

# FRONT PORCH STEPS

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A full-length drama by  
Bob Pritchard

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

**DAD** (George Snyder), age 45. George is a complainer. He has never been content with his life. He is the perpetual victim. He always thinks negative...except about his family, and his wife Wanda in particular. They are his foundation, what he lives for and works for. A white collar worker with a blue collar mentality.

**MOM** (Wanda Snyder), age 42. Typical 1960s housewife. Hard worker, dedicated to her family. Practical and sensible. Her world is very black and white – there is not much indecision in her. She is a devoted and faithful wife and a fierce protector of her children even if that means protecting them from themselves.

**TIM**, age 11. Parochial school fifth grader. Innocent and trusting. Open and unguarded in word or action. Loves everyone and everything (especially the Baltimore Orioles). Does not look any further ahead than his next meal. A very sweet young boy, idolizes his brother Mike.

**MIKE**, age 16. At a crossroads. Not a rebel yet, but trying to figure out who he is and where he fits. Admires his father but does not want to be him. Influenced by the music of the British invasion. Very good singer and guitar player.

**CATHY**, age 17. More like her mother than she wants to admit. Wants stability, but on her terms. Independent but sensitive to others' feelings. Has lived in a protective bubble all her life and wants to experience other things.

**JOE**, age 20. The tarnished golden child. Made choices that have turned out worse than he expected. Very loyal to his family, but finds every word from his father a contradiction to the real world he sees. A good guy in a bad spot, who is too prideful to ask for help.

EDDIE, age 24. Cathy's boyfriend. Impulsive. Needy. Egotistical. Not sympathetic or empathetic. Charming and persuasive, but lives only for now. All his choices make sense to him; his pursuit of Cathy, his obsession with his band, his dreams of the big time. He does love Cathy, but a long-term relationship with anyone is not something he can comprehend.

KITTY, age 17. Cathy's best friend. Smart. Sexy. Confident. Growing up very fast. Can see the truth of things. Quick to judge and usually right. A fierce friend.

TYLER "THE TURTLE," age 15. Slow, simple friend. Goes along and gets along. No waves. No worries. Very calm. A good stable influence for Mike's anxiety.

BRADLEY "BUDDY" RILEY, age 20. He constantly looks for the easy way, the easy score. No moral compass. The victim. Society owes him. Takes what he can when he can with no consideration for the consequences. Lives in fear. Spends most of his waking hours high—pot, pills, whatever. Can be charming. A good childhood friend to Joe.

DETECTIVE PIRELLI, age 30s. Loves Baltimore. Wants her to be safe. Young. Eager. Finding his unique way. Bends but does not break the rules. Smart and patient.

Others – can be doubled:

COP 1 (by Tyler).

COP 2 (by Michael).

DONNA (by KITTY, not seen).

RICKY PULASKI, voice-over. May be taped.

## SETTING

October 1966. All action takes place in the Snyder home.

## MUSIC NOTE

Three songs are included: "Love Me Do" and "Yesterday" by The Beatles and "Only You" by The Platters. You have four options: get the rights to these songs for low costs; find similar 1960s period songs for low or no cost; write your own songs; cut the songs entirely. They are used primarily to show Michael's musical talent/passion.

## NOTE ON LANGUAGE

If community standards require it, the director/producers may, at their discretion, choose alternate words in place of profanity (e.g. "crap" instead of "shit," "darn" instead of "damn"), keeping in mind a "Baltimore" feel as opposed to local jargon.

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ACT I

SCENE 1

*(Wednesday – October 5, 1966, 6:15 PM.)*

*(The Snyder family home. A typical 1960s BALTIMORE, MD, row home. This one is an "end," so the SL side is not connected to another home, so it plays more like a yard where characters can exit and enter. Just off center are the front porch steps – four – leading up to a small porch with railing and awning. The steps should look like they are made of marble [they must look as real as possible], a classic feature of many Baltimore homes built during this time.)*

*(There is a second story which should be suggested, but is not used. The living room is wide but not very deep. Upstage C are stairs leading to the second story. It has a wooden railing. SL is an archway that leads off SL to the dining room. Just before the arch against the upstage far L wall is a door leading to a basement.)*

*(To the right of the home should be seen a series of four to five identical homes that fade off into the upstage background. They can be suggested on a backdrop or built, but they are not functional.)*

*(However, there needs to be the illusion of a sidewalk in front of the house that leads off SR for exits and entrances.)*

*(Lights up on the living room. TIM is seated on a stool, eating a PP&J sandwich. He is facing the audience with an early 1960s TV console in front of him.)*

**RICKY PULASKI:** *(V.O.)* Welcome back to the 1966 World Series, ladies and gentlemen, on this beautiful October afternoon. The American League champ Baltimore Orioles are off to a hot start today, leading four to one in the top of the third...but don't count out the defending champion Los

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Angeles Dodgers yet. I'm Ricky Pulaski, your voice of the Baltimore O's...

*(JOE enters SR from front door. He is carrying a package.)*

**JOE:** Hey Timmy. What you watching?

**TIM:** *(Without turning his head:)* Orioles and Dodgers.

**JOE:** Oh that's right, the Series started today. Who's winning?

**TIM:** 4 to 1, Birds. Frank Robinson and Brooks both homered in the first.

**JOE:** Cool... Got something for you.

**TIM:** *(His attention grabbed:)* What?

*(Joe hands him the box.)*

A Jim Palmer baseball glove!! Oh wow...this is great. I needed a new glove – thanks JOE!

**JOE:** Anything for my favorite brother.

**TIM:** Haha! Don't tell that to Mikey. *(Noticing the nice suit Joe is wearing:)* Hey, are you working with Dad now?

**JOE:** No man. No square duds for me... I'm a college man now. Gotta look good for the ladies, Timothy, my boy.

**TIM:** Well you look like Dad.

**JOE:** Only in my nightmares.

*(Exits SL to the basement.)*

*(Tim still watches, eating and playing with glove.)*

**RICKY PULASKI:** *(V.O.)* Ball four, and McNally has just loaded the bases. Here comes the Oriole manager, Hank Bauer, to the mound and he's calling for the righty Moe Drabowsky. Wes Parker steps into the batter's box.



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*(DETECTIVE PIRELLI, COP 1, and COP 2 enter SR and cross to the porch and knock. Tim waits, hoping someone else will get it – he knows it's not for him.)*

*(Knocking continues, louder. Tim reluctantly goes to the front door.)*

**TIM:** Yes?

**DET. PIRELLI:** Hello. Is Joseph Snyder at home?

**TIM:** Yes. *(Still distracted by TV:)* He's downstairs in the cave.

**DET. PIRELLI:** The cave? Oh, the basement.

*(He turns to Cop 2.)*

Watch the back.

*(Cop 2 exits SL.)*

*(To Tim:)* May I come in?

**TIM:** Sure –

*(He crosses back to his chair.)*

*(Det. Pirelli looks quickly around the room. Cop 1 notices the basement door and moves to it. Cautiously opens the door and goes in.)*

**DET. PIRELLI:** Watcha watching?

**TIM:** The series. Orioles are up four to one, bottom of the third, two outs.

**DET. PIRELLI:** *(Impressed:)* Really? No way they're gonna beat Koufax though.

**TIM:** He's not pitching. It's Drysdale. My Dad says he's good too, but I still think we'll take em.

**DET. PIRELLI:** Spoken like a true fan.

*(Some noise from downstairs...raised voices, scuffling. Det. Pirelli watches door then turns back to Tim.)*

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Hey that's a nice glove you got there.

**TIM:** Yea, my brother Joe got it for me.

**DET. PIRELLI:** May I see it?

**TIM:** *(Holding it out:)* Sure.

**DET. PIRELLI:** Looks expensive.

*(Tim just shrugs, if he reacts at all.)*

*(Basement door opens and Cop 1 is leading Joe to front door. Joe is in handcuffs.)*

**JOE:** Timmy, tell Mom I'm at the Essex jail.

**TIM:** *(Looking up, but is more curious than shocked:)* Ok.

**DET. PIRELLI:** *(To Cop 1:)* Put him in the car. *(Back to Tim:)* Timothy!?

**TIM:** Yes sir?

**DET. PIRELLI:** *(Handing him back the glove:)* It was very nice meeting you. *(Holds out his business card.)* Give this to your mom, Ok?

**TIM:** Ok.

**DET. PIRELLI:** Don't forget now.

**TIM:** I won't.

**DET. PIRELLI:** Orioles had a great year...97 wins, I think. But the Dodgers are just too good.

**TIM:** We can take 'em.

**DET. PIRELLI:** *(Smiling:)* It'll take a miracle.

*(Exit SR.)*

**TIM:** It will all come down to the pitching, that's what my dad says...

*(Another 10 seconds pass. We hear Mike out front.)*

**MIKE:** (*Off:*) Whatcha doing with my brother? JOE? JOEY? What's going on? HEY!!

(*MIKE enters SR – front door.*)

Did you see that?

**TIM:** What?

**MIKE:** The PO-lice, idiot. They just took Joe away. In a squad car!! Jesus! Didn't you see anything?

**TIM:** Joe got me a new glove!!

**MIKE:** Really? (*Disbelief:*) Let me see it.

(*Taking it.*)

**TIM:** Hey, that's mine!

**MIKE:** (*Playing keep away:*) I just wanna see it, numbnuts. Hey, this is nice...a Jim Palmer.

**TIM:** I know!! I'm gonna use it Saturday when we play the Pirates.

**MIKE:** Saturday? That's just three days. You can't use this glove that soon...you gotta work it in first.

**TIM:** Right. I forgot. Like Dad did for yours last year. (*Remembering:*) You...put a ball in it...

(*Mike is about to correct him.*)

...No wait...you rub it with oil first...

(*Mike nods.*)

...THEN you put the ball in and tie it up.

**MIKE:** You got it

**TIM:** But how long I gotta wait?

**MIKE:** Maybe a week...two at the most.

**TIM:** (*Thinking:*) Hmmm. Do you think maybe we can play

catch with it now, anyway?

**MIKE:** Sure, why not. You can't catch any worse.

*(He starts up the stairs.)*

Man, Dad's gonna have a heart attack when he finds out about Joey.

*(Exits upstairs.)*

**TIM:** *(Watching TV:)* Oh NO!! He walked in a run. ...Jeez Louise, Drabowsky!!

*(DAD enters SR onto porch with WANDA.)*

**DAD:** Dammit Wanda, I'm all right.

**MOM:** Dr. Larson said you HAVE to take those pills, George. High blood pressure is a bad thing.

**DAD:** But I feel fine. Turn that thing off, Timothy. Did you do your homework yet?

**TIM:** But it's the Orioles!!

**DAD:** Oh that's right. The series. Who's winning?

**MOM:** Of course you FEEL fine, dear.

**TIM:** Birds – four to two.

**DAD:** Drabowsky's pitching? What is wrong with Bauer? Is he the worst manager in baseball or what? He should have Palmer in there.

**MOM:** That's the thing about high blood pressure, George. You gotta be careful. They call it the silent killer.

**TIM:** Is Dad gonna die?

**MOM:** No Timothy. Clean up this mess please, and go do your homework.

**TIM:** Hey Dad, look at this new glove Joe got me.

**DAD:** A new glove? This looks expensive. Where the hell does he get the money for this sort of thing?

**MOM:** Language dear.

**DAD:** Sorry... Don't say hell, Timmy.

**TIM:** It's a JIM PALMER!!

**DAD:** I can see that. This is a 10-dollar glove. Where does he get the money for something like that, Wanda?

**MOM:** Well he does have the job at National Bo.

**DAD:** (*Going upstairs:*) I'll talk to him when he gets home.

**TIM:** Oh, he's not coming home.

**MOM:** Why not, dear?

**TIM:** (*Handing her Det. Pirelli's card:*) He's in the Essex jail. When's dinner?

**DAD:** WHAT??

(*Blackout.*)

## SCENE 2

(*Later, same day – 8:00 PM.*)

**CATHY:** (*With EDDIE, kissing on the porch:*) Please Eddie...Miss Josie is watching.

**EDDIE:** Let her watch, the old bitty.

**CATHY:** (*Another kiss.*) Do you love me?

**EDDIE:** You know I do, baby.

**CATHY:** (*Fierce hug.*) Oh Eddie. We are going to have such a great life together.

**EDDIE:** You can say that again. As soon as you move in with me.

**CATHY:** I'm telling my mom tonight.

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**EDDIE:** Why tell her? Just go upstairs and pack. You can move in tonight.

**CATHY:** No...I could never do that. I have to finish my senior year first, you know that. It's bad enough I won't be going to college. My dad is gonna flip about that...but I can handle him. No, my mom...she has to be handled carefully.

**EDDIE:** You worry too much. Miss Wanda LOVES me...hell, she practically introduced us at the Lunday wedding, remember?

**CATHY:** (*Laughing:*) Of course. How could I forget.

*(She stands and impersonates him, smoking a cigarette.)*

"Hey darling, I'm in the band. Whatcha number?"

**EDDIE:** I was not smoking. Bad for the lungs. Hard to blow, you know.

**CATHY:** Oh, I know, Mr. Sax Man.

**EDDIE:** You mean Mr. SEX man.

**CATHY:** (*Suddenly serious:*) No Eddie, I mean it. No sex until we are married. But we can do other things you like.

**EDDIE:** (*Tired of the games, gets up.*) Yeah yeah, little miss Catholic girl...you've told me a hundred times. Such bullshit.

**CATHY:** (*Going to him:*) Don't be angry, honey. You know I love you, right Eddie? Only you.

**EDDIE:** Now you sound like one of our songs (*Singing badly, but sincerely:*) *Only you...can make this world seem right...*

*(Mike enters SR, joining in. He sings VERY well.)*

**MIKE:** *Only you...can make the darkness bright.*

**ALL:** *Only you, and you alone, can thrill me like you do. You're my dream come true, my one and only you.*

**EDDIE:** That's great, Michael. You got a good voice. Better than Herbie, even.

**MIKE:** Really? You think I could play with you guys? You know I'm learning guitar and...

**EDDIE:** Not just yet. What are you? 15? 16? You gotta be at least 21 to play in the clubs. But keep at it, Elvis.

**MIKE:** (*Earnestly:*) But one day? You think I got the chops?

*(Eddie looks at him seriously, then at Cathy.)*

**EDDIE:** Sure kid...keep it up and stay in touch. Hey, here's some advice, get your own band together. Play some gigs... You know school dances, Knights of Columbus. That's how I got started. Get some experience. Then in a few years...who knows?

**MIKE:** Really? Really, you think so? Because I was thinking the same thing. Me and Kirk and Turtle were thinking of getting together. We just need a drummer...and mics. Kirk's got an amp but...

*(Mike exits into house.)*

*(Eddie has stopped listening, moves next to Cathy.)*

**EDDIE:** Hey darling, I'm in the band. Why don't you move in with me?

**CATHY:** (*Laughs and kisses him.*) Mom didn't even want to bring me that night, but Miss Annette called in sick last minute, so she needed an extra pair of hands to serve and clean up after the wedding.

**EDDIE:** (*Cutting her off and kissing her again:*) It was my lucky day.

**MOM:** (*Off SR as she enters:*) CATHERINE ANN SNYDER!! What do you think you're doing?

**EDDIE:** Hi there, Miss Wanda.

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**MOM:** Don't you Miss Wanda me, Edward. Catherine, come inside, we have to talk. Good night, Edward.

**DAD:** *(Entering SR:)* Two thousand dollars. Who has two thousand dollars? Damn lawyers.

**MOM:** That's for bail, George. Not the lawyer. We have to pay them two hundred dollars and Joseph can get out.

**DAD:** Jesus, Wanda, wait till we get inside. I don't want the whole world to hear our problems!!

**MOM:** *(As Mom and Dad enter the house:)* Catherine. Now!!

**CATHY:** Ok, Mom.

*(Quick kiss.)*

Call me later?

**EDDIE:** Sure...oh no, can't tonight. We have practice.

*(Looks at watch.)*

Shit, I'm late. Bye.

*(Exits SR.)*

**CATHY:** *(Waving:)* Bye hon. *(Whispers:)* Love you.

*(Starts up front porch steps.)*

**KITTY:** *(Entering SR:)* Hey, slut!!

**CATHY:** Shut up. My mom's inside!!

*(KITTY sits on porch steps and looks off SR.)*

**KITTY:** Was he checking to see if you had tonsillitis? With his tongue?

**CATHY:** You saw that?

**KITTY:** Cath. The whole street saw you. I live two blocks over and I saw you. What you see in that guy I'll never know.

**CATHY:** Because you are a child, Kitty dear, and you've never been in love.

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**KITTY:** Love? Is that what that was? Looked more like the U.N...Russian hands and Roman fingers...haha.

**CATHY:** He wants me to move in with him.

**KITTY:** What? Now? Cathy you're only 17! Oh my God, does your dad know? He'd blow a gasket!

**CATHY:** NO...I was going to talk to Mom tonight about it, but with all this crap with Joe I think I'll –

**KITTY:** Oh my God, Cath... They put him in a police car! Right here, in front of your house! Dragged him out in handcuffs and pushed him into the backseat like it was *Dragnet* or something.

**CATHY:** I heard. Miss Josie told me when I got home from school. Mom and Dad had already gone to the police station and she was more than happy to clue me in!! I swear, I think that lady just sits in her window with binoculars all day. My mom told me once she got home from a catering job last winter at two in the morning...in a snow storm. And the next day, Miss Josie walked by and said "Are you all right Wanda? Walking home in the snow that late? You could have slipped and fell!" Jeez Louise.

**KITTY:** It's all over the neighborhood now. Your brother is a drug king or something. They say he was caught with ten pounds of marijuana in his school locker at Essex Community. It was just overflowing. Some of it was falling out. That's how they got him. Is it true?

**CATHY:** (*Sad:*) I don't know, Kitty.

**KITTY:** I heard he was working with Buddy Riley. Oh he's a bad one, Riley is. I heard he cut up a kid once just for scratching his car. Everyone knows he's a dope head.

**CATHY:** Look I gotta go in. Mom and Dad just got back from the police station. I'll call you tomorrow and fill you in. Or you and Miss Josie can fill me in!!

**KITTY:** Ok...hey I'm here if you need me.

*(They hug.)*

**CATHY:** Thanks, hon.

*(Goes into house as Kitty exits SL.)*

**MOM:** *(On the phone:)* Oh Helen, they wouldn't let us bring him home. He looked so sad. I've never seen that look on his face before... Yes tomorrow, after we post bail... Two hundred... No we got it. It'll take all my Christmas money but... Oh no that's ok, Bill would kill you if you gave me any money... What? No I didn't know that. How many days? Are they going to fire him? Oh thank God for small favors... I know, I love you too. I'll call you tomorrow. Good night, hon.

*(She hangs up and sits, feeling very tired.)*

**MIKE:** *(Running down the stairs with a guitar:)* Bye, Mom.

**MOM:** Where are you going?

**MIKE:** Turtle's house. We're gonna play some music.

**MOM:** Mr. Biedronski called again.

**MIKE:** Aw, Mom.

**MOM:** He just needs help after school and a few weekends here and there. You know, at the Sinclair gas station on Eastbrook? Next to the Kmart?

**MIKE:** I know, Mom, but I'm busy now. Gonna get a band together and –

**MOM:** I thought you liked working on cars?

**MIKE:** I do, Mom, but I really want to do this. I've been practicing...

**MOM:** I told him you would come by Saturday.

**MIKE:** What? But I got a game Saturday!

**MOM:** You can go after.

**MIKE:** I was gonna go to Turtle's after.

**MOM:** Michael Alan Snyder, do not fight with me about this. Go see Mr. Biedronski!!

**MIKE:** (*Gives up knowing resistance is useless:*) Okay. Okay.

**MOM:** And don't be late...nine o'clock. It's a school night.

**MIKE:** But Mom...

**MOM:** (*Raising her voice and shocking him:*) I SAID NINE O'CLOCK!! (*Puts her hand over her face:*) I'm sorry Mikey. I didn't mean to raise my voice. I'm a little tired tonight.

**MIKE:** Mom? Is Joe in a lot of trouble?

**MOM:** (*Under control again:*) Nine o'clock, dear.

*(Mike exits quietly.)*

**TIM:** (*Coming halfway down the stairs slowly:*) Mom? I'm sorry.

**MOM:** What Timothy? Sorry for what?

**TIM:** I let him in. The policeman. He was nice to me.

**MOM:** Come here, Tim.

*(He comes to her and she hugs him.)*

It wasn't your fault, dear. Your brother did something bad and, well, we just have to deal with it.

**TIM:** Will he be home soon?

**MOM:** Tomorrow, I hope. But enough of that. How was your day? How was school? How'd you do on the Columbus report?

**TIM:** A B-minus.

*(They sing together.)*

**MOM & TIM:** *In fourteen hundred and ninety-two, Columbus sailed the ocean blue.*

**TIM:** Haha. I woulda' got an A, but Sister Mary Carol says my handwriting is awful and she can't read it.

**MOM:** That's ok. Gives you something to work on...improve. You just need to slow down when you write, that's all. That's all.

*(She starts to cry.)*

**TIM:** Mom...? Mommy?

**MOM:** It's all right, dear. Go upstairs now, dear. Please finish your homework, it's late.

**TIM:** The Orioles won, Mom. Five to two!!

**MOM:** That's nice, dear. Go on up. I'll be there in a minute and read you a story.

**TIM:** *Where the Wild Things Are??*

**MOM:** Again? Didn't we read that last week?

**TIM:** Yea, but it's my favorite.

*(He walks up the stairs like a monster.)*

Aarrgg!!

*(Mom exits door to front porch. After a few minutes we hear but do not see DONNA KOMINSKI passing by. Donna is always a voice – we never see her.)*

**DONNA:** *(Off:)* Hi, Miss Wanda.

**MOM:** Hello, Donna. How's your mother?

**DONNA:** *(Off:)* She's fine thanks. She really liked the bundt cake...I did too.

**MOM:** Well that plumber she suggested – Mr. Phillips? He was a godsend. Hardly charged me a thing. Washer is working like brand new again.

**DONNA:** (*Off:*) I'll tell her. Night, Miss Wanda.

**MOM:** Night, hon.

(*Waving, she sits, starts to pray her rosary.*)

**RILEY:** (*Entering from SL:*) Hey, Miss Wanda.

**MOM:** (*Stiffly:*) What do you want, Bradley?

**RILEY:** Just wondering if Joey is around?

**MOM:** You know very well he is not, Bradley.

**RILEY:** Ok...but I really need to talk to him, Miss Wanda. Will he be home tomorrow?

**MOM:** (*Getting angry:*) I don't know, Bradley. I'll tell him you came by. Good night!!

**RILEY:** Ok...Ok. Don't get your panties in a wad. Good night

(*He exits back SL around the house. Mom watches him go, then continues her rosary, as... Lights fade to black.*)

### SCENE 3

(*Next day – Thursday, 4:30 PM.*)

(*Lights up on living room. Mom, Dad and Det. Pirelli seated.*)

**DET. PIRELLI:** The case is strong, Mrs. Snyder. Joey had hidden the drugs in his locker. Then another unidentified boy came, knew the locker combination, and took them. We tried to arrest him red-handed but he got away.

**MOM:** (*Serving him ice tea:*) Any idea who he was?

**DET. PIRELLI:** We got some leads. We'll catch him, don't worry. But, we need Joe to identify him.

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**DAD:** Don't you think we need a lawyer here?

**DET. PIRELLI:** Relax Mr. Snyder. I need to get going anyway. My son's bowling team is playing tonight over at the COLT lanes.

*(He rises.)*

What I'm trying to say is we know Joe was a dupe; just a middle guy. Yes, he played his part, he hid the drugs in his locker and gave someone the combination. But we want the big fish, Mr. Snyder. We need a name. We need to know who he was working with. So just ask him, that's all. Consult a lawyer of course, but I believe he would agree with me that if Joe helps us, he will be treated very leniently. Might not even get jail time.

**MOM:** Jail time? Joe might go to jail?

**DET. PIRELLI:** They found ten pounds of high-grade marijuana in his school locker, Mrs. Snyder. That's no small thing. Plus we have evidence that supports he has been doing this awhile...maybe as long as six months.

**DAD:** We'll talk to him.

**DET. PIRELLI:** That's all I ask. I'm just trying to help. Everyone I talked to says Joe is a good kid. Call me anytime. Thanks for the tea.

*(He exits.)*

**DAD:** *(Scoffs:)* Good kid. That boy...GOD DAMN IT!!

**MOM:** George! Your blood pressure!

**DAD:** We gave him everything! He had scouts watch him play ball. We paid for his college. He's the smartest one in his class. How could he do something so stupid?

**MOM:** I don't know, dear.

**DAD:** It's that damn Riley boy, damn him. I want him out! As soon as this is over he's out. We let him stay down there in his "cave" and he comes and goes out the back as he pleases...who knows what he's doing down there.

**MOM:** Let's just wait and see, dear.

**DAD:** And how we gonna afford a lawyer? What do we have in savings?

**MOM:** Two thousand two hundred dollars.

**DAD:** Well you can kiss THAT goodbye. Damn lawyers. Take all our money, and for what? Any promises? Nope, not a DAMN one. "Oh we have to wait and see, Mr. Snyder. The city has a strong case." What...what in hell am I paying him for? Huh? Can you answer me that, Wanda? What the hell are we paying him for?

**MOM:** We should talk to Joe.

**DAD:** YOU talk to him. I just want to kill him.

**MOM:** Mr. Moskowitz came highly recommended, George. He's been Vern's lawyer for years.

**DAD:** Vern! Vern! Can we go 24 hours without hearing that bastard's name? Please? Don't I have enough problems?

**MOM:** (*Hotly:*) Without Vern Schwarz dear, we wouldn't HAVE that 2,000 dollars. Remember that. He's been very good to me. Getting me all the best weddings and bar mitzvahs at the hall. When you switched jobs we agreed it would be a good idea if I could bring in a little extra money, right? Do you remember that?

**DAD:** Yeah yeah, damn Miller steel mill...

**MOM:** All right then. So no more bad talk about Vern.

**DAD:** (*Pause.*) Where is he? Downstairs?

**MOM:** (*Getting up and crossing to basement door:*) Joseph? Joey

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honey? Will you come up here please?

**DAD:** (*Mocking:*) "Will you come up here please." Jesus H. Christ, Wanda, no wonder he turned out like he did. I should've used the belt more, like my father.

**MOM:** Now try to be calm.

**DAD:** I need a beer.

**JOE:** (*Entering:*) I'll get you one, Pops.

*(Goes through dining room door.)*

**MOM:** Joey, that nice detective was here. He had an idea that might help you.

*(Joe enters with two beers, gives one to Dad and sits.)*

**JOE:** Don't listen to the fuzz, Mom...ever.

**MOM:** He was very nice, dear, and said if you help them it will go better for you.

**DAD:** Who were you working with, Joe? Huh? Who gave you the drugs?

**JOE:** Nobody. I don't know how that stuff got in my locker. I think it was some prick at school...this guy named Carter. We have Calc together and he thinks he's hot shit so I told him so...I think he did it to get back at me.

**DAD:** This is the story you told the police? And Mr. Moskowitz?

**JOE:** (*Laughing:*) Where'd you find that old fart? He doesn't know his ass from a hole in the ground.

**MOM:** Language!!

**JOE:** Sorry

*(Joe lights a cigarette.)*

**MOM:** Don't smoke in the house, Joe. How many times I have to tell you? The basement smells like a night club.

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**DAD:** They want a name, Joe. Detective Pirelli says they will be more lenient on you. They know you're not the boss. They want the main guy.

**JOE:** How do they know I'm not the boss? Be a rat? Is that what you're asking? Hell no!

**MOM:** Joseph!! Please.

**JOE:** I am telling you. I don't know how that stuff got in my locker, ok? But I didn't expect you to believe me. You don't listen to me about anything.

**DAD:** What the hell are you talking about? They saw you. They had... What do they call them, Wanda? Under...under...shit.

**MOM:** Undercover men, dear

**DAD:** Yea...undercover men watching you.

**JOE:** Did they see me put it there? Did they see me touch it? NO...someone stole my locker combination...probably that Carter prick...and now the PO-Lice is trying to frame ME, because they got nothing!!

**MOM:** So you had nothing to do with this?

**JOE:** Finally!! God, what's it take for you two to hear me?

**MOM:** Ok...so explain to me the money. Where's THAT coming from?

**JOE:** I'm working, Mom. Remember? Aunt Helen got me the job at the beer place.

**MOM:** Yes...part time...and you've missed two days last week and three the week before.

**JOE:** I had homework...you know...the fall semester just started.

**MOM:** Then tell me where you get all the money for new clothes...and that stereo you have downstairs...

**DAD:** ...and that expensive glove you bought Timmy?

**JOE:** I knew you didn't trust me. I'm not having this conversation.

*(Goes through basement door.)*

**MOM:** *(Yelling:)* We have to see your lawyer tomorrow at nine.

**DAD:** *(Exiting upstairs:)* I'm going upstairs and lay down.

*(Mom exits onto front porch. Kitty enters SL with Cathy.)*

**KITTY:** You seeing Eddie tonight?

**CATHY:** No, he's got a gig.

**KITTY:** You're not going? You'd probably get in for free. Sounds fun. You could take your best friend along.

**CATHY:** I could go if I wanted, but it's the groupies that bother me. And he encourages them.

**KITTY:** What a heel.

**CATHY:** *(About to defend him but changes her mind:)* Yea. Sometimes

**KITTY:** Hi, Miss Wanda.

**MOM:** Hi, Kitty. How's your mother?

**KITTY:** She's fine, Miss Wanda. I'll tell her you said hi. *(To Cathy:)* Come by later if you want.

*(Kitty exits SL.)*

**CATHY:** Ok, bye.

*(Sits next to Mom. After a few beats:)*

What's the latest with Joey?

**MOM:** I don't wanna talk about it. Tell me some GOOD news. Have you heard back from Towson or Maryland?

**CATHY:** Still too early, Mom. I just sent them, remember?

**MOM:** Oh right. I don't where my head is at. It would fall off if it wasn't attached.

**CATHY:** Mom...I'm not sure I want to go to college.

**MOM:** What? We discussed this. Of course you're going. Your father and I been putting money in a savings account for years. You might need a scholarship, but we'll figure...

**CATHY:** No Mom, I'm serious. I may wait a few years.

**MOM:** And do what? (*No answer.*) And do WHAT?

**CATHY:** (*Getting up:*) Mom, Eddie and I...

**MOM:** Oh no. Stop right there, young lady.

**CATHY:** But Mom...

**MOM:** Don't you BUT Mom me. You're gonna throw away your chance at college for some boy?

**CATHY:** He's not a boy. He's 24.

**MOM:** Yes...you're right. He's a man...and you're a child... DON'T interrupt. You are more grown up than your sister ever was, Catherine, I'll give you that, and she got married two years ago. But Steven was a good boy, her age, with a good job. What is Eddie? A 24-year-old musician? Don't throw away your future for him.

**CATHY:** But I love him.

**MOM:** Fine. Love him, but go to college.

**CATHY:** We're gonna move in together.

**MOM:** Oh no you're not! I'm putting my foot down, Catherine. You are only 17 and...

**CATHY:** After I graduate, Mom. I'll be 18 in June then...

**MOM:** Oh Jesus, Mary and Joseph...why do you have to bring this up now? With all the problems with your brother...

**CATHY:** I know, Mom. But I...we have been talking about this for a while now, and I told him I'd discuss it with you.

**MOM:** Can we just put it off a little bit? I can't think clearly now.

**CATHY:** Sure, Mom. Is there anything I can do?

**MOM:** No dear, thanks but...no wait. Go upstairs and talk to your father. He's very upset

**CATHY:** They have another fight?

**MOM:** (*Quiet for a moment.*) I don't know what happened to him, Cathy, I just don't. What did we do wrong? Were we such bad parents? We have a good home...this is a nice neighborhood...oh we probably could have made better choices along the way but...did I ever tell you about the house we looked at in Reisterstown? Oh, a beautiful home. A new neighborhood. Wide streets...trees...and the rooms were so big...the kitchen, oh my Lord...and we even had the down payment. When Nanny died she left us 5000 dollars...would've been just enough. (*Quiet again.*) But we kept putting it off, and putting it off...then Timmy came...and one thing led to another. We ended up using the money for a new washer dryer and the back porch...

**CATHY:** You love that back porch. The million-dollar breeze. Haha.

**MOM:** Yes...yes.

(*Tim and Mike enter SR.*)

**TIM:** Oh man oh man, you blasted it!!

**MIKE:** (*Smiling, holding a bat:*) He threw it right down the middle!

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*(Swings.)*

**TIM:** Right over the fence!!

**MIKE:** Gone!! Home run.

**TIM:** *(As the pitcher:)* Now...batting cleanup for the Colgate Orioles...Michael Snyder

*(Mike takes his place in the batter's box.)*

**MIKE:** Let's see what ya got.

**TIM:** The wind up and the pitch

*(He throws imaginary ball. Mike takes a BIG swing.)*

**MIKE:** Blam!! Outta the park!!

*(Rounds the bases.)*

**MOM:** Oh, I almost forgot, Tyler called.

**MIKE:** Turtle? Oh great

*(Runs inside.)*

**MOM:** Well, I better go start dinner.

**CATHY:** You need help?

**MOM:** No. Go talk to your father

*(Mom and Cathy enter house. Tim plays pretend with glove, then swings the bat a little.)*

*(Riley enters SR.)*

**RILEY:** Heey, slugger.

**TIM:** Hey.

**RILEY:** Your brother around?

**TIM:** I don't know. I just got home.

**RILEY:** Hey that's a nice bat. (*Grabbing the bat from Tim:*) You know, your brother and I use to play all the time. I played short and Joe third.

**TIM:** I play right field.

**RILEY:** Right field? Well, I guess someone has to.

*(Pretends like he will hit Tim.)*

Haha.

*(Then tosses it to him.)*

Tell Joey I need to see him.

*(Exits SL.)*

*(Mike enters from house with guitar. Sits and starts to strum a few chords, notices Tim has not moved.)*

**MIKE:** Hey, you alright?

**TIM:** Riley was here.

**MIKE:** Jerk.

**TIM:** He wanted Joey...then he threw...

**TYLER:** (*Entering SL with guitar:*) HeyheyHEY, Moptop.

**MIKE:** (*Ignoring Tim:*) Hey Turtle...I see you didn't get lost this time...haha.

**TYLER:** One time! Plus, I was drunk.

**MIKE:** You were plastered.

**TYLER:** I ended up knocking on Donna Kaminski's door...haha...woke her mom up.

**TIM:** Mike. Riley tried to—

**TYLER:** Man, you seen Donna lately. She grew a pair.

**MIKE:** I got eyes don't I? So what you wanna play?

**TYLER:** I don't know... "Love Me Do"?

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*(Mike plays opening chords, humming the harmonica part.)*

**MIKE:** Gotta get a harmonica.

**TYLER:** One day.

*(They play "Love Me Do." When it gets to the second chorus Tim, who has been dancing and jumping to the music, joins in – singing loudly and badly.)*

**MIKE:** STOP STOP STOP—Jesus H Christ Timmy, will you shut the hell up. We're trying to practice here. Nobody wants to hear you. Go in the house.

*(Tim, devastated and holding back tears, enters the house. Tyler and Mike continue to play softly, as lights fade on them and come up in the house following Tim.)*

**MOM:** Timmy, go wash your hands. Dinner will be ready soon.

*(Tim sits and starts to cry.)*

Timmy...? What is it sweetheart?

**TIM:** Nothing...

**MOM:** Tell me honey.

**TIM:** Why do people have to be so mean?

*(She hugs and comforts him.)*

**MOM:** Oh baby...it's ok...it's ok... Go wash up... Dinner will be ready in a few minutes.

**TIM:** Ok, Mom.

*(He exits upstairs.)*

**MOM:** *(Goes to door.)* Michael! MICHAEL!!

**MIKE:** What, Mom, we're playing.

**MOM:** What's happened to Timmy? He was crying.

**MIKE:** Jeez Mom, I don't know. He was acting stupid like he does and I told him to go inside...big deal.

**MOM:** It IS a big deal. Don't you know he looks up to you?

**MIKE:** Mom, we're trying to practice.

**DAD:** *(Coming downstairs with Tim:)* The BIRDS are playing tonight Timothy. Game two. Where's my radio?

**MOM:** Dinner is ready, George.

**DAD:** Oh right...after we eat, Tim, then we'll listen to the game. Ok?

*(Tim gives Mike a dirty look and goes to dining room door.)*

**TIM:** Ok, Dad.

**MOM:** *(Quiet for a moment.)* Come inside. Dinner is ready.

**MIKE:** ...but Mom—

**MOM:** Tyler can eat too. You need to call your mom, hon?

**TYLER:** No, ma'am. She knows where I am.

*(They all enter dining room door. Eddie enters SR and knocks on front door.)*

**EDDIE:** Hello?

*(Mom returns, notices who it is. Crosses her arms, coldly:)*

**MOM:** Afternoon, Edward.

**EDDIE:** Hey, Miss Wanda. Is Cathy here?

**MOM:** *(Still with the LOOK, yelling up the stairs:)* Catherine. Edward is here.

**EDDIE:** *(Very uncomfortable:)* I'll wait outside.

**MOM:** I think that's a GREAT idea!

*(He exits off porch.)*

**CATHY:** *(Excited, coming down stairs:)* Eddie? Where is he,



Mom?

*(Mom points at the door. Cathy rushes out.)*

Hey, honey. What a nice surprise.

*(She kisses him.)*

**EDDIE:** *(Brushes her off.)* What's with your Mom? She just gave me the stink eye.

**CATHY:** Oh yeah...I told her we were moving in together.

**EDDIE:** Well that explains that. Look, I got you a ticket. I want you to come to the show tonight.

**CATHY:** Really? Ahhh, ok.

**EDDIE:** Well don't be so happy about it ok.

**CATHY:** No, I am happy...just surprised.

**EDDIE:** *(Whispering:)* And bring your pajamas...

**CATHY:** EDDIE!!

**EDDIE:** Tell your mom you're sleeping at Kitty's tonight.

**CATHY:** What? I can't do that. I got school tomorrow.

**EDDIE:** You can miss one day...come on.

*(Kisses her.)*

**CATHY:** No...stop that...I can't concentrate when you do that.

**EDDIE:** Come on. You know I love you.

**CATHY:** I know and I love you too...it's just I've never...

**EDDIE:** It'll be fine... Look we're gonna be together right? We're moving in as soon as you graduate...so this is just a preview.

**CATHY:** No...I should wait...till we're married.

**EDDIE:** Haha. That's what I love about my little catholic girl.

**CATHY:** I'm serious.

**EDDIE:** Ok... Tell you what. Get the PJ's... *Cathy starts to object but he interrupts her:*) BUT we'll leave em in the car. And if you want to come home or go to Kitty's after, I'll take you. It'll be fine. Your choice.

**CATHY:** Really? It's not that I don't want to...with you... I'm just scared is all.

**EDDIE:** Baby. Baby...trust me. I would never do anything you didn't want to do.

**CATHY:** Ok...I'll meet you down the street,

**EDDIE:** Love you.

*(He exits SR.)*

**CATHY:** *(Worried:)* Love you too.

*(Then runs in the house.)*

*(Riley enters SL. Looks at the front of the house. Goes up the steps and looks in through window. Seeing nothing, he starts back down steps.)*

**KITTY:** *(Entering SL:)* Oh it's you.

**RILEY:** Hey, pretty Kitty.

**KITTY:** Thought you'd be in jail by now.

**RILEY:** Stupid fuzz. They can't catch me... Plus I ain't done nothin...YET.

*(Makes a grab for her.)*

**KITTY:** Hey watch it buster!!

*(Riley, laughing, exits SL.)*

**CATHY:** *(To Mom inside as she comes onto porch:)* I'm going to Kitty's house, Mom. Might spend the night. I'll call you.

**KITTY:** News to me.

**CATHY:** (*Screaming:*) Ahh—Jesus, Kitty. You scared me half to death.

**KITTY:** Haha—so when were you going to tell me?

**CATHY:** Come here. (*Dragging her away from house:*) Look, Eddie asked me to come to his show tonight.

**KITTY:** That's great...but what do you need the bag... (*Understanding:*) Oh my GOD!! You are NOT spending the night with him.

**CATHY:** Quiet down! I don't know; I might. I want to.

**KITTY:** Wrong answer!! You are not sleeping with that creep.

**CATHY:** He is not a creep. I love him.

**KITTY:** Doesn't make him NOT a creep... I just question your common sense.

**CATHY:** We're gonna get married.

**KITTY:** Fine. And I'll be your bridesmaid and cry the whole time...but you're not married yet.

**CATHY:** You don't know.

**KITTY:** Oh yes I do. (*Pause.*) Remember last summer? The big family vacation disaster to Ocean City? We were there for two long weeks.

**CATHY:** Yea. You said your brother got in trouble or something.

**KITTY:** (*Shy:*) He didn't get in trouble...it was me.

**CATHY:** You? And you never told me? Your best friend?

**KITTY:** I never told anyone. Plus my mom and dad made me promise...the scandal. My mom would flip.

**CATHY:** So...

**KITTY:** (*Pause, then in low voice:*) Look...I really can't tell you

everything...but I...God I can't believe I did this...I went to a motel with an older man.

**CATHY:** (*Shocked:*) No...

**KITTY:** He was this really cute waiter we had at this crab place Dad took us on the boardwalk. He was about thirty; tall, funny – God, even Mom liked him!! Anyway the second time we came in he started to chat me up, you know. "My you look very pretty tonight. Is that a new dress? Got a hot date tonight?" He'd whisper all this stuff when he would bring bread or drinks. So Mom couldn't hear, you know. Then, he kind of surprised me when I came out of the bathroom. "Here's my number. I get off at 10." I was in shock, and a little turned on. I didn't tell anybody – and about 10:30 I sneaked out and called him.

**CATHY:** And you met him?

**KITTY:** No, not that night. We just talked. He was so different, you know...adult. Not like those boys at school; a man. We planned to meet the next afternoon. Dad had planned a day at the amusement park and I told them I was sick. I met him at his restaurant and we drove to a motel. It was happening a little fast and I was scared and excited, and I knew I should stop...but I didn't. We went in and started to kiss, when there was a loud knock on the door...and a shouting. It was his girlfriend. I hid in the bathroom, and they started arguing and fighting and breaking things...and soon the cops came.

**CATHY:** Oh no, Kitty.

**KITTY:** Yea, imagine THAT phone call. Hi Mom? I'm at the Ocean City police department. Can you come get me?

**CATHY:** I'm surprised you weren't grounded for life.

**KITTY:** Pretty much. Thank God there were no charges or anything...I thought Dad was gonna kill him. Anyway, we

came home early and we promised we wouldn't talk about it...my reputation and all.

**CATHY:** I'm sorry.

**KITTY:** You know, my dad's usually a jerk, but he was right that day...I could've ruined everything. What boy would want me after that? And what if I got pregnant?

*(A horn sounds.)*

**CATHY:** I gotta go.

**KITTY:** Don't do this, Cath...please.

**CATHY:** I...

*(Hugs Kitty then exits SR. Joe enters SL.)*

**JOE:** Hey.

**KITTY:** Hi.

**JOE:** Mom hates when I smoke in the house.

*(Sits on steps.)*

Want one?

**KITTY:** Sure.

*(She sits next to him.)*

So...what's new with you?

**JOE:** *(Laughs.)* Haha. Oh, not much. Let's see...ah...I'm flunking out of college, my knee is busted up so no more baseball...my old man thinks I'm a loser...and, oh yeah, I spent the night in jail...besides that...nothing much.

**KITTY:** *(Laughs.)* It's good you can laugh about it.

**JOE:** Yea well I'm a funny guy.

**KITTY:** I always thought so. You were silly on the bus to school.

**JOE:** Yeah...when I was a kid, you mean.

**KITTY:** I remember. I used to sit right behind you.

**JOE:** *(Pause...really looks at her for the first time.)* You know, I can keep a secret too.

**KITTY:** *(Not understanding, then:)* Oh my God...you heard me? You were listening?

**JOE:** *(Consoling:)* Just the end. I was coming around the house. I didn't want to disturb you two.

**KITTY:** Oh god. *(Getting up:)* I am such a jerk. I gotta go.

**JOE:** *(Catching her:)* Hey wait...I'm serious...I won't tell anybody. I can keep a secret. Cross my heart hope to die. God knows I've done some stuff I shouldn't have.

**KITTY:** Please Joe...you can't ever tell. My mom would just die.

*(Starts to cry.)*

**JOE:** *(Holding her arms:)* Hey it's ok. Don't worry. My lips are sealed.

**KITTY:** *(Looking up...touches his lips...then turns away.)* You must think I'm such a slut.

**JOE:** No...I've never thought that about you.

**KITTY:** Then what DO you think about me?

**JOE:** Well...you're Cathy's best friend...

**KITTY:** *(Turning away:)* I gotta go.

**JOE:** No wait! Sorry. Sorry... *(Looking at her deeply:)* You have the most beautiful eyes...and I like your hair, especially when it's down...you're funny, you're...Look, Kitty. I'm in serious trouble here. You don't want me.

**KITTY:** Don't tell me who I want and don't want. I know what I want.

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**JOE:** I could go to jail. You know that, don't you?

**KITTY:** Did you do it? Did you have pot in your locker?

**JOE:** (*Quietly:*) I didn't do anything. Riley just needed a place to hide the stuff...he said just a day or two. What's the harm? Said he'd give me a hundred bucks. Easy money... So I give him the locker combination. First time it went off without a hitch.

**KITTY:** First time? How many times have you done it?

**JOE:** A few. I don't even see it. But a few days after, Riley gives me a fat envelope full of cash.

**KITTY:** You weren't worried? Breaking the law? Getting caught?

**JOE:** How? I was never there.

**KITTY:** Sounds pretty stupid to me for a hundred bucks.

**JOE:** How about two thousand bucks?!

**KITTY:** What? Really?

**JOE:** Like I said...easy money.

**KITTY:** No Joe...that much is NOT easy money. You got arrested. They dragged you out of your house...in handcuffs.

**JOE:** Yea...didn't see that coming.

**KITTY:** Really? You just expected the gravy train to go on and on? The police are not stupid, Joey.

**JOE:** They want me to rat out Riley.

**KITTY:** Then do it! He's a creep anyway.

**JOE:** He's my friend.

**KITTY:** Friend? Friends don't ask friends to break the law for them.

**JOE:** No...I got myself into this...I'm not rattin' anyone out.

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**KITTY:** Do they know that? Riley was here earlier looking for you. I found him on the porch looking in the house.

**JOE:** Really? When?

**KITTY:** Half hour.

**JOE:** I should go find him, tell him...

**KITTY:** NO...you need to keep away from him.

**JOE:** But he's my friend...

**KITTY:** No Joe...he is not. Maybe he was once, when you were kids playing ball and all...but not now. He's bad news.

**MOM:** (*Coming out of house:*) Joe? I thought I heard someone out here.

**KITTY:** (*Getting up:*) Hello, Miss Wanda. I was just going.

*(Suddenly grabs Joe's hands.)*

I'm serious. Very bad news.

*(Exits SL.)*

**MOM:** What was that about?

**JOE:** Nothing.

*(Sits, lights another cig.)*

**MOM:** Give me one of those.

**JOE:** I didn't know you smoked?

**MOM:** There's a lot you don't know, Joseph Francis Snyder.

*(He lights her cig, they sit.)*

**JOE:** I'm sorry, Mom.

**MOM:** I know, dear...but you made a big mistake. And you've really hurt your father.

**JOE:** Like he gives a shit.

*(She hits his leg hard.)*

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Hey!

**MOM:** Don't you ever say that. Ever. That man loves you so much. Since the day you were born.

**JOE:** Then why does he rag me all the time?

**MOM:** Because you disappoint him. You had such promise. Good grades...handsome...good ball player, popular...then one day...nothing...you're moody...you stay in the basement for days...are you doing drugs?

**JOE:** No.

*(Mom makes a mark on an invisible chalk board in front of her.)*

**MOM:** That's one.

**JOE:** One what?

**MOM:** Lies you've told me. *(Looking at him:)* I may be "just a mom," Joseph, but I am not stupid.

**JOE:** I know, Mom.

**MOM:** Drugs are bad enough...they make you stupid and irresponsible—we'll talk about your missing work in a minute—but the worst thing about drugs is the people...the drug world...it's full of bad people, Joe...criminals...they don't care about you. And they certainly are not your friends...they're not your family. They will never care about you.

**JOE:** Mom...I didn't...

**MOM:** You listen to me and you listen good, young man. I will NOT have drugs in my house. You understand me? Your father and I have worked too hard to lose it all for something as...as stupid as that. They are against the law and I will not have it...or anyone involved with them. Do I make myself clear? I will not have anyone involved in drugs in my house. If you don't care about me or your father think about Cathy and

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Michael...and little Timmy. No, Joe...no. No matter how all this works out, I will not allow you to live here if you are doing that. Do you hear me? DO YOU HEAR ME?

**JOE:** YES...YES. Jeez Mom calm down...

**MOM:** (*Standing up:*) Do NOT tell me to calm down!! Not after the police have come to my house to drag my eldest son away. To jail! I won't have it, Joey. I will not put you father through that. It will kill him. I thought losing his job at the mill was going to do it...but we survived that. Got a nice job selling life insurance now, it's not great but maybe in a couple years things will be better...but I will not put more pressure on him now. I love you, dear...it hurts how much I love you, but you better think real hard about what you're doing right now because the consequences will stay with you for the rest of your life. Do you hear me?

**JOE:** Yes, ma'am.

**TIM:** (*Bursting out through door:*) Mom...Dad's got the Oriole game on the radio. I told him it's on TV but he said "Timothy, it's just better on the radio." Come on, Mom. Oh hi Joe.

**JOE:** Hey, Timmy. How's the glove?

**TIM:** It's great. I haven't really used it yet, but I will Saturday. We're playing the Pirates!

**MOM:** You're going to have to use your old glove, Timothy. Joe has to take that glove back to the store

**TIM:** What? But why, Mom?

**MOM:** Don't argue with me.

**TIM:** But, Mom...

**MOM:** Timothy!!

**TIM:** Aw, Mom.

*(He goes inside.)*

**MOM:** You bought that with your drug money. Don't deny it. I won't have it in my house.

*(Joe, hurt, goes inside.)*

*(Lights fade on Mom on the porch as lights up on living room. Dad, Tim, Mike and Tyler are listening to Dad's handheld radio.)*

**RICKY PULASKI:** *(V.O.)* It's the top of the fifth and we are witnessing a classic pitchers' duel here at Dodger Stadium. After losing the first game the Dodgers are desperate to even the series. But 20-year-old Jim Palmer, the young Baltimore star, is keeping up with future Hall of Famer Sandy Koufax, who is coming off another stellar year with 27 wins. The score is still zero to zero as Boog Powell comes up to bat to try to get the birds on the board.

**TIM:** C'mon Boog. Smack one outta there.

**DAD:** Oh, he could do it too. The Booger's having a great year.

**TIM:** Haha. The Booger. Funny, Dad

**DAD:** If I had my way, we would have named you BOOG.

**TIM:** No you didn't. Mom named me after grandpa.

**DAD:** Is that the story she's been telling you? Well, I'm sorry I got to be the one to break it to you, Booger...oh I mean Timothy...

**RICKY PULASKI:** *(V.O.)* And Boog Powell smacks a line drive into center. He's safe at first and the Birds have their first base runner.

**DAD:** Told you. Told you.

**TIM:** GO BOOOOOOOOG!!

**RICKY PULASKI:** *(V.O.)* Paul Blair's digging in now... Koufax gets the signal and—it's a fly ball into shallow center. Willie Davis is under it and...oh no, he dropped the ball; right off his

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glove. The Orioles have men on first and second now with no outs.

**DAD:** Wahoo!! Way to go, Blair!

**TYLER:** That guy Davis dropped the ball...what an idiot.

**DAD:** Davis is one of the best outfielders there is, Tyler. He must have lost it in the sun.

**RICKY PULASKI:** (*V.O.*) He must have lost it in the sun. But the damage is done and the Birds are making a move. Etcheberren is up now and Koufax is bearing down.

*(Lights fade on Dad and Tim. We hear V.O. but very softly.)*

**RILEY:** (*Entering SR:*) Hey, Miss Wanda. Heard Joey is back.

**MOM:** Yes he is but he can't see anyone right now.

**RILEY:** Ah come on, Miss Wanda. I just need to talk to him for a second.

**MOM:** No Bradley. Not tonight. I'll tell him you came by.

**RILEY:** (*Moving closer:*) I really need to speak to him tonight, Miss Wanda.

**MOM:** (*Standing on the steps:*) And I said no. Go home Bradley.

**RILEY:** Five minutes. It's all I need.

**MOM:** I said no.

**RILEY:** (*Putting a foot on the steps:*) It's kinda important.

**MOM:** Bradley...go home.

**RILEY:** (*Moving to second step:*) Really can't do that, Miss Wanda. Gotta talk to Joey tonight.

**MOM:** (*Backing away to screen door:*) Don't come up here.

**RILEY:** You better move, Miss Wanda. Nobody needs to get hurt.

*(Lights fade on Mom and Riley and back to living room.)*

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**RICKY PULASKI:** *(V.O.)* Etchebarren connects...it's another high fly ball to center...Davis is under it... And...oh my goodness...he dropped another one...and Boog Powell is being waved in... Davis throws to third...but the throw is high...oh my goodness, another error and Paul Blair scores. The Orioles are up two to nothing. What is happening to the Dodgers?

**DAD:** WOHOOO!!

**MIKE:** Go BIRDS!

*(Dad and Mike together sing Oriole fight song.)*

**DAD & MIKE:** *Go, Orioles go, we play to win, it's everything, we're never gonna stop, so, go Orioles go...*

*(Lights fade on Dad, Mike and Tim. Back up on the porch.)*

**MOM:** Do NOT come up here Bradley. You go home right now!!

**RILEY:** *(Stepping onto porch:)* No can do – now you call him or I'm going in – RIGHT NOW!

*(Mom picks up Mike's bat and waves it at Riley, who backs up.)*

**MOM:** Back...back!! Get off my porch NOW!!

**RILEY:** Calm down Miss Wanda...careful with that.

**MOM:** *(Swinging at him:)* I SAID NOW. GET OFF MY PORCH!!

*(Lights up on porch and living room.)*

**RICKY PULASKI:** *(V.O.)* Louis Aparicio is at the plate now... Koufax is taking his time; trying to slow the Oriole momentum. The wind up and the pitch. Aparicio cracks a monster drive to right. Etchebarren scores and Aparicio is safe standing up at second...THREE to ZERO birds...oh my!

*(Riley is off the porch now, suddenly charges up the steps. Mom takes a vicious swing at his head, barely missing him and*

*clanging off the metal railing. Riley is stunned and backs away, breathing hard now. Mom is also breathing very hard, a lioness protecting her cub...)*

*(Riley pauses for a moment, indecision in his body language.)*

**RILEY:** God damn it!!

*(He exits SR.)*

*(Dad, Tim, Mike and Tyler dancing and celebrating as Mom slowly puts the bat down, tries to catch her breath and suddenly collapses and dies.)*

*(Fade to black. End of Act I.)*

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**ACT II**

**SCENE 1**

*(Saturday – October 8, 3:15 p.m.)*

*(Mike on porch playing "Yesterday" by the Beatles.)*

*(As song ends, Dad enters SR with Cathy, Tim, Kitty, Eddie and Joe. They are returning from the funeral of Wanda Snyder.)*

**DAD:** What am I going to do now?

**CATHY:** It will be ok, Dad. C'mon, let's go inside.

**DAD:** No, I think I'll sit here a bit. I'm tired.

**KITTY:** Anyone hungry? Joe, help me make something in the kitchen.

*(Kitty, Joe, Eddie and Mike enter house. Dad, Cathy and Tim stay on steps.)*

**DAD:** Your mother loved this house. Especially after we put on the back porch.

**CATHY:** Yes Dad. She loved to sit back there because there was always a breeze.

**DAD:** She wanted to move, you know?

**CATHY:** Yes she told me. Reisterstown.

**DAD:** Reisterstown...new neighborhood. Modern. Everything new and shiny...and big! I said no; kept putting it off. I was afraid we couldn't afford it. Now the damn thing's twice what we would have paid...old Dad's one sharp financial wizard, eh Timmy?

**CATHY:** Don't say that, Dad. You raised five great kids.

**DAD:** Four.

**CATHY:** Five... Joey's just a little lost right now.

**DAD:** Oh, he'll be lost soon, that's the damn truth. He's out. I waited till the funeral was over but he's gone...today. I'm gonna tell him this afternoon.

**CATHY:** What do you mean gone? You kicking him out?

**DAD:** You think I can stand to see his face after what he did?

**CATHY:** Dad, he made a mistake. He's already talked to Detective Pirelli about everything...

**DAD:** I don't mean that. He killed your mother!!

**CATHY:** No Dad, he didn't. She had a stroke. It just happened.

**DAD:** It did NOT just happen. She was fine and then all this mess happened, and now she's gone...

**CATHY:** Daddy, it wasn't Joey's fault.

**DAD:** And where were you, huh? It was horrible. Finding her out here like that. Thank God Michael was here. He called the ambulance.

**CATHY:** (*Very shamed:*) I was out, Dad. Didn't Mom tell you? I spent the night at Kitty's.

**DAD:** I kept looking for you...calling for you. Where were you?

**TIM:** We're gonna lose Joe too?

(*Starts to cry.*)

**CATHY:** (*Comforting:*) No, Timmy. It will be ok. Dad's just upset.

**DAD:** Don't tell me what I am! I can still think for myself, god damn it!

**CATHY:** Dad, you're scaring Timmy.

**DAD:** Oh...sorry son... Hey, when's the game?

**TIM:** It's already started.



**DAD:** Well get my radio, son.

*(Tim goes inside.)*

You know we met at a Sadie Hawkins dance...after the war...did you know that?

**CATHY:** Yes, Dad. I know this story.

**DAD:** She came right up to me and said, "Hey you're cute let's dance"...haha...it must have been the uniform. She had this great mass of dark hair...coal black...she was always messing with it...touching it...trying to keep it in place...she hated hairspray...it made her cough...so she was always tying it up or pinning it...haha. I told her to cut it if it bothers her and she just about killed me... "Cut my hair? Are you joking?" She dyed her hair, you know...once a month, like clockwork. She'd go over to Miss Jean's and come back...a young girl...I don't know what made me think of that.

**CATHY:** She was beautiful...inside and out.

**DAD:** God I miss her...who's gonna take care of me?

**CATHY:** I'm here, Dad...don't worry.

*(Eddie and Tim enter from house as she says this.)*

**TIM:** Here, pops.

*(Hands him the radio, but Dad looks at it as if he doesn't know what it is. Dad places radio on the steps.)*

**DAD:** I'm gonna go lie down.

*(He enters house.)*

**CATHY:** Timmy, go inside and eat something.

**TIM:** *(Picking up radio:)* But—

**CATHY:** Don't but me, mister. I said go!

**TIM:** Am I the only one who cares about the game?

*(He goes inside.)*

**EDDIE:** How you holding up, baby?

**CATHY:** I'm ok. I'm worried about Dad.

**EDDIE:** Yea, I heard.

*(He crosses off porch away from her.)*

**CATHY:** Eddie. Don't be that way, now. He needs me.

**EDDIE:** So do I.

**CATHY:** How can you be so cruel?

**EDDIE:** I'm...ok I'm sorry...but this isn't going to change our plans, is it? I mean after you graduate?

**CATHY:** I don't know, Ed. I can't think that far ahead now.

**EDDIE:** What do you expect me to do...just wait around?

**CATHY:** If you really love me, yes.

**EDDIE:** Until the next Snyder disaster.

**CATHY:** Do you hear yourself? God you're an insensitive bore.

**EDDIE:** Hey, I liked your mom...I did...but life goes on.

**CATHY:** *(A pause.)* I think you should leave now.

**EDDIE:** C'mon baby.

*(He moves to her.)*

**CATHY:** *(Backing onto porch:)* I mean it. Just go...I'll call you later.

**EDDIE:** I miss you. Why don't you come over tonight?

**CATHY:** I can't. I'll call you tomorrow.

**EDDIE:** I'll come by after the gig...around twelve.

**CATHY:** I don't know.

**EDDIE:** Baby...

**JOE:** (*From house with Kitty:*) You leaving, Eddie?

**EDDIE:** Yea...I gotta a show tonight.

**JOE:** Well, thanks for coming to the funeral.

**EDDIE:** Ok...see ya

*(Exits SR.)*

**KITTY:** We brought you a plate.

**CATHY:** I'm not hungry.

**KITTY:** You need to eat.

**CATHY:** Is Dad ok?

**JOE:** He's lying down

**CATHY:** That sounds like a good idea

*(She enters house.)*

**JOE:** She's been great... for Dad I mean.

**KITTY:** (*Pause.*) You know it wasn't your fault.

**JOE:** When I was little, maybe nine or ten, the Kowalski's got a pool...two houses down...an aboveground thing that pretty much filled their entire backyard...but it was the first pool on the block and Kevin Kowalski was one of my best friends...so I put on my shorts, got a towel and went over there. His big brother Gary met me at the gate and said "What you want, Snyder?" I said "Where's Kevin?" ...of course I could see him. He was right there in the pool with about ten other kids, splashing and laughing...but Gary says "He's busy. Go home." ...just like that. I must have been to their house a hundred times, playing games or army or watching TV...so I yell "Hey Kevin!!" real loud. And he hears me...gives me this funny look and ducks under...I just stood there, with my towel and everything...and before they could see me cry I went home.

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Mom was watering some plants in the back yard and I just went right up to her and hugged her around the waist and started to ball. "What's wrong, Joey?" "Kevin won't let me in his pool," I cried. Then she said the usual, you know it's alright and don't worry honey...but then she said something I never forgot...because it seemed so adult at the time, not something you say to a kid...

**KITTY:** What did she say?

**JOE:** She said "sometimes people can be real bastards." I had never heard her cuss before and here she was giving the Kowalski's the dead eye, you know. They were just two yards over, maybe thirty feet? And we could see them and hear them laughing and playing...and she just looked over there like she would burn that pool to the ground. My Dad bought us one the next week.

**KITTY:** Did you let that little shit come over?

**JOE:** I don't remember...probably...kids are a lot more forgiving at that age. But I never forgot my mom...she actually scared me a little. I don't think I loved her more than that moment. She would kill for me.

*(Kitty puts her arms around him and kisses him on the cheek. Joe turns and very quickly takes her in his arms and kisses her.)*

**JOE:** *(Rising quickly:)* Ah jeez, I'm sorry...I shouldn't have done that.

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