Who?

TED: He used to look up to me. And now I was looking up to him. And he made sure I saw all of this. He made sure I felt it.

BARTENDER: You want to know something?

TED: I might have been okay with it but he kind of followed me around letting me have it. I have to project my strengths. They don't know what it was like.

BARTENDER: Let me tell you something.

TED: How do I project my strengths to these assholes?

BARTENDER: Can I tell you something?

TED: I did not.

BARTENDER: Did not what?

TED: I did not like it. I resented he had my success. I am telling you something here.

BARTENDER: Sure. Can I tell you something?

TED: Are you listening to anything I have said?

BARTENDER: You resented his success. You told me that.

TED: Yes. And that's true. I never realized that. Until now. Just saying it. It tells me something.

BARTENDER: Oh yeah. Tells you what?

TED: I mean just saying it. Puts something in motion.

BARTENDER: Can I tell you something?

TED: Yeah. Sure. What?

BARTENDER: I don't give a tinker's fuck.

TED: What do you mean?

BARTENDER: What do I mean? The idea is like a tiny camera mounted on a balloon. A tiny camera mounted on a balloon is sent aloft. Of course it's a feeling. It's not a camera. Do you get that?

TED: Get what?

BARTENDER: Here is where we go aloft. Above to see over the treetops, see the surface of the lake shining—first thru the trees, and then all in the clear a flattened sheet of dim reflected sky. Like tin, like zinc, a bright gleaming gray. That's the sky reflected on the water.

We are taken up. So this is where I am. I had forgotten, I never knew. Of course there is no camera. We are taken up. This is where I am. I had forgotten. I never knew. This where I am. The crossroads of highway, streets, commerce, houses and park, and a flat sheet of water. It might be frozen water.

The silhouettes of trees arrayed in space, this changes of course as we float upwards. Do you get that? The land is divided by the trees, the land is joined to the sky by the trees and chimneys, by the roots of the trees running deep into the ground. I can see smoke from a fire. A wide street runs towards it. I remember it now.

TED: What do you mean?

BARTENDER: I drove by your house when it was burning.

TED: You drove by my house?

*(as TED and the BARTENDER talk RON is revealed upstage behind the scrim. He begins to cross-load his rolling luggage from another duffel bag. The duffel bag contains fire-starting materials...)*

BARTENDER: I saw your house burning before the fire had really taken off. I drove by when the front door was open and smoke poured out the top of the open door like a black upside-down waterfall. It was an unbelievable sight. I remember it. I drove past and I didn't stop. I didn't see any people running out of the house. The front door was wide open and the lights inside the house were on.

TED: Not me. I live in a condo. What are you talking about?

BARTENDER: It was a Sunday evening. It was raining, dark and blue and cold. I was driving to drop off a child. No one was talking. I drove past a house on fire. The front door of the house was flung open all the lights were on inside, and pouring out the open door over the porch eaves was a current of black smoke. It poured out the top of the open door. It looked like an upside-down waterfall. But black. No one was around. No one stood in the yard or looked at the fire or looked at the house on fire with the front door open and all the lights on inside.

*(RON finishes carefully packing his luggage. There are numerous plastic bags now hanging pendulously from his rolling suitcase. He exits)*

TED: Not me. I live in a condo.

BARTENDER: I thought it was odd I didn't stop.

TED: That's odd?

BARTENDER: I didn't see any people running out of the house.

TED: I told you.....

BARTENDER: The front door was wide open and the lights inside the house were on. I don't remember seeing any flames. I just remember the gray black smoke pouring up and out the open front door. Black smoke.

TED: Not my fire. I told you.

*Act 3, scene 22*

PAM: I want you to look into my eye. And tell me what you see.

You know that's what I want. But it's not that easy. If I can't keep the right face on and if you are looking into my eyes something could go wrong. You might see something in my face that I don't want you to see. Your eye contact is a little strong.

But then there is this other thing that happened. I got some baby powder in my eye. I don't know what happened. I went to the eye doctor I guess it's okay. Baby powder is kind of harmless. He asked how I got baby powder in my eye.

But then he gave me an eye exam, and so he turns off all the light in the room and it's dark. And quiet. He told me to close my eyes. And then he covered up my face with this mask. It felt like goggles. They kind of locked in. I was trapped in the chair by all this equipment. It was quiet. And then he told me to open my eyes.

I could see just a shining light really bright. It was blurry, but so bright it hurt. And then I could see something else. I could see something. I mean I could focus and everything. At first I thought I was looking at an underground cave, a round room carved out in the dirt, carved out in red clay, or something, reddish gray dirt. It looked like a place I could stand up in. And wet. Soft. Empty. So I looked around this room, this place, to decide where I was. Why was I seeing this place? I forgot where I was. But then I could see embedded in the round walls of this room, I could see blood vessels. I could see the blood vessels moving, and they were beating with my heart.

I was looking at my eye. My eye was looking into itself. You don't see yourself, but you do, you see inside your eye. There is nothing else.

There is the eye, looking at itself. It does look like a place you could stand up in. An empty room, just waiting for something to come in.

I mean, that's really who I am. I don't think you can look any closer than that.