

BORN AGAIN AGAIN

By Mark Bellusci

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Mark Bellusci
104 Hemlock Drive
Stamford, CT 06902
203-363-0070
mark@markbellusci.com

CAST

STEVE

An entrepreneur, late thirties to forties.

JD

STEVE'S partner. Late twenties to fifties.

JEN

STEVE'S wife, around the same age.

ALYSSA

STEVE and JEN'S daughter, 13 to 15.

JORDAN

STEVE and JEN'S son, around 17.

OFFSTAGE STEVE VOICE

Could be STEVE'S voice recorded, or another voice that's similar.

JANE:

A somewhat nerdy, timid, small business owner.

SCENES:

1. An expensive but disheveled office.
2. Beautiful kitchen in an upscale home.
3. Darkened stage with spot on STEVE.
4. The audience of a school auditorium. Could be as simple as chairs facing the audience.

SCENE :

An expensive but disheveled office. STEVE and JD are sitting at desks that butt up against each other, with the two of them facing each other. On both desks and throughout the office are the latest electronic gadgets: computers, printers, PDAs and more. Both STEVE and JD are on phone calls.

(The lines could overlap.)

STEVE

What do they do --

JD

No no no, not interested--

STEVE

Are they ready to sell --

JD

Come up with something new--

STEVE

Well, throw in a low ball and see what they--

JD

I don't know. You figure it out--

STEVE

We'll run 'em into the ground.

(He hangs up.)

JD

You get something worth buying, we'll talk.

(He hangs up.)

Watch this: they're back on the phone innn...

(Looking at his watch.)

thirty seconds.

STEVE

You think that long?

(Phone rings.)

JD

(Answers the phone.)

Yeah? ... Nope, not a dime more--and you're getting a good price at that.

(He hangs up.)

Candy from babies.

STEVE

Scary how easy--

JD

(Opens envelope and flashes two tickets.)

Hey, courtside for the Knicks.

STEVE

When?

JD

Tonight.

STEVE

Tonight? Geez!

JD

What?

STEVE

Told Jen I'd be home early.

JD

So?

STEVE

So I should actually do it this time.

JD

Why?

STEVE

I don't know, see the kids, family dinner--

JD

All of a sudden, I'm working with Pa Walton.

STEVE

I'm just saying--

STEVE

Man, that's stretching it.

JD

What am I wasting a genius alibi on you for? I'll just call Johnny and--

(He starts dialing.)

STEVE

Wait.

JD

(Chuckling.)

Attaboy.

STEVE

Just give me the damned ticket.

(JD hands it to STEVE.)

All right, it's a major client meet. We get it, we double the business.

JD

Fine.

STEVE

Don't screw this up! I'm already in the doghouse for the last three nights.

JD

So?

STEVE

Obviously a man who's never married --

(Phone rings.)

Yeah, what--...

(Sweetly.)

Oh, hi hon.

(JD laughs loudly and STEVE waves him off.)

No, that's his stressful laugh -- you know, to break the tension.

JD

(Yelling, addressed to JEN on the phone.)

Actually, I'm laughing at Steve.

(STEVE waves him away.)

STEVE

So, uh, there's this meeting tonight and --

JD

(Imitating a child.)

Could Stevie come out and play?

(STEVE throws a notepad at him.)

STEVE

Whoa, you think I want to be out? It's business. A major new--

JD

(Coughing the word)

Bullshit!

STEVE

I have no choice! The client specifically said -- ... All right, forget it. Just--

JD

What?--

STEVE

I'll be home for dinner. Bye.

(He hangs up the phone.)

JD

Wimp!

STEVE

It's called ... strategy.

JD

To miss the game?

STEVE

I'll be watching it courtside.

JD

But you just said--

STEVE

Look, I go home, I do nice nice, then you come and we bolt-
-

JD
No no no, don't pull me into this.

STEVE
What? You walk in, we walk out.

JD
Yeah, with a knife in my back.

STEVE
Jen likes you--

JD
Roasted over a skewer.

STEVE
Just show up at seven-thirty, and we're out by seven-
thirty-two.

JD
I knew I should've called Johnny.

STEVE
Shut up.

End of Scene

SCENE

Beautiful kitchen in an upscale home. Eating dinner at the
table are JORDAN, ALYSSA and JEN.

JEN
So anyway, I was thinking liposuction, and then--

ALYSSA
Who really cares?

JEN
I care! I've got to look at these mutations every day.

ALYSSA

So don't look.

JEN

I'll still know they're there. I'll still know your father knows it's--

ALYSSA

He doesn't care about that. All he cares about is business.

JEN

That's not true. Your father cares about a lot of things. He just hides it well.

ALYSSA

Yeah, right.

JEN

Besides, he sees these liposucked-smooth thighs and--

JORDAN

Yo yo yo yo! I don't need to be hearing this, y'all.

JEN

Oh stop.

JORDAN

You like fine -- for a ma.

JEN

(To ALYSSA.)

See?

JORDAN

It's a compliment, yo -- you lookin' like a ma's s'posed to look: a little plump and round and --

ALYSSA

(To JORDAN.)

You're such a --

JEN

That's why the liposuction.

ALYSSA

Don't listen to--

JEN
Goodbye cottage cheese, hello hot babe.

JORDAN
I be eating here, yo!

JEN
All right, calm down.

(Pause as they eat.)

JEN
So how is it?

JORDAN
It's dope.

JEN
Better be. I paid a ton for it.

JORDAN
Ain't nobody orders a dinner like you. Slavin' in the kitchen over those take-out menus, timing that call just right. It a work a art.

(ALYSSA chuckles.)

JEN
What, you think it's easy sorting through all those menus?

JORDAN
It be so hard, why don't you just cook?

JEN
Don't be ridiculous.
(They all chuckle. Then to ALYSSA.)
Hey! Didn't you have the dance semifinals today?

ALYSSA
Yeah.

JEN
And?

ALYSSA

And it's no big deal.

JORDAN

Sound like she got beat.

ALYSSA

Shut up.

JEN

(To ALYSSA.)

That's okay, honey. At least you tried--

ALYSSA

(Sighing.)

I'm in the finals.

JEN

Are you kidding me? The finals!

ALYSSA

Don't get all excited--

JEN

I told you that dance camp in Tahiti would help.

JORDAN

Twenty large, damn well better.

JEN

Best twenty thousand we ever spent.

JORDAN

What about the piano, baton twirling and acting camps?

ALYSSA

Shut up.

JORDAN

She be tripping to all these bogus camps, but do I get the dope Harley I need?--

JEN

Jordan, you--

JORDAN

J-Ball, yo. My tag is J-Ball.

JEN

I am not calling any son of mine J-Ball.

JORDAN

Punk-ass name, Jordan.

JEN

In this house, that's your name. And we're talking about your sister. Wouldn't kill you to be a little happy for her.

JORDAN

(Beat, then addressed to ALYSSA.)
Hey, it cool.

ALYSSA

(Sarcastically.)
Ooooh, a blessing from J-Ball, the lily white suburban gangsta. My world is complete.

JORDAN

Yo, why you got's to get all up in --

JEN

(To ALYSSA.)
Your father will be so happy to --

ALYSSA

(Despondent.)
Yeah, right.

JEN

(Ignoring ALYSSA's tone.)
So when are the finals?

ALYSSA

Tonight.

JEN

Tonight? Why didn't you tell us --

ALYSSA

(Dejected.)
Look, if you don't want to come, fine.

JEN

I didn't say that, I just wish--

ALYSSA
Forget it. Just--

JEN
I'm coming, I'm coming! And so is Jordan.

JORDAN
Say what?

JEN
And so is your father.

JORDAN
I gots bidness tonight.

JEN
Cancel it.

JORDAN
Shii--

JEN
Watch that language.

JORDAN
All I say was --

JEN
You just be there for your sister.

JORDAN
Be a lot easier I on a Harley.

JEN
Jordan.

JORDAN
J-Ball, yo!
(Beat as JEN stares him down.)
A'ight, I be there. But the old man, he don't have time
for-

JEN
He'll be there. I'm putting my foot down.

JORDAN

Uh oh.

JEN
Didn't you have a calculus test today?

JORDAN
Mmm.

JEN
And?

JORDAN
Did a'ight.

JEN
What's all right?

JORDAN
Senty-nine.

JEN
You could do better.

JORDAN
Yo, what you getting all in my face for? Not like I'm gonna use that shi--

JEN
Watch your--

JORDAN
That part a the lingo, yo.

JEN
Not in this house. And as far as a seventy-nine goes, you should be--

STEVE
(STEVE enters, talking loudly and heatedly on his cell phone.)
I don't care what the analysts say, this company's ready to be taken. They're--

JEN
Steve, talk to your son--

STEVE

(Gesturing for JEN to hold for a second.)
You just get the money. The rest is bullshii--

JEN

Steve!

STEVE

(STEVE gestures apologies as ALYSSA and JORDAN snicker.)
I'm not screwing around with these clowns. ... Just -- ...
no, JD's coming here--

JEN

He is?

STEVE

(Nodding to JEN, then into phone.)
I'll tell him myself...Right.
(Hangs up.)

JEN

You didn't tell me JD was--

STEVE

He wasn't, till we got a last-second shot at this big new deal

JEN

I can't believe--

STEVE

Ahh, he's part of the family.

JEN

There are many names I'd call your partner. Family isn't one of them.

STEVE

So he's a little crude, but --

JEN

We have more important things to talk about.

STEVE

Pass the ribs. Like what?

JEN

Like your son's attitude.

STEVE

You got cheese for the fries?

ALYSSA

Cheese isn't good for you.

STEVE

No honey, cheese alone isn't good for you. But when combined with French fries, they balance each other and climb up the food pyramid to become a balanced meal.

ALYSSA

What are you?--

JEN

Can we stay on the subject?

STEVE

Which is?

JEN

Your son.

STEVE

Oh yeah. What did he--

JEN

It's what he didn't do, which is study for his calculus test.

STEVE

You failed?

JORDAN

Got a senty-nine, yo.

STEVE

A what?

JORDAN

Senty-nine. Senty-nine!

JEN
Seventy-nine

STEVE
Oh. So what's--

JEN
But he never studied--

STEVE
It's good enough.

JEN
No it's not. Jordan has to apply--

STEVE
What for? It's calculus. He's never gonna use it

JORDAN
That's what I'm talkin' about.

JEN
Hopeless. Absolutely hopeless.

STEVE
Come on. Jen. You don't want him to be a brainiac, do you?

JEN
Oh, nice parenting!

STEVE
He starts getting A's, no one'll talk to him.

JORDAN
Word up on that.

JEN
You and I will talk about this later.

STEVE
Whatever.

(Pause as they all eat silently.)

JEN
Alyssa's dance finals are tonight.

STEVE

(Automatic response.)
That's great.

JEN

And we're all going.

STEVE

Yeah, sure, whatev-- wait wait wait. I've got an emergency meeting tonight--

ALYSSA

(Sighs, then to JEN.)
Why do you even bother?

STEVE

(To ALYSSA.)
Aww honey--

JEN

(To STEVE.)
We're all going.

STEVE

Don't you think I would if I could?

JEN

You can, and you will.

STEVE

I called the meeting.

JEN

Then you'll have no problem canceling it.

STEVE

How can I?

ALYSSA

Forget it. Just forget it.

JEN

No, we won't forget it. This is important.

STEVE

Look, I'd love to go, but --

(His cell phone rings. STEVE picks it up.)

Ready in a sec, just come up ... What are you talking about?
Jen thinks you're part of the family...

(JEN gives him a menacing look, which STEVE ignores.)
The kids too.... Just shut up and come!

(He hangs up, then to JEN.)
You could make him feel more at home.

JEN

Okay, I'll put in a bar, a Wall Street ticker, some babes--
(Doorbell rings.)
There's our favorite family member now.

STEVE

It's open!

JD

(Talking on a cell phone and holding a PDA.)
No, babe, hold it till seventy-five, then sell.
(He signals to STEVE to hurry up.)

STEVE

(Wolfing down his food.)
Two minutes.

JEN

(Dripping with sarcasm.)
Always a pleasure, JD.

JD

(Covering the phone, then to JEN.)
Yeah, babe.
(To JORDAN and ASHLEY.)
Hey.

(JORDAN and ASHLEY mumble hello's.)

JD

(Back into phone.)
Where is it now? ... Jesus, that fucker's going through the
roof!

(Everyone stops and stares at JD. JEN glares at
STEVE.)

STEVE

Uhhhh, JD?

JD

Wha?

(STEVE indicates his family.)

JD

Nothing they ain't heard before, right?

(Back into phone.)

Jesus H, why didn't you get me in on this a frickin' month ago?

(JEN continues glaring at STEVE while JD hangs up.
Pregnant pause as STEVE wolfs his food.)

JD

So, uh, what's going on?

JEN

Oh, just another peaceful family dinner at home.

JD

Yeah, it looks, uhhh -- anyone eating those?

JEN

Actually, I was going to--

(JD attacks the ribs, mumbling and growling as he does so. He reviews his PDA as he does so. The others stare at him in revulsion.)

Right.

ALYSSA

Mom, he's making noises--

JEN

It's ... how he ... eats.

JD

(To JEN)

So, uh, you still working at the?--

JEN

For the millionth time, I left that job four years ago.

JD

Oh yeah. So you could--

JEN

Spend more time--

JD

With them, right. So what do you, uh, I mean, with the,
uh ...

(Indicates the kids.)

JEN

I raise them.

JD

You mean, like, feed them and drive them to soccer and
things?

JEN

The sum total, right there.

JD

Sounds, uh, you know.

(To JORDAN.)

What about you?

JORDAN

Say what?

JD

What's your game?

JORDAN

I'm kickin' right now, you know what I'm saying?

JD

You're ... wha?

JEN

That's the way they talk.

JD

Snoop lily white.

(To JORDAN.)

So what are you doing with your life?

JEN

He's seventeen, JD. He's in school.

JD

Still? I was selling junk bonds by fifteen.

JEN

(Ominous.)
Steve.

STEVE

Uhh, JD?--

JORDAN

(To JD)
It got me buggin', yo.

JD

Wha?

JEN

(To JD.)
He hates it.

JD

What for? School's good -- for meeting babes and shi-- and stuff.

JEN

(Tersely to JD.)
For getting an education.

JD

There's that.

JEN

Thank you.

JD

But you want a real education, you go ...
(He indicates over his shoulder with his thumb.)
out there.

JORDAN

The living room?

JD

The streets.

JEN

Steve!

STEVE

JD, you can't--

JD

Our kind of work, make the right moves, or get fuh--

JEN

Steve!--

STEVE

JD!

JD

Screwed.

JORDAN

Yo, I be ready fo the streets, like, right now.

JEN

You're not going anywhere near--

JD

Don't rush. Ain't pretty out here.

JORDAN

Yo, why you telling me shi I --

JEN

(To JORDAN.)

Watch your mouth!

JD

Just have your fun with the cheerleader babes. Plenty of time for the streets later.

JEN

(To STEVE)

Aren't you done yet?

(With his mouth full, a rushing STEVE puts up one finger to indicate that he'll be finished momentarily.)

JD

What about you, Astor?

ALYSSA

Alyssa. I keep telling you, it's Alyssa--

JD

Yeah, whatever. What's your game?

JEN

Her "game" is school.

JD

Yeah, whatever

JEN

And tonight she's in the dance finals.

JD

The dance -- what?

JEN

A dance competition that my daughter's going to win.

ALYSSA

Maaaa--

JEN

And my husband should be there with his family to see it,
but--

STEVE

(Still with his mouth full.)

I would, but--

JD

Whoa whoa whoa. Steve's got a meet tonight.

JEN

No excuse to--

JD

Can't back out for some Shirley Temple tap dance shi-- crap.

JEN

Shirley Temple? Who the hell are you to--

JORDAN

Yo yo, who be Shirley Tempest?

(STEVE knows he must leave now if he is to escape. So he bolts up, but the effort, along with wolfing his food and overall stress, nauseates him and makes him feel faint, causing him to stagger.)

JEN

(Noticing STEVE's stagger.)
What's wrong?

STEVE

Nothing. I just feel --

JD

Come on, we gotta move.

STEVE

(Sheepishly, to JEN.)
Well, we better ...

JEN

So you're actually going to abandon your daughter on the most important night of her life.

ALYSSA

What's the difference? My life is meaningless.

STEVE

Aww honey, I'll go to the next one.

JEN

Next one? What part of "finals" do you not understand?

STEVE

(Sighing.)
All right.
(To JD.)
How about I catch the first half with you, then--

JEN

Half? Half of what?--

JD

Are you kidding me? The game--

JEN

Game?!--

JD

Doesn't mean anything till the last two minutes.

JEN

You're missing your daughter's finals for a game?

STEVE

It's not just a game, it's a client meet at a game--

JORDAN

(To JEN.)

Yo yo, how come he get to watch hoops and I be locked into this ra ra dance bullsh--

ALYSSA

Nobody come! I'm used to being left out.

JEN

See what you started?

STEVE

It's business!

JEN

It's your family!

JD

Look, are we going or what?

STEVE

Uhhh.

JEN

Might as well be married to him.

JD

(With an exaggerated deep voice.)

Hey hey, I don't go that way.

ALYSSA

Stupid me, thinking someone might actually be interested in my life.

STEVE

I am interested. It's just that--

(STEVE staggers again -- this time so pronounced that he has to grab the chair.)

(The following four lines overlap.)

JEN
Steve!

ALYSSA
Daddy!

JORDAN
Yo!

JD
Whoa!

STEVE
Must ... be ... something ... I ate.

(He faints. Everyone rushes to him.)

JD
They have e-mail in hospitals?

(Lights fade.)

End of scene.

SCENE

Darkened stage with spot on STEVE. STEVE VOICE is offstage throughout.

STEVE VOICE (Offstage.)
And so, it comes to this.

STEVE
Are you ... God?

STEVE VOICE
Do I sound like God?

STEVE
I don't know. I've never heard him.

STEVE VOICE

Don't you recognize your own voice?

STEVE

Thought you sounded familiar. But how come you're using my voice?

STEVE VOICE

Because I am you.

STEVE

You're not me. I'm me.

STEVE VOICE

And so am I. A higher you.

STEVE

There are two me's?

STEVE VOICE

There are many you's.

STEVE

Well, is this me -- my me -- dead?

STEVE VOICE

Depends on how you look at death.

STEVE

I mean, like, not breathing? Like turning blue and smelling funky and --

STEVE VOICE

You mean physical death of the corporeal shell.

STEVE

Uhhh --

STEVE VOICE

No, that part of you is not dead.

STEVE

Soooo ... I'm okay?

STEVE VOICE

Some of the you's are.

STEVE

Well how is this you -- I mean, me?

STEVE VOICE

While your shell is fine, your previous ego did not survive.

STEVE

I'm a vegetable!

STEVE VOICE

Calm yourself--

STEVE

Baby food and bed pans: my new life!

STEVE VOICE

You will be physically self-sufficient.

(Beat.)

STEVE

Whew.

STEVE VOICE

But say good-bye to the ego swollen, self centered you that used to be you.

STEVE

Soooo, which me am I going to be?

STEVE VOICE

A higher you. A you that sheds worldly possessions, seeks enlightenment and finds joy in simplicity.

STEVE

Sounds kind of ... grasshopper monkish.

STEVE VOICE

If that's how you envision it, so be it.

STEVE

And what if I don't want to be that me?

STEVE VOICE

Remember the last position the old one was in?

STEVE

I see your point.

STEVE VOICE

Then is no other you for you but this you.

STEVE

So what you're saying is ... if I want to be me, I've got to be you. But you're me anyway, so me being you is the same as being me.

STEVE VOICE

You're beginning to see the light.

STEVE

I'm beginning to lose my mind.

STEVE VOICE

Fear not, it will all become clear.

(The voice fades towards the end.)

You will enjoy being you.

STEVE

Wait, wait. This me is still confused. I ...

(Spotlight slowly rises on STEVE in bed, giving almost a holy effect. JEN, JORDAN, ASHLEY and JD are around the bed. JD is on his cell and looking at his PDA. STEVE starts to rustle.)

STEVE

I ...

ALYSSA

I think he's--

STEVE

(With a beatific smile. A bright, shining light spots his face, giving a holy effect.)

I ... understand.

(The following three lies are said simultaneously.)

JEN

Thank God

ALYSSA

Daddy!

JORDAN

Yo Yo.

(The family members hug STEVE, while JD hangs back a bit. JD then works his way to the bed and shakes STEVE's hand.)

JEN

You're --

STEVE

(Calmly.)

I ... am enlightened.

JD

(Checking his watch and making other signs of leaving.)

Yeah, yeah look: I'm glad you're feeling better. So the investors' meeting is starting in a few, so ...

STEVE

I understand.

JD

Your wife, she said I shouldn't ask you to come -- even though, you know, you look pretty good and--

STEVE

I feel good.

JD

Good enough to jump on out of here and --

JEN

JD!

STEVE

I'm just saying, he looks good -- if he wanted to--

JEN

Steve is not going--

STEVE

It's okay, my beloved.

JORDAN and ALYSSA

(Questioningly, to JEN.)

Beloved?

JEN

(Beaming.)

Beloved.

STEVE

(TO JD.)

I'm done with that.

JD

All right, I'll handle this meeting till you--

STEVE

Not just the meeting, the whole business.

(JEN and the family do a double take.)

JD

(To the family.)

It's the drugs.

STEVE

It's me. I've had it with this kind of life.

JD

Look, we'll talk about this when you're --

STEVE

It's true, you know. What they say about your life flashing before you when you die.

JEN

Nobody's dying. You had an anxiety attack.

STEVE

But it felt like I was dying. I mean, it was peaceful. No more stressing about deals. A total release from worldly pressures.

JD

Guy has a panic attack and all of a sudden he's Sri Chimnoy.

STEVE

For that shortest of time, I was free. And my only regret was that I didn't live life to the fullest.

JD

What are you talking about? You're worth about twenty-five mil-

STEVE

I'm talking about what I've done with my life. Or not done. I've got a great family, and I've neglected them.

JEN

(Lovingly.)

Oh, Steve.

JD

Oh, geez.

STEVE

But there's more. So much more. We have all this wealth, yet most of the world is hungry.

JD

Now I'm partnered with Mother Theresa.

STEVE

And then there's me. I've got to start enjoying life.

JD

Are you kidding? We're having a ball.

STEVE

Not just running around chasing deals.

JD

The hell else is there?

STEVE

The simple joys. Long walks after dinner. Cultivating my mind with the exhilaration of learning.

JORDAN

You want to exhilarate with calculus, I got it, yo.

STEVE

(Laughing embarrassingly loud.)
Ahhh my humorous young J-Ball. Always ready to lighten a situation.

JORDAN

(Embarrassed.)
Just playing wichoo.

STEVE

And don't think I don't appreciate it! Together, we'll partake in the joy of father/son bonding over your homework.

JORDAN

Uhh--

JD

(To JEN.)
Better get that quack back in here.

JEN

Be quiet.

STEVE

Things are going to be different, Jen. You'll see.

JEN

As long as you're healthy, that's all that matters.

STEVE

I love life.

JD

I'll get the sedatives.

STEVE

I don't need--

JD

For me.

STEVE

You need to find yourself, my friend.

JD

I need to find a drink, my friend.

JORDAN

Take me witchoo, yo.

(JEN backhands JORDAN'S arm.)

STEVE

(To JD.)

I wish I could share my joy with you.

JD

I'm getting out of here before I catch it.

(He starts to leave.)

STEVE

Wait wait wait.

JD

What?

STEVE

Give me a hug.

JD

A wha--? Look, you've had a tough day--

STEVE

You saved my life.

JD

I cell phoned the hosp--

STEVE

A hug.

JD

The last person I hugged was my mother thirty-two years ago.
And she smacked me for wrinkling her dress.

STEVE

Come on!

(Beat.)

JD

(Relenting and hugging STEVE.)

Ahhh.

STEVE

I love you, man.

JD

All right, stop that.

STEVE

I'm not scared of saying it.

JD

I'm scared of hearing it. Some hot young nurse babe walks in, my rep is shot.

STEVE

I am one with you.

JD

I am one with the door.
(He exits quickly.)

JEN

Finally, a way to get rid of him.

STEVE

He's a beautiful person.

JEN

JD? I wouldn't --

STEVE

So are you.

JEN

(Flattered.)
Oh ... well ... and wait till you see me after the lipo.

STEVE

And so are the kids, and so am I.
(He yells the following.)
In fact, everything is beautiful!

JEN

(Embarrassed.)
Honey, you're in a hospital.

STEVE

This hospital is beautiful!

JEN

You're yelling.

STEVE

Yelling is beautiful!

JORDAN

Dude be buggin', yo.

ALYSSA

Just shoot me.

JEN

You're scaring the--

STEVE

Being scared is beautiful!

JEN

(TO JORDAN.)

Get the doctor.

(JORDAN runs out the door.)

STEVE

The doctor is beautiful!

JEN

Yes. dear.

ALYSSA

Make him stop before I die of embarrassment.

(A nurse peeks her head in to see what the yelling
is about.)

STEVE

And the nurse? You know what she is?

JEN

Beautiful, dear.

STEVE

And singing. Singing is beautiful.

JEN
Sure it is.

STEVE
I'm going to sing now. Because I can.

JEN
(Yelling offstage.)
Where's that doctor?!

STEVE
(Singing.)
Everything is beautiful, in its own way.

(JORDAN returns with a doctor, who injects STEVE with a sedative. Lights dim as STEVE continues singing while falling asleep.)

End of scene

SCENE

(The dinner table. JEN is unpacking a rack of lamb dinner from a take-out bag. She yells offstage.)

JEN
Dinner!

(JEN returns to her dinner preparations. STEVE, ASHLEY and JORDAN enter.)

JORDAN
Yo yo, is that--

JEN
Your father's favorite: rack of lamb with mint jelly.

JORDAN
Now dat's what I'm talkin' about.

STEVE
Ohhhhh, Jen. That's so -- such a nice gesture.

JEN

Took a little extra time to order it, but you're worth it.

JORDAN

(Chuckling.)

Mom be slavin' extra hard with those take-out menus, yo.

JEN

(To JORDAN.)

Keep that up, and you'll be eating peanut butter.

STEVE

Hey, good idea. Let's get some peanut butter.

(Beat.)

JEN

I'm only kidding.

STEVE

Well, you know what? Peanut butter actually sounds good.

JEN

What are you--

STEVE

With a little of that mint jelly and--

JEN

I spend my whole day digging through take-out menus, and you're --

STEVE

And don't think I don't appreciate it. It's just that, well ...

JEN

What?

STEVE

I can't eat meat anymore.

JEN

All you had was an anxiety attack--

STEVE

It's not that.

JEN

Then what?

(Beat.)

STEVE

The face of death: I saw it.

JEN

Oookay ... but the face is gone now.

STEVE

For me, it is. But for this poor little lamb?

JEN

Oh no.

STEVE

I mean, am I the face of death for it?

ALYSSA

What's he talking about?

JEN

But lambs are raised for--

STEVE

(Said somberly and profoundly, like a eulogy.)
"Mary had a little lamb, little lamb. Its fleece was white
as snow."

ALYSSA

Ma?

JEN

Steve?

STEVE

A simple nursery rhyme, yet it kind of says it all.

JEN

Says what?

STEVE

(Indicating lamb.)
This could be Mary's lamb. And you're asking me to eat it.

JORDAN

(Snickering.)
He doin' kindergarten shi, yo.

JEN

(With a sharp look towards JORDAN.)
It's not Mary's lamb. Mary's lamb is long dead.

STEVE

Doesn't matter. This lamb, Mary's lamb, us: when you think about it, aren't we all one?

JORDAN

He really buggin' now.

JEN

(To JORDAN.)
You're not helping.

STEVE

We're all living creatures, sharing the same life force.

JORDAN

Yo, I seen that force shi -- in Star Wars.

(JEN sighs in exasperation.)

ALYSSA

(To JEN)
I thought you said daddy was fine.

JEN

He's ... just a little confused right now. Maybe we should call the doctor.

STEVE

The doctor can't see the physical and emotional toll that eating Mary's lamb will have on me.

(Beat.)

JEN

(Sighing, then to JORDAN.)
Get your father the peanut butter.

STEVE

But don't think I don't appreciate the thought--

JEN

Yeah, right.

STEVE

And don't think I blame you for this barbaric act of cannibalism--

JEN

Whatev-- what?

JORDAN

Yo, he call us cannibals.

ALYSSA

(To JORDAN.)

Shut up.

STEVE

It's not your fault -- it's society's. A society that promotes gluttony and greed and--

JEN

All right! You don't want the lamb, fine. But at least let us eat in peace.

ALYSSA

I'm not.

JEN

You're not what?

ALYSSA

Eating Mary's lamb.

JEN

It's not Mary's lamb!

STEVE

In a sense, it--

JEN

Steve! Just --

JORDAN

Well, I'm eating it. Cause I a cannibal, y'all. Bwana bwana.

ALYSSA

Shut up!

JORDAN

(Turning to ALYSSA.)

Yo, that arm be looking mighty fine.

(He reaches down to gnaw at ASHLEY's arm. She pulls it away and screams. STEVE laughs.)

ALYSSA

He bit me!

JORDAN

Just nibbled, yo!

JEN

That's enough--

STEVE

(Chuckling, to ALYSSA.)

He's just playing with you because he loves you.

ALYSSA

Ugh.

JORDAN

Yo yo yo, ain't nobody talkin 'bout love.

STEVE

Go on, give her a hug.

JORDAN

I ain't hugging--

STEVE

But we just had a tender moment.

JEN

Look, dinner's getting cold--

STEVE

Only takes a second. Here, I'll start it.

(STEVE jumps out of his chair, gets between ALYSSA and JORDAN, and pulls them together in a tight embrace.)

JORDAN

Come on, yo.

ALYSSA

You're crushing me!

STEVE

Don't you feel the communal life force?

ALYSSA

I feel Jordan's jelly breath on my face!

JEN

Steve--

STEVE

Come on, Jen. Join us.

JEN

I'm eating.

STEVE

I can feel your aura.

ALYSSA

I can't feel my shoulder!

STEVE

(Ending the hug with hearty backslaps and returning to his seat.)

All right, let's eat.

(They all return to their meal.)

STEVE

But first, a moment of thanks.

(They all stop, sigh, and look at STEVE.)

JEN

We agreed a long time ago not to impose a specific religion on the kids.

And we're not going to.

STEVE

Then what--

JEN

Trust me.

STEVE

But why--

JEN

Oh Lord, thank you for these gifts, and for the gift of life. Amen.

STEVE

(The following three lines are said in unison.)

Amen.

JEN

Whatever.

ALYSSA

Yo yo.

JORDAN

Now in Hebrew.
(He begins a prayer in Hebrew.)

STEVE

Wait wait wait, what are--

JEN

Instead of imposing a specific religion, we'll cover them all.

STEVE

(Groans from the kids.)

You can't be--

JEN

By the time we have dinner, y'all, it be beffas.

JORDAN

STEVE

(Chuckling.)
Okay okay; so what we'll do is alternate religions each night.

ALYSSA

Whatever.

STEVE

So let's eat! I can't tell you how good this--
(He looks at the peanut butter label.)
Oops.

JEN

(Exasperated.)
What now?

STEVE

Preservatives.

JEN

So?

STEVE

So they're not part of my natural lifestyle.

JEN

Look, I'm eating the lamb I slaved over, and for all I care, the rest of you can eat bark.

STEVE

Funny you should mention that, because in the TuTu diet, sautéed bark is a delicacy that --

JEN

(Ominous.)
Steve.

(Beat as they all eat.)

STEVE

Hey, I almost forgot: how was the dance competition?

JEN

Oh, when the school heard what happened to you, they postponed till tonight--

ALYSSA

Could've cancelled it for all I care.

STEVE

Cancel it? Are you kidding? I wouldn't miss it for the world.

(ASHLEY rolls her eyes.)

JORDAN

You never been to any of her other competitions.

STEVE

That was before my life flashed before me. Now I know what's important.

(He breaks down and cries.)

ALYSSA

Ma, why is he crying?

JEN

I'm ... not sure.

STEVE

The time I wasted on spirit-draining business when I should've been bonding with my family.

JEN

Plenty of time for that.

ALYSSA

(Reluctant, but hopeful.)

I guess I could get a ticket.

STEVE

Get three. Me, mom and J-Ball.

JORDAN

Yo yo yo! Whassup wit dat?

STEVE

Your sister up there hoofing it, you hanging with your "homeboy" folks -- what could be better?

JORDAN

But I gots bidness--

STEVE

And afterwards? Tofu ice cream on the big guy.

JORDAN

Yo yo yo, ain't eating no tutti frutti shi, a'ight?

JEN

We'll all get ice cream sundaes.

STEVE

Ah, what the heck, sundaes it is. Let's get crazy.

(He breaks down and cries again.)

Could life be any better?

ALYSSA

Maaaa, he's crying into the potatoes.

JEN

You're making them soupy, dear.

End of scene

SCENE

(The audience at ASHLEY's dance competition, audience members are seated facing the actual audience, which actors view as the stage. JEN is dressed elegantly. There are two empty seats next to her. After a moment, JORDAN enters, wearing his usual baggy "gangsta" clothes, with the addition of a sports coat.)

JORDAN

Yo yo, s'up?

JEN

"What's up" is you barely made it.

JORDAN

Everything cool. Where guru at?

JEN

Stop calling your father that. He took his bicycle to "boost his and the environment's life force."

JORDAN

It be raining!

JEN

Cleanses his mind.

JORDAN

What mind?

JEN

That's your father you're talking about.

(Lights start to dim.)

And he's about to miss--

(Just then, we hear a door open from offstage, then wet, plodding feet, followed by Steve's offstage voice.)

STEVE

Excuse me, pardon me. Isn't this wonderful? Excuse me--

JEN

Oh jeez.

(STEVE enters onstage, soaking wet. He is wearing flip-flops, shorts and sandals that make loud flopping noises.)

STEVE

Whew, just made it.

JEN

You're soaking wet.

STEVE

And sparkling clean in body and soul.

JEN

You were supposed to wear a suit.

STEVE

And constrict my life force?

(JEN sighs in exasperation. Lights down.)

STEVE

Ah, I feel so alive!

(From offstage, we hear a shush.)

Sorry, good neighbor! My *joie de vivre* got the best of me.

(Music from the performance starts. Lights up to dim.)

JEN

Just watch the show.

STEVE

(Trying to whisper, but still loud.)

Ah, look at her! My daughter. How beautiful!

JEN

Shhh.

STEVE

They're all beautiful!

JORDAN

Yo, guru, chill.

STEVE

Yes, pirouhette! Be free!

(STEVE starts to rise in his seat, but JEN pulls him down.)

JEN

Steve!

(STEVE sits, but moves frenetically with the music.
There is a pause while the ballet continues.)

STEVE

Our auras are unified!

JEN

Shut up!

STEVE

I need to be one with them!

(He starts to rise.)

JEN

What are you?!--

(STEVE dashes onstage before anyone can stop him.
JEN and JORDAN slowly slink into their chairs.
There are commotion sounds that come from the unseen
stage.)

JEN

(A loud whisper to STEVE as she tries to maintain
her anonymity.)

Get down here!

STEVE

(Offstage voice.)

Ah, sweet mystery of life!

(Offstage is a thumping sound.)

JEN

Oh ... my ... God.

JORDAN

He did a split, y'all! Dad just did a--

JEN

(Covering her face, but peeking.)

And now he can't get up.

OFFSTAGE ANNOUNCEMENT

Is there a doctor in the house?

JORDAN

Yo, let's bug before--

JEN

I can't leave your sister.

ALYSSA

(From the unseen stage.)

Maaaaaa!

JEN

(Directed offstage to ALYSSA.)

Just dance around him, dear.

STEVE

(Offstage.)

Hey, anyone out there want to sing Kumbaya?

JORDAN
This time he really buggin', yo.

STEVE
(Singing offstage.)
Kumbaya, my Lord, Kumbaya -- Everyone! -- Kumbaya.

(Lights fade.)

ALYSSA
(From offstage.)
Maaaaa!

JORDAN
Like, I'm supposed to show my face in school after this?

JEN
Shoot me. Just shoot me.

End of scene

SCENE

(The dinner table. JORDAN, ASHLEY and JEN sit
around morosely.)

JEN
Where's your father?

JORDAN
The ashram room.

JEN
The den. It's the den.

ALYSSA
He calls it--

JEN
I don't care what he calls it. Go to the den and tell him
dinner is getting cold.

JORDAN
Don't matter to him, yo. All he be eating is barks and
twigs and shi--

JEN

Tell him anyway.

(JORDAN leaves. Beat, then to ALYSSA.)

Don't you have rehearsal tonight?--

ALYSSA

You think I could show my face after what dad--

JEN

Honey, he didn't -- he's ... well, he's just a little ...

ALYSSA

Tell me about it.

JEN

But I think he's getting better.

(Jordan returns with STEVE, who is wearing a long flowing gown/robe with sandals.)

STEVE

Ahhh, my loving family.

JEN

(To ALYSSA.)

Then again ...

(STEVE hugs each family member. They respond listlessly.)

STEVE

Have I told you how lucky I am to--

(The following three lines are said in unison.)

JEN

Yeah yeah yeah.

ALYSSA

Ugggh.

JORDAN

Heard it.

STEVE

(He sits down.)

First, a prayer of thanks.

(JEN, JORDAN and ALYSSA sigh and drop their silverware loudly.)

STEVE

What religion are we up to?

ALYSSA

Hebrew.

JORDAN

Hebrew be last night.

JORDAN

Hindu?

STEVE

No, I think it's Zorastroism.

ALYSSA

Nuh uh. I'm not wearing those hats.

STEVE

(Pulling four pointy hats from under the table.)
Only takes a second.

ALYSSA

It gives me helmet hair.

STEVE

You can comb your hair after.

JORDAN

I into the hat, y'all.

(Looking into the hat.)

But where the rabbit at?

(He puts one hand in a magical command position and picks up a table element slowly, as if it were levitating.)

JEN

Let's just finish the prayer and eat, okay?

STEVE

Of course, my kindred soul. Now, if we could all just ...

(He indicates putting on the cap, and JEN and ASHLEY reluctantly follow suit. STEVE then recites a strange incantation.)

STEVE

Hmmmmm-owwwww-yeeeeeee-ooooooooo-uuuuuuu. Okay, let's eat.

(All grab at Chinese food except STEVE, who has a plate of what looks to be leaves and twigs. Beat as they eat for a moment.)

JORDAN

Yo guru, ever gonna get dressed?

STEVE

I am dressed.

JORDAN

You be wearing a sheet, yo.

STEVE

Actually, it's a saffron robe, and it's the most liberating garb I've ever worn.

JORDAN

(To ALYSSA.)

Man be wearing a dress cause he tired of wedgies.

JEN

Just eat, Jordan.

(To STEVE.)

And you could wear normal clothes to dinner.

STEVE

Normal? What is normal? How I lived before?

JEN

I'm not talking about--

STEVE

Look what "normal" did to me.

JEN

I'm just saying, a little moderation, that's all.

(Doorbell rings.)

JORDAN

On it, y'all.

(JORDAN runs offstage. A moment later, he returns with JD.)

JEN

(Surprisingly cheerful.)

JD!

JD

(Surprised by the cheerfulness.)

Uhhh, yeah. Look, sorry to bother you, but--

JEN

No bother at all--

JORDAN

(To STEVE.)

But I kept trying to call, fax and e-mail you.

STEVE

I've been in extended meditation.

JD

I just wanted to know--

JEN

Sit down, JD. Join us.

JD

(To JEN.)

You all right?

JEN

Of course I am. It's just nice to see you.

JD

Uhh, yeah, okay.

(He sits, then to STEVE.)

So I know you've been sick and --

JEN

How's business?

JD

Busy.

(To STEVE.)

That's what I need to talk to you about--

JEN

That's got to be exciting, putting deals together.

JD

(Wary of JEN's unexpected friendliness and support.)

Uhh, yeah.

JEN

Now I know why Steve loves it so much.

STEVE

Used to love it--

JEN

(To STEVE.)

And why you're probably itching to get back.

STEVE

Well, actually--

JD

That's why I came by.

(To STEVE.)

See, I know you're recovering, but I gotta have an idea when you'll be back and--

STEVE

I don't plan on--

JEN

Oh, Steve's dying to get back--

STEVE

Jen--

JD

Good, because nobody schmoozes like you do--

STEVE

Like I used to. I'm an honest man now.

JEN

You could still be ... kind of honest.

JD

Uhhh .. yeah ... sure.

STEVE

But slaving for the almighty dollar is not the true way.

JEN

And when the bank converts to your philosophy and tears up our mortgage, wonderful. But until then ...

JD

Come on, man. It'll be like old times.

(Beat.)

STEVE

Ahhh, the necessities of life.

JD

Yes!

STEVE

But I'm going to bring a new level of enlightenment and spirituality to the office.

JD

Bring whatever you want. See you on --

JEN

(To JD.)

Why don't you have something to eat?

JD

You want me ... to stay?

JEN

Of course. You're like family.

JD and STEVE

What?!

JEN

Jordan, get JD a seat.

(JORDAN pulls up another chair. JD sits down.)

STEVE

The raw seaweed is sooo replenishing.

JD

There's nothing I need to replenish that badly. Pass the ribs.

JEN

Absolutely. And there's general Cho's chicken and Shanghai beef and--

STEVE

Ugghh.

JD

What's the matter--

STEVE

To even contemplate the desecration of these kindred animals is --

JD

I'm not contemplating, I'm eating.

(JD ravenously digs into the food, STEVE turns away in disgust while JEN smiles.)

JEN

Finally, appreciation for a well-ordered meal.

STEVE

Uggh.

(Lights dim)

End of scene

END OF ACT I

ACT II

SCENE

Next day at the office. JD is at his desk on his cell phone, looking at his PDA.

JD

No no no, not at that price. Gotta knock that down ...

(STEVE comes in wearing a dashiki, sandals and a kilt. JD, does not see him at first.)

I don't know, a hundred grand at least.

(STEVE sits at his desk and smiles broadly at JD.)

Well what the hell's he expect?...

(JD looks up from his PDA and does a double take at STEVE's smiling stare.)

Uhhh ... Yeah, but we're not gonna take a bath if it tanks-

(Uncomfortable with STEVE's continued smile.)

Hold on a second.

(Then to STEVE.)

There's uh, there's coffee.

STEVE

I don't drink it anymore.

JD

(Incredulous.)

What?

STEVE

But I have this ginseng bilboa tea with a hint of alfalfa. Want some?

JD

Uhhh, I'm good.

(Back to phone.)

Yeah, so tell him we're not touching it unless--

(He sees STEVE get up to make tea and notices his outfit for the first time.)

Ho- ho- hold on a ... call you back.

(Hangs up, then to STEVE.)

What the ...

STEVE

Hmm?

JD

Hell are you wearing?

STEVE

Oh, this little thing?

JD

It's a dress.

STEVE

It's not a dress, it's a kilt.

JD

What's the difference?

STEVE

A dress ... is a dress, while a kilt is the military garb of the Scottish warriors.

JD

We expecting a Scottish war?

STEVE

I need something to bring out the warrior within.

JD

And you figure a dress'll do it.

STEVE

It's not a dress! It's a --

JD

Just don't wear it when clients--

(STEVE sighs impatiently.)

Just-- just call that lead.

STEVE

Fine.

JD

Feel 'em out. See how low they'll sell.

STEVE

I'll try to be fair.

JD

Uhhh ... yeah.

(JD gets back on the phone while STEVE prepares to make calls. His efforts are fastidious, almost like Ed Norton preparations on the Honeymooners.)

JD

(To STEVE.)

What are you?--

(Into phone.)

Yeah, what'd they? ... That's bullshit! Knock 'em down another buck...

(STEVE dials the phone.)

Patch 'em in, I'll wait--

STEVE

Hello, it's Steve ... much better, thank you. So, what's the price? ... Hmm, sounds good to me, but is it good for you?

JD

(Numb from overhearing STEVE's conversation., then into the phone.)

I'll ... call ... you ... back.

(He hangs up and stares dumbfounded at STEVE.)

STEVE

Geez, I'm sorry you're so desperate to sell. But you shouldn't have to take a bath.

JD

(Shaking his head, as if coming to his senses.)

What?--

STEVE

(Indicating to JD that it's under control.)

We'll give you double that price.

JD

What are you?--

STEVE

(Smiling at JD and giving a thumbs up sign. Then chuckling into the phone.)

No no, it's the same Steve, same company.

JD

Give me the phone.

(He reaches out for the phone.)

STEVE

That's quite all right. Hey, we're all connected in a metaphysical way, right? ... No really, it's Steve--

(JD snatches the phone.)

JD

(Into the phone with an embarrassingly fake laugh.)
Ha ha ha, that's my boy Steve for ya, always with the jokes.

STEVE

What joke?

JD

(To STEVE.)
He says, "Hardy frickin' har."

STEVE

Why is he saying?--

JD

(Listening to phone.)
All right, what's the price?

STEVE

Wait a second, I've already negotiated--

JD

(To phone.)
Too high and you know it! No wonder Steve was playing with your ass.

STEVE

We don't need that much!--

JD

Knock it down forty percent and--

STEVE

That poor woman's mother is in a nursing home!

JD

Hey, save the sob story for Hallmark. We want -- ...
Fifteen? The barely covers sandwiches!

STEVE

Must you be so id aggressive?

JD

Forget twenty! Twenty-five, and that's as low as--

STEVE

We're raping them!

JD

Done! Lawyers'll talk tomorrow.

(He hangs up and giggles.)

STEVE

You're a life force vacuum!

JD

(Chuckling.)

Man, you're good.

STEVE

What?

JD

That whole "life force" thing. It could be a goldmine!

STEVE

It's not about--

JD

Even the clothes -- they're perfect for clients.

STEVE

They're not for cli--

JD

At first, the look'll shock 'em. Then they'll think your "episode" numbed your mind--

STEVE

I've never been healthier--

JD

And that'll mean sympathy for you, and better deals for us!

STEVE

Wait a second --

JD

Damn, I wish we had prospects coming today.

STEVE

This is not--

JD

Hey, maybe I can get a few people in here last second.

STEVE

There. You happy? Now I'm out of harmony.

JD

"Harmony." Beautiful!

STEVE

(With exaggerated deep breaths.)

Have to recapture my one-ness.

JD

(Giddy.)

"One-ness." We'll be rich.

STEVE

I will not-- I have to meditate.

(He gets up to leave.)

JD

Yeah, go arrange your tea leaves and your stars and your tarot cards -- it's all money to us, baby.

STEVE

(On his way out.)

I can only hope you someday find the true way.

JD

And tomorrow, bring a dress for me.

(We hear STEVE groan from offstage. Lights down.)

End of Scene

SCENE

(STEVE's and JEN's bedroom. JEN is laying down reading a book, STEVE is sitting in a lotus position, breathing loudly. After a moment, he speaks.)

STEVE

And then he laughs, thinking my new life is an act.

JEN

Tsk tsk tsk.

STEVE

He wants to borrow my best frock!

JEN

He's just trying to make a living.

STEVE

He's low-balling a guy whose mother is in a nursing home.

JEN

You know business: no room for personal.

STEVE

I should have made JD take that lower price.

JEN

Now wait a second. Charity is charity, and business is business.

STEVE

But why can't?--

JEN

Because you'll be a sitting duck for every rip-off artist with a "mommy in a nursing home" scam.

STEVE

Now you sound like JD.

JEN

In this case, he's not wrong.

STEVE

Wow, I never thought you'd --

JEN

Want what's best for my family?

STEVE

What's best for this family is a clean, simple lifestyle.

JEN

A simple lifestyle going to pay for this fifty-two inch TV?
Or this 600-square-foot bedroom? Or our four cars and boat
that you insisted on?

(Beat.)

STEVE

Goshdarn it, you're right!

JEN

(Shaking her head and sighing.)
Here we go.

STEVE

These materialistic maulers are out of our lives.

JEN

Your life.

STEVE

Hmm?

JEN

You want to go back to Cro-Magnon days, be my guest. The
rest of us will stay in this world.

STEVE

But without the materialistic trappings, we'll be a closer
family.

JEN

We get any closer, we'll kill each other.

STEVE

How can you--

JEN

Look, you don't want to watch TV, don't watch it. But don't tell me not to watch it. And if you even try to tell the kids not to watch it, you'll see the Promised Land a lot faster than you think.

STEVE

See the hostility it --?

JEN

The hostility is already there. TV's a temporary tranquilizer.

STEVE

If only I could share the vision I had when I almost died -
-

JEN

You were never close to dying--

STEVE

You know what I mean.

JEN

No, I don't know what you mean. I don't know anything about you anymore.

STEVE

That's why, if we just shut the TV--

JEN

TV stays on.

STEVE

Well, I'm not watching anymore.

JEN

Fine.

STEVE

I'm going to purify my life.

JEN

Good. Now leave me alone.
(SHE turns to the TV.)

STEVE

(He assumes a lotus position on the bed and chants.)
Ommmm.

JEN

Keep it down.

(STEVE lowers his voice. After a moment, he caresses
JEN'S hand and says the following in a seductive
tone.)

STEVE

You know, a wonderful way to attain enlightenment is
through a Tantric exploration of each other's ecstatic
embrace.

JEN

What?

STEVE

The physical act of --

JEN

Well there's a new way of asking for it.

STEVE

It can help you understand the true meaning of--

JEN

Uhhh ... my cosmic energies are not properly channeled
during this lunar phase, which leaves me cerebrally
challenged for said experience.

STEVE

What?

JEN

Not tonight, I have a headache.

STEVE

Fine. I'll attain my oneness through chanting.

JEN

And I'll attain mine through Letterman.

STEVE

Ommm.

(JEN turns up the TV to drown out STEVE, but STEVE chants even louder, then JEN turns up the TV even louder until both are loud.)

End of scene

SCENE

(Dinner table. STEVE is shirtless. ALYSSA is shielding her eyes from him, while JORDAN just giggles. JEN ignores the scene as she distributes food from take-out boxes.)

JEN

Stop giggling.

JORDAN

Yo, guru be like, balls-ass--

JEN

Jordan.

STEVE

I am not naked. I'm wearing my Sahara loin cloth.

ALYSSA

Uggh. Maaa!

JEN

Could you at least put on a shirt?

STEVE

The human body is a beautiful and natural thing.

JEN

And it'll stay that way, under a shirt.

ALYSSA

Maaa --

JEN

Just eat your dinner, dear.

STEVE

Alyssa, I'm still your same old dad.

JORDAN

(Chuckling.)

Just be a lot more a him showing--

JEN

That's enough from you. You're already in trouble.

JORDAN

Didn't do nothing, a'ight?

JEN

Oh, I know you didn't do anything. That's why you're doing well in calculus.

STEVE

What?--

JORDAN

So what, yo?

JEN

So you won't get into college.

STEVE

Ain't nobody using calculus on the street -- tell her, guru.

STEVE

Well, actually--

JEN

(To STEVE.)

You see what you've started?

JORDAN

Yo, calculus don't mean--

STEVE

Calculus is a wonderful opportunity to experience the invigorating thrill of learning.

JORDAN

Say what?

STEVE

And learning is a natural high.

JORDAN

(Sarcastic.)

Yeah, I sees lots a dudes snorting calculus, yo.

STEVE

Hey, I know: after dinner, let's you and me dig into a little calc.

JORDAN

You said calculus be bogus.

STEVE

That was the old me. The new me can't wait to share a learning experience with this crazy J-Ball son of mine.

JORDAN

(Looking for help from JEN.)

Yo ma, he be--

JEN

Hey, you're the one with the mediocre grades.

STEVE

It'll be a blast!

JORDAN

Cap me now, yo. Just cap me now.

End of scene

SCENE

(Kitchen table, later that night. Dishes are cleared and STEVE is poring through textbooks while JORDAN is falling asleep.)

STEVE

Fascinating!

JORDAN

(Mumbling in his semi-sleep.)

I'm up on that.

STEVE

I told you we'd have fun.

(STEVE exuberantly whacks JORDAN hard on the back and jolts him awake.)

JORDAN

(Disoriented ramblings.)

Yo, what it is? What?--

STEVE

Listen to this:

(Reading from the text.)

"Without calculus, there could be no air travel."

JORDAN

Woke me up for that?

(Beat as JORDAN falls back asleep and STEVE keeps reading.)

STEVE

(Loudly.)

Amazing!

JORDAN

(Startled.)

What? What?

STEVE

NASA uses calculus to --

JORDAN

Yo, whassup witchoo?

STEVE

What?

JORDAN

Where this guru shit come from?

STEVE

I told you: I saw my life flash--

JORDAN

One bogus-ass fainting spell, and you punkin' out.

STEVE

I don't think I'm punking--

JORDAN
I mean, like, you, doing calculus with me?

STEVE
And enjoying every minute of it--

JORDAN
Now das what I'm talking about. Ain't nobody enjoy calculus.

STEVE
It's not just calculus--

JORDAN
You said nobody use that punk-ass shi on the street.

STEVE
But it's such an invigorating challenge to the mind.

JORDAN
Das what video games be fo.

STEVE
But calculus lets us learn together.

JORDAN
So?

STEVE
So we don't spend enough time together, man to man.

JORDAN
You wants the man to man thing, let's tip to them bars you be hanging in.

STEVE
I don't hang in--

JORDAN
Yo yo, this me, a'ight? I know where you and JD be.

STEVE
How would you --

JORDAN

My possee, yo. Dawgs seen you around.

STEVE

Well, I don't do that anymore.

JORDAN

And whassup wit dat?

STEVE

Not right to my family.

JORDAN

Right to me, yo. I be there soon's I get my Harley.

STEVE

Don't make the mistakes I did. Those places drain your life forces--

JORDAN

You know, that guru act gettin' old fast.

STEVE

Jordan, you're aura is becoming hostile.

JORDAN

More guru shi. Dang, you used to be a'ight.

STEVE

I'm even more "a'ight" now.

JORDAN

Naw, man. Now you be trippin'.

STEVE

Tripping? Being myself is tripping?--

JORDAN

This ain't you, yo

STEVE

Sure it is--

JORDAN

It some Colorado Ashram, Ben-and-Jerry bullshit.

STEVE

Yes, I definitely feel a misalignment of your harmonial spirits.

JORDAN

See? Now dat's what I'm talkin' about. Who talk like that in the real world?

STEVE

I'm not concerned with what the real world thinks.

JORDAN

But that where you living. Not in some new age cave in Tibet.

STEVE

Well, thank you for your encouragement and support.

JORDAN

Yo, I'll go solo on the calculus.

STEVE

But we were just having fun.

JORDAN

Naw man, you was.

STEVE

But--

JORDAN

I got this, a'ight?

STEVE

(Hurt, but trying not to show it.)

Oh ... okay. I'll just ... I ... I could use some meditation.

(STEVE leaves. JORDAN goes back to sleep at the table.)

End Of Scene

SCENE

(Next day at office. STEVE is sitting at his desk with shorts, floppy shirt and sandals. JD then

enters wearing a ponytail toupee, clip-on earring
and a dashiki.)

STEVE

What are?--

JD

Client coming. It's on.

STEVE

What's on?

JD

The hippie shtick.

STEVE

It's not shtick--

JD

Borrowed mom's dress, earrings, clip-on ponytail--

STEVE

You're using my newfound enlightenment for evil.

JD

What evil? This is a more comfortable way to dress ... and
if it makes us a few extra bucks, well ...

STEVE

I will not be apart of this ... disharmonious desecration!

JD

Just do what you been doing, and we'll be fine.

STEVE

But that's--

(Buzzer rings. JD gets up to answer the door)

JD

Okay, let's be at one with profits.

STEVE

I'm not saying a word!

JD

Just look Zen-like.

(JD opens the door to JANE, a person in a business suit.)

Duuuude.

JANE

Hel -- Hello?

JD

What up, dawg?

JANE

(Double takes the name on the door.)

I'm sorry, I must have the wrong--

JD

No no, you cool. Come into the crib and chill.

JANE

But I'm supposed to meet with Dealco.

JD

That be us. JD and Steve. Jane, right?

JANE

Ms. Wat- um, sure, Jane. But I thought--

JD

Hey, don't let the look fool you. We do mergers and acquisitions. We just keep it cool, dig?

JANE

Well--

JD

(Taking JANE's arm and escorting her to a chair. He then lights an incense candle and puts on new age music.)

See, we ain't about hard-ass business bogus-ness. We're about being one with our clients.

STEVE

Uggh.

(STEVE puts his hands over his face. The customer quickly looks at STEVE, but JD just as quickly gets between the customer and STEVE.)

JANE

But I was told you were hard-and-cold suit types.

JD

Used to be.

JANE

Then what--

JD

We discovered our kismet is to fill our client's pocket.

JANE

What does--

JD

The better you do, the better we do.

JANE

Ahhh.

STEVE

(Louder than last time.)

Uggh!

JANE

(Referring to STEVE'S noises.)

Excuse me, but what is--

JD

Oh, that -- that's brother Steve's way of, uhhh -- Feng Shui! Steve has taken a vow of silence to rid the office of evil spirits.

STEVE

Uggh!--

JD

So we can make a more tranquil and harmonious deal.

STEVE

All right, that's enough.

JANE

He spoke!

JD

(Glaring at STEVE.)
Uhhhh, yes, I know. That means the office is now free of
evil--

STEVE

What are--

JD

Thank the mighty Feng Shui gods for their --

STEVE

Would you stop?

JD

Uh, yes, of course. Jane has no time for --

JANE

Actually, I'm fascinated by Feng Shui.

JD

(Trying to sound innocent, but not succeeding.)
Really?

JANE

I've just added a Feng Shui section to my Web site.

JD

What a coincidence.

(STEVE shakes his head in resignation.).

JANE

Yes, I'm a big follower of it.

JD

So are we! Seems like everyone is catching on.

STEVE

Look, would you --

JD

I wish people could see what we have, to know the way of
peace and harmony.

JANE

Is that why? ...

(He gestures to JD's clothing.)

JD

Our Feng Shui advisor shuns the military garb of our era.

JANE

Military?--

JD

Business suits.

JANE

Fascinating!

(She removes her jacket and unbuttons her top blouse button.)

STEVE

(To JANE)

Look, do yourself a favor: leave now.

JANE

What?

STEVE

I said--

JD

See, Steve is so not into material things, he doesn't even want to watch the usual haggling that accompanies capitalist business deals.

STEVE

That's not--

JD

But I keep reminding my Zen partner that we provide a valuable service here -- especially to those who have found the one true way with Feng Shui.

STEVE

That is so--

JANE

So refreshing.

STEVE

Don't listen--

JD

Don't listen to the hard-driving hagglers who harass you with desperado deals.

STEVE

I can't believe--

JD

He can't believe how antagonistic those deals can be.

STEVE

That's not--

JD

That's not the way he does business.

STEVE

Would you let me--

JD

Explain how we operate? Sure.

STEVE

Well, first of all--

JD

We don't insult your intelligence by making you guess at a fair selling price.

JANE

I've thought about that, and--

JD

And we tell you straight out what we're willing to pay. Which, in your case, is two hundred thousand.

JANE

Two hundred thousand? That's a bit lower than I--

STEVE

Ah, you're testing us.

JANE

No no, it's just that--

JD

To see if we're true to our Feng Shui ways.

JANE

I don't think--

JD

Rest assured, this is the price our Feng Shui gods say will bring harmony and tranquility to all.

JANE

See, I was expecting--

JD

As a fellow Feng Shui-est, you surely recognize the wisdom in this offer.

JANE

I was looking for--

JD

And you recognize that there is a low way, a high way and a middle way.

JANE

Yes, but--

JD

And this, being the middle way, brings balance to all.

JANE

No, but--

JD

Of course, I may have been wrong.

JANE

Yes, I think--

JD

I simply assumed you were a true Feng Shui-est, but --

JANE

I am, I am!

JD

And that your deeper conscious would sense this offer's elegant tranquility.

JANE

(Beat.)

Well, I guess I could live with--

JD

To live. Isn't that true beauty? To breathe, to find oneness in all things?

JANE

Yes ... Yes, of course.

JD

Ah, to connect on a visceral level with a fellow Feng Shui-est.

JANE

Yeah ... I guess it does feel good.

JD

Even if it means giving away more of our worldly goods than we normally would.

JANE

Well, if you feel I'm getting too much, I guess I could go lower--

JD

No! No. Please allow us this blissful reward for our charitable donation.

JANE

I never knew business could be so --

JD

Enlightening? It can -- if you follow the true way.

(He looks at his watch.)

Ah, the nasty necessities of life: another meeting in ten minutes.

JANE

But don't we have to--

JD

Let's not sully this blissful moment with capitalist details.

(He pulls out a contract.)

I'm sure your chi tells you there is balance in this contract. All you have to do is sign.

JANE

Well--

JD

(JD puts the pen in JANE'S hand and guides it to sign the contract.)

It's sad, really. That those ego-driven, western lawyers make us do this, when our karmas are already in alignment.

(JANE hesitantly signs.)

Wonderful.

(JD then whisks the contract away and looks at his watch.)

Darn, if only there was more time for spiritual bonding.

(He begins to escort JANE to the door.)

JANE

Oh, I'm in no rush--

JD

(Reluctantly pausing.)

Let's take a precious few moments of Zen breathing as we reluctantly conclude this Karma encounter.

JANE

Ah. Yes.

JD

Annddd ...

(They inhale deeply.)

Come on. Deep, deep, from the Hara ... anndddd release.

(They all exhale loudly.)

Anndd, inhale ...

(JD resumes escorting JANE to the door.)

And release. Inhale ...

(JD guides JANE out the door, then closes it. He then yells through the door.)

And release. Keep breathing, my Feng Shui compadre.

(JD returns from the door to a still deep breathing STEVE.)

JD

Well, that was enlightening.

STEVE

How could you?--

JD

I feel enriched -- enrichingly rich!

STEVE

That innocent lamb.

JD

I just bought a business for one tenth of what it's worth!

STEVE

Can't believe you would--

JD

Man, I love this new age crap!

STEVE

Taking the Feng Shui spirit in vain.

JD

Ten minutes of Feng Shui research on the Web, ten times the profit.

STEVE

Bad Karma, here. Bad, bad--

(He starts making strange humming noises, like
mantra gone bad. Somewhere between a honk and a
high-pitched squeal.)

JD

You, my flower child partner, are a genius!

STEVE

(Amidst the squealing and the honking.)
It's all out of alignment: the planets, the moon, my chi.

JD

When Forbes puts me on the cover for discovering the new
age way to make millions, you think I should wear a mu mu?

STEVE

I've ... I've got to go.

(He staggers up and heads to the door.)

JD

Go find your inner peace,
(He pulls out a bottle of scotch and takes a slug.)
I'll find my outer limits.
(STEVE groans and leaves.)

JD

(Yelling to STEVE offstage.)
Wait a minute. Here's my mantra: mmmmmoneyyyy.

End of Scene

SCENE

(Kitchen table. STEVE picks at his food listlessly.
The others notice and give him furtive glances.)

JORDAN

Yo, Earth to guru.
(STEVE does not respond.)
Come in, space cadet.

JEN

Leave your father alone.

ALYSSA

Why's he being so quiet?

JEN

Because he's ... I'm not sure.

STEVE

Why is JD so money hungry?

JEN

Because that's what business is all about.

JORDAN

Yo, how many times you be telling us it a Snoop doggie-dog world?

JEN

That's "dog-eat-dog" world--

(We hear a carhorn from offstage. ALYSSA goes to the door.)

ALYSSA
Going to the mall.

JEN
Home by ten.

ALYSSA
Maaaaa.

JEN
Ten!

ALYSSA
Did you up the limit on my credit card?

JEN
Yes, but I don't want you spending it all tonight.

ALYSSA
(As she's leaving.)
Constantly treated like a child. No wonder I hate my life.
(SHE exits.)

JORDAN
(Getting up to leave.)
Yo, outta here.

STEVE
Where are you--

JORDAN
Hangin' wit da dawgs. Gas in the beamer?

JEN
Enough.

JORDAN
Got a extra hundred, yo?

STEVE
(Wistfully, to himself.)
Whatever happened to an extra five?

JEN
(Takes cash from her pocket.)

Here's seventy.

JORDAN

How I get by wit chump change?

JEN

Sacrifice is good for the soul.

JORDAN

Dawgs think I welfare, yo.

JEN

Wait till they find out it's last year's beamer.

(JORDAN sighs in exasperation and exits.)

Don't be late.

STEVE

Mini materialistic moguls.

JEN

Peace and love don't put gas in the beamer.

STEVE

I'm leading them down the same materialistic path I was on.

JEN

Nobody leads them. We're just along for the ride.

STEVE

But someone has to show them the way.

JEN

Yeah, their friends, the Web, TV.

STEVE

They're the root of --

JEN

We're just as responsible, with our house, our three cars,
our--

STEVE

Darn it, you're right!

JEN

Just the way things are.

STEVE
And we're going to change it all.

JEN
Now don't get started--

STEVE
We'll donate the house.

JEN
What?--

STEVE
And the cars.

JEN
All right, just relax--

STEVE
We'll move to a smaller house -- or maybe even a tenement.

JEN
If you think--

STEVE
And TV? It will never poison us again.

JEN
(With condescending calmness.)
Steve, I want you to--

STEVE
We need entertainment, we'll play checkers. Or sing quartets.

JEN
Breathe--

STEVE
Or do what they do in the working class neighborhoods: lean out the window while the kids play stoopball.

JEN
Would you listen to what you're saying?

STEVE
What?

JEN
Stoopball? Jordan is going to play stoopball?

STEVE
As you said, we're just as much to blame as --

JEN
Nothing to be blamed for.

STEVE
But the kids --

JEN
Are typical American teenagers.

STEVE
That scares me even more.

JEN
Look, they haven't haven't killed anybody and they haven't
OD'd, so consider yourself lucky.

STEVE
Have we really fallen that far?

JEN
Who is this "we," Kimosabe?

STEVE
Our children, society, us.

JEN
As far as the first two go, nothing's changed.

STEVE
It seems so--

JEN
But you and me? Yeah, I'd say we've taken a nosedive.

STEVE
I too have noticed a ... deepening rift between us.

JEN
More like, worlds apart.

STEVE

And I, for the life of me, can't figure out why.

JEN

Why don't you start with the fact that you're borrowing my dresses.

STEVE

I never borrowed a dress -- just a belt to cinch my waste.

JEN

(Sarcastic.)

Gee, now I feel better.

STEVE

But there seems to be more to it than that.

JEN

Uhhh, let's see: your swan lake rendition mortifies your daughter, your calculus calamity KOs your kid's classwork--

STEVE

Aside from a couple of minor things.

JEN

Throw in the fact that you've stopped bringing home paychecks, which means we'll be fighting for the last dress soon.

STEVE

Wait, I don't understand. Compared to the rest of world, we have the money of kings.

JEN

And the bills of pharaohs.

STEVE

But we've saved--

JEN

And that's what we're living off -- for maybe another month.

STEVE

But I -- We had -- I need to ... meditate.

JEN

You need to work.

STEVE

I wish those Zen books would explain this part of life.

JEN

They do. Just write a Zen book and sell it to a million suckers like you.

(Beat.)

STEVE

I'm ... I've got to -- going for a cleansing walk. Need some answers.

JEN

(Sarcastically.)

Enjoy your search.

(STEVE goes offstage. JEN sits at the table holding her head. After a moment, the doorbell rings. JEN yells offstage.)

JEN

You found answers that fast, I'm dying to hear them.

JD

Answers? No, I got questions.

JEN

(Going the door, talking as she does so.)

Oh, sorry, I thought ...

(JEN lets in JD and continues talking.)

Steve just went out for a ... you didn't see him out there?

JD

Nope.

JEN

He was probably moving fast to get away from here.

JD

Well, sorry to drop in like this --

JEN

No no, it's fine --

JD

It's just that your boy's not exactly easy to get hold of.

JEN

Yeah, he hasn't--

JD

I mean, it's not like he's a regular down at the office.

JEN

I know.

JD

And he stopped answering his cell phone.

JEN

He tell you the radiation withers his life force?

JD

Mmm hmm. Man, when he gets into character, he doesn't stop.

JEN

Character? You think this is an act?

JD

And a brilliant one at that. Clients eat it up.

JEN

You've got to be kidding.

JD

Profits are up eighty percent thanks to his "true way."

JEN

But I thought he wasn't coming down--

JD

But when he does, he's a goldmine. This act is genius!

JEN

I'm telling you, it's no act.

JD

(Beat as JD stares at JEN.)

But ... I mean ... nobody really does the flower child thing anymore.

JEN

He does.

JD

(He laughs, while JEN stares.)
I'm sorry. I shouldn't--

JEN

While he's living like a pea pod, the bills are piling up--

JD

Oh, don't worry about that.

JEN

Easy for you to say. All that money you're making without having to split any--

JD

Hey hey hey. Who says I'm not splitting?

JEN

He hasn't brought home any checks.

JD

Because Buddha boy never picks them up.
(He hands JEN several checks. She is surprised.)

JEN

I thought--

JD

What, that I'd screw him? My only partner?

JEN

No, it's just --

JD

Never mind. Just don't tell anyone I have a loyalty streak, Bad for business.

JEN

It'll be our little secret.

JD

Besides, he's made more money this way than he ever did in the office.

JEN

Just wish he did as well at home.

JD

Oops. I, uh, I thought everything was great between--

JEN

Huh.

JD

All he talks about is how family has brought out the real Steve.

JEN

I'll take the fake one.

JD

What, all of a sudden, my kind of life ain't so bad?

JEN

Compared to this Ashram sham I'm in--

JD

Well, maybe you and I ...

(Beat.)

JEN

I said I was frustrated, not insane.

JD

(Recovering quickly.)

Hey hey, I'm only kidding here. What am I, going to steal my partner's wife?

JEN

Hey, wait a minute--

JD

I mean, all the babes chasing me--

JEN

We might have something here--

JD

Can't even keep up with all the action I'm getting--

JEN

Would you shut up and listen? What we'll do is ...

(Lights fade as JEN explains her plan.)

End of scene

SCENE

(Spotlight on downstage right, where we see STEVE in a lotus position.)

STEVE

Ommmmmm.

JEN

(From the darkened stage.)

Steve, dinner!

STEVE

Just a few more minutes till nirvana.

JEN

Gonna get cold.

STEVE

Okay, okay.

(He gets up and the spotlight follows him as he makes his way to the dinner table.)

I wish I could explain the advantages of eating on a tranquil stom-

(Lights come up to reveal JD sitting at Steve's spot at the table.)

Oh, JD. I didn't know--

JD

Didn't want to interrupt your altered state.

STEVE

What's up, another business meet--

JD

No.

STEVE

You need me to sign--

JD

Nothing like that.

STEVE

Huh ... well, we're always glad when you stop by--

JD

Not stopping by.

STEVE

So you're--

JD

I live here now.

STEVE

You--

JEN

He moved in.

STEVE

You--

JD

Moved in.

STEVE

What, they're working on your place?

JD

No, I gave it up.

STEVE

You gave it--

JD

So I could move in here.

STEVE

To --

JD

To live with Jen ... and the kids.

STEVE

Jen ... and the--

JEN

We were going to tell you yesterday--

STEVE

Tell me what?--

JEN

But you were in locked in your mental Mecca room.

STEVE

What were you going to tell--

JD

That Jen and I are--

JEN

We're in love.

STEVE

What?!

JD

Jen and I.

ALYSSA

He's going to be our new dad.

STEVE

He's going to? -- how can? -- I'm your--

JORDAN

(No longer speaking hip hop. Now almost like
boarding school English.)

He's shall be a true pater.

STEVE

(Doing a double-take at JD's new voice.)

What happened to -- I've tried to be a good father --

JEN

He'll wear pants.

JORDAN

He has also promised to acquire a Harley-Davidson motorcycle for my personage.

ALYSSA

And he won't dance at my recital.

STEVE

I just wanted us to be--

JEN

He'll eat what the rest of us eat.

ALYSSA

He won't lecture us on the automechanical features of the eyebrow.

STEVE

(Visibly shaken.)

I didn't know--

JEN

You look a little flustered, dear. Try some Hara breathing.

STEVE

(He takes a few deep breaths as he places his hand over his belly.)

Yes, yes, of course. My breathing. Bring harmony to--

JD

Hey, pass the ribs.

STEVE

(With accentuated breathing and exaggerated calmness.)

It's just that, well, you're my family, and --

JEN

And we'll still be your family -- in your Zen-like, mystical world.

JD

And in this world, they'll be my family.

STEVE

But I don't--

JD

Plenty of room for all of us.

JEN

You get the guest room.

JD

Set it up like a personal enlightenment center.

JEN

You won't have to be distracted by the common annoyances of daily life.

JD

Spend all your time seeking the boy within.

STEVE

But I've already found--

JEN

You don't even have to come to dinner. We'll leave a nice plate of muselix, carrots and colon blow right outside your door.

JORDAN

New father? Perhaps we should hasten our excursion to the Harley dealer?

JD

Right after I kill these ribs, boy.

JORDAN

Of course, sir. I look forward to our adventure.

JEN

(Chuckling, referring to JORDAN.)

Oh JD, I think you've got a new fan.

JD

Why the hell not? I'll buy his punk ass whatever he wants.

STEVE

But the way he talks.

JD

That's because money talks: a buck for every word he says in English.

JORDAN

I'll have you know: I am keeping a detailed language log.

JD

Bill me at the end of the week.

JORDAN

Jolly good, sir.

STEVE

But --

JD

And Astor--

STEVE

It's Alyssa!

ALYSSA

I'm having it changed.

STEVE

You're what?

JD

I told her, I'll never remember Alice-- Alista -- whatever the hell it is! So I'm throwing her twenty large to change it.

ALYSSA

My new dad likes Astor, and I like money.

JD

Plus you get to go to that "I am Woman" self-esteem camp in Tahiti for a month, so--

STEVE

A month?! What about school?

JD

Waste of time. I got enough money for about five of their lifetimes.

JORDAN

I, too, shall forego formal educational endeavors for the more -- how shall I say? -- prosaic-yet-eminently-practical lessons to be learned on the asphalt.

JD

(Throwing JORDAN a hundred dollar bill, then
tussling his hair affectionately.)

You mean, the street.

JD (CONTINUED)

(To STEVE.)

Runt'll be good on the streets when he comes to work for me.

JORDAN

Tally ho!

STEVE

But he's too young to--

JEN

All right, enough worldly strife for Steve. Let's let him
enter his higher world while we--

STEVE

But I don't want to go--

JEN

But honey, you can finally concentrate your conscious on
collecting kismet karma.

ALYSSA

And we'll get the normal family life we need.

JORDAN

And I will finally acquire my Harley.

JD

And I'll get ... Jen.

(He playfully grabs at her, she giggles, the kids
laugh. STEVE's breathing increases to the point
where he's hyperventillating. Finally, amidst all
the laughing and giggling, he faints. The theater
lights go dark, except for a single spot on the
fallen STEVE. We then hear the singsong, new age
voice of STEVE, which comes from offstage.)

FIRST STEVE VOICE

Breeeeathe, my corporeal self. Yes, you face an obstacle.
But all is surmountable. Welcome this adversity, as you

welcome JD to your wife. Give him all your worldly possessions -- including your family. After all, are they not just another example of your greedy id-influenced, materialistic--

(Suddenly the Zen voice is choked, as if being strangled. Then a squeal from the Zen Voice. Then we hear footsteps running away. A different STEVE voice comes from offstage. This is the more aggressive STEVE from the first act. Even more so as this voice has no guilt, no compunctions, no hesitation.)

SECOND STEVE VOICE

All right, had enough of this kismet-karma-chi crap?

STEVE

Who are?--

SECOND STEVE VOICE

This is you, setting you straight.

STEVE

But--

SECOND STEVE VOICE

The real you, not some meally mouthed, we-are-the-world wimp.

STEVE

But I thought you were dead--

SECOND STEVE VOICE

He pulled that again?

STEVE

Who?

SECOND STEVE VOICE

Guru, that son of a bitch.

STEVE

Guru? That's what my son's been calling me.

SECOND STEVE VOICE

He keeps trying to steal my body.

STEVE

He said it was his body -- I mean, my body. I mean--

SECOND STEVE VOICE

The hell else you think he's going to say, he's borrowing it?

STEVE

So who is he?--

SECOND STEVE VOICE

Some body-snatching creep lurking in the dark corners of people's minds.

STEVE

And how'd he --

SECOND STEVE VOICE

He saw the exact thing creeps like him wait for: a division between mind and body.

STEVE

You mean, I was dividing?

SECOND STEVE VOICE

Of course you were, you moron.

STEVE

But how? I tried to be good, do the right thing, take care of my family--

SECOND STEVE VOICE

(Dismissive.)

Hey, this is you you're talking to.

STEVE

But I--

SECOND STEVE VOICE

You worked, you played, you had fun with JD.

STEVE

(Guiltily.)

I guess I did burn it at both ends--

SECOND STEVE VOICE

And you better cut that guilt crap right there.

STEVE

I'm just saying, I should've --

SECOND STEVE VOICE

How do you think guru got in in the first place?

STEVE

I don't--

SECOND STEVE VOICE

He saw some clown living his life the way he was meant to, who then started spewing out all this "I'm screwing up" guilt.

STEVE

All because I thought--

SECOND STEVE VOICE

Man, you must feel pretty stupid. No job, no family and no cartilage left in your knees from all that meditation.

STEVE

They are kind of sore.

SECOND STEVE VOICE

And if I see rabbit food anywhere near you, I'm gonna kick some ass.

STEVE

The other me didn't give me much choice.

SECOND STEVE VOICE

Well now you have: either live your life smoking a stogie, sneaking off to ballgames and catching shit from your wife, or continue with this self-imposed slow death.

STEVE

Well --

SECOND STEVE VOICE

(He makes buzzer sound.)

Time's up, I made the choice for you. And it ain't singing "We are the World" while my wife gets laid by that cutthroat bastard partner.

STEVE

Geez, when you put it that way--

SECOND STEVE VOICE

That's right, baby, Zen vacation's over. Get your ass up and get back into this world.

(The lights go up and we see the whole family around the fallen STEVE. He shakes his head, and begins to awaken.)

JEN

Oh thank God.

JD

I thought he was ...

(JD helps STEVE to his feet, at which point STEVE decks JD.)

JEN

Steve!

STEVE

Steal my family, huh?

JEN

He didn't--

STEVE

Understand this, pal: the old Steve -- the real Steve -- is back.

JEN

Calm down. Use your Hara breathing--

STEVE

I am never breathing again.

JORDAN

Guru appears to have disappeared--

STEVE

Talk normal!

JORDAN

No mo guru, y'all.

STEVE

That's better.

(To JD.)

And you, you snake in the grass.

JEN

He didn't do --

STEVE

He stole my --

JEN

It was all an act.

STEVE

An act?

JEN

To shock you out of Ghandi land.

STEVE

But what--

JEN

See, you fainted, and--

STEVE

I didn't faint, I was getting my body back.

JD

What?--

STEVE

And then, there you all are: one big, happy family -- with JD in the middle.

JD

Can I act or what?

JORDAN

Yo, how 'bout me, with that foreign language and--

ALYSSA

That's nothing. I convinced everyone I was happy.

STEVE

Well now the curtain's down and the show's over. No more
Zen vegetables, no more name changing daughters, no more
English-speaking sons,

(To JD)

and no more family stealers.

JD

Hey, with all the babes chasing me, you think I'd really--

STEVE

(To JEN and the kids.)

And I don't want any more guilt about staying around the
house more.

JEN

Believe me, there's no problem with that.

(The following 2 lines overlap.)

JORDAN

Straight up.

ALYSSA

Oh God, yeah.

STEVE

(Addressing JD.)

And as for you ...

(JD flinches as JD offers his hand.)

Thanks.

(JD shakes STEVE's hand and gets up.)

JD

(Checking his jaw and teeth.)

I'm billing you for the dental work.

STEVE

Go ahead.

JD

And hey, if you're done with those hippie clothes, you mind
if--

STEVE

Don't tell me you--

JD

The Feng Shui shtick can make us lots of coin.

STEVE

How much, uhhh ... you think there's?--

JD

Are you kidding? We're at the tip of the iceberg.

STEVE

Yeah?

(JD puts his arm around STEVE'S shoulder. They walk off-stage together as JD delivers the following lines.)

JD

We could be doing Feng Shui books, talk shows, video games, web sites--

STEVE

Wow.

(They leave the stage.)

ALYSSA

I'm kind of hungry.

JEN

Me too. Let's just reheat the ...

(Unsure.)

I think I can work the microwave.

ALYSSA

I'll take care of it.

JORDAN

What about pop and JD?

JEN

Leave them alone. They're happier this way.

ALYSSA

And so are we.

JORDAN

Word.

(STEVE and JD return.)

STEVE

We're going out for a meet.

JEN

Whatever.

(STEVE and JD start walking off while animatedly talking business. STEVE then stops and turns back to his family.)

STEVE

Well?

JEN

Well ... what?

STEVE

You coming?

JEN

Huh?

JD

What??

STEVE

You're my family, Steve's my business family. We'll make decisions as a family.

ALYSSA

Oh boy.

JEN

Steve, you're not slipping back, are you?

JD

Can't we call someone, get him some drugs?

STEVE

No, no, no. It's the same old Steve, just a little more ... enlightened. Come on, we'll --

ALYSSA

(Imploring.)
Ma?

JEN
How about you guys go out tonight, and tomorrow we'll all discuss this over dinner here. You too, JD.

JD
Are you slipping?

JEN
I'm fine.

STEVE
Yeah, you are. You lose some weight or something?

JEN
(To ALYSSA.)
Bye bye, lipo.

JORDAN
Dang, now y'all making me nauseous.

ALYSSA
Can we just eat?

JEN
Yes, honey. Steve, you and JD have a good meeting. We'll see you later.

STEVE
(Suggestively.)
Yeah, you will.
(JEN giggles. ALYSSA groans.)

JORDAN
Stop it, yo! Just ain't natural!

STEVE
Later.
(STEVE puts his arm around JD, who looks stunned.)

JD
(To STEVE, as they exit.)
You sure you're all right?

JEN

(Pleasantly surprised.)

Bye.

(ALYSSA places food in a microwave while JEN and JORDAN sit down for dinner.)

ALYSSA

Now that dad's ... "normal," you think I could eat meat again?

JEN

Like a cannibal, dear. Like a cannibal.

JORDAN

Yo, I a cannibal, y'all.

JEN

Don't start, Jordan.

JORDAN

J-Ball, yo. J-Ball the canni-ball.
(He growls.)

(Lights down.)

ALYSSA

Maaaa, he's biting me again.

(JORDAN growls again.)

END