Mutants (1981)
by Brad Fraser

It will be a long hard climb into professional theatre, but it will happen.

~BRAD FRASER QUOTED IN ASHWELL, JAN 1981

Few teen-angst plays are as compelling or as merciless as Brad Fraser’s Mutants. Wrenched from his own high school experiences in the late 1970s and blasted through his infamously unforgiving and violently creative imagination, Fraser’s first produced play introduced to Edmonton audiences his now internationally familiar scathing dialogue—what Edmonton Journal reviewer Keith Ashwell called at the time “a surgeon’s appreciation of the jugular” (“Mutants”). Two decades later this same sensibility would endear Fraser to audiences and critics in the UK, particularly at Manchester’s Royal Theatre Exchange, where two of his recent plays have opened, and in the United States, where Poor Super Man premiered. Given the controversial record of Fraser’s subsequent writing, it should be no surprise that while Walterdale’s board of directors nearly denied Mutants its first production, it was the company’s highest-grossing show that season and a direct catalyst for Fraser’s professional career.

Fraser was born in Edmonton in 1959. Following a difficult childhood, one that he has characterized as “nomadic” (quoted in Kirman) and “Dickensian” (Fraser, Interview), Fraser transferred from Edmonton’s Eastglen High School to the Performing Arts program at Victoria Composite. There, theatre teachers Bill Brumbalow and Don Pimm influenced his artistic impulses while he gained something of a cult-of-personality following among his artistically inclined friends.

By the late 1970s Fraser’s work was gaining notice. His play Two Pariahs at a Bus Stop in a Large City Late at Night won in the High School category of the Alberta Playwriting competition in 1977, and With Love From Your Son won in the full-length adult category the following year. Fraser also stage managed a Walterdale Christmas show, and in the fall of 1979 he designed for and appeared as Mr. Perry in Walterdale’s
production of Allen’s *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. In early January 1980 he appeared in the ambitious new Walterdale collective creation facilitated by Kevin Burns called *Shikata Ga Nai* (*It Can’t Be Helped*), in which he played the journalist Sadeo “potently” (Ashwell, “Rewrite!”). That spring, shortly after Quebec’s first referendum on separation, Fraser assisted director Stephen Heatley on Walterdale’s production of Tremblay’s francophone identity play *Les Belles Soeurs*. It was heralded as a “strong and frequently touching” Edmonton premiere (Ashwell, “Belles Soeurs”), with the English version staged at Walterdale and the French version staged at the University of Alberta’s Faculté St. Jean by Théâtre Français of Edmonton. Fraser then appeared as the artist Verezzi in Walterdale’s production of Walker’s *Zastrozzi*, the first Walker play performed in Edmonton. By the time he began rehearsals for *Mutants* at the age of twenty-one, Fraser had already spent two summers in the Banff Playwrights Colony and had worked as a freelance writer for CBC Radio and ACCESS television, all while employed full-time at a graphic-arts supply company. With emerging Edmonton director Heatley as his “consultant” on *Mutants*, Fraser was prepared to navigate Walterdale’s production conditions as director of his own play.

The formation of professional companies such as Theatre 3, Northern Light Theatre, Theatre Network, and Workshop West Theatre in Edmonton during the 1970s had created a vibrant Canadian play atmosphere in which Walterdale was, by the early 1980s, eager to participate. The 1980/81 season was remarkable in terms of Walterdale’s Canadian play programming: Canadian writers penned half of the season’s productions.31 It was also remarkable for controversies related to Fraser, only part of which involved the premiere of *Mutants*.

The season-opening production of Walker’s *Zastrozzi* that October had created a stir. The board, which became aware of the play’s controversial material in the summer, voted to ban “total nudity” from the production despite the demands of the script’s stage directions and strong objections from three board members. The issue stemmed from discussions regarding the opening of scene seven, in which Fraser’s character, Verezzi, “is naked.” Despite the board’s ban on total nudity, Fraser elected to do a few performances without underwear. And he made sure, along with the actor playing Matilda, that the simulated sex that opened the scene was visually and vocally “offensive” (e-mail to author, 2007). For weeks the board fielded letters from disgruntled audience members who, in response to Fraser dropping trou, threatened to drop their season subscriptions. One such letter featured the flowery prose of a “long term supporter” who thought that in attending *Zastrozzi* she had sat “in the wrong pew.”

It was in this charged environment that a revised version of Fraser’s new play made its way into the hands of then board president Judy Tilley. The original draft of *Mutants*, Fraser estimated, would have run about seven hours: “It was everything I’ve ever wanted to say about everything” (quoted in Ashwell, “Mutants”). When some concerns were raised about the content of the now considerably shortened draft, Tilley sought advice from Walterdale’s long-time membership. The ensuing commotion divided Walterdale mainstays: some felt the play’s language and terrorist-style treatment of an adult youth worker were too much for the stage, while others “fought like hell” to keep it in the season (F. Glenfield, Interview), calling it a well-crafted piece by a promising writer.
The controversy found its way into the November board meeting, which Fraser attended. There was much discussion about the play’s initial length, its “stylistic vs. realistic presentation, offensive language, and topical subject matter” (Walterdale, Executive, November 1980). In a preview interview in the Edmonton Journal, Fraser responded succinctly to the now-public accusations: “My position is it’s colloquial. What people call offending words are not there for effect—I do nothing for effect, or I try not to” (quoted in Ashwell, “Mutants”). The board agreed to honour its commitment to produce Mutants in a vote from which eight members abstained (some admitting that they had not read the play in advance of the vote). The board agreed that a language warning would appear in all advertising. Auditions attracted a high turnout from local high school students. Years later, those board members who supported Mutants recall they did so with enthusiasm that evening, seeing in it the kernel of an already strong and undeniably promising artistic voice.

Mutants received “positive and enthusiastic” reaction, as reported at the first board meeting following the run, with solid 69 percent houses through to closing night. Fraser’s work out-drew the other six Walterdale productions that season, including Zastrozzi, Ibsen’s The Lady from the Sea, and Labiche’s The Italian Straw Hat. But the production also sparked opinionated debate among audiences and reviewers. Its angry portrayal of ageism was immediately played out in the local media. Keith Ashwell opened his Edmonton Journal review as if shouting back at the play:

Brad! What did I do? Why did you beat up on me like that?

I came out of this show feeling I had to apologize. But to whom? For what?

I’ve never, not wilfully at least, been the cause of adolescents going bad. I don’t think I’ve even been guilty of denying their individuality, even by default, and yet Fraser never let up on me.

I, representing adult society, was accused and condemned of an incredible catalogue of anti-social actions committed by the six delinquents in Mutants. And from them—hardly a word of remorse! (“Writer”)

And in the University of Alberta’s student newspaper, The Gateway, Emma Goldman wrote:

But there is no way Fraser could subdue the play to make it less offensive to the middle-aged, middle-class family-type Walterdale patrons. They won’t understand the play because they cling blindly to the system of values that Fraser attacks.

For example, upon leaving the theatre Tuesday night I heard one of Edmonton’s well-known theatre critics comment, “Now that he has gotten this out of his system, maybe he’ll be able to write a play.”
Evidently it was not the twenty-somethings who were offended by the language and content they had been warned about in the show’s publicity, but the “middle-aged, middle-class family-type[s]” who donned their moral armour. If various demographics found little to agree on, one thing seemed clear: Fraser was a playwright with opinions and something to offer both the art form and society.


Fraser’s years at Walterdale were mutually beneficial. A few months after _Mutants_ premiered he was elected member-at-large on Walterdale’s board, but by the following November, having not had the opportunity to attend meetings, he withdrew. The next year the board considered commissioning him to write a new play, but this did not come to pass. Walterdale had given Fraser a very public start, and he had added to the company’s production history of original, well-produced, and controversial fare.

_Mutants_ captures six young “delinquents” in a condemned office building in the midst of kidnapping their group home counsellor, Mr. Goldwyn, in order to attract media attention to their mistreatment and to their general lot in life. But their plans backfire when they also kidnap Jett’s straight-and-narrow friend Christine (daughter of the province’s minister of culture), Judy reveals to Jim that she’s pregnant with his baby (“Mutant children. How scary,” observes Jett), and Jett is shot dead during an altercation with Plato. Fraser’s skillful use of monologues and a Brechtian chorus give the play’s us-versus-the-system theme a theatrical punch that was noted in reviews at the time. It offers strong, believable parts for young actors and deals convincingly with contemporary issues, including the treatment of prostitutes and young offenders as well as the use of terrorist tactics and fear to gain advantage and public notice. And yes, the play carries a language and content warning. That it is suitable not only to be seen but also to be performed by teen actors is clear. Importantly, subsequent productions of
Mutants will likely replay the same discussions in which Walterdale members and the Edmonton community engaged at the time of the play’s premiere.

*Mutants* ran January 27–February 7, 1981, at Walterdale Playhouse (firehall) with the following cast and creative team:

- **JIM**  Brian Rodomski
- **CAL**  Greg Dovell
- **JETT**  Les Bland
- **PLATO**  Phil Zyp
- **JUDY**  Darcia Parada
- **CHRISTINE**  Collette Hebert
- **ABRA**  Kat Mullaly
- **GOLDWYN**  David Nattress
- **COP (OFF-STAGE VOICE)**  Keven Smith

- **DIRECTOR**  Brad Fraser
- **ASSISTANT DIRECTOR**  Mark Plaudis Wilson
- **CONSULTANT/WORKSHOP DIRECTOR**  Stephen Heatley
- **SET DESIGNER**  Jeff Unger
- **LIGHTING DESIGNER**  Tom Robertson
- **STAGE MANAGER**  Deb Preston

*Program cover designed by Brad Fraser for his first produced full-length play, Mutants, for Walterdale Theatre Associates, Jan–Feb 1981.*
Mutants: A Play in Two Acts
by Brad Fraser

Characters
JIM
CAL
JET
PLATO
JUDY
CHRISTINE
ABRA
MR. GOLDWYN
VOICE (OFFSTAGE)

Setting
The top floor of a condemned office building. Lots of radiators, windows,
ledges and things.

Notes
Be imaginative.

This play is for Kat and Brian.

Act One

A lone spot on Jim.

JIM
(Whispers) Are you here? (Pause) Hello. (To Audience) Hello. (Pause) I’m
Jim. (Pause) Hot in here, isn’t it? (Pause) I – I – uh – have some things to
say. I have – you know – words. (Pause) It’s just so hard to do. It’s finding
the right words. I know them, but I don’t know them, if you understand
any of that. No. I didn’t think you did. It’s like – sometimes you get fed
up. The rules. You know. After a while you can't put up with it anymore.
You’ve got to do something about it. You’ve got to say...

The others speak from the darkness.

ABRA
We’ve had it!

PLATO
We’re through!

JUDY
We’re finished!

JET
We’re done!
And we’re finally going to do something about it.

*A lone spot on Cal.*

In my house it’s very warm. In my house it’s dim and all the shadows are very soft. My house is on a hill, beside some trees and in front of some clouds. In my house it’s very soft. And I never hear anything but the sounds I like to hear. *(Pause)* Except sometimes, when I hear the far away, muffled sound of thunder in the distance. I don't like the thunder. But it’s far away. In my house I’m always safe. And not even the thunder can get me.

Cal?

Not even the thunder.

Cal?

Not even the thunder.

*Blackout. Lights up on set. The others enter. Cal follows Jim blankly. Jim holds a gun to Goldwyn's head.*

*(Pushing Goldwyn down)* Sit there.

And don’t move!

Christine?

Where is she?

I don't think she’s here.

She’s got to be. Christine.

I thought you said we could rely on this broad Jett.

I did.

I don't think there’s anyone here but us.

Maybe she’s in one of the other rooms. *(He wanders off to find her)* Christine. Christine?

We’re fucked if she’s not here!
JIM We’re not fucked yet. Don’t go and get all excited until we know what’s happening. *(Jim sits down)* Now you stay there.

JETT *(Entering)* She’s not here.

ABRA Now I’ll get excited. *(To Jett)* What the hell do you mean she’s not here?!

JETT I can’t find her anywhere.

JIM Jett, are you sure you told her to meet us here?

JETT Yes Jim.

JIM And she knew it was this building? She didn’t get it confused with someplace else?

JETT She knows the building.

JIM Well maybe she’s just late.

PLATO And maybe she’s on the phone with the cops right now.

JETT Christine wouldn’t do that!

PLATO How do we know that?

JUDY She gave Jett the gun didn’t she?

PLATO Lota good that was. It didn’t even have bullets in it.

JETT I told you, she couldn’t find the bullets.

JIM At least it got us out.

ABRA That’s right. And if it weren’t for the gun we never woulda got Goldwyn to come with us.

PLATO *(Pulling out a switchblade)* I could’ve got Goldwyn to come with us.

ABRA Would you put that thing away.

JIM And what would you have done if someone had seen us. Fought off six guards with a knife?
PLATO  I might've.

JUDY   I don't blame Jett's friend for not coming up here. This place gives me the creeps.

PLATO  I think it's great.

ABRA   You would. It's a dump.

PLATO  Some people like dumps.

ABRA   Yeah, and some people like vanilla.

PLATO  You're a real riot.

ABRA   And you're a royal pain in the ass!

JIM    Alright! Let's not start fighting already. We've got a lot to do tonight.

JUDY   We can't do much until Jett's friend gets here.

JETT   Her dad probably wanted her to do something, so she couldn't get out when she was supposed to.

JUDY   How well do you know this girl Jett?

JETT   I've known her for years. She'll be here Jim. I wasn't lying.

JIM    I know.

JETT   Good. I wouldn't lie to you.

JIM    I know that.

ABRA   What if they found out she was the one who gave Jett the gun, and picked her up?

JETT   She wouldn't talk.

ABRA   Jesus, they could be surrounding this place right now.

JIM    Alright Abra. That's enough.

ABRA   This isn't a good place to hide out. It's right uptown.
And where would you suggest we go?

We didn't exactly have time to get a car and get outa town.

But why this building? It's so obvious.

I told you, this is the best place. We used to come up here and party all the time. No one ever caught us.

I don't like this place either.

If this thing's going to work we've got to stick together.

It's gonna be a piece of cake.

If we're lucky.

All we gotta do is make one phone call, right?

Hell, I can make that phone call as easily as she could.

I don't think that would be very smart.

Why not?

Because they're going to be looking for us by now.

So I'll stick to the alleys. They won't see me. Which paper do you want me to call?

Maybe later.

You think I'd go out there and just fuck it up.

Don't be stupid.

Don't you trust me?

Look, there are all kindsa people out on the streets right now. You might be able to get away with it, but what if you don't?

Jim's right.

Jim's always right.
It must be thirty in here.

At least.

Rub a dub dub. Three men in a tub. And who do you think they be...

(He trails off)

(Goes to Cal) You okay? You need anything?

He’s not going to answer you.

(Going to window) It seems like years since I’ve seen downtown. All those lights...

Get out of the window – someone might see you.

Sorry.

I wonder if our parents have heard yet.

They’re the first ones who those bastards’ll get in touch with.

My dad’s going to be pretty upset.

Mine too.

I’d give anything to be able to see my old lady’s face when they tell her I’ve escaped. She won’t sleep for weeks. I hope she gets ulcers worrying about me. I hope she gets fucking bleeding peptic ulcers.

Cal rises and wonders around the set. Jim goes to him.

You’d better sit down.

Night of the living dead or what?

(Sits Cal down) Just stay here.

(To Jim) Does he ever answer you?

(Before Cal can answer) No.

Goldwyn begins banging his feet against the floor. Plato walks up and slaps him, almost casually, across the head.
PLATO   Shut up ya old fart.

JIM     Don't hit him Plato.

PLATO   But I like to hit him.

JIM     Well don't. *(Takes Goldwyn's gag off)* What is it?

GOLDWYN I can’t breathe through that thing.

JIM     You've done fine up to now.

GOLDWYN Look, Jim, you’ve got to let me go...

JIM     *(Putting the gag back on Goldwyn)* Don't want to hear it.

JETT    Christine should be here any minute now.

PLATO   Y’know, this building’s been condemned for years. *(To Judy)* You want to see the rest of it?

JUDY    I don't know...

PLATO   C’mon, it’s not haunted.

JUDY    Well, okay.

PLATO   This way for the guided tour of Plato’s House of Horrors.

JUDY    Oh good, a tour.
(As they exit) Looking to your left we have the De Sade room.

(Referring to Plato) He pisses me off so much sometimes.

You know what Plato’s like.

He’s always so fucking down on everything.

I don't think he tries to be like that.

I don't think we should’ve brought him Jim. I don’t trust him.

I can handle Plato.

You sure of that?

Yes.

Maybe if I went out onto the roof I could see Christine from there.

Just make sure no one sees you.

It’s just that ... I’d feel so horrible if she didn't show up after you guys trusted me and everything.

I think I’ll go with him. It might be cooler.

Abram and Jett exit.

(To Goldwyn) Guess you’re pretty pissed at me huh? Can’t blame you really. But we had to do this Mr. Goldwyn. We did. But don’t worry. No one’ll hurt you. We just need you – to make sure they listen to us. You’ll be okay.

(Begins rocking) Rub a dub dub. Three men in a tub. And who do you think they be? The butcher, the baker, and the candlestick maker...

That all you’ve got? Nursery rhymes? (Goes to him) You're not fooling me Cal. I know you're still in there. Somewhere. And I’m going to get you back here. Somehow.

(Entering) No cooler. What’re you doing?

Nothing.
ABRA How are you?

JIM Huh? Oh, okay. You?

ABRA I’m scared.

JIM Don’t start doubting Abra.

ABRA You know if anyone else tried to get me to do what we’re doing now I would’ve told them to piss off. But I really think you can do it Jim.

JIM We’ve got to try.

JETT (Enters) No sign.

JIM We’ll give her a little longer. If she’s still not here we’ll have to try something else.

ABRA What?

JIM One of us’ll have to call the papers.

ABRA Not Plato!

JIM Of course not.

ABRA Who then?

JIM I’ll go. But we’ll have to wait until pretty late.

   *Abra finds a discarded newspaper.*

   *Abra findings a discarded newspaper.*

ABRA Look at this.

JIM Anything in it?

ABRA No.

JETT I’ve always wanted to be in the paper.

ABRA As long as it’s not the obituary section.
(To audience) In the newspaper! Wow, would that be great! We could be heroes. Celebrities! People would know our names. I can see it already. My name in the newspaper. It would be just like in the movies. Or all those comic books I used to read. (Pause) They don't make comic books like that anymore. I – I don't usually tell people this, but I love comic books. Always have. I collect them. Or I used to. But I stopped when they changed. Comic books now, they aren't like they used to be. When I was a kid. They were really great then. I mean, the heroes were really heroes. Superman, Batman, the Creeper, the Shadow, Captain America. Now those guys were great. They never stopped to worry about whether or not what they were doing was right. They just went in there and slapped the shit out of those criminals. But they’re not like that anymore. People don't want to read that kinda thing. They want their heroes to be just like they are. They want them to have problems and hang-ups and neuroses just like everyone else. Or they want them to be movie stars, or junkie rock and roll singers, or people who write about all the crappy things in life. They don't want heroes at all anymore. They want people just like themselves, with maybe a bit more talent. No one wants to be someone better than who they are anymore. Maybe that’s why there are no heroes.

I can just see it on the four p.m. newsflash. Fat Girl and Friends Take Guidance Counselor Hostage. Details at six.

Or, Courageous Youths Risk Lives to Blow Whistle on Provincial Institution.

That's not bad.

We could be in *Maclean's*.

Or *Chatelaine*.

(Entering with Judy) Yeah, and maybe someone’ll set fire to the bottom floor and we’ll all burn up here.

And just where have you two been?

We were off – chatting. You know Jim this was the best place to come. There’s only one entrance onto this floor of the building.

Good.

Well, your friend show yet?

No. Not yet.
Judy: That’s really great! (To Jim) Have you figured out what we’re going to do if she’s chickened out?

Jim: One of us’ll have to make the call.

Judy: Which one?

Jim: We’ll decide that when we do it. We can’t go out for a while anyway.

Judy: So we wait.

Jim: Yes. We wait.

Plato: We wait.

Pause. They all wait.

Abra: I hate waiting.

Plato: Me too.

Pause.

Jett: You know, when my father reads this in the paper tomorrow, he always reads the paper first thing, I hope he understands.

Judy: I’m sure he’ll try.

Plato: I think your father’s going to disown you the minute he hears about this.

Jett: Plato...

Plato: Aw c’mon “buddy” you know I’m only funnin’ ya because you’re such a great kinda guy.

Jett: (Quietly) No. I guess you’re right. He won’t understand.

Judy: Do they ever?

Jett: Sometimes they try.

Plato: But do they ever succeed.

Jim: How can we expect them to?
They don't know anything but where they're from. And Christ knows that's a different place.

*Theatrical light change.*

**Judy**

Different planet.

**Jett**

Father?

**Abra**

Mother?

**Jim**

Do you...?

**Judy**

Can you...?

**Plato**

Will you...?

**Abra**

Have you ever tried to understand me Mother? Have you ever really made the effort to look beyond the image of me you've always held in your eyes?

**Jett**

I'm a person father. I laugh. I cry. I get in trouble. I win. I fail. I have things to say. I have opinions. I have ideas. I have feelings.

**Judy**

I'm desperate and I'm angry and I'm lonely and sometimes I want to punch you in the face and sometimes I just can't make myself care anymore.

**Jim**

And sometimes I want you to stop existing.

**Abra**

And sometimes I want to hurt your feelings as much as you've hurt mine.

**Judy**

Tramp!

**Jett**

Fairy!

**Abra**

Fat!

**Plato**

Loser!

**Judy**

Irresponsible!

**Jett**

Immature!
ABRA  Lazy!

PLATO  Destructive!

JUDY  Just like your father.

JETT  Just like your mother.

ABRA  Good for nothing.

PLATO  More trouble than you're worth.

ABRA  You should be ashamed!

ABRA  Did you pray for me mother? Did you say make my daughter smart? Make my daughter beautiful? Make her slim and svelte and attractive to men?

JETT  Did you pray for me father? Did you say, make my son strong? Make him handsome and tall and good at all things. Make him a football player or a hockey player or a prize fighter?

JUDY  Father.

PLATO  Mother.

JIM  My parents divorced when I was seven years old. My father was an asshole who didn't want anything out of life but a bottle and a lot of snatch to sleep with and when he left for the last time my mother had a type of breakdown and they took her away from my brother and me. My old man filed for a divorce and since neither of my parents would take responsibility for us we were put in an orphanage. I never saw my mother again after that. They tell me she killed herself. My father we never heard from again. We were in the orphanage for about three months before someone adopted my brother Tommy. He was four then. I felt bad about it, but a little bit relieved too. Because now that he was gone I didn't have to feel like I had to stay there to take care of him. I missed him sure, I missed him a lot. But I knew he was better off with his new family. And with him okay I could start making plans to get out of the fucking orphanage. So two days after he was gone I ran away. They caught me of course. But I never stopped trying to run after that. Every time one of the nuns turned her head I was gone. Usually they caught up with me within a couple of days.

Lights return to normal.
PLATO  No one’s going to believe us. They’ve never believed us before, why the hell should they start now? Why don’t we drop this whole thing and get the hell out of the province?

JIM  Because we have to do more than just get out of the home.

PLATO  So why can’t we just ride write them a letter from Saskatchewan or something?

JIM  It’s not just for us Plato. It’s for the other kids there too.

PLATO  Fuck the other kids. They’ve never done anything for me.

JIM  We can’t lose sight of things now that we’re out.

PLATO  Why won’t any of you ever listen to me?

*Plato walks away from the others.*

CAL  Rub a dub dub. Three men in a tub. And who do you think they be? The butcher, the baker, and the candle stick maker...

JUDY  Can’t you stop him from doing that?

JIM  What do you want me to do? Gag him?

JUDY  It’s starting to get on my nerves.

JIM  What did Plato say to you to make you so bitchy?

JUDY  Why do you always try to blame everything on him?

JIM  Forget it.

ABRA  I think I liked you two better when you were in love.

JIM  Stay outa this.

ABRA  Fine. *Abra walks to Cal and sits beside him* I’ll spend my time with someone who appreciates the true sensitivity of my nature. *To Cal* Hiya chatterbox, read any good books lately?

JIM  *(To Judy)* Why are you so mad at me?
JUDY I’m not mad at you.

JIM Well there’s something wrong.

JUDY Is there?

JIM What did you have to talk to Plato about?

JUDY Nothing important.

JIM Suit yourself.

Jim begins to move away.

JUDY Later. Okay?

JIM Okay.

ABRA (To Cal) So, what do you think of Kubrick?

JIM Leave him alone.

ABRA Sorry. You guys know how manic I am. Just ignore me. I’ll – uh – sit in this corner and read the paper or something.

Abra sits in the corner and reads the paper.

JETT (To Jim) He really did a lot of acid huh?

JIM Yeah. We all did.

JETT How come you didn't turn out like him then?

JIM I’m not sure.

JUDY (Joining Abra) Anything interesting in the paper?

ABRA Not much.

PLATO Has that thing got a sports section?

ABRA (Handing it to him) There ya go.

PLATO Thanks.
ABRA  You really used to hang around up here?

PLATO  We used to skip school up here.

ABRA  Why didn’t you just hang around the Seven Eleven like everyone else?

PLATO  Seven Elevens have no style.

JETT  How long have you known him?

JUDY  Since about grade six.

JETT  Jeez, that’s a long time to be friends.

JIM  Yeah, I guess it is.

JETT  Any of the friends I’ve had have never lasted more than a few months.

JIM  Really? Why not?

JETT  I don’t know.

JIM  Well how long have you known this Christine?

JETT  Christine doesn’t really count. She’s more like my sister or something.

ABRA  (Who has returned to reading the paper) Listen to this. “Mother puts Baby in Microwave Oven to Exorcise Demons.”

JUDY  Lovely.

JETT  (To Jim) You ever done cocaine?

JIM  Oh yeah.

ABRA  Here’s another one. “Nun Bludgeons Mother to Death With Crucifix.” (Laughs) I love it!

JETT  I’ve never really done anything but smoke drugs.

JIM  Reefer is a real downer. I like something that’s going to pick me up.

JETT  Acid picks you up?
Acid shoots you right into the fucking sky.

“Newborn Baby Thrown From Moving Car.” Christ!

That’s sick.

You ever done heroin?

Couple of times. It was just chipping though.

“Terrorist Group Bombs Cathedral.”

Boring.

Was Cal, like an addict?

He was like an addict.

“Drinking Water Contaminated By Nuclear Wastes.”

What do you mean?

I don't think he was physically addicted to drugs.

There are other ways to be addicted?

Sure.

“Acid Rains Exterminate Wildlife.”

Like how?

Like when nothing’s fun anymore unless you're stoned right out of your mind.

Is it really that great?

Yes.

“Junior High Suicide.”

Sounds like a song.

Can you describe it?
JIM No.

ABRA “Unidentified Remains Found by School Children.”

JETT Try.

JIM I can’t.

ABRA “Father Rapes Four Year Old Daughter.”

JETT Why not?

JIM I don’t know the words to use.

ABRA Oh good, another article about the energy crisis.

JUDY Which one?

JETT Is it anything like being drunk?

JIM No. It’s nothing like that. It’s like – like being in a good mood.

ABRA This newspaper is the most fucking depressing thing I’ve ever read.

JIM If everything was made outa chrome and lit with trails of moving neon that’s what acid’s like.

ABRA Even the weather report’s depressing.

JETT I don’t think I understand.

JIM Don’t you ever want to get away?

JETT Sure. I like to escape.

JIM That’s what it’s all about. Escaping.

*Lights change theatrically.*

CAL Rub a dub dub. Three men in a tub. And who do you think they be? The butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker...

ALL BUT JETT Acid. Acid. Acid. Acid. There are only three things to soothe my soul. They’re sex. They’re drugs. They’re rock and roll. I’ll fuck ’til I drop.

PLATO An ode to acid.

ABRA Ah little piece of paper. It is you that makes Friday nights fun again. It is you that gives life to all the old discos and sparkle to the conversation of mundane people. It is you that brings me up when I’m falling down and gives me the energy to go on and not care when I would be ready to stop. It is you that lets me soar above the heads of the boring and laugh at the frustrating.

JIM Ah little pill, little paper, little tablet, soothe me once more with the reality you alter and the brain cells you destroy.

JUDY Tingle my body and distort my vision. Make me witty, make me beautiful. Set the world afire and stop the bleeding in my soul.

PLATO Save me once more from the bondage of mediocrity. Lift me my little piece of paper.

ABRA My little bug of fun.

JIM My little lover of life.

ABRA My little friend.

JIM My little piece of paper.

BOYS But I’ll pay your evil price if you’ll take that away. I may forget my name but I’m alive today. Suck onto my body, bore into my head. If you live your life fast it doesn’t matter if you’re dead.

GIRLS It doesn’t matter if I’m not loved. I don’t care anymore. Once I’ve popped you into my mouth, I’ve evened the score. Rents can rise and atomic bombs can fall. The children unborn don’t care at all.

ALL But give me for a moment the luxury of escape. Enter my system, don’t make me wait. Take away the loneliness, take away pain, and when it rises once more, kill it again. I’m tired of caring and I’m sick of this shit. So I’ll pay my five dollars and hide away from it. Acid. Acid. Acidacidacid.

Lights return to normal.
PLATO Where the hell is she?

JETT I don't know.

PLATO It's like a fucking oven in here.

ABRA So take some of your clothes off.

PLATO Very funny.

ABRA I will if you will.

PLATO Abra the last thing I want to see right now is your humongous sagging tits.

ABRA Slightly sagging tits.

Goldwyn begins to bang his feet against the floor.

JETT Now what?

Goldwyn continues to bang his feet.

PLATO (To Goldwyn violently) Shut the fuck up!

Goldwyn stops.

JIM (To Goldwyn) Don't be difficult, please. You've got nothing to worry about.

PLATO I wouldn't be too sure of that.

JIM And you leave him alone.

PLATO You gonna make me?

JIM If I have to.

PLATO I'd like to see that.

JIM Don't fuck with me Plato.

PLATO Sure boss.

JIM What the hell's wrong with you?
PLATO: I’ll bite, what’s wrong with me boss?

JIM: You never used to be like this.

PLATO: I guess I’ve changed.

JIM: Yeah Plato, you’ve changed.

PLATO: I wouldn’t worry about it too much.

Christine enters, unseen by the others. She stands at the back of the set and watches for a moment.

JIM: Don’t fuck this up.

PLATO: You threatening me?

JIM: I’m not going to let you ruin this.

PLATO: How are you gonna stop me?

CHRISTINE: Jett?

They all turn, very startled.

JETT: Christine!

ABRA: Well, it’s about time.

JETT: We were beginning to think you’d never show.

CHRISTINE: The stuff you need’s in that bag.

JIM: Thanks.

JETT: Boy Chris, you really had us worried for a while there. But I’m glad you’re here anyway. And don’t worry about being late. How are you?

CHRISTINE: Fine.

JETT: There’s some buns and stuff in here if anyone’s hungry.

ABRA: (Going for the bag) Let me at it.
CHRISTINE  There’s a bottle in there too. I though you might like something to drink.

PLATO  *(Pulling bottle out of bag)* Alright!

Plato begins to drink. He will continue to drink throughout the act.

JETT  Where’d you get that?

CHRISTINE  Dad’s bar.

JETT  Is there something wrong?

CHRISTINE  No. No. I’m fine.

JETT  You look sorta funny.

CHRISTINE  Do I?

JETT  Yes.

CHRISTINE  Oh.

ABRA  Well aren’t you going to introduce us to your friend Jett?

JETT  Of course. Christine, this...

ABRA  *(Interrupting)* Hi there. My name’s Abra. You must be Christine. I’ve heard so much about you. I have no morals.

CHRISTINE  Uh – hello.

JETT  Abra’s such a card.

ABRA  Yeah, funny fat girl. I’ve heard it all before.

JETT  And this is Judy.

JUDY  Hi.

JETT  Plato.

Plato waves indifferently.

JETT  And Jim.
JIM  Hello Christine.

ABRA  How do you like us so far?

CHRISTINE  *(Indicating Goldwyn)* Why is that man tied up like that?

ABRA  It’s the only way we know how to tie people up.

CHRISTINE  Jett, what’s going on here?

JETT  I told you. We escaped from the home.

CHRISTINE  You never told me you were going to tie other people up.

JETT  We had to take him.

CHRISTINE  Why?

JIM  We need something to make sure that if the cops find us they can’t do anything. Taking someone from the home hostage was the best way to do that. We’re not going to hurt anyone. We just need some insurance.

CHRISTINE  I don’t like any of this.

PLATO  We’re not doing it for you.

CHRISTINE  Well I brought the stuff you needed. I think I’d better go now.

*Christine begins to exit. Jim motions for Jett to stop her.*

JETT  Chris, wait.

CHRISTINE  What?

JETT  Why are you taking off so fast?

CHRISTINE  I really should get home.

JETT  But don’t you want to stay and talk to me or anything?

CHRISTINE  Look Jett, I’m sorry, but the only reason I came was because I promised I would. But I’m not going to stay. I could get into a lot of trouble.

JETT  I know that Chris, but – I’ve missed you.
CHRISTINE Jett, do you know the police are looking for you?

JETT Yeah, well I figured they would be.

CHRISTINE You're going to be in a lot of trouble.

PLATO Too late.

JETT We're already in a lot of trouble.

CHRISTINE I don't think I want to be involved in this.

ABRA I thought you said we could trust this chick.

JETT We can trust her.

CHRISTINE Jett, if my dad found out I was helping you he'd have a fit. You know that.

JUDY I don't think I want her to help us.

JETT I know I've asked a lot of you Chris. But really, I wouldn't do it if it weren't very important.

CHRISTINE Jett, you're me best friend. But you know what dad's like.

ABRA What is this with her father? She makes him sound like Hitler.

JETT Chris's father is with the provincial government. He's very uh – aware of his public image.

JUDY With the government?

CHRISTINE He's the Minister of Culture.

PLATO Well La-de-fucking-da.

ABRA Great Jett, you didn't tell us she was one of them.

JETT One of whom?

ABRA One of them.

CHRISTINE I'm not one of them.
PLATO  Who's them?

ABRA  Shut up!

JETT  Stick around for a while. Please.

CHRISTINE  Well I suppose a few minutes won’t hurt.

PLATO  *(To Judy)* Drink?

JUDY  Yeah, thanks.

PLATO  When’re you gonna tell him?

JUDY  As soon as we know what’s happening.

PLATO  I was thinking that maybe, you know, if you didn’t want Jim to know, we could like take off.

JUDY  Take off?

PLATO  Yeah, leave. Jim would never have to know.

JUDY  You want me to leave with you?

PLATO  Yeah.

JUDY  Plato, I can’t do that.

PLATO  Why not?

JUDY  It’s Jim’s baby.

PLATO  He’s not going to care. He’s more interested in his faggot friend Cal.

JUDY  That goddamn Cal.

PLATO  I’ll take care of you Judy. I’ll get a job and be just like the kid’s real father. You’ll see.

JUDY  I don’t think so Plato.

PLATO  Why not?
JUDY: It just wouldn't work.

ABRA: (To Jim) What're those two whispering about over there?

JIM: Who knows?

PLATO: (To Judy) Why do you all follow him around?

JUDY: He means a lot to me.

PLATO: And what about me?

JUDY: You're a very good friend Plato. I like you. But I want to stay with Jim.

PLATO: Jim's an asshole! Come with me?

JUDY: I can’t!

*Judy walks away from Plato.*

ABRA: What are you two fighting about?

JUDY: Nothing.

*Abra goes to Plato.*

JETT: (To Christine) Have you seen Aaron lately?

CHRISTINE: Not since you went into the home.

JETT: He didn't come visit me or anything.

CHRISTINE: You know what Aaron's like Jett.

JETT: Yeah. (Short pause) It doesn't really matter anyway. I've got a whole new set of friends now.

CHRISTINE: These people are really your friends?

JETT: You've just got to look past what they show people. They're – nice.

PLATO: (To Abra) If you don't quit breathing down my fucking neck I'm gonna cut your tits off!!

Mutants 113
ABRA Yell at someone you can scare fuckface!

CHRISTINE Nice?

JETT Well Plato’s sort of an off one.

CHRISTINE He looks like a lunatic to me.

JIM (Approaching Jett and Christine) Excuse me. I’d like to talk to you for a moment Christine, if I may. I think it’s very – kind of you to help all of us out. Considering you don’t even know us.

CHRISTINE Oh, it wasn’t much trouble.

JIM No, I’m sure it was a lot of trouble.

CHRISTINE Okay, it was, kind of.

JIM It takes a very – concerned person to stick her neck out for a group of strangers like you have.

CHRISTINE I never thought of it that way.

JIM I can see why Jett’s always spoken so highly of you.

CHRISTINE Jett, what have you told them?

JETT (Not quite sure what’s happening) Oh, you know...

JIM Christine...

CHRISTINE Yes?

JIM I realize it’s not very fair of me to ask anything else of you...

ABRA Here it comes.

CHRISTINE What is it?

JIM Well we have one more thing I need.

CHRISTINE One more thing?

JIM Yes.
CHRISTINE (Her suspicion returning) What is it?

JIM I don’t know how much Jett told you about what happened in the home.

CHRISTINE Not that much.

JIM Well, you see, we didn’t escape from that place just to get away. I mean, there were some very heavy things going down.

CHRISTINE What kind of things?

JIM The things aren’t really important. What is important is that we’ve got to do something about it. And we’ve got to do it fast.

CHRISTINE What do you want me to do?

Cal rises.

CAL Thunder.

Pause.

JIM We have to call the newspapers.

CHRISTINE What?

JIM We have to call the newspapers and get some publicity happening. That’s the only way we’re going to be able to tell people what’s going on.

CHRISTINE (To Jett, indicating Cal) What’s wrong with that guy?

JETT Drugs.

CHRISTINE Figures.

JIM All it’ll take is one quick phone call.

CHRISTINE What kind of drugs?

PLATO (Violently) Never mind that! Listen to what the hell he’s trying to say to you!

CHRISTINE Don’t you yell at me you bloody psychopath!
PLATO  What did you call me?

JIM    Plato, she didn’t mean it.

PLATO  She called me a psychopath!

JETT   She didn’t mean it.

CHRISTINE  Yes I did.

PLATO  Loud-mouthed little bitch!

JIM    Slow down.

CHRISTINE  Jett, I’m getting out of here right now.

JETT   Wait a minute...

CHRISTINE  These people are all crazy!

PLATO  *(Very loud)* No!

Pause.

PLATO  We can’t let her go. She thinks we’re all crazy. She’ll probably be on the blower to the cops the minute she gets out of here.

JETT   No.

PLATO  Her father works for the provincial government – the bourgeois slut.

JUDY   I think you’re going a bit too far.

PLATO  Am I? Do you want to take a chance?

ABRA   Maybe he’s right.

PLATO  Do you want to see all your precious little plans turn to shit. All it’ll take is one wrong word from her and bang.

JETT   Stop it Plato.

PLATO  Bang.
ABRA  Jim, we can't take the chance.

CHRISTINE  *(Turning to exit)* I don't believe this.

PLATO  You'd better stop her.

JIM  *(Going to stop Christine)* Goddamn you Plato!

CHRISTINE  Let go of me!

JIM  I'm sorry – we can't let you leave now.

CHRISTINE  *(Slapping Jim)* Get your hands off me.

JIM  *(To Christine, reasonably)* I can't let you go.

CHRISTINE  You are all crazy!

JIM  Just a few hours until we can get out to make that phone call ourselves.

CHRISTINE  You can't do this. This is illegal. This is – this isn't right.

JIM  I'm sorry.

*Christly begins to scream, very loud. Jim slaps her.*

JIM  Please don't make this any harder.

CHRISTINE  *(Trying to escape)* Let go of me you bastard! Let me go! Jett, make them let me go. *(Pause)* Jett? *(Very shocked)* Jett! You can't keep me here! I'll – I'll have you all arrested. I'll scream! I'll run away!

JIM  Abra, give me the rest of that rope.

JETT  Jim, do we have to?

JIM  I'm afraid so.

CHRISTINE  You wouldn't dare.

*Judy and Abra hold Christine. Jim goes to the chair Cal is hiding under.*

CHRISTINE  Someone's going to pay for this.
ABRA  So call the cops angeltits.

CHRISTINE  Jett you little coward, how can you let them do this to me?

JETT  I’m sorry.

Jim ties Christine to the chair.

(To Christine) There. That’s not too tight is it? If it’s uncomfortable just say so and I’ll loosen it.

Christine begins to scream again. Jim raises his hand. She stops quickly.

JIM  It doesn’t make me feel good, hitting girls. But don’t fuck with us.

JETT  Christine...?

CHRISTINE  You’re supposed to be my friend.

JETT  I am your friend.

CHRISTINE  Friends don’t tie each other up.

ABRA  My friends do.

JETT  We just can’t take any chances.

CHRISTINE  But I wouldn’t tell anyone anything.

JETT  It’s only for a few hours. We’ll let you go as soon as we call the reporters.

CHRISTINE  I hope you all get caught!

JETT  Don’t say that!

CHRISTINE  I do! I hope you all get caught and they put you in prison for life!

JETT  If we do get caught we probably will go to prison. Most of us’ll be eighteen next year.

CHRISTINE  Good.

JUDY  (To Jim) Things don’t seem to be going according to plan.
I know.

Don't go getting drunk.

Don't worry about me.

(To Christine) You don't mean that do you? About us getting caught.

No. I didn't mean it.

I didn't think so.

But I'm really mad at you.

(To Plato) Gimme a swig a that there bottle partner.

Plato hands her the bottle. Abra drinks and chokes.

You – uh – sure you're not drinking too much?

(Warningly) Abra...

Plato takes out his switchblade and begins to clean his nails with it.

I've always liked you Plato.

Yeah?

I used to like you more though.

Pause.

You're going to cut yourself with that thing.

(Laughs) I doubt it.

Can I see it?

No.

Why not?

No one touches my spike but me.
ABRA  Hmmph, a phallic surrogate. I knew it all along.

PLATO  I think it's more of a subliminal defense mechanism made tangible in slight phallic representation.

ABRA  Is that the knife you got that teacher with?

PLATO  Yeah.

ABRA  Did he need stitches?

PLATO  Sixteen I heard.

ABRA  You're really scary sometimes.

PLATO  *(Rising)* He never shoulda came at me like he did.

ABRA  Where are you going?

PLATO  Out onto the roof.

ABRA  Why?

PLATO  It's too hot in here

ABRA  Someone might see you.

PLATO  So what?

ABRA  Why don't you care about this thing as much as the rest of us?

PLATO  Because it's a stupid idea Abra. *(Forming his hand into a gun and pointing it at Abra)* Bang.

ABRA  Stop being so stupid.

PLATO  *(Aiming at Jim)* Bang.

ABRA  Stop that.

PLATO  *(Aiming at Goldwyn)* Bang.

ABRA  Jeez!
CHRISTINE  Jett, I have a Chemistry exam tomorrow.

ABRA  So what?

\textit{Judy touches him.}

JUDY  You're so soft. I love the way that hair feels right there.

PLATO  (Who is observing all this from outside) Fucking Jim. Why do they all look up to him so much?

ABRA  Because he's handsome and has a big dick.

PLATO  He's as fucked up as the rest of us.

CAL  Rub a dub dub. Three men in a tub. And who do you think they be? The butcher, the baker, and the candlestick maker...

\textit{Cal begins to rock.}

JIM  Cal?

JUDY  There's nothing you can do for him Jim.

JIM  He looks so... (He trails off)

CAL  (The rocking increases) Rub a dub dub. Rub a dub dub. Rub a dub dub. Rub a dub dub... (The rocking becomes nearly violent)

JIM  (Shaking Judy off) Cal. (And going to Cal)

JUDY  Jim?

JIM  Cal? What's wrong Cal?

\textit{Cal rocks harder.}

JIM  Stop it.

\textit{The rocking grows.}

JIM  Stop it!!

\textit{Cal suddenly goes limp in Jim's arms.}
Jesus Fucking Christ!

(Remaining limp) In my house, it’s very warm.

Lights change theatrically.

Cal? Shit Cal... When’s it going to stop? How many times do I have to say I’m sorry? I’m so tired Cal? I want to talk to you again. I need you here. They’re all watching me all the time. I didn’t mean it. Really. It was just that – I was tired. It was all going too fast. We were losing touch with things. You always said we lived life like characters in a movie or a book. That we had an obligation to do all the things the hung up people wouldn’t do. And we could do all the drugs and all the drinking and all the driving and all the fucking they were too scared to do. Hey, do you remember the time we picked those four chicks up at the club? What a riot! The looks people gave us when we walked out of there! And that time we booted that MDA and played on the swings in the park all night? But something happened. Somewhere we lost sight of things. We were doing things because that’s what people expected us to do. We stopped being a couple of friends out for a good time and became what everyone wanted Jim and Cal to be. I got busted three times in a year. I got kicked out of school. You got kicked out of the house. I don’t know what was happening – but things were changing. It was like we had to keep getting faster or things – I don’t know what – things would catch up with us. I think – I think maybe we were trying to destroy ourselves. And I don’t know why. Well except for our really fucked up families.

In my house it’s very warm.

That’s why I had to get away.

In my house it’s very nice.

But I never thought you’d do – this.

And no one can get in.

I know you can hear me in there.

Not even the thunder.

Cal?

Lights return to normal.
CHRISTINE  Jett, I’ve got to study for that exam.

ABRA  Get off his back, would ya?

CHRISTINE  I wasn’t talking to you.

ABRA  Ooh, the cheerleader’s got a little fight in her after all.

CHRISTINE  You don’t scare me. And I’m not a cheerleader.

ABRA  Don’t be stupid. Of course you are.

JETT  No Abra, she’s not.

ABRA  Well she should be.

A spot on Plato.

PLATO  It’s like an anger. It’s like a loneliness. It’s like some wired indefinable emotion welling up inside you. It’s like you’re the only person in the world and no one else can understand. (Pause) Mostly it’s anger. (Pause) Mostly it’s not knowing. (Pause) When I was in tenth grade they kicked me out of school for the first and last time. I’d always been a super student. I mean, I’m not talking nothing, but a ninety average since the first grade practically. And I didn’t even have to try. No studying, nothing. I just knew things.

Anyway, when I hit high school I finally decided to hell with it. I mean, being brilliant and dependable had never gotten me anything but in fights with the other kids anyway. So I stopped going to classes. I still turned in my assignments. I still wrote the tests. I still got the highest marks in class. But within a week the principal was on the blower calling me down to his office. It started out pretty funny. I mean, the old fart was trying his hardest to be diplomatic and understanding about the whole thing. He hemmed and hawed for a while until finally I got fed up with the whole stupid thing and said Look man, why don’t you cut the shit and get to the point. Well, that kinda shocked him. There was this sorta pause. And he said, Alright. I’m afraid if you don’t start attending class we’re going to have to ask you to withdraw from school. I said, why should I go back to class when I can maintain my marks without being there? He said if they were to make an exception for me they would have to make an exception for everyone in the school and they were running a school with some thirteen hundred students in it and they couldn’t go about catering to individuals. I told him he could shove his school and
his goddamn classes up his fat cocksucking asshole. He told me to get the hell out of his office. I said I’d love to and kicked the window out of one of his bookcases. He came at me across the desk. I don’t like it when people rush at me. He called me a crazy little bastard and grabbed me. That was it. The old anger came up again. I tried to control it, but I couldn’t. As soon as he grabbed me I pulled my spike outa my boot. I ended up cutting his arm open. Someone heard the noise and called the cops. I’m not sure what happened after that. Someone said I tried to knife the cops too. I don’t know. (Pause) Sometimes you gotta fight back. Sometimes you gotta let them know that even if you can’t win you’re going to fight them.

*Plato sits on the ledge and pretends to shoot people on the street. Goldwyn interrupts them by banging his feet against the floor.*

**JIM** Jesus! *(Going to Goldwyn and removing his gag)* What is it now?

**GOLDWYN** Jim, this isn’t going to work.

**JIM** We’ve got to do this.

**GOLDWYN** Why?

**JIM** Because – because we have to.

**GOLDWYN** Who are you doing this for?

**JIM** Us. We’re doing it for us.

**GOLDWYN** But you broke the law. Probation didn’t work. Foster homes didn’t work. You had to go into the home.

**JIM** There are things you don’t know about.

**GOLDWYN** What kind of things?

**PLATO** Don’t tell him anything.

**JUDY** You wouldn’t believe us anyway.

**GOLDWYN** Is this that Lucy Jordan thing again?

*Lights change theatrically.*

**ABRA** Lucy Jordan.
JETT  Lucy Jordan.

JUDY  Feet swinging.

JIM  Lucy Jordan.

JUDY  Neck angled.

PLATO  Lucy Jordan.

JUDY  Dried blood around her mouth.

ABRA  Lucy Jordan,

JIM  Lucy Jordan.

JUDY  Lucy...

JIM  Yes. It’s got a lot to do with the Lucy Jordan thing.

*Lights return to normal.*

CHRISTINE  *(To Jett)* Who was Lucy Jordan?

JETT  Lucy was a friend of ours – theirs.

CHRISTINE  What happened to her?

JUDY  They say she killed herself!

GOLDWYN  But she did kill herself!

JUDY  She wouldn't kill herself.

GOLDWYN  Judy, the coroner’s report said that...

JUDY  I know. I’ve heard it all before.

GOLDWYN  How else could she have died?

JUDY  There’s no use talking to you!

GOLDWYN  I don't understand what any of you are talking about?
Jim Leave it alone Mr. Goldwyn.

Jim moves to put the gag back on.

Goldwyn No! I’ll keep quiet. Please.

Jim (Considers a moment) Well okay, but you’ve got to keep your mouth shut.

Christine (To Jett) How long have you known these people?

Jett I told you, since I went into the home.

Christine I take it they all knew each other before that.

Jett Yeah, they’ve known each other for a long time.

Christine Why were they in there?

Lights change theatrically.

Abra (Stands) Runaway. Truancy. Shoplifting.

Plato (Stands) Breaking and entering. Auto theft. Assault with a deadly weapon.


Jett (Stands) Shooting six dogs.

Lights return to normal.

Abra What?

Jett Shooting six dogs.

Abra Why the hell did you shoot six dogs?

Jett I hate dogs.

Plato Don’t worry Jett. I understand. Sometimes you just have to kill dogs.

Goldwyn Jim?
Yeah?

You'd better watch Plato Jim. He’s very – unstable.

He's a little pissed right now, but he’ll come around.

He’s angry because the others follow you, not him.

No one’s following anyone.

They’re all following you. They’re all depending on you. And you know it.

We’re doing this thing together!

Plato could ruin everything you’re trying to do here.

Isn’t that what you want?

I think I understand what you’re doing.

Don’t patronize me.

I know where you’re coming from.

Oh Christ!

I understand your position. Jesus Jim, I come from practically the same background you do. I grew up in foster homes.

Good for you.

If this thing fails you won’t go back to the home.

I know.

You’ll go to prison.

(Indifferently) I know.

If you go to prison Cal won’t go with you.

What?

If this thing falls apart you’ll go to prison and they’ll put Cal somewhere where they can take care of him.
JIM    It won't fall through.

GOLDWYN They probably won't let you see him. They’ll say you forced him to come here with you. That he’s not responsible for his actions.

JIM    There’s nothing wrong with him!

GOLDWYN How can you say that? Look at him

JIM    He’s just fucking around.

GOLDWYN Jim he’s retreated from reality completely!

JIM    No. He’s still there. He’s just – hiding or resting or something for a while.

GOLDWYN Come on Jim. I grew up in the sixties. I saw what those kinds of drugs did to people. Speed. Mesc. Acid. It was a lot stronger and a lot cheaper then than it is now.

JIM    He’s not dead.

GOLDWYN Why do you feel so obligated to him Jim?

JIM    He’s my best friend.

GOLDWYN What happened? I really thought we were making progress in the home.

JIM    You also thought Lucy Jordan committed suicide.

GOLDWYN Who would want to hurt her?

JIM    There was so much going on there that you never knew about.

GOLDWYN What?

JIM    The drugs, the sex, the fights. Couldn’t you see any of that?

GOLDWYN We were – aware of some of the things the kids were doing.

JIM    You stupid asshole! I’m not talking about the kids! I’m talking about the fucking guards!

Pause.
GOLDWYN The guards?

JIM (Putting the gag back on Goldwyn) So fucking blind. You don’t deserve to hear anything else!

A spot on Judy.

JUDY I met Lucy Jordan the last time I ran away from home. It was just after my sister’s funeral, and my dad and I were fighting again, and I finally decided “to hell with it.” I was so goddamn tired of hearing about what a disappointment my sister was, and how I’d turn out just like her, that I figured I had to get out or lose my mind. So I packed my things and left. I’d met Lucy before, through some kids I knew, and since she was the only person I knew who didn’t live at home, I went there. She was great. I mean she really cared about me. Well I moved in with her and we started hanging around with Jim and his gang. It was Lucy that first got me into working the streets. I was sort of nervous at first, but Lucy’d been at it since she was fourteen and she didn’t seem to have any trouble handling it. It wasn’t all that bad. You got some weird tricks sometimes, and the occasional dose, but nothing really awful happened. Jim and Cal were hustling then too, so it wasn’t all that bad. And after the night was over we’d all get together and laugh about what we’d done. (Pause) In the home, Lucy was the bravest of us all. Braver than Jim even. I mean, she didn’t take shit from anyone. When she didn’t like something she said so. No one messed with her. She was a tough BITCH. I guess that’s what finally did her in. (Pause) In a lot of ways Lucy was a lot like my older sister. They were both very brave. Now they’re both dead. (Pause) I hate to think it, but maybe there’s something to be said about being afraid. At least the rest of us are alive. (Pause) But I’ve got to admit, if I could start back in the home again I’d carry a knife with me, just like Plato does. And the first time one of those bastards came up to me I’d run it up his belly so fast he wouldn’t have time to fall before his guts spilled all over his feet.

Lights return to normal.

ABRA This waiting is driving me out of my mind.

JIM I’ll go out right away.

JETT Do you want me to come with you Jim?

JIM Thanks but no.

JUDY Are you sure? What if someone catches you?
JIM     They catch me.

ABRA    Maybe Judy or I should go. They’re less likely to stop a girl than they are a guy.

JIM     I think I stand a better chance of getting away.

JUDY    But we need you here if something goes wrong.

PLATO   (Entering) I could go. Maybe I should go, huh Jim?

JIM     Maybe.

PLATO   You mean you might let me go?

JIM     I’ll think about it.

PLATO   I wouldn’t screw anything up.

JIM     Okay. Don’t get all excited. We’ve got a little while yet.

PLATO   I know what to do.

JIM     Okay. I’ll let you know.

ABRA    (Confidently, to Jim) You’re not serious?

JIM     Of course not. But if it’ll keep him quiet for a minute...

PLATO   I’d just phone the paper and say, let me talk to the editors.

CHRISTINE (To Jett) Do you really think that’s such a great idea?

JETT    What?

CHRISTINE Calling the papers like that?

JETT    Of course it’s a good idea. Jim thought of it.

CHRISTINE Please, let’s get out of here.

JETT    I’m sorry. I can’t. They’ll let you go when Jim goes out to make that phone call though.
CHRISTINE: But I want you to come with me.

JETT: I can't do that Chris.

CHRISTINE: I'll find someplace to hide you.

JETT: I just can't.

ABRA: (Who has been listening) Good stuff!

CHRISTINE: You've been listening!

ABRA: I had to listen to something.

CHRISTINE: That's rude!

ABRA: So my manners are bad. Sue me. Jett's not going to let you go.

CHRISTINE: What have you done to him?

ABRA: We made friends with him.

CHRISTINE: Tried to make him just as sick as the rest of you.

ABRA: He's comfortable with us.

CHRISTINE: He doesn't know any better.

ABRA: You talk just like a TV commercial.

CHRISTINE: And the filthy way you talk is better I suppose?

ABRA: I say what I've got to say. People understand me. That's the important thing.

CHRISTINE: If people understood you, you wouldn't be where you are right now.

ABRA: What would you know about it?

JETT: Abra, please...

CHRISTINE: I know your type.

ABRA: It takes a type to know a type.
CHRISTINE  You're a cliché!

ABRA    And you're going to get a punch in the mouth in about three seconds!

CHRISTINE You're really tough when I'm tied up!

ABRA    Tied up or not, I could rip your face off anytime!

CHRISTINE Fat girls don't scare me!

ABRA    You bitch!  (To Jett) Untie her, I'll show the stuck up scuz a thing or two!

JETT    Stop it Abra.

ABRA    I'll rip her arm off and beat her with the wet end!

CHRISTINE  (Loughs) You're ridiculous!

ABRA    Shut your mouth you fucking FAG HAG!

*_Long pause._*

ABRA    Sorry Jett.

JETT    Don't worry about it.

ABRA    I didn't mean to say that.

CHRISTINE I'm not a fag hag.

JIM     Abra, leave them alone.

CHRISTINE  (To Jett) Why did she have to call me that?

JETT    She didn't mean it.

CHRISTINE I was your friend before I knew you were gay.

JETT    I know.

CHRISTINE I'm not a fag hag.

JETT    Of course you're not.
CHRISTINE: I'm not afraid of men – or sex.

JETT: Don't let it get to you Chris.

CHRISTINE: Other people have said that too.

JETT: What the hell do they know?

CHRISTINE: They all know about you too?

JETT: Sure.

CHRISTINE: It didn’t bother you to tell them?

JETT: No.

CHRISTINE: You’ve changed.

JETT: Whatever I do is cool with them.


JUDY: Don’t you dare!

PLATO: I will.

*Abra joins them.*

ABRA: What’s going on?

PLATO: Mind your own business Pork.

CAL: Rub a dub dub. Rub a dub dub...

*Jim goes to Cal.*

JUDY: You think they’ve ever made it with each other?

ABRA: I dunno.

JUDY: Most guys do when they’re close like that.

PLATO: I slept with you Abra.
ABRA    Please...

JUDY    You ever sleep with Cal?

ABRA    No. You?

JUDY    Once.

ABRA    How was he?

JUDY    Not bad. Thick.

PLATO   Remember when I slept with you Abra?

ABRA    I don’t like to Plato.

PLATO   Why not?

ABRA    We were both very drunk.

PLATO   How was I?

ABRA    You were a two.

PLATO   A two?

ABRA    On a scale of one hundred.

PLATO   A two?

ABRA    You’re a real sloppy drunk.

PLATO   Sometimes I cry too.

JETT     (To Christine) Okay, so maybe they’re not the most stable people in the world. But they make me feel like one of them.

CHRISTINE You’re so different.

JETT     A place like that changes you. (Pause) There were a lot of really rotten things happening there.

CHRISTINE What things? People keep talking about these things, but I still don’t know what they are.
JETT Just things.

(To Abra) What're we going to do if we're caught?

JUDY (To Abra) What're we going to do if we're caught?

ABRA Who knows? I know I won't go back to the home.

CHRISTINE: What kind of things?

JETT I don't know if you'd understand.

CHRISTINE I'll try.

JETT Well, there are these guards that work the night shift...

CHRISTINE Uh huh?

JETT They – uh – they do things to the kids in there...

CHRISTINE Things again.

ABRA Are you retarded? Do we have to spell it out for you?

Lights change theatrically.

JIM The home.

ALL The home.


JETT Let me out.

JIM In black marker.

ABRA Fuck the world.

JUDY Scratched into the paint.

PLATO There are no heroes.
Jett I wrote that.

Plato Slaughter the rich.

Judy He wrote that.

Abra Girls are virgins. Girls are sluts.

Jim I’m losing my mind. I’m going nuts.

All Watching your back. Watching your front. Fighting with the boys. Fighting with the girls. Knives made from razor blades. Scars across a wrist. Drugs smuggled in. Porn for trade. Secrets in the shower room. Someone planning an escape. The night staff...

Jim The night staff.

Abra The night staff who take the place over when it’s been shut down and all the kids have gone to bed.

Judy Four men with the power and lack of intelligence to stop any rebellion that might form in the night.

Jett Four men in one of the lounges playing cards. Drinking beer. Waiting for the safety of midnight.

Plato Then, when the lights are out.

Jim And they’re sure most everyone is asleep.

Abra They throw down their cards and hitch up their pants.

Judy Step into the halls and tap on your doors.

Jett And you can hear them moving your way from the bed. And with every step they get closer to your door. And you hear their feet, and you hear the heaviness of their breathing. And they’re getting closer and you shut your eyes and you pray, not me. Please not me. Not again tonight. Not me.

Abra And their whispered voices carry the dirtiest words of all.

Plato And those words are...

Jett Delinquents.
JIM        Fuck ups.

PLATO      Useless garbage.

JUDY       Good for only a few things.

ALL        And they tap on your door. And they tap on your head. And they enter your room. And they enter your bed. And they say, “Wake up little boys. Wake up little girls. Get out of your bed and get out of your underwear and get onto the floor and get onto your knees and get onto your back and get onto your belly” and they run your hands over their thighs and they run their fingers through your hair and they fill you up and make you hurt and make you choke and they pinch you. And they pant in your face and they let their sweat splash on your skin.

JUDY       Leave me alone!

JIM        And there’s not a goddamn thing you can do to keep them from coming in.

ALL        You hear the grunts and you hear the cries and you hear the moans and you hear the screams. And you want to yell out and you want to pound the floor and hit at the walls and claw at the windows and smash your head against the cement and yell “Make it stop. Make it stop!”

JUDY       But you can’t.

ALL        Because how the hell do you fight the ones who are abusing you when everyone thinks they’re helping you.

PLATO      And even if you told them they wouldn’t believe you anyway.

JIM        And they’d make you very sorry.

JUDY       Just like they made Lucy Jordan very sorry.

ABRA       It’s not the acts.

PLATO      Because in another situation you might even enjoy the acts.

JUDY       And it’s not the pain.

JETT       Because pain never lasts forever.
It’s knowing that they’re using you. It’s knowing that they’re fucking you in every way possible because they honestly believe that that’s all you’re good for.

And the other kids may tolerate it. May even enjoy it.

But not us.

Because we will not be used!

Lucy was the only one who ever stood up to them. She didn’t care about their threats, or the fact that they slapped her around. She still fought them. Fought them with everything she had. She never gave in. They never got to her.

Never?

Until that last time. The time she told the guard to piss off and kicked him in the nuts. He slapped her, but went away. And we all laughed and celebrated and told her she’d finally shown them.

We should’ve known better.

We should’ve protected her.

I found her the next morning.

_Lights return to normal._

(To Goldwyn) Suicide! Fuck you suicide!

Jett, why didn’t you tell me?

I didn’t know how to.

It would’ve made so much difference.

I’m going to make that phone call now.

I thought you said I could go.

You’ve had too much to drink!

You always treat me like a fucking kid!
I’ll be back as soon as possible. If I’m more than an hour try to get the hell out of here.

(Pulling his switchblade) No!

Put the knife away Plato.

I’ll cut you Jim. If you move I’ll cut you bad!

I’m going now.

Don’t make me do it Jim.

I’m leaving.

Jim begins to exit. Plato steps in front of him, his knife to Jim’s throat.

Leave him alone you crazy bastard!

If you’re going to use that you’d better mean it.

Jim steps around Plato and continues to exit. Plato watches him, ready to pounce with the knife at any second. The others wait breathlessly. Finally Plato drops the knife. Jett picks it up quickly.

Judy’s pregnant.

Pause. Jim stops and turns.

What?

You’re fucked up good boy.

I don’t believe you.

Ask her.

Plato...

Judy?

Judy nods.

We’ll talk about this when I get back.
A flashing red light suddenly fills the stage. An amplified voice is heard offstage.

VOICE City Police. We’re coming in.

Blackout.

Act Two

Lights up. All in same position as act one. Red lights still flashing. Pause.

VOICE Can you hear me?

Pause.

VOICE We know you're up there!

Pause.

VOICE We’re coming in.

JIM (Running to window) No!

VOICE Who is that?

JIM My name’s Jim!

VOICE I can hardly hear you.

JIM My name’s Jim!

VOICE Jim?

JIM That’s right.

VOICE Jim Stark?

JIM Yes.

VOICE Are the others up there too Jim?

JIM Yes.

VOICE All of them?
JIM Yes.

VOICE Mr. Goldwyn too?

JIM Yes.

VOICE Is he alright?

JIM He’s fine.

VOICE Are you going to come down Jim? Or do we have to come after you?

Pause.

JUDY Let’s give up.

JETT No!

JIM We’re not coming down.

VOICE You’re only making things difficult for yourselves.

JIM Jett, bring Goldwyn here.

_Jett leads Goldwyn to Jim. Jim sets him out on the window ledge._

VOICE Don’t do anything you’ll regret.

JIM If anyone sets a foot in this building I’ll push him.

VOICE Jim...?

JIM Do you hear me?

VOICE Yes, but...

JIM (Cutting the voice off) Listen to me! We have a gun. We’ll kill him if we have to. Do you understand? We’ll blow his brains out!

VOICE I hear you Jim.

JIM We don’t want to hurt anyone. We don’t want any trouble.

VOICE What do you want Jim?
Reporters.

What?

Reporters. Newspaper reporters. TV reporters. Any kind of reporters. I don't care. Just bring us as many of them as you can. Bring us reporters, or we'll kill him. Do you understand me?

Yes.

Then do it. Now!

Jim pulls Goldwyn out of the window.

(To Jett) He wouldn't really kill him, would he?

(To Jim) What do you want us to do?

Get over there by the ledge. Keep your eyes open. Let me know if anything funny is happening.

Jett goes to the ledge and stands look-out.

Abra, Judy, go block the stairway. I don't care what you use, but make sure no one can get through without us hearing them.

Sure.

Judy and Abra exit. Pause.

And me?

I don't care. Do whatever you want. Just don't fuck this up any more than it already is.

Rub a dub dub. Three men in a tub. And who do you think they be?

(Low, but with force) Stop it Cal. Now.

Cal stops.

There's still a chance.

Jim, you'd better come here.
JIM (Going to him) What is it?

JETT Look. Three cars just went into that alley. And there’s men on top of that building over there.

JIM They don’t fuck around, do they?

JETT They can see everything we do from up there.

JIM So let them see. (Calling down) Hey!

A spot hits Jim from the street below.

VOICE What is it Jim?

JIM Turn the fucking lights out!

The spot goes down.

JIM That’s better.

VOICE What is it Jim?

JIM Why’ve you men on those buildings?

VOICE We just want to keep an eye on things Jim.

JIM I don’t want anyone to get hurt.

VOICE That’s good Jim.

JIM And if you cooperate with us, we’ll cooperate with you.

VOICE That’s all we want.

JIM As soon as we’ve talked to those reporters you can do whatever you want to do. But if you do anything to stop that from happening, we’ll kill Goldwyn.

VOICE Can’t you talk to me Jim?

JIM No! Just get the reporters! And tell those men to watch themselves!

PLATO (Quietly to Goldwyn) This is all your fault. Your fault. Your fault. Your fault.
JETT I'm not worried Jim.

JIM No.

JETT I know you'll make this thing work.

JIM Thanks Jett.

JETT You look kinda – kinda tired?

JIM Do I?

JETT Yeah. You're feeling okay, aren't you?

JIM Yeah. I'm fine.

Pause.

JETT You want me to stay here and keep watching?

JIM Sure.

PLATO I suppose you blame me for this whole thing.

JIM Drop it!

PLATO It's not my fault you know.

JIM I said drop it!

Pause.

PLATO You can't be sure it was me they saw. You don't know that for sure.

Pause.

PLATO And if they did, I didn't mean it. I just went out there to cool off. It was too hot in here. Too smoky. I was frying. I had to cool off. I had to... (He trails off)

Judy and Abra enter.

ABRA Well, we did the best we could.

JIM Great.
Pause.

**ABRA**  What now?

**JIM**  I guess we wait and hope they bring the reporters.

**JUDY**  They’re not going to bring the reporters.

**ABRA**  Shut up Judy.

**JUDY**  They’re not going to come.

**JIM**  So leave.

**JETT**  They’re up on some of the other roofs now.

**ABRA**  They’re on the roofs?

**JETT**  Yep. All around us.

**ABRA**  Shit! *(To Plato)* You ruin everything you stupid asshole!

**PLATO**  You can’t blame it all on me.

**ABRA**  Why not? It’s all your fault!

**PLATO**  It’s not my fault! *(Pointing at Goldwyn)* It’s his fault!

**ABRA**  That’s right. Always someone else’s fault!

**PLATO**  If it hadn’t been for him and his stupid home we wouldn’t be here right now.

**ABRA**  Yeah, and if you hadn’t been so goddamn stupid that last time we got busted none of us would’ve ever been in the home at all!

Pause.

**CHRISTINE** *(To Jett)* What’s she talking about?

**JETT**  They all got busted together one night. They were on this fire escape and Plato...

**PLATO** *(Cutting him off)* Shut up Jett!
Why the hell should he? I’ll tell you. We were all on this fire escape, drinking and talking on Friday night. Well there was this lounge across the street and all these disco queens and their boyfriends came out. We were sorta drunk and we all got up and started yelling at them. You know, just being rude. Nothing really heavy. The disco people weren’t even worried about it. They were just laughing. Lucy yelled something like “Fuck the draft.” And I yelled “piss on the world.”

Stop it Abra!

Shut up. Anyway, I yelled “Piss on the world” (Indicates Plato) And this jerk off did it. I mean, literally. He whipped it out and pissed down four floors to the street below.

Christine giggles.

Sure, it sounds funny now. And it was funny at the time. But one of the disco ladies didn’t think it was such a riot and called the cops.

I was drunk.

Yeah Plato, you’re always drunk when you do something stupid, or stoned.

I wouldn’t talk if I were you.

The cops got us for illegal possession, trespassing, public indecency and about four other things I can’t remember.

None of those things sound so bad to me.

They weren’t that bad. Except for like we were all on probation already, and Jim and Cal had just scored a hundred lot of acid that night. And the cops found it.

Oh.

Two weeks later we were all in court.

And shortly thereafter we were in the home. But none of it was Plato’s fault. Oh no! Not his!

I hate you!
Yeah? So what’re you gonna do. Knife me? Strangle me? Or just fuck me up like you have everyone else?

Go to hell!

Look at them, just standing up there like that. It's kinda scary.

I bet there are fifty guns aimed at us right now.

Jim’s going to get us through. I know he is. And us, we’ll be like little heroes, for helping him out. You know...

Heroettes?

That’s right.

I hope so Jett.

You mean that?

I didn’t realize – I mean, you never told me. It must have been awful.

It was.

No one deserves to be treated like that.

I know.

Maybe you're right Jett. Maybe we will come out of this thing alright.

Sure. Just like in Rebel Without a Cause. Jim’ll be James Dean and I’ll be Sal Mineo. Now those guys were real heroes.

Lights change theatrically.

Marilyn Monroe.

John F. Kennedy.

Jimi Hendrix.

Judy Garland.

Jack Kerouac.
ALL


ABRA

There is.

PLATO

There must be.

JUDY

It’s there.

JETT

It has to be.

JIM

There must be more than this.

They all chant, “There is more than this. There must be more than this” as Jim speaks.

JIM

There is more. Somewhere there is more. More than getting up for a school you hate every morning. More than parents who don’t understand and cops watching every move you make. More than nine to five jobs that pay shit for money and crush any creativity that there might be. More than getting drunk every weekend and scrambling to be one of the gang and trying constantly to prove yourself. More than getting married and buying a condominium and having two point three children and more than starting to die at thirty. There is more than that. I know there is because if there’s not then there’s no reason for us to exist. No reason at all.

ABRA

Pray for me mother.

JETT

Pray for me father.

ABRA

John Lennon.

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Hot Thespian Action! 10 Premiere Plays from Walterdale Playhouse
Vincent van Gogh.

Brian Jones.

Neal Cassady.

Elvis Presley.


Lights return to normal.

But don’t you want to grow up and get married and have babies and things?

Things I might be able to handle, but babies repulse me.

(To Jim) I’m sorry.

So am I.
JUDY I didn’t mean to ... I – I guess I just forgot one of my pills.

JIM Yeah.

JUDY Everyone makes mistakes.

JIM What’re we going to do?

JUDY I’ll have an abortion.

JIM I guess there’s no other choice.

JUDY No.

JIM Do you know what to do. Who to see and all that?

JUDY Yeah.

JIM Good.

JUDY Yeah.

VOICE Jim! Jim!

JIM (Going to ledge) What?

VOICE Could we see Mr. Goldwyn?

JIM What for?

VOICE We just want to talk to him.

ABRA They want to make sure we haven’t disemboweled him or anything.

JIM Yeah, I guess so. (To Goldwyn) You heard him. Get up.

Jim leads Goldwyn to the ledge and removes his gag.

VOICE Samuel Goldwyn?

GOLDWYN Yes?
VOICE You're alright?

GOLDWYN Yes. I’m – fine.

VOICE You haven’t been hurt?

GOLDWYN No.

VOICE We’re going to get you out of this.

GOLDWYN Good.

VOICE Don’t hurt him, Jim.

JIM Then get the fucking reporters.

Jim takes Goldwyn away from the ledge and makes to put the gag back on.

GOLDWYN No.

JUDY They’re not going to call those reporters Jim.

JIM They have to.

JUDY They’ve got all the guns. We’ve only got one. They don’t have to do anything.

JIM You don’t have to stick around you know.

JUDY I know.

JIM If you’re so sure we’re going to fail why haven’t you left already?

JUDY (Pause) Because.

JIM You can leave if you want to.

ABRA You don’t mean that?

JIM Look, none of you have to stay up here. I’ll finish this thing alone if I have to.

JUDY Maybe we should just take Cal and leave. All of us.
JIM  Cal stays with me.

JUDY  You’ve always got to be the rock.

JIM  Any of you want to go?

JETT  *(To Jim)* I’m staying with you.

ABRA  Judy, they’ll just take us back to the home.

JUDY  *(To Plato)* Looks like you were right. He’s not so special.

PLATO  Yeah?

JUDY  You coming with me?

  *Pause.*

JUDY  Plato?

PLATO  I – uh – I... *(He trails off)*

JUDY  Plato?!

PLATO  Judy, I’m the one who fucked this whole thing up. I can’t run out now. I – I have to stick here.

JUDY  You’re as bad as the rest of them.

PLATO  I’m sorry.

JUDY  *(Indicating Christine)* Well what about her? There’s no reason to keep her here now. You can let her go.

JETT  That’s right.

JIM  Yeah Judy, she can go with you.

  *They untie Christine.*

CHRISTINE  Thank you.

JETT  I’m real sorry about all this.
CHRISTINE  (Pause) Be careful.

JETT  I will.

*Jett and Christine embrace.*

JUDY  Let’s go.

JIM  Judy...?

JUDY  What?

JIM  You – you don’t have to do this.

JUDY  I thought you didn’t care.

JIM  Look, I’m not very good at saying what I feel. I didn’t mean for it to sound like that. I just... *(He trails off)*

JUDY  Just what?

JIM  Just don’t know what to say.

JUDY  You always know what to say to Cal.

*Pause.*

CHRISTINE  *(To Jim)* You take good care of Jett.

JIM  I will.

JUDY  Let’s go.

*Judy and Christine exit.*

CHRISTINE  *(Turning suddenly)* I can't do it!

ABRA  What?

JETT  Chris?

CHRISTINE  I can’t just leave. Now that I know why you’re doing this, I feel like I’m part of it. I can’t just leave you like this Jett.
JETT  Christine...?

CHRISTINE  I’ve never in my life had to do something – you know – fight for something. I’m probably crazy. But I can’t just walk out.

JUDY  You’ll go to jail just like the rest of them.

JETT  She’s right Chris.

CHRISTINE  Only if it fails. And I don’t think it will. (To Jim) I want to stay with you Jett.

JUDY  You’re crazy.

CHRISTINE  Jett’s been my best friend for years. I want to stay with him.

JUDY  Suit yourself.

   Judy exits. Pause.

PLATO  Jim?

JIM  What?

PLATO  I’m sorry.

JIM  I know.

PLATO  It’s just that sometimes – you know?

JIM  Sure.

PLATO  I don’t know why I do things like that. (Pause) I guess ... fuck! I don’t know I’m just sorry.

JIM  It’s okay.

PLATO  I want to be your friend again.

JIM  Okay.

JETT  (At window) My father’s down there!

ABRA  Where?
PLATO  Right there. Beside the car.

ABRA  And there’s my parents. I don’t believe it! *(Calling down)* Hi Ma, ya old wazoo!

JIM  Cut it out Abra.

ABRA  Sorry. *(Going to Jim)* I don’t believe Judy really walked out on us like that.

JIM  Neither do I.

ABRA  Pregnant. Wow!

JIM  Yeah. Wow.

ABRA  I don’t think she understands you very well.

JIM  You’re right.

ABRA  It bothers her just about as much as it bothers you.

JIM  It just gets in the way.

ABRA  I guess it’s not just something you can control.

JIM  No, it’s not.

ABRA  I’m glad I’ve never loved anybody.

JIM  Yeah. *(Going to ledge)* Hey! Hey down there!

VOICE  What is it Jim?

JIM  Where the hell are those reporters?

VOICE  They’re on their way.

JIM  It’s been too long.

VOICE  We had to get most of them out of bed. They’re coming.

JIM  Well hurry it up.

GOLDWYN  It’s not working Jim.
PLATO  Shut up, or we’ll gag you again.

        Judy enters.

JUDY  I just couldn’t.

PLATO  Why’d you come back?

JUDY  (Quietly) Because.

PLATO  Because why?

JUDY  Just because!

ABRA  Great! I know what we’ll do now that we’re all back together.

JETT  What?

ABRA  When this whole thing is over, we’ll all move to Saskatchewan and start our own commune. You guys can work out in the fields, growing brown rice and whole wheat and us girls can stay in the house and macramé cars and pigs and stuff. Then Judy can have her baby and name it something like Cranberry or Alfalfa or Rover and we’ll all raise it. And we can put a sun porch just off the kitchen for Cal and Jim can go scrape moss offa his north side once a week.

CHRISTINE  Sounds great to me.

ABRA  I don’t remember inviting you.

CHRISTINE  Oh.

JIM  I don’t want to be a father.

JUDY  You don’t have to be. I already told you. I’m not having the fucking thing!

JIM  There’s nothing else we can do.

JUDY  Guess not.

JIM  What do you want me to do? Marry you? Get a job?

JUDY  I’m not asking you to do anything.
Pause.

GOLDFYN  You know Jim...

JIM      What?

GOLDFYN  You haven't hurt anyone yet. Except for escaping from the home you haven't really done anything wrong. If you let me go now, if you give yourselves up, I'll put in a good word for you all. I'll make sure you don't go anywhere but back to the home. And those guards, you won't have to worry about them anymore either. I'll make sure charges are brought against them. We'll work things out. You might have to spend a little more time in the home, but after that you'll be free to go.

JIM      That's a great offer. But what are the conditions?

PLATO    Conditions?

GOLDFYN  Yes. I want you all to promise me that you won't say anything about the guards to the media.

ABRA     Aha!

GOLDFYN  We're a provincial institution. Funding is bad enough as it is. If people were to find out about that – well the bad publicity could ruin us.

JUDY     Not to mention you'd probably lose your job huh?

GOLDFYN  That's not important. If people find out about this thing they could well close us down. And if they did that there would be no place for people like you.

JIM      And how would you make sure the guards were punished if you don't want to tell anyone about what they've done?

GOLDFYN  We could take care of that privately. There's no use making a big stink about it anyway.

ABRA     And what about Lucy Jordan?

PLATO    That's right.

GOLDFYN  What happened to Lucy was very unfortunate...
JUDY Very unfortunate?! 

GOLDWYN But it’s already been looked into. There’s not much more that I can do.

JIM There it is. He can’t do anything about Lucy, and he can’t really do anything about the guards, but he can take us back to the home and make us healthy, productive members of society.

ABRA No doubt.

JIM In a year or so we can all get out of the home, and get jobs and get married, and never break the law again.

JETT No more guns.

PLATO No more fire escapes.

JIM No more drugs.

ABRA But a clean record and lots of security.

JUDY And we won’t have to think about Lucy Jordan anymore.

PLATO Or getting fucked up the ass by a guard with whiskey on his breath.

JETT Or being beaten with the buckle of a belt.

JIM All we have to do is keep our mouths shut and watch out step. Now guys, what do you say to that?

_Pause. They all turn their backs to Goldwyn._

JIM Thank you.

GOLDWYN You’re all going to be sorry for this.

JIM Plato, gag him again.

_Plato puts the gag back on._

PLATO (To Judy) I’m sorry I couldn’t leave with you.

JUDY It doesn’t matter.
Rub a dub dub...

(To Cal) Cal?

I wish he’d talk to us again.

You always say that.

What?

It doesn’t matter.

Oh.

But things always do matter.

I guess I want them to stop mattering.

I know that feeling.

If there was just some way you could turn your feelings off. Like Cal did.

Do you think he did that?

Sure.

You’re really going to have an abortion huh?

Guess so.

That doesn’t bother you?

Should it?

It would bother some people.

Not Jim.

He has – trouble with girlfriends.

But how can he – not like me as much as I like him?

Some people are like that.
Jett: Jim likes everyone equally I think.

Judy: Everyone but Cal.

Judy: But I tried to give him – so much.

Plato: Maybe you gave it too easily.

Judy: Huh?

Abra: I think I know what he means. Sometimes, nothing makes a person more uncomfortable than someone liking them too much.

Jett: I don't like it when people like me as much as I like them, either. I get real suspicious when that happens.

Plato: I think I can sorta understand that.

Judy: Well I don’t.

Abra: He loves you too Judy. He kinda loves all of us.

Jett: There’s nothing wrong with that.

Abra: You’re one of his friends he slept with.

Jett: I slept with him?

Judy: What?

Christine: You did?

Jett: Yeah. But there was no sex. One night, after the guards came to my room, I was pretty upset. Jim came and got me and took me to his room. And I slept with him. That's all. It made me feel – safe.

Judy: I just hoped...

Abra: That you were getting a little more from him than the rest of us?

Judy: Yes.

Abra: You're his friend. Is that so bad?
JUDY  I’ve always wanted to be special to someone. Really special. My sister, Darlene, I was special to her. She looked out for me. And after she died, Lucy looked out for me. I wanted Jim to be like that. I need someone to look out for me.

JETT  Jim looks out for all of us.

PLATO  How did your sister die?

JUDY  Overdose.

JETT  Smack?

ABRA  Heroin’s pretty heavy shit.

JUDY  But I lost her, and I lost Lucy, and the way it’s going, I could lose Jim too.

ABRA  Don’t you worry. Jim’s going to get us out of this.

CAL  Rub a dub dub. Three men in a tub. And who do you think they be? The butcher, the baker and the candlestick maker and they all... they all...

JIM  Not looking too good buddy. I think they’re fucking with us Cal.

JUDY  Jim?

JIM  Yeah?

JUDY  You’ve done the best you can.

JIM  Don’t start talking like it’s all over yet.

JUDY  I didn’t mean...

JIM  It’s okay.

JUDY  We can’t say anything without one of us taking it the wrong way.

JIM  I guess not.

Pause.

ABRA  Young love, ain’t it wonderful.
JETT  She wants to marry him, doesn't she?

PLATO  Sure.

ABRA  The girl's crazy.

CHRISTINE  Don't you ever want to get married?

ABRA  Me? No way.

CHRISTINE  Why not?

ABRA  Too boring. I'm a real slut.

JETT  Oh Abra, you are not.

ABRA  I am so. Deep down.

PLATO  Me too.

JETT  *(To Plato)* How about you? You ever want to get married?

PLATO  Naw.

ABRA  *(Referring to Judy)* I think she made the right decision about not wanting to have this baby.

CHRISTINE  Why?

ABRA  After all the drugs Jim's done, who knows what she'd give birth to.

PLATO  It could be anything.

ABRA  Like an eight pound four ounce foot.


CHRISTINE  Does that really happen?

ABRA  I don't think so.

PLATO  I know a lot of people who've done a lot of drugs. Real heavy shit. And their kids all turned out fine. Big. Healthy.
Able to lift things with their minds.

Those reporters are taking an awful long time.

They’ve got an ambulance down there now.

An ambulance? What for?

There’s a fire truck too.

They always call in ambulances and fire trucks. Don’t you guys ever watch TV?

Maybe we should pack it in.

You can’t just give up now.

If the reporters were going to be here they would’ve arrived by now.

Maybe the reporters don’t care.

I guess we aren’t as smart as we thought we were.

I have – oh forget it.

What?

I had an idea. But it’s dumb.

What is it?

It’d never work.

Let’s hear it.

Yeah. At this point I don’t think we can get too fussy.

Well I don’t think it’s very good. But this is it. What if I were to go down there and tell the cops that you guys made me come up here. You know, like your prisoner or something. Then maybe they’d take me home. I’d pretend to be real upset so they had to take me home, and I’d call the reporters for you.

That’s a great idea.
CHRISTINE  You really think so?

JIM  Sure.

JETT  You'd do that for us Christine?

CHRISTINE  Yes. I mean – I'm sort of part of this thing aren't I?

JIM  Let's do it then.

CHRISTINE  Okay.

JUDY  Good luck.

CHRISTINE  Thanks.

JETT  Be careful Chris.

CHRISTINE  I will.

*Christine exits.*

ABRA  Now there goes one hell of a woman.

JIM  We're gonna make it Cal.

JUDY  Jim, have you ever stopped to consider that maybe Cal really is burnt out and's going to stay that way permanently?

JIM  No Judy. I've never considered that.

JUDY  It's a possibility.

JIM  No. It isn't.

ABRA  Judy might be right Jim.

JIM  No. She's not. I know Cal. I know what he's doing. He can't keep it up forever.

JETT  What do you mean?

JIM  You wouldn't understand.
We knew Cal too Jim.

Not like I did. There are things none of you knew.

Like the fight on the fire escape?

(At ledge) I hope Chris is alright.

What about the fight on the fire escape?

Wasn't it just after that that Cal did all that acid?

How did you know about that?

You told me. Remember?

No.

Don't you remember the night you came to my place. Drunk out of your mind? You cried on my shoulder all night long.

And I told you about that?

Yes.

Pause.

What fight?

It doesn't matter.

You can't feel guilty for the rest of your life Jim.

I didn't mean to ...

To what? I thought Cal just went out and did lots of drugs one night.

No. There was a reason.

What reason? Jim, you never told me about any of this.

Jim doesn't have to tell us if he doesn't want to.

I was so tired.
No one blames you for that.

It wasn’t fun anymore.

We’ll understand.

Understand what?

You can’t run forever. It all catches up with you, eventually.

What did you do?

I told him to get the fuck out of my life.

Pause.

After that last time we got busted, when we were waiting to go to court, I told him to meet me on the fire escape one night. Then I told him I couldn’t do it anymore.

You said that – to Cal?

He didn’t understand at first. He thought I was joking or something. I said, I’m sorry Cal, but it’s stupid. Then he got mad, called me a pussy. Said I was selling out. He told me I was a chickenshit. That I didn’t have the guts to enjoy myself, to really live. I told him he was a…

Thunder?

Fuck up. I called him a fuck up and took off!

Pause.

Two days later his mother called me. Said Cal was in the hospital. Some kind of overdose. The doctors said he’d recovered fine, physically. But something had happened. To his head.

Pause.

Even his mother said it was my fault.

You did what you thought you had to do.

I should’ve known what he would do.
No one knows anyone that well.

Cal and I did.

Thunder.

(Going to him) Cal?

Jim and Cal are singled out. The others all disappear into the darkness.

Cal? I’m running out of time. Why the fuck do I always let people down? I don’t know. I’ve got to talk to you Cal. Cal? Cal? (Jim pulls Cal to a standing position and slaps him across the face) Prick! (Jim slaps him again) You’re dead meat! (Slapping him again) You stupid son of a bitch! You fucking asshole! You goddamn fucking stupid...

Jim pushes Cal away angrily.

I’m too tired. I-need-you-Cal.

Pause. Slowly Cal begins to rise. Cal changes slowly to the person he once was. He walks to Jim, who doesn’t see him at first.

Jim.

Cal?

Yes.

I don’t believe it.

It’s true.

But Cal...

You said you needed me.

I need to talk to you.

So talk.

I’m not sure what to say.

Pause.
JIM: I've – I've missed you.

CAL: Yeah?

JIM: Yes. (Pause) Have – have you missed me?

CAL: I don't miss anything Jim.

JIM: What?

CAL: I don't miss anything anymore.

JIM: That's not like you.

CAL: I'm not like I used to be.

JIM: I don't understand.

CAL: I don't expect you to. What did you want to talk to me about Jim?

JIM: Everything. All the thing's you've missed. All the things that've been happening.

CAL: I know what's been happening.

JIM: You do?

CAL: Yes.

JIM: But how...?

CAL: I'm still aware of what's happening. I just don't let it matter to me anymore.

JIM: Nothing matters to you anymore?

CAL: No.

JIM: I don't believe that.

CAL: I don't expect you to.

JIM: Judy's pregnant.
Yes.

I don't know what to do.

Neither do I.

I'm not ready.

Is anyone ever ready?

And the cops are down there. I don't think they're going to bring the reporters.

Of course they're not.

You believe that too?

They always win.

No. No they don't.

Oh yes, they do.

They can't.

They will.

Don't say that.

Pause.

I wasn't selling out. I was just – tired.

Tired?

Sick.

Fed up?

Yes.

Scared?

No.
CAL Scared!

JIM Alright then. Scared. I just wanted to stop it for a while. Slow it down.

CAL Slow it down?

JIM We were burning ourselves out.

CAL We were living!

JIM We were dying!

Pause.

CAL Dying isn’t so bad, if you live right.

JIM I want to live.

CAL Live or exist?

JIM Live. But there’s got to be a medium somewhere. An in between ground.

CAL Sure. Mediocrity.

JIM And are you any better? You’re dead. Or as good as dead.

CAL I’m safe.

JIM Safe? You’re a fucking vegetable!

CAL I don’t hurt like you do. Not anymore.

JIM You can’t live if you don’t hurt.

CAL I’m tired of being hurt.

JIM It wasn’t the drugs at all. Was it?

CAL They helped.

JIM You just – stopped.

CAL Yes.

JIM How can you do that?
CAL It wasn’t so hard.

JIM And you tell me I don't know how to live?

CAL I know what I’ve done. I’m weak. I admit it. I’m just as weak as you are.

JIM We were strong when we were together.

CAL Yes.

JIM We can be strong again Cal. Together. We can get all of us out of this thing.

CAL No.

JIM Why not?

CAL I don’t know anymore.

JIM You're still mad at me.

CAL I don’t feel anything anymore.

JIM That’s worse than being dead!

CAL Only in your mind.

JIM Why didn’t you just take a razor and slice your wrists? Why didn’t you run your car off a bridge? Why didn’t you die? Do the job right? Any of those things would’ve been easier for both of us. Why didn’t you just die?

CAL I used to think you were different. That you knew.

JIM Knew what?

CAL The things I knew.

JIM But I did know.

CAL I thought you knew about living. About turning on the night and going underground and taking everything that was offered. Because experience is the only lasting thing in this fucked up world today. I thought you knew about being friends and remaining safe from everyone else. I really thought you knew.
JIM Come back. I’ll make it this time. I’ll know. I’ll live. Just come back to me.

CAL I can’t.

JIM Why not?

CAL Because – because, I won’t be hurt again. By anyone. Not ever again.

JIM I won’t hurt you!

CAL You have to.

JIM Why?

CAL Because you’re my friend!

Pause.

JIM Please.

CAL No. (Pause) You’re going to fail.

JIM You’ve got as much to lose as any of us.

CAL You forget. They’ve decided I’m no longer responsible for my own actions.

JIM You bastard!

CAL I’ll survive.

JIM I hate you.

CAL You can come with me Jim.

JIM Never.

CAL It’s not such a bad place.

JIM You’re insane!

CAL And it’s not hard to get there.

JIM Not in a million years.
And you won't be hurt. Ever again.

Fuck you!

It's very warm, and it's very nice. And no one gets in unless you want them to. *(Cal returns to his childlike state)* It's soft and warm and nice. Nice Jim. It's very very nice.

Cal? Cal?

*Sudden pandemonium from outside. Horns going off. Many voices yelling. Lights return to normal. The others return.*

Come back! Come back here! Someone stop her!

What is it?

What's going on?

I don't know. They're sure excited down there.

*Sound of someone running up the stairs. Christine bursts in, very out of breath.*

Chris.

What happened?

Those bastards!

What happened?

They wouldn't even take me home. They thought I was involved in this somehow. They were going to make me sit in that car until they got you guys.

Got us guys?

Look at the roof of that building over there!

Holy Jesus.

What is it?
CHRISTINE  It looks like a whole goddamn SWAT team.

ABRA    Oboy!

CHRISTINE  They’ve got them up on every roof that faces this place.

JUDY    Goldwyn was right. They’re never going to let us out of here.

Pause.

VOICE  We’re losing patience, Jim.

PLATO   Those assholes.

ABRA    What’ll we do now Jim?

JETT    Jim?

JIM    I don’t fucking know!

PLATO   Look at them up there. Looking down on us.

JETT   (Taking gun out) Maybe we should load this now.

PLATO   It’s so goddamn hot in here.

ABRA    One gun? What the hell will we do with one stupid gun?

JIM    We’re so close.

JETT    Jim, should we load it?

JIM    Let me think a minute.

PLATO   They’re going to kill us. They’re going to shoot our fucking brains out.

JUDY    Plato?

JIM    I don’t know what to do.

PLATO   Assholes! Assholes!

JUDY    Plato, are you okay?
Plato sudden rushes at Jett and takes the gun away from him.

PLATO   Assholes!

JETT    Plato!

Plato rushes to the window, brandishing the gun wildly.

PLATO   Bastards! Goddamn fucking bastards! You can't win. We’re right! We’re the ones who are supposed to win! You can't get us! We've tried too hard!

JUDY    Plato!

JETT    Get down from there!

PLATO   I should blow your fucking brains out! I should kill every one of you!

JUDY    Plato, put the gun down. They’ll...


CHRISTINE Jett?!

JIM     Jett?

CHRISTINE Jett, get up.

JIM     C’mon buddy. Get up.

Abra goes to Christine and holds her.

CHRISTINE No! No!

Jim goes to Jett and cradles his head in his arms.

JIM     Why him? Why did it have to be him?

CHRISTINE (To Jim) This is your fault! It’s all your fault! He respected you! You were his hero!
Please, don’t say that.

All he wanted to do was be your friend. He – he said he loved you.

Don’t say that.

(Gently, to Christine) Leave him.

Please...

We’re finished.

Not quite.

Jim begins to load the gun.

Jim?

Not quite.

What are you doing?

Don’t touch me.

Jim stands and aims the gun and Goldwyn.

Someone stand him up.

Goldwyn rises on his own.

Jim don’t...

Jett’s dead.

Killing Goldwyn won’t accomplish anything.

We’re all dead anyway.

It’s murder. You’ll lose everything Jim.

Don’t do it Jim.

(Aiming the gun at Goldwyn’s head) For Jett.
CHRISTINE It’s not for Jett, and you know it!

JIM And Lucy Jordan.

JUDY No!

JIM And for Cal.

PLATO No!

Jim pulls the trigger. There is a loud gunshot. The lights go red. Goldwyn falls, dead. The others scream and twist in pain.

JIM (Dropping the gun) Now we’re even.

The others rise. Lights return to normal.

ABRA Jim.

PLATO Jim.

JUDY Jim.

CHRISTINE Jim.

JIM Keep away.

The lights change, they get dim and ghostlike. They will stay like this until the end of the play.

VOICE Jim...

ABRA Jim?

JIM Don't any of you come near me.

VOICE Can you hear me in there?

JUDY Jim?

JIM Just-leave-me-alone.

VOICE Was that a shot?
JUDY What’s wrong with you?

JIM Cal?

CAL (Rising) I hear you.

VOICE Jim, anyone – talk to me.

JIM I’m caught Cal.

JUDY Jim?

CAL It’s not so hard.

JUDY You look so...

CAL Jim?

JUDY Strange.

CAL It’s warm.

JUDY Like...

CAL It’s nice.

JUDY Like Cal.

CAL And no one can hurt you.

JUDY You look just like Cal!

CAL Come.

JUDY Jim, no.

CAL Come into my house.

The others begin to move about the stage. They do bits and pieces of their monologues and dialogue. Judy and Cal stand on either side of Jim.

JUDY Don't escape Jim. You can still make it.

CAL It’s not hard Jim. It’s not hard at all.
I’m having your baby.

Jim?

Just let go.

Judy?

Jim?

Cal?

Jim.

Don’t go.

The others stop moving around. They stand in place and continue to do their monologues without making a sound.

I – I don’t know.

It’s warm.

You can’t escape everything.

No responsibilities.

You have to face life.

No feelings.

Stay.

I’m so sorry Jett.

I need you.

Come Jim.

I love you.

Join me.

You don’t have to be alone.
It’s not hard Jim.

Jim.

Just let go.

Jim?

Just let go.

I...

Jim walks to Cal.

Jim. Please.

What – what do I do?

Sit. Here. Beside me.

Sit.

They sit.

Now rock.

Rock.

They rock.

In my house.

In my house.

It’s very warm.

It’s very warm.

Very nice.

Very very very nice.

The light on Jim and Cal fades very slowly as they continue to rock. The sound of the sirens and the flashing of the red light fade with the main lights until all is black.
LEFT: Jim’s (Brian Rodomski) magnetism draws in Judy (Darcia Parada) as their kidnapped group home counselor Mr. Goldwyn (David Nattress) looks on helplessly. Photo: Phil McCallum for Walterdale Theatre Associates.

BELOW: Cast and crew for Mutants. BACK ROW (Left to Right): Greg Dovell (Cal), Brian Rodomski (Jim), David Nattress (Goldwyn), Tony Dawkins (lights). SECOND ROW (Left to Right): Tim Preston (hairstylist), Phil Zyp (Plato), Kat Mullaly (Abra), Keven Smith (Off-stage voice of Cop), Les Bland (Jett), Deb Preston (Stage Manager). FRONT ROW (Left to Right): Collette Hebert (Christine), Brad Fraser (playwright, director), Darcia Parada (Judy). Photo: Phil McCallum for Walterdale Theatre Associates.