

YESTERDAY STARRING A WOMAN NAMED, CALIFORNIA RED

A Drama and Dark Comedy in Two Acts

BY JOSEPH ROBINSON

Yesterday, Starring A Woman Named, California Red

Written by Joseph Robinson III

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This play has no previous production history

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CHARACTERS

CALIFORNIA RED — Female

PETE RED — Male

MICKY PAGE — Male

BARISTA — Female

ANOTHER BARISTA — Female

LISA (Voice Over) — Female

SAMMY — Male

LIONEL — Male

AA MEMBER — Female

TERRY — Male

LADY — Female

GEORGE JR. — Male

LENA — Female

TOM — Male

GEORGE — Male

JAKE — Male

MARGOT — Female

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

- California Red is a typically kind and fun person, with a good job and a great husband...the event of “yesterday,” though is so great that she is crushed in spirit; like her father, Terry, California is mean when she’s angry.
- Pete Red, is California’s loving, wise, supportive, and at times facetious husband, who also is heart-broken by the driving event of the play.
- Micky Page is an all-star business man and friend of California, Pete, and Lionel.
- Sammy Leland is California’s fun-loving boss and friend.
- Lionel is a friend of California, Pete, and Micky; he is a typically kind person, and owns a software company.
- Terry is California’s father; he truly is a good man, but we find him very angry and having a severe internal conflict; this isn’t anything new to Pete and California; they know this side of Terry well.
- Lady is California’s sweet and honest mother.
- George Jr. is the son of George and is eighteen, smart, and in need of family.
- Lena is George Jr.’s super nice, yet tough, mother.
- Tom is calm, brilliant, and just. George is conflicted; he has done something wrong in the eyes of everyone, though he stands by his innocence; he is a person bothered mentally.
- Jake is a kind-hearted priest.
- Margot is a mother who has lost her only child; she is angry, saddened, and lost.
- The two baristas are proudly kind, vain, efficient, and politically correct.
- Lisa (V.O.) is the typical hard-working office assistant.
- The AA Member is outspoken and young.

ACT 1 PROLOGUE:
The Next Day: A Prologue

Lights up. George and Tom in Tom's office.

GEORGE. I don't know why I did it, but, you know what, it's done - so let's move on. Soon.

TOM. It's not that easy, George.

GEORGE. You told me, "to the best of my ability" explain what I was thinking, and I believe, *to the best of my ability*, that I have done exactly that.

TOM. George, the problem is this: you just killed forty innocent people and then yourself -

GEORGE. I know that!

TOM. Then do better! (*Pleading.*) Period.

GEORGE. I... (*Beat.*) I can't.

TOM. George, look, you hurt a lot of people and we have court in three days; try harder.

GEORGE. Tom, then you don't get it.

TOM. Then what am I missing?

GEORGE. Everyone has been in my head for years now, and after therapy, and drugs, I came to one conclusion: kill myself.

TOM. But you killed others also.

GEORGE. Because justice eventually came to that point.

TOM. Excuse me?

GEORGE. I...

TOM. Whose justice?

GEORGE. Who cares?

TOM. Excuse me?

GEORGE. I don't know, God's, Satan's, the President's, no matter what, I was broken so I did what I did not to be broken. Am I sorry? Only if justice wasn't done. Period. Do you think I would just hurt people? I wasn't made for that; but honestly every bad thing I did I believe was warranted. These people tore me apart. I hurt just knowing that I existed there, or that they existed at all. Did they hurt me outwardly — physically? No. But I swear to you and to whomever is listening that they were there mentally. They were there, at that point, intentionally. Wholeheartedly. I saw through them. They were two faced. All of them.

TOM. So, you killed them.

GEORGE. It's not that simple, but I only had one option.

TOM. Murder is not an option, there are better ways -

GEORGE. It wasn't murder! It was justice!

TOM. Whose justice?

GEORGE. If I do something that is bad, or evil, consider this: I believe in hell...I fear it. I work against it so I don't end up there. So, why would I do something that would take me there? I don't want to burn forever. Come on. I wouldn't do bad things when I could be hurt by it. Am I fearful of the truth? No. But murder is not my truth. Justice is. It happened because it should have. Anything else is impossible. It happened because it should, not because it could.

TOM. It happened because it *should* and not because it could?

GEORGE. Right.

TOM. You, maybe not tactfully or eloquent enough for the court, but still something case worthy, and in your favor, finally said something. Good job, Kid.

GEORGE. I don't follow you, sir. What did I say?

TOM. That's fine, don't worry about it, the rest is up to me. By the way, I have never lost a case.

GEORGE. How many cases have you worked?

TOM. About four billion.

GEORGE. "About?"

TOM. Technically.

GEORGE. What's "technically?"

TOM. Sometimes I view every case as one big suit.

GEORGE. Oh. *(Beat.)* Am I really dead?

TOM. Are you Superman?

GEORGE. No?

TOM. Then you bet your ass, son. And, son, you died hard. You all did.

GEORGE. Damn.

TOM. Oh, also, you're fortunate to be tried here.

GEORGE. Why?

TOM. Because it's my home and I know you'll be given an honest case.

GEORGE. Why?

TOM. Because I am everyone and everything. Consider this a blessing.

GEORGE. *(Beat.)* How many of you are there?

TOM. I lost count.

GEORGE. Hm.

TOM. What?

GEORGE. Your home or not, everything is subjective. My life is still in the hands of someone else's opinion.

TOM. *(Beat.)* Duh.

Lights fade.

END OF PROLOGUE

ACT 1

SCENE ONE:

Another Next Day

Lights up. California and Peter at home.

PETE. Are you okay?

RED. I don't want to talk about it.

PETE. Why?

RED. Because I'm angry.

PETE. California, then you *really* should talk about it.

RED. I'm mad.

PETE. Like crazy?

RED. Don't be funny.

PETE. Then talk about it. Come on, California.

RED. Don't "come on, California" me.

PETE. Listen, honey, we need to talk about this.

RED. Or you could just understand me and go away.

PETE. Understand what? Because I'm getting a whole lot of nothing from you.

RED. Just go away.

PETE. So, I'm supposed to know something and do nothing about it?

RED. Nothing is something.

PETE. Let me try this again: So, I'm supposed to know something and do nothing about it?

(Silence. Peter can see he will get nothing else from her.) Fine.

RED. Alright, *Pete*.

PETE. Fine. *(Under his breath.)* Bitch.

RED. Fuck you, you motherfucker!

PETE. Whoa.

RED. Yeah, I said it. In the eyes of God!

PETE. Alright, Red.

RED. And you know what?

PETE. Please, tell me.

RED. Fuck him too.

PETE. Who?

RED. God.

PETE. Why?

RED. Because yesterday sucked! *(Beat.)*

PETE. So? Yesterday sucked, so that means everyday now sucks? *And it's God's fault?* What does he owe you? Nothing.

RED. I thought God is in control of everything.

PETE. He is, but we have a choice.

RED. I didn't choose bad. I didn't choose this. I didn't choose yesterday.

PETE. That's not how that works.

RED. Enlighten me.

PETE. Red, sometimes really bad things happen because we live in a place where, at times, evil has an at bat opportunity and gets a home run. Some battles evil wins.

RED. And sometimes it's only good people who are punished. Who asked for that? No one. It's God's fault.

PETE. That's a poor way to view things. That's a poor way to view life. We may be powerless at times but come on, Red, we can either get busy living or get busy dying.

RED. *(Beat.)* Did you just quote *Shawshank Redemption*?

PETE. Look, and yes, but look, just because your yesterday sucked doesn't mean you can go around saying, "[eff] God."

RED. But it's his fault, Pater. So, I am going to say this one more time: Fuck! God! *(She exits in a rage. Beat.)*

PETE. *(Looking up and speaking to, God.)* By the way, Jesus, I'm not always with her.

Lights out.

SCENE TWO:
Micky Page Get's Coffee

Lights up. Micky is in line at a cafe about to order coffee; he is next.

BARISTA. Next.

MICKY. Hi.

BARISTA. Hi. How may I help you?

MICKY. I would like a...a...is a Venti a small? I rarely buy coffee.

BARISTA. No, it's a large.

MICKY. To me it sounds small.

BARISTA. Grande is the small.

MICKY. That sounds huge.

BARISTA. I see.

MICKY. Good, because I'm becoming uncomfortable.

BARISTA. I'm sorry.

MICKY. Whatever, you're not the coffee king.

BOTH. That would be a lot of pressure.

MICKY. Right. Yeah, well, look, here's the problem, I want a large coffee, but I want to sound impressive, I mean, at least to myself, I want to sound like some huge massive muscle—ly man, do you understand?

BARISTA. I do.

MICKY. And listen, I'm not arrogant, I'm just really down today. Now, with that said, I want a large coffee — a Venti — but I need you to say it's a Grande when you call for my order pick-up.

BARISTA. But people will know that.

MICKY. What?

BARISTA. People know the difference between a Grande and Venti. They'll spot the cup and think we've gotten something wrong.

MICKY. *(He thinks for a moment.)* ...I don't really care. Besides, I didn't know.

BOTH. So, there must be other people who do not know.

MICKY. Correct. You're a - a winner.

BARISTA. The thing is, though, that could confuse new customers.

MICKY. Holy hell.

BARISTA. If they see it they may say it, and next thing you know, all we'll have here are huge problems. We're awfully vain here, sir. *(Beat.)* Proudly vain.

MICKY. You're awfully proudly vain?

BARISTA. *(Happily and proudly.)* Oh, yes.

MICKY. *(Disappointed.)* I'll never get what I want.

BARISTA. You could buy two grandes.

MICKY. ...Maybe...though...no, no, that's okay, I only have fifty dollars on me.

BARISTA. Our grande is only \$7.95.

MICKY. "Only?" If "only" you could hear yourself.

BARISTA. You're funny.

MICKY. Thanks. I appreciate that. I needed a boost.

BARISTA. Rough morning?

MICKY. Friend, you have no idea.

BARISTA. That bad?

MICKY. Yesterday was just awful.

BARISTA. Yeah?

MICKY. Yeah. Did you hear about the latest mass shooting?

BARISTA. I did hear that.

MICKY. This guy took a rifle into his place of work, killed forty people, and then himself.

BARISTA. I did hear that.

MICKY. These mass shooters somehow always get the order of things wrong. You're supposed to walk into an office building with an AK-47 - then kill yourself. Not others then you, just you... Your world is over, not ours. The thing about it is, and I hate to say it, but the truth is, that's my company he shot up. *(Beat.)* Yesterday sucked. *(Beat.)* Big time. *(Beat.)* I'll have a large hot black coffee, suck free, please. *(He extends his credit card. The barista hesitates.)*

BARISTA. I'm sorry, about yesterday.

MICKY. We all are. *(Meaning the deaths of the people.)* So many people...too many people...look I need to go - but I still need that suck free coffee. Please take my card I'm dying here. *(After a beat she does.)*

BARISTA. May I have a name?

MICKY. Micky...better yet, call me, Yesterday Sucked...

BARISTA. I need to keep it p.c.

MICKY. What? I thought when Trump won p.c. died?

BARISTA. *(Tickled.)* That's not how that works.

MICKY. Well, it should. *(Beat.)* Fine, say, "Y. S.

BARISTA. Okay. *(The Barista types in the name he gave, swipes his card, then hands the card back.)* Would you like a receipt?

MICKY. Yes. *(The barista hands Micky a receipt.)*

BARISTA. Okay, your order will be up soon.

MICKY. What's "soon?"

ANOTHER BARISTA. Grande black coffee for, Y. S.!

MICKY. Wow.

BARISTA. Yes, sir. We're proudly vain and proudly efficient.

MICKY. My god, you're like the Jimmy John's of coffee.

BARISTA. It is also just a black coffee.

MICKY. Simple stuff?

BARISTA. Very.

MICKY. I guess I'm a simple guy. *(Beat.)* Awesome. *(He takes his coffee.)* Have a nice day.

BARISTA. Same to you. *(Micky exits.)* Next.

Blackout.

SCENE THREE: California Confesses

Lights up. California is in her office. She works. After a couple beats Sammy knocks on the door.

RED. *(Presses a button on her office phone; it's an intercom to her assistant.)* Lisa?

LISA. Yes, Mrs. Red?

RED. I said to notify me when I have a visitor; who is knocking on the door?

LISA. Mr. Leland.

RED. Oh, alright. *(To Sammy.)* Come in. *(Sammy enters.)*

SAMMY. California.

RED. Hi, Sammy.

SAMMY. Do you know why I'm here?

RED. To bother me, boss?

SAMMY. *(He has no clue that her brother is the mass shooter.)* To give you an opportunity to confess your sins.

RED. Just mine?

SAMMY. Or everyone's, just be smart about it, no need to confess to crimes you didn't commit. Though...I could use a fall guy for an event back in 1997. *(Beat.)* What were you up to on May 10, 1997?

RED. What?

SAMMY. Never mind. Anyway, speak your mind.

RED. Alright, here I go: A good clean joke about death on TV is great to me, I masturbated 20,000 times before my first marriage, which is my current marriage, and my brother is a murderer. *(Beat.)*

SAMMY. Ohh-kaay. Look, Red, did I catch you at a bad time? Because I promise you, this confession game of ours used to be fun.

RED. *(Sarcastic.)* And right now it's not?

SAMMY. Right.

RED. (*Sarcastic.*) Dang-it. How dare I? Though, what if I'm not the problem?

SAMMY. In all my life I never seemed to be the problem, but here's a good question: Do you think it's me? Right now?

RED. (*Sarcastic.*) Hm. Maybe. Did I catch you at a bad time?

SAMMY. Red, what's wrong?

RED. That shooter from yesterday?

SAMMY. That crazed guy who killed forty people in his office building?

RED. And then himself.

SAMMY. And then himself?

RED. Yeah, him.

SAMMY. What about him?

RED. That's my brother.

SAMMY. Oh. Shit.

RED. Yep, just shit.

SAMMY. Holy, shit.

RED. You see, Sam, you really did catch me a bad tim..

SAMMY. Holy shit.

RED. Yeeeeeep.

SAMMY. I... I'm speechless.

RED. Who isn't?

SAMMY. Was he sick? I mean, actually crazy?

RED. I don't know.

SAMMY. Damn.

RED. That's my brother. Look, no one truly knows why he did it...but he did it.

SAMMY. What are you going to do?

RED. I have to give a speech.

SAMMY. On the news?

RED. Yes.

SAMMY. Which one?

RED. All of them.

SAMMY. Knowing you they should make sure their seven second delay is working.

RED. Shut up. (*Beat.*)

SAMMY. Do you need anything?

RED. Like what?

SAMMY. "Like what?" I don't know, these conversations never get this far, or personal — though I love you.

RED. Give it a shot?

SAMMY. Okay...how about a hug?

RED. (*Beat.*) What?

SAMMY. Do you need a hug?

RED. I'm sorry my ears must be clogged. Say that again.

SAMMY. Would you like a hug?

RED. May I rip your heart out you son-of-a-bitch?

SAMMY. Okay, relax, I'm leaving. I'm sorry about your...*this*. Your troubles.

RED. Yeah?

SAMMY. Yeah. *(Beat.)* Would you like the day off?

RED. No, not now. *(Beat.)* Okay?

SAMMY. Yeah, okay. *(Beat.)* I think, all things considered, you're taking this really well.

RED. *(She's about to lose it.)* Well, fuck, I didn't do it. Shit, I didn't do it. *(She begins to lose it.)* I didn't do it. I did not do it. I did not. I didn't. I mean, maybe it had something to do with me teasing him when we were kids, but fuck get over it you stupid bitch - him not me - because I didn't do it. I didn't. I just didn't do it. I just didn't. ... Did I? ... I mean ever since we reconciled in college we've been best friends. Right, so, I didn't do it. I didn't. I didn't care for his choice of women, but hell I'm family, I may be vocal. Come on: Carla was a gold digger, Susan was a cheating whore, and Lena West was practically retarded. I could be vocal. It's my right. Right?

SAMMY. Right.

RED. Shut up - I'm having a rhetorical breakdown - I mean conversation! I'm having a conversation! I'm having a conversation with myself! I mean - I mean - I mean - I didn't do it. I - I - I - Sam...tell me that I didn't do it. I, I need to speak to, Peter. I need to speak to my husband. He knows me. He knows where I was in 1997. He'll believe me I swear.

SAMMY. Red! Stop! *(Silence.)* Try to be calm. Please. This will be okay. This all will be okay. Deep breaths and a little time to relax will fix everything. Okay? *(Beat.)*

RED. What just happened?

SAMMY. It seemed like a panic attack. Are you alright?

RED. Yeah.

SAMMY. Good. *(Beat.)*

RED. I thought you were leaving.

SAMMY. Oh, right. I was, that is, until you flipped your shit, Woman.

RED. Fuck. I'm sorry.

SAMMY. I get it - not *it* - but I get it.

RED. I know.

SAMMY. Anyway, I should be on my way, California. *(Beat.)* Bye, Red.

RED. Bye, Sam. *(Sammy exits. Beat. Red drops her head onto her desk making a loud thud. Beat.)* Ouch. *(A couple beats pass then her office phone rings. She keeps her head down and reaches for the phone. She picks it up, and keeping her head down to speak, answers.)* Hello, this is, California. *(Beat.)* Hi, Peter. *(Beat.)* What now? *(Beat.)* You have to be kidding me. *(Beat.)* You're lying. *(Beat.)* You're right, I'm sorry, why would you lie about this. I'm just... I don't feel good. It's all of this. I'm so sorry. I will be in contact, okay? *(Beat.)* I love you. Okay. Bye. *(She hangs up the phone. Beat. She throws a heart broken, angry, disgusted - but concealed - so as to not be heard by anyone outside of her office - tantrum. After a couple beats she stops.)* I. Hate. My. Life.

Lights fade to black.

SCENE FOUR:

More and More and More and More, A Press Conference, Starring, California Red

Lights up. California Red is at a lectern giving a press conference.

RED. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, my name is, California Red, and I denounce and abhor everything that my brother did three days ago. There is no argument in favor for him, not even some secret thought that I will exhale on my deathbed justifying this event. I need to say, because I feel this, and this is true: I am truly sorry for the death and trouble that he brought onto you. The sadness, the hatred, he put into your hearts, the sickness that you were forced to witness I hate and I am truly sorry. Three days ago should have never happened. I hope it never happens again. If we are to gather anything from this, let it be how we hate and condemn this behavior as a species. I was notified yesterday that my brother was involved in even more great wrongdoing. Not only did he kill forty people but they found in his home three missing teenage...

(Speechless.) Teenage... You know what? Fuck him *(Beat.)*

Blackout.

SCENE FIVE:

Messages

Lights up. Red is sitting on the couch (feet and all) reading through messages on her cell phone from her brother. A couple beats pass. Pete enters with a glass of red wine that he hands to her.

Red immediately drinks the entire glass.

PETE. Wow. *(Red hands him the empty glass, which he takes and puts down. Beat. Red belches.)*
Wow. Also, ew.

RED. Mhm.

PETE. What are you doing?

RED. Reading through my messages.

PETE. All from, George?

RED. Yeah.

PETE. Does he say anything really out there?

RED. No. *(Beat.)* Did you really hate yesterday's press conference?

PETE. Of course I did. You can't say things like that on TV.

RED. It's not my fault no one's seven second delay box was broken. The world is against me.

PETE. Even still.

RED. I was just upset. I sort of...blacked out.

PETE. Okay...I...Look, Red, we need to talk about this all.

RED. M.

PETE. Red, do you understand how much I love you? Truly? *(Red hands Pete her cell phone.)*

What? *(She gestures for him to take it. He does.)* Read? *(She gestures for him to do so. He reads.)*

Beat. She gets up and walks into the kitchen and pours him a glass of red wine. She returns with it and hands it to him. Pete takes the glass of wine and drinks. Red sits close to him and they

cuddle as he continues to read. A couple beats pass. This is their safety position.) God he was so nice.

RED. I know.

PETE. I hate this.

RED. I understand. *(Beat. Pete puts the phone down and kisses her head. Beat. She begins to cry.)*

PETE. Let it out. *(Red cries for a few beats, then there is a knock at the front door that grabs them both. Red wipes her tears away.)*

RED. I'll get it.

PETE. Let me.

RED. No. I'll get it.

PETE. Okay. *(Beat. She doesn't move. A couple more beats pass.)*

PETE. When?

RED. Hm?

PETE. Did you mean, "I" as in "me?"

RED. *(Duh.)* Yeah - you get the door.

PETE. Cute, lady. *(Pete goes to answer the door.)*

RED. Pete?

PETE. Yes?

RED. If you tell anyone I was crying, I'll lie and tell them you're gay.

PETE. *(Sarcastic.)* Thanks, babe. You know what? I always had a thing for unnecessary conversations. *(He opens the door. It's Micky.)*

MICKY. Hi, Pete.

PETE. Hi, Micky, come in.

MICKY. Sure. *(While entering.)* Want to finish my coffee?

PETE. No. Ask, Red, though.

MICKY. Fine. Hey, i'm really starting to love this new habit of mine. coffee just may be man's best friend.

PETE. Funny.

MICKY. Right, aren't I a peach?

RED. Hi, Micky.

MICKY. Hi, Red. Would you like to finish my coffee?

RED. Is it old?

MICKY. It's fresh.

RED. Yeah. *(Micky hands her the coffee and she drinks.)*

MICKY. Were you crying?

PETE. And I said nothing.

RED. But you just did, Homo.

PETE. Watch it.

RED. *(Responding to Micky.)* And yes, I was crying.

MICKY. May I apologize for him?

RED. For, George?

MICKY. Yes.

RED. Because you *know* he's sorry?

MICKY. You're right.

RED. And if you do, ever, apologize for him, ever, know this: you will never be welcome here.

MICKY. Fine.

RED. After Pete and I beat your ass.

MICKY. You know, sometimes I wish you were a man.

RED. Why?

MICKY. So I could beat your ass.

RED. You're sexist.

MICKY. How?

RED. Would you like to rephrase you comment — because if I can go to war — I can fight a man.

PETE. (*Drinking his wine.*) Mick, she will beat your ass.

RED. Micky, have you ever fought a woman?

MICKY. No.

RED. Why?

MICKY. Because it would be too easy.

PETE. (*About the trouble Micky is inviting.*) Oh shit.

RED. You're totally lying about never being beat up by a woman. Look at you, you friggin' bottom. I bet she crushed you. Fuck you, Micky. You little boy. You. Little. Boy.

MICKY. Side note: If I had a dollar for every time I heard “fuck you, Micky” in the last three days —

RED. Who cares? What do you want?

MICKY. (*Under his breath; inaudible.*) Cunt.

RED. What?

MICKY. I called you a cunt. But not because you are, but because that's all you are.

RED. If I had a dollar for every time someone called me a named under their breath in last week

-

MICKY. You'd be rich.

PETE. Alright guys, we can start a fight club or we could order a pizza.

MICKY AND RED. Pizza.

PETE. Thank. God. (*Pete begins to exit to order a pizza.*)

RED. (*As Pete is exiting.*) You're getting fat by the way.

PETE. (*Exiting.*) It's a good thing you're easy. (*Micky laughs.*)

RED. Seriously, Micky, what do you want?

MICKY. To know that you're okay. (*Beat.*) Are you?

RED. I am. It's just, he wasn't like that. He wasn't a murderer-rapist.

MICKY. I know.

BOTH. Or he always was.

MICKY. This whole thing is causing too much conflict in me. I just don't know who I am anymore.

RED. How's that?

MICKY. I keep looking in the mirror and saying, "What do you know!? Nothing! You know nothing! You don't know people - you don't know you! Nothing! This is what your brother did to me, and for that, I hate him. I hate your brother.

RED. I understand.

MICKY. The worst part is, your brother, George, was the best employee I ever had. One of the nicest people I've ever met.

RED. Did he show signs?

MICKY. Of what he did?

RED. Yeah. Was he odd?

MICKY. No. Just normal and cool and awesome. He was lovable.

RED. Oh.

MICKY. You know, who knows what was going through that man's head? There's a strong part of me that wants only to hate everything about him.

RED. *(Me too.)* But we can't.

MICKY. Right. We can't hate everything about him when we don't know everything that was going on. Let those days ago be what they were and move on. He's seriously deleted from my vocab' list though.

RED. Seriously, before all of this happened, I'm telling you, those times when we needed a laugh or an elevated heart-beat he was there and he was good. Always. He wasn't perfect, but he was still good. He was meaningful.

MICKY. Two days ago sucked.

RED. What do you think he'd say about all of this?

MICKY. He'd probably say, "*What was he thinking?*"

RED. Yeah.

MICKY. *(After Red's line he is really upset by George's actions.)* What a bitch, though. He's just a piece of sh — *(There is a knock at the door. Pete enters.)*

PETE. *(Referring to the knock at the door.)* Pizza.

MICKY. That was fast.

PETE. They are known for their quick delivery. It's the Jimmy John's of pizza.

MICKY. What's the place called?

PETE. Johnny Jim's.

MICKY. Oh, I've heard of that place!

PETE. They're great.

RED. Is the door bell broken?

PETE. I don't know. I'll check it later. *(He opens the door.)* Hello.

LIONEL. Hi, Pizza. *(Pete notices it's, Lionel, a friend of the family.)*

PETE. Lionel?

LIONEL. Surprise!

PETE. Come in, dude. *(Lionel enters and Pete closes the door.)*

RED. *(She is very happy to see him.)* Lionel!

LIONEL. Hi, California.

RED. What are you doing here?

LIONEL. I just bought the pizza restaurant you apparently order from, and that's a total rip-off of Jimmy John's. And since I was in town, I just had to stop by. By the way, that'll be \$18.95.

PETE. *By the way?* It should be free now, Friend.

LIONEL. My ass, Pete. And don't forget to tip.

PETE. Oh I'll give you a tip.

RED. So, life in general is good for you?

LIONEL. Not necessarily. I bought this pizza place so my software company would have another source of income. We're actually not okay at the moment.

PETE. I'm sorry to hear it.

LIONEL. Me too.

MICKY. Hi, Lionel.

LIONEL. Hi, Micky. What took you so long? Just like my look?

MICKY. Oh, shut up and welcome home.

LIONEL. Thanks, buddy. Where is George? *(Beat.)*

PETE. You haven't heard?

LIONEL. What?

RED. Mr. Software developer doesn't watch the news?

LIONEL. What happened?

PETE. He snapped and killed forty people, then himself.

LIONEL. What?

PETE. Yeah.

LIONEL. That's not a funny joke, Pete.

RED. It's not a joke.

LIONEL. *(To Red.)* Red, come on, what is this?

RED. It's true. *(Beat.)*

MICKY. This doesn't mean he was suddenly evil one day. He was, maybe, sick.

LIONEL. God. *(Beat.)* He just messaged me five days ago.

RED. What did he say?

LIONEL. He sent me a song.

RED. What?

LIONEL. "Fox On the Run."

PETE. By, Sweet?

LIONEL. Yeah.

RED. Play it.

LIONEL. Yeah. *(He pulls out his cell phone and plays the song and all listen in silence. Red cuts the song short.)*

RED. Everyone get out.

PETE. C'mon, Red.

RED. You too. Go, get beer or something — just get out, all of you. Now.

PETE. Fine. *(Lionel, Micky, and Pete grab their things and make for the front door. Pete goes to give Red a kiss on the cheek but she stops him.)*

RED. Don't kiss me, get out.

PETE. Fine. *(The men exit. Beat. She sits on the couch in silence. In anger she takes the wine glass and throws it against the wall. It shatters. Silence. She cries.)*

Lights fade to black.

SCENE SIX:

PETE GIVES A SPEECH

Lights up. Pete is in front of an AA Group.

PETE. Before I begin, I would like to be honest about why I am with you all, today, this evening, in Alcoholics Anonymous. I'm not an alcoholic...not to my knowledge...but I was walking past and saw your sign, and I thought to myself, "well, I do have some things that I would like to share, to get something off my chest." Maybe to avoid becoming one. Because I do like alcohol. I like it a lot. Maybe I sound a little selfish, but I really need a moment. I know that we do not know one another, but we all know something: we know that life is important. Why else would we be here? Even if we do not know one another, we have a shared experience in this...life that we live side by side. *(Beat.)* My name is, Peter Red, and I am here to communicate an idea about responsibility: We are, all of us, responsible for ourselves, but we, at times, forget, or maybe we really don't know, that *ourself* is in no way void of others. I recall driver's education class, in high school, when my instructor told my class that we must "drive for others, not only ourselves." We must live for the true "ourself," which is us and others. That's our responsibility. For example, the day we marry our wife, or husband, we marry their world. It's never just you two. The single person dies. *(Beat.)* My brother-in-law is the man who killed all of those people in that office building and -

AA MEMBER. What the fuck?

PETE. I know. He did what he did, and it hurts; a lot of people were hurt - and not just the immediate victims, the people who he killed - but also those who have been effected by his actions. We should take from this the fact that we are responsible to more than ourselves; we are responsible for, or to, others as well. To drive my point home, when you feel like taking a drink, as a friend told me, "play the tape back..." You *know* what could happen if you do take that drink. Really bad things. Even if you feel that it's too much to be responsible for others in that context think about this: maybe *you* deserve a better life. I don't know you and you already mean so much to me. That's all. Thank you and God bless.

Lights fade to black.

SCENE SEVEN:

Breakfast

Lights up. Red and Pete are sitting at their breakfast table eating. He is telling her about the statements he made at the Alcoholics Anonymous meeting the night before.

RED. So, last night, instead of hanging out with the guys —

PETE. They were there —

RED. Okay, so you all went to AA, and you're not alcoholics — not to my knowledge —

PETE. Not to mine either —

RED. Not to our knowledge — and you gave a motivational speech?

PETE. That was a perfect team summary.

RED. *(After a beat.)* And then what happened?

PETE. And then we went to the bar and had a few drinks.

RED. *(Beat.)* Great. *(Beat.)*

PETE. What?

RED. Nothing, you're free to do such things. I get it too.

PETE. Yeah. *(They eat.)*

RED. Did you make any friends at AA?

PETE. Define friends.

RED. Okay: friends.

PETE. Define the word with the word and you'll only get nowhere.

RED. Did they go to the bar too?

PETE. You know, I don't really remember. *(Beat.)* Are you accusing me of being an enabler? I'm not an enabler if that's your point.

RED. *What am I getting at?*

PETE. I don't know. This all seemed innocent.

RED. It seems wrong that you used the death of those people to stand out in a crowd. I didn't think you were selfish. Maybe practical, but never disgustingly selfish. But if that makes you feel good, go on, keep taking advantage of people.

PETE. That wasn't the point.

RED. It's too bad that I wasn't there; then I wouldn't be missing the point.

PETE. You're the one who said go.

RED. I said leave the house, not go find broken souls and take advantage of them.

PETE. You should take the day off and do a character analysis, because where ever you are in your head right now, will not be allowed in this house. Ever.

RED. Yeah? And you are?

PETE. Someone. Something. Certainly not a punching bag.

RED. You really don't get what just took place these last few days, do you?

PETE. What's happening here? Who are you?

RED. Hurt! I'm crushed! I'm crushed and you go out with your pals and motivate other people while your wife is imploding.

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