

Kidnapped

by

Sean O'Connor

Winner of The WorkShop Theatre's
"Best New Play" Award

KIDNAPPED

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Kidnapped was first produced by the Miranda Theatre (NYC).
Valentina Fratti, Artistic Director; Cathy Trinant Buxton, Executive Director. It was directed by Jude Schanzer; Sets were designed by Eric Lowell Renschler; Lighting Design by Scott Griffin; Costumes were designed by Patrick Bevilacqua and Rodney Munoz; Fight Choreography was staged by B.H. Barry; Music - George Bonds. The show was Stage Managed by Jason Brouillard; The cast was as follows:

Marylee - Sally Frontman
Tyrone - Raymond Haigler
Happy Man/Young Man/Tyrone Jr. - Earle Hugens
Nurse MacNamara/Betty Ann Pomeroy/Madonna - Ibi Janko
Dr. Barden/Scoutmaster/Daniel Boone - Tim McCracken
Joe Buchanan - Clark Middleton
Barney/Jed - Andre Sogliuzzo
Nurse Connely/Mrs. McKenzie/Betsy Ross - Jo Twiss
Singer - George Bonds.

Kidnapped was subsequently produced by 42nd St. Workshop Theatre (NYC). Artistic Director: James DeMarse, Executive Director: Michele Bouchard. The production was directed by Clark Middleton; Sets were designed by Tim Smith; Lighting/Sound/Music were designed by Michele Gutman; The cast was as follows:

Marylee - Michele Bouchard
Tyrone - Bill Tobes
Happy Man/Young Man/Tyrone Jr. - David McGhee;
Nurse MacNamara/Betty Ann Pomeroy/Madonna - Rhonda Christou
Dr. Barden/Scoutmaster/Daniel Boone - Kelly Gwin
Joe Buchanan - Danny Rose
Barney/Jed - Sean O'Connor
Nurse Connely/Mrs. McKenzie/Betsy Ross - Willie Ann Gissendanner.

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ACT 1 SCENE 1

A house in the coal mining hills of West Virginia. The stage is dark. Music plays. A lone spot falls front and center stage, on Marylee. Twenty-one. Pretty. Long curls fall from beneath a cowboy hat. She wears jeans and cowboy boots, as a pocketbook on her lap, and speaks very nervously.

MARYLEE. I...I reached for a seed. It was comin' by me. In the wind. It was tumblin' by me in the wind. And I reached for it. And I caught it. Then I cracked it open. And I saw...forever. Like a million shiny new ribbons, all on fire in the sun, a killion ribbons, stretchin' deeper n' deeper. I saw forever. In the middle a' this seed. *(Pause.)* And it felt...it felt...real. *(A dim light falls in back of her revealing Joe, her father, in a suit, holding a drink and wearing a large bandage where his left ear should be. He is rubbing his stomach which bulges out of his shirt.)*

JOE. You don't think I'm gettin' fat, do you, honey? I'm not like a Porky Pig type, a big ol' Tubby Tuba...?

MARYLEE. *(Quickly.)* No.

JOE. Good. Cause people used to tell me...that I was an Adonis. A muscular Adonis. You know who told me that once, I ever tell you...

MARYLEE. Who?

JOE. *(Pause.)* Bozo.

MARYLEE. The clown?

JOE. The very one. You never knew I knew Bozo, I never told you 'bout that, did I?

MARYLEE. No.

JOE. Oh yeah. Your daddy knew all the biggies. But Bozo...he was a great man, a great artist. He was very sensitive. And he loved me. Bozo truly loved me.

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MARYLEE. I want...I want that seed.

JOE. Well...I think it might be a little...too late, sweetheart.

MARYLEE. I want to leave.

JOE. You can't leave.

MARYLEE. *(Pleading.)* I want to go. I want my own life. I want my own family. I want my own way a' doin' things. *(Joe snaps his fingers, stage left. A light falls on BARNEY. A short, stocky man, hair slicked back, holding a rope and wearing a suit.)*

JOE. It's too crazy for you out there, lil darlin'. *(Snaps his fingers, stage left. A light falls on "THE HAPPY MAN." Fat. Dark hair slicked back. A sneer carved across his face. Dressed in a suit and holding a straitjacket.)* And you're fragile. You're like your mother was. You're way too fragile. Now Barney and The Happy Man have come here, honey. They've come to take you away for a bit. *(Barney and The Happy Man start slowly moving towards Marylee. She spins in her chair, glancing from one to the other.)*

MARYLEE. No!

JOE. Now Marylee, honey...

MARYLEE. No!

JOE. Now the Bible...

MARYLEE. Stay away from me!

JOE. The Bible says "Respect thy father", dammit!

MARYLEE. Stay away, I said!

JOE. Go get her, boys! *(They slowly move straight to the chair.)*

MARYLEE. No, no, no, no, no, NO!!!!!!! *(She shoots up. Pulls a gun out of her pocketbook.)*

JOE. Now, honey, you don't...

MARYLEE. Get outta my life! *(Grabs a set of keys from her pocketbook and spins to the door, stage right.)*

JOE. Now, baby...

MARYLEE. GET OUTTA MY LIFE!!! *(Exits. Slamming the door. We hear a key turn in the lock.)*

JOE. *(Pause.)* Well. Go get her, boys. *(The Happy Man tries to open the door. It's locked from the outside.)*

HAPPY MAN. Joe! Joe, she locked us in, Joe! Joe, she locked us in!

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JOE. BARNEY! *(Barney tries his door.)*

BARNEY. Joe! Joe, it's...it's locked, Joe! They're both locked, Joe! *(Joe begins the early stages of what will grow into a loud, haunting, terrifying laugh.)*

HAPPY MAN. We're locked in, Barney! Barney, we're locked in!

BARNEY. I know we're locked in, stupid! I know that! I know that, stupid!

HAPPY MAN. *(Sniffing.)* What's that?

BARNEY. What?

HAPPY MAN. That smell! What's that smell?! *(Happy Man races to the backstage window. We begin hearing the crackle of flames.)* Joe! Joe, she lit us on fire! *(Joe's laughter grows and grows.)*

BARNEY. We're on fire?!

HAPPY MAN. Yeah! The whole place is burnin' up! *(Happy Man and Barney pace madly, back and forth, upstage.)*

BARNEY. What're we gonna do, Joe?! Heh?! Heh, Joe? What're we gonna do?!

HAPPY MAN. Joe! Tell us! What're we gonna do?! *(Lights quickly fall on Happy Man and Barney. Leaving a lone spot on Joe, front and center. His laugh explodes at its height for a few beats. The lights shoot to black. Silence for one beat. Then a song explodes from the speakers.)*

SCENE 2

Lights up on two tables, representing the inside of a bar. A half hour later. Music begins to fade. At the stage left table, sits a nervous Marylee, with a pitcher of beer. She finishes a glass, pours another. In walks TYRONE, raw, edgy, late twenties, with a pitcher and a glass and wearing jeans, a jean jacket and a coonskin cap. He sits at the stage right table and faces away from her. He pours a glass. Downs it in one gulp. Pours another.

MARYLEE. *(Tentative.)* You're one a' them Union boys, ain't you? Y'all on strike 'gainst the Coal Company, had some big rally today, right? Yeah. I can tell. *(No response.)* I'm highly perceptive that way, if you will. Doctors

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tell me I have an acute capacity for perceivin' the unknown. Almost an extra-terrestrial capacity. If you will. *(He just keeps drinking.)* Helllloo. Helllloo over there. I am attemptin' a conversation "avec vous." Hellooo...

TYRONE. I heard you.

MARYLEE. Well, glory be. Methinks I hear a voice. *(Back to his beer.)* Did you see the sky tonight? Well you shoulda. Orion was up there ready to do his huntin'. But you could see Scorpio inchin' 'cross the sky, like that myth, you know? That Persian myth where Orion goes out to hunt for the whole tribe but the scorpion arrives and bites off his testicles, know what I mean? Chews off his testicles one by one, grinds Orion's testicles between its teeth, squishin' 'em like juju-fruits till there's blood n' guts...

TYRONE. Whoa, whoa, hold on now.

MARYLEE. Oh, come on, it's just a silly, little myth. You take everything real serious, don't you? *(Back to his beer.)* Anyway, just as Scorpio got real close to Orion's testicles, suddenly Orion just exploded. And the whole sky exploded too. And know what I saw in the center a' the whole sky, the center a' the whole universe?

TYRONE. What?

MARYLEE. Mr. Potato Head.

TYRONE. Oh come on now!

MARYLEE. Yes, I did! And it was a God-given vision!

TYRONE. A vision is somethin' that's transcendental! You don't have visions 'bout Mr. Potato Head!

MARYLEE. Well, I certainly do! And know who he was dancin' with, there in the center a' the universe, you know...?

TYRONE. Who?

MARYLEE. He was dancin'...with Madonna.

TYRONE. This is the scariest thing I...

MARYLEE. I swear to God, Mr. Potato Head was dancin' with Madonna, like Jesus with Mary Magdalene...

TYRONE. Oooo-weeee!!! *(Cracks up.)*

MARYLEE. And when they stopped, know what he said? Know what Mr. Potato Head said to me from the heavens above?

TYRONE. I can imagine.

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MARYLEE. He said, "Your seed's been broken. Little darlin'. But it shall heal. And when it does...you shall bloom forever...and ever...and ever.

TYRONE. You're completely bonkers, you know that?

MARYLEE. I am not bonkers! I am clair-voyant!

TYRONE. Seein' Mr. Potato Head and Madonna in the center a' the universe is clairvoyant?

MARYLEE. Yes it is. And I of all people should know.

TYRONE. Why?

MARYLEE. Because I took a test, that's why. A test that judged your acute and intuitive powers of clairvoyancy. And I scored ultra-high.

TYRONE. Where was this test? *(No response.)* C'mon, tell me, where was...

MARYLEE. It was Reader's Digest! If you will! It was Reader's Digest and I scored ultra-high in clairvoyancy! *(Suddenly a loud cop siren approaches the bar. They both crouch and listen. It passes then fades. They slowly rise.)*

TYRONE. You hear 'bout the fire? *(No response.)* There's a big fire up on Glenrock Hill. They think people were killed. And know what else they think?

MARYLEE. What?

TYRONE. They think it was an arson who did it. And they're searchin' the whole town. For this arson.

MARYLEE. *(Pause.)* I was...I was joshin' 'bout Mr. Potato Head.

TYRONE. You were joshin'?

MARYLEE. Yeah. I was joshin' 'bout that whole thing.

TYRONE. Then why'd you say it?

MARYLEE. I just wanted to see...if we could laugh together, you know? Cause...you looked nice. And when you laugh with someone who's nice, it's like a candle gets lit up in your heart.

TYRONE. *(Sincere.)* That's cute. I mean, it's crazy but it's...it's sweet. I like you. *(Sits at her table.)*

MARYLEE. Well. I think that...I like you too. *(He reaches into his pocket. Pulls out Certs and an ear.)* What's that?

TYRONE. Certs. It's a candy mint and a breath mint. It's two...

MARYLEE. No. What's that? *(Tyrone picks up the ear.)*

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TYRONE. It's a ear. Thing you hear with.

MARYLEE. What're you doin' with a ear?

TYRONE. I can't tell you that. *(Puts it back in his pocket.)* But that's how come those sirens are wailin'.

MARYLEE. I think they might be wailin' for me. That's why I'm leavin' this area.

TYRONE. You're...?

MARYLEE. By tomorrow mornin'. I'm up n' gone and I ain't comin' back.

TYRONE. Me too. See... *(Real close. As they share these dreams they steadily grow more intimate.)* They're after me cause I done somethin' bad. To somebody who used to have this ear.

MARYLEE. Well, me too. I done somethin' sinful.

TYRONE. Me too. And I want to leave this area n' go out west.

MARYLEE. Well, me too! Like the Pioneers! And find me a Real America!

TYRONE. Where when your dream dies, you just push westward...

MARYLEE. And a new dream opens its eyes wide as the horizon that whispers at dawn...

TYRONE. Paintin' it's pastel promise of pure...

MARYLEE. ...prolonged...

TYRONE. ...and perfect pleasure...

MARYLEE. ...across a sacred...and a virgin...

TYRONE. ...sky.

MARYLEE. *(Quick pause.)* Oh my beloved Lord.

TYRONE. And I wanna build me a log cabin and go out huntin' n' fishin'....

MARYLEE. And I wanna sit in a log cabin, sewin' by the fire. Cause I'm related to the greatest sewer in history.

TYRONE. Who's that?

MARYLEE. Betsy Ross. See. *(Shows her bracelet.)* This is the very same bracelet she wore when she knitted the stars n' stripes.

TYRONE. This is amazin'! I'm related to Daniel Boone! Look! *(Pulls up his shirt.)*

MARYLEE. Well...alls I see is these weird moles.

TYRONE. But it's the same configuration a' moles that Daniel Boone had!

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Right to the north of his gall bladder! And that's why I wear this coonskin cap! But the main thing is, once I get out there, I want to start me a real family! The way families used to be!

MARYLEE. That's what I want!

TYRONE. Cause I ain't got no family left!

MARYLEE. Me neither!

TYRONE. This is unbelievable. Do you...do you got any kids yet?

MARYLEE. No.

TYRONE. Me neither.

MARYLEE. But I want to. Real soon.

TYRONE. Me too. Real soon.

MARYLEE. And I want to be there forever for my child.

TYRONE. The worst thing is not to be there...

MARYLEE. Cause then the child feels forever like she's' a lonely seed spinnin' in an angry wind. Cause if you don't provide soil for your seed...it disappears. Like it ain't never lived. *(Their faces now are almost touching.)*

TYRONE. Well I want to take my seed...and toss it into the soil...

MARYLEE. And watch it bloom forever...and ever...

TYRONE. ...and ever. So when I die I'll feel like...

MARYLEE. ...I truly...truly...

TYRONE. ...lived. *(Pause. They stare deep into each other's eyes.)* You have...

MARYLEE. Yes?

TYRONE. The most beautiful...bicuspid...I have ever seen.

MARYLEE. I can feel a candle...flickerin' in my heart.

TYRONE. I got one on fire in mine.

MARYLEE. I think I love you. *(They fall into a deep kiss. Tyrone explodes out of it.)*

TYRONE. Oh yeah! I love you too, lil' darlin'! Well, c'mon! Let's go start us a family! *(Sirens explode outside. The stage is filled with the flashing lights of cop cars.)* Oh shit! Let's go! *(Turns to exit.)*

MARYLEE. But...I don't even know your name!

TYRONE. It's Tyrone! C'mon!

MARYLEE. Well, hi, Tyrone. I'm Marylee.

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TYRONE. Well, how you doin', Marylee? C'mon! *(He bolts off, stage left. She follows. The sirens howl, the red lights dart across the stage. Then everything falls. Music rises.)*

SCENE 3

Very late that evening. A hospital room. Represented by just a bed, stage left. On it, sits Joe. Bandage on his ear. On his arms and legs. He sits there holding his stomach. Pinching it. NURSE CONNELLY, a fortyish spinster with a weird bouffant hairdo walks in.

NURSE CONNELLY. *(Shocked.)* Mr. Buchanan!

JOE. You don't think I'm gettin' fat, do you, honey?

NURSE CONNELLY. Mr. Buchanan, Dr. Parker said...

JOE. I mean, you don't see me as a fat guy, do you? Big ol' Tubby Tuba type... *(She tries to cover him up with the sheet.)*

NURSE CONNELLY. Mr. Buchanan! Dr. Parker said...

JOE. *(Still with his stomach.)* I mean, you wouldn't walk in here, see me and say, "Oh, he's a fat blob. I'm not gonna talk to him."

NURSE CONNELLY. Mr. Buchanan! Dr. Parker said...

JOE. Fuck Dr. Parker!

NURSE CONNELLY. *(Aghast.)* Mr. Buchanan!

JOE. FUCK DR. PARKER! *(She runs out screaming, "Dr. Parker! Dr. Parker!")* Happy Man?! Barney?! Happy Man, Barney! *(Barney and the Happy Man run into the room. Bandaged and on crutches.)*

HAPPY MAN. Yeah, Joe. We're here, Joe.

BARNEY. You want us, Joe? Is that what you want, Joe? You want us? *(Joe climbs out of his bed.)*

JOE. We're goin', boys.

HAPPY MAN. But Joe, Dr. Parker said... *(Dr. Parker, white jacket, stethoscope around his neck, round mirror tied to his forehead, arrives with Nurse Connely.)*

DR. PARKER. Mr. Buchanan! Really!

NURSE CONNELLY. Dr. Parker! Dr. Parker!

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JOE. *(Imitating her.)* Dr. Parker! Dr. Parker!

DR. PARKER. Mr. Buchanan! You have to remain in...

JOE. GET OUT! YOU HEAR ME?! OUT! *(They run out.)* Dr. Parker! Dr. Parker! Dr. Parker! Big sissy. *(He grabs his crutches.)*

BARNEY. Joe? Where we goin', Joe? Where we goin'?

JOE. To get my daughter, boys.

HAPPY MAN. But Joe...

JOE. Let's go! Vamoose! *(Joe exits on crutches. Happy Man and Barney stare at each other. Then follow him. Music rises. Lights fall.)*

SCENE 4

Marylee's apartment. Early the next morning. A large crucifix of Jesus hangs on the back wall. Light peers in through the curtains in back. On a big mattress on the floor lie Marylee and Tyrone. Giggling.

MARYLEE. Hey. What's that rubbin' up against my leg?

TYRONE. That's a Cruise missile, darlin'. *(He rolls on top of her.)* It's what you call a smart missile.

MARYLEE. It feels kinda brilliant right now.

TYRONE. Yeah, but...uh-oh! Oh yeah! There it goes, it's comin' down now, comin' faster n' faster, oh no...! *(Makes a loud explosion sound and then rolls to his side.)*

MARYLEE. Did it land?

TYRONE. *(Picks up his head.)* Surgical strike. Through the kitchen window, hopped over Mr. Coffee and blew up a toaster. *(Starts kissing her.)* Oh yeah! You made me a man last night!

MARYLEE. Well...you made me a woman.

TYRONE. Oooo-weee! *(Kisses her then leaps up in his underwear.)* I got me a John Dillinger strapped between my legs! You heard about John Dillinger, right? About his penii?

MARYLEE. What're you talkin' 'bout John Dillinger's penii?

TYRONE. His penii! His one-eyed trouser snake! They got it caged up in

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the Smithsonian Institute!

MARYLEE. Tyrone, I...

TYRONE. I got me a friend, a reputable type of acquaintance, who's seen it! They got security guards all around it, it's about this long (*spreads his arms wide*) it's got a little mustache and late at night, it starts barkin' just like a dog! (*He barks a few times.*)

MARYLEE. (*Laughing.*) A penii can't bark!

TYRONE. John Dillinger's can! (*Barks again.*) And one night, when the guards were all asleep...John Dillinger's penii crawled right outta the Smithsonian Institute!

MARYLEE. (*Laughs.*) Tyrone!

TYRONE. Went down that damn Pennsylvania Avenue and placed a long distance phone call to Gay Paree! To the Louvra Museum! Heard there was a job open as a curator. Penii wanted to be a Parisian curator.

MARYLEE. A penii cannot be a curator!

TYRONE. Well, this is a highly educated penii. Been readin' Russian-type novels ever since it was a tiny, little penii. With glasses. And a bow tie round it's penii neck. (*Turns to the Crucifix.*) Oooh. Excuse my vernacular, Mr. Jesus.

MARYLEE. My daddy gave me that. He said it would instill the fear a' Jesus in me. Fear Jesus. Fear the Bible. Nothin' but fear.

TYRONE. I never understood that. They tell us to fear the thing that loves us most. It's like...with you. I just met you. But I'm not afraid.

MARYLEE. I'm not afraid neither.

TYRONE. With other people...I'm always afraid. But with you...whatever I give you. I know you're not gonna hurt it.

MARYLEE. I'm gonna hold it n' keep it warm for you. For as long as you want.

TYRONE. Why do I feel like this about you so quickly?

MARYLEE. I don't know. But you just keep feelin' it. Cause I'm feelin' it too. (*They kiss.*)

TYRONE. Let's go, honey. They'll be comin' for me real soon. (*Gets up.*) We can take those horses?

MARYLEE. Right across the street. My daddy owns the stable.

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TYRONE. Jesus Christ! *(Slams his fist down onto the counter.)*

MARYLEE. What? *(He reaches down and picks up a dead scorpion.)*

TYRONE. It's a damn scorpion. *(She starts getting dressed.)*

MARYLEE. Didn't you hear? They come up from the river cause a' the floods. Just like in the Book a' Revelations.

TYRONE. What do you mean, just...

MARYLEE. The locusts with the scorpion sting, risin' from the abyss and wieldin' their spiritual torment. They been bitin' people and people been behavin' like scorpions.

TYRONE. How?

MARYLEE. There's been a few murders. Mostly family murders. Cause that's how scorpions is. They love murderin' family. It's like...my daddy. He's a real scorpion.

TYRONE. What do you mean your daddy...?

MARYLEE. He's got a stinger. In the darkness of his mind, he wields a stinger. Like a loaded gun. *(Suddenly we hear a baby crying from the adjacent room.)*

TYRONE. What the hell is that?

MARYLEE. Oh, that...that's my baby. *(Runs into the other room. The crying stops.)*

TYRONE. That's your...? Marylee? Honey, you told me you didn't have any babies. *(She appears at the door, holding a baby, wrapped in a blanket so the audience cannot see it.)*

MARYLEE. Well, I...I didn't.

TYRONE. Then what's that in your arms, Batman?

MARYLEE. I didn't. Until...a few weeks ago. Or somethin'.

TYRONE. Well... Who's the father? *(No response.)* Marylee, who...?

MARYLEE. *(Quickly.)* It was a Holy Father.

TYRONE. Well, I'm sure he was but...does he have a name?

MARYLEE. No!

TYRONE. No name.

MARYLEE. No! I don't know who the father is, alright?!

TYRONE. OK. OK.

MARYLEE. *(Collects herself together.)* But it doesn't matter, Tyrone, we

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can take this baby and this baby'll be the New Beginning. We can begin a whole new type a' family with this baby.

TYRONE. OK. Well...as long as you're up front...I got me a baby too.

MARYLEE. You...you got...?

TYRONE. A 13-year-old baby. And I ain't never seen him. Alls I know is he's got my name. His mom split on me and had him out west. It was like she kidnapped my child. Last word I got, he's livin' with her in Carson City, Nevada.

MARYLEE. Carson...? Ain't that where...?

TYRONE. The Ponderosa?

MARYLEE. That's where the Cartwrights live.

TYRONE. Ben, Hoss, little Joe...

MARYLEE. And Hop-Sing.

TYRONE. Can't forget Hop-Sing. But honey, we'll take your baby, go out west to the Ponderosa n' find mine, and we'll have a million others.

MARYLEE. Oh, Tyrone. *(Starts crying.)*

TYRONE. Well...let me hold the little bugger.

MARYLEE. NO!!!

TYRONE. What do you mean...?

MARYLEE. NO! He's...he's too delicate. At this point in his development.

TYRONE. But Marylee, he's my...

MARYLEE. No, it's...it's too early. He's...a beautiful baby and the world has been awaitin' the arrival a' this baby and I have to protect him. Cause he's...gonna be famous and very, very successful and very famous.

TYRONE. Well...what's his name? *(No response.)* Marylee...

MARYLEE. *(Quickly.)* Jesus.

TYRONE. Jesus?

MARYLEE. Yes. My baby's name is Jesus.

TYRONE. But...you can't...

MARYLEE. What do you mean I can't...

TYRONE. I mean, it's already been used, that's why.

MARYLEE. OK. Then it's not Jesus.

TYRONE. OK, then...

MARYLEE. It's...it's Big Gus. *(Tyrone cracks up.)* What're you laughin'

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about?

TYRONE. How can you call a little thing like that, Big Gus?

MARYLEE. Cause that's his name, that's how!

TYRONE. I mean...you name a pig, Big Gus...

MARYLEE. Well, my baby is not a pig!

TYRONE. No, I...

MARYLEE. He's the lamb in the Bible sittin' at the throne a' God, leadin' the lost into the springs a' livin' water!

TYRONE. I'm sure he is but...Big Gus?

MARYLEE. And my baby is gonna be a Congressman or a famous writer of intellectual books or my baby is even gonna be a movie star! But he is not a pig! And his name is Big Gus! *(Suddenly she gets very weak and dizzy. She spins into Big Gus's room.)*

TYRONE. Honey, what's...what's the matter? *(She comes back out, runs past Tyrone, without Gus, and heads straight to the bathroom.)*

MARYLEE. I feel...I feel sick. *(She runs into the bathroom, closing the door.)*

TYRONE. You alright? Marylee, you OK? *(We hear Marylee coughing in the bathroom. Then Big Gus begins crying. Tyrone crosses to Gus's room.)*

Aww. It's OK, Big Gus. Mommy's gonna be alright. *(He disappears into the room.)* Don't you worry, little guy. Daddy's here for you. Don't you worry. Mommy's gonna be just fine. Don't... *(Marylee comes out of the bathroom. Sees the door to Gus's room wide open.)*

MARYLEE. No! What're you doin'?! Get outta there! *(She takes a step towards the room then stops suddenly as Tyrone appears at the doorway holding Big Gus in his arms wrapped in a blanket.)*

TYRONE. So Big Gus is comin' with us, huh? He's gonna be our first child, right? Our very own, right? *(He unfurls the blanket and a toy baby doll tumbles to the floor. The crying stops.)* Goddamn! GODDAMN!

MARYLEE. Tyrone. I can explain. It's not what...

TYRONE. You got a goddamn tape recorder in there doin' the cryin'!

MARYLEE. Tyrone...

TYRONE. What do you think I am, heh?! You lied to me!

MARYLEE. No, listen, you don't...

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TYRONE. You lied to me, you hear me?!

MARYLEE. It's not like that!

TYRONE. I been sittin' here like a sucker listenin' to that baby squeal!

MARYLEE. It was here! Don't you see?!

TYRONE. What do you mean it was here...?!

MARYLEE. The baby! The baby was here! And it was my little baby, don't you see?!

TYRONE. What're you talkin' about?! This is makin' no...

MARYLEE. *(Hysterical. Her mind exploding.)* It was here and it was so soft like a little lamb and it was so talented and it was gonna save everybody...

TYRONE. *(Grabs her.)* Look at me! Marylee...

MARYLEE. Crossin' the desert, walkin' on the water...

TYRONE. Marylee...!

MARYLEE. It was gonna save the whole world...

TYRONE. Marylee! Look at me!

MARYLEE. But the world was too hard, don't you see? The world couldn't...the world couldn't... Don't you see? The world... *(Falls to her knees in front of Jesus. Begins babbling.)* Our father, who art in heaven, hallowed be...

TYRONE. Goddammit! *(He picks her up, she goes back down.)*

MARYLEE. Thy kingdom come, thy will be...

TYRONE. Marylee! *(Grabs her up from the floor.)*

MARYLEE. On earth as it is in heaven...

TYRONE. Stop it! Stop it! *(Slaps her across the face. She stops. Stares at him.)*

MARYLEE. It was nothin' but light...

TYRONE. I don't wanna hear...

MARYLEE. People waitin' a thousand years but it was born into a world a' darkness...

TYRONE. You're not makin' any...

MARYLEE. It was cursed. Daddy said the curse a' the scorpions was upon it. And we had to bring it to the water...

TYRONE. *(Understanding something.)* Hold on.

KIDNAPPED

MARYLEE. To set it free.

TYRONE. Hold on for a second.

MARYLEE. It was the devil's child, don't you understand?

TYRONE. Marylee...

MARYLEE. Born from the Holy Spirit but wearin' the sign a' the devil. And daddy said we had to bring it to the water.

TYRONE. Marylee, tell me somethin'...

MARYLEE. Cause nobody could know the devil was in our family.

TYRONE. *(Shakes her.)* Look at me! Tell me, who is the father of your child? *(Marylee just stares.)* Marylee, who is Big Gus's daddy?

MARYLEE. It's the Lord.

TYRONE. It's not the...

MARYLEE. The Lord is the Father, we are all the children...

TYRONE. *(Shakes her. Screams.)* Look at me! Who is the father of your child?!

MARYLEE. It's...it's daddy.

TYRONE. *(Pause.)* Oh, you poor girl. *(She begins sobbing.)* Oh, my little angel, come here. *(Takes her in his arms.)* Don't you worry, baby. I got you. I got you now.

MARYLEE. I...I never...I never told anyone.

TYRONE. I know. It's OK. It's OK, honey. Now...how long...has this been goin' on, Marylee? With your father? *(No response.)* Sweetie?

MARYLEE. Since I's ten years old. Right after mama died.

TYRONE. *(He holds her close.)* Oh sweetheart.

MARYLEE. The room'd be dark. And the door'd be creakin'.

TYRONE. Oh baby.

MARYLEE. Then the creakin'd grow wide n' long and light from the hall'd rush in like a knife. And he'd come and...the breath with the liquor... and the beard...and he'd press, he'd press me like grindin' a flower into concrete. And he'd leave. And I'd be lyin' in a pool a' wet sin. And the door, all night long, be creakin' at me, like a scornful, a hateful voice, all night long.

TYRONE. Oh sweetie. Oh Marylee.

MARYLEE. And ever since...until I met you...no matter how much I'd like another boy...it felt like a blade. Like daddy.

KIDNAPPED

TYRONE. I'm gonna be soft, sweetie.

MARYLEE. And the doctor said I...might never be able to have another...

TYRONE. OK.

MARYLEE. Cause...the birth was so harsh.

TYRONE. It's OK.

MARYLEE. But also...it wasn't a boy.

TYRONE. It...

MARYLEE. It was a girl. I wanted a boy. Like the sweet, little Jesus to save this horrible world. But it was a girl. With the eyes of a virgin. So I called her...Madonna.

TYRONE. Madonna.

MARYLEE. Like a New Jesus. Leadin' the world to a New Promised Land.

TYRONE. And you brought Madonna to the river.

MARYLEE. I put a tape on her forehead that said "My name is Madonna." And daddy put her in the water. And the stars...stopped sparklin'. The whole sky, for a minute, went black. And right then...that's when the scorpions come up.

TYRONE. Baby...

MARYLEE. But she started swimmin'.

TYRONE. Honey...

MARYLEE. I swear. Like she was savin' herself.

TYRONE. OK.

MARYLEE. But...you see, Daddy couldn't help it...

TYRONE. No, baby.

MARYLEE. No, no, see the world did him wrong, it took his wife away...

TYRONE. Marylee...

MARYLEE. ...like in the Bible, he needed the comfort of his family...

TYRONE. No. That's not how it works.

MARYLEE. But...it doesn't matter. He's here...no longer.

TYRONE. *(Pause.)* What do you mean...?

MARYLEE. I burned him. On Glenrock Hill.

TYRONE. The fire...?

MARYLEE. I set...I set my daddy on fire. And it was a terrible sin and I didn't want to say nothin' cause you're one a' the strikin' miners and...my

KIDNAPPED

daddy, he's big for Pittston Coal, he's one a' the bosses...

TYRONE. Wait, wait...

MARYLEE. ...he knows movie stars n' Presidents n'...

TYRONE. Hold on. Marylee! Who is your daddy?

MARYLEE. It's Joseph. Joseph Buchanan. *(Tyrone reaches into his pocket. Pulls out the ear.)*

TYRONE. This here's your daddy's ear. I thought I killed him. That's why I'm runnin'. Cause I went over to his office yesterday and beat his brains out and for a momento I took his ear. Goddamn! Listen, there's probably every cop, every senator in the damn country out lookin' for us. Now, them horses? Is...is there a key...? *(She points to a nail upon which a key hangs.)* Alright. You'll stay here, right?

MARYLEE. Yeah.

TYRONE. OK. I'll...be back in a minute. One minute. *(Exits stage left. A moment passes. She stands there staring after him. Suddenly we hear a key turning in the door, stage right. Marylee spins around. Afraid. In steps her father, Joe. The big bandage on his ear. And on his arms and legs. Sun-glasses on. He walks using a crutch.)*

MARYLEE. Daddy!

JOE. Hey, baby. See the sun out there today? It's all red. Like it's got a wound on it, heh? *(A terrible laugh.)*

MARYLEE. You're...you're alive.

JOE. Ain't that somethin'? Heh? Ain't that the craziest thing? *(He laughs loudly for a beat. Then stops. They stare at each other. Joe begins hobbling around the apartment. Opening drawers, cupboards. Picking up things. Putting them down. Ominously.)* Got a call from an old friend the other day. Didn't tell you about that, did I? *(Pause.)* I said, I...

MARYLEE. No.

JOE. Yeah. Well. You know who it was? Who gave me the call, know who it was?

MARYLEE. No.

JOE. *(Stops. Stares.)* It was Robert Goulet.

MARYLEE. *(Pause.)* Robert Goulet?

JOE. That's right. Robert Goulet. You never knew I knew Bob Goulet, did

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you? Never knew that about me, did you?

MARYLEE. No, I...

JOE. Oh yeah, I knew 'em all, all the biggies. Goulet? The original... Dennis? Of Dennis the Menace? Oh yeah, I knew him real well. And he was a prince. You hear me? He was a prince. *(Pause.)* And they all loved me. Did you know that, heh? Did you know...

MARYLEE. No, I...I didn't know that.

JOE. Well, you shoulda. Cause they did. They all loved me. *(Pause.)* I even knew the Beatles, I ever tell you that, I even...

MARYLEE. No.

JOE. Well I shoulda. We were...amazing friends. And they loved me. Even Ringo.

MARYLEE. What're you look...?

JOE. But it was John, he loved me most of all. But too bad about John, know what I mean....

MARYLEE. What're you...?

JOE. I mean, it still hurts me thinkin' 'bout...

MARYLEE. What're you lookin' for?

JOE. *(Pause.)* My ear. I'm lookin' for my ear. *(Pause.)* That... fire...was a sin, you know that, right? *(Deep anger.)* Marylee, you know...!

MARYLEE. *(Scared.)* Yes.

JOE. Well, thank God, we all got out. Barney. The Happy Man. Thank God, we're alive. Now...I know who you're with. And I know this person, he's a terrible...sinful person.

MARYLEE. What do you know?

JOE. I can't tell you what I know. But he's done terrible, terrible sins his whole life. And he sinned against me. Horribly, he sinned against me. If you knew what he did, oh my Lord, you'd hate this person.

MARYLEE. I know...about the ear.

JOE. It wasn't just the ear, pumpkin.

MARYLEE. There...there was more?

JOE. The other sins he committed were so horrible...that Lucifer, himself, would blush...if he was told about them.

MARYLEE. Oh no. Please. Please...

KIDNAPPED

JOE. So I want to talk to him, alright. When he comes back...I want to talk to him. *(Pause.)* And then you'll come back home. And you'll atone for your sins. You want redemption, don't you?

MARYLEE. *(Terrified. Confused.)* Yes.

JOE. Good. Cause otherwise, honey...you'd burn. You'd burn in hell.

TYRONE. *(Offstage)* OK, honey, I got 'em!

JOE. Shhh. The Good Lord's lookin' down on you now, sweetie. And he's makin' judgements. *(Moves to the far corner, stage left. Pulls a gun out of his pocket. The door bursts open. Tyrone enters. Breathless. Does not see Joe.)*

TYRONE. OK, baby, you ready? *(No response.)* Honey, you...?

MARYLEE. *(Paralyzed.)* Tyrone?

TYRONE. Yeah? What? What's a' matter?

MARYLEE. He...he walked...through the fire.

TYRONE. What're...? Who? Who walked through...? *(Puts his hands on her shoulders.)*

MARYLEE. Daddy. Daddy made it through the fire. *(Joe raises his gun.)*

JOE. You just take your coal-stained mitts off my daughter, boy. *(Tyrone turns.)*

TYRONE. You fucker. *(Pulls a gun out of his pocket.)*

MARYLEE. Tyrone! No! *(She leaps in between Tyrone and her father.)*

TYRONE. Marylee! Get outta...!

MARYLEE. No! You have to tell me why you did what you did!

JOE. He's the devil, honey.

TYRONE. *(To Marylee.)* What're you...?

JOE. He's Satan, baby. Satan Incarnate.

MARYLEE. The sins! The sins you committed against him!

TYRONE. Marylee! Why're you askin' this?!

MARYLEE. I'm not sure! I...I just gotta know! Now why...?

TYRONE. Cause the day before yesterday...your father killed my daddy. *(Marylee spins. Faces Joe.)*

JOE. Jesus is watchin' you, baby! He's watchin' n' judgin'!

TYRONE. And my father spent his whole life in the mines, tryin' to give me a better life! Black lung, crippled from explosions, but all during the

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strike, he'd wheel his wheelchair in front a' the scabs and the coal trucks...

JOE. Damn unions turnin' America into a second rate work force!

TYRONE. And the day before yesterday, I come home, he's lyin' at the bottom a' the stairs, blood pourin' from his mouth and I held him close and I said, "Who did this, daddy?" and in his last breath he told me. It was Joe Buchanan.

MARYLEE. *(To Joe.)* Is that true? Tell me...!

JOE. I had to, baby. He was destroyin' America. That's why the Orientals are on top! *(Marylee stands back in horror.)*

TYRONE. Big, fat Joe Buchanan.

JOE. I'm not fat! Stop it! *(They begin moving in circles. Their guns pointed at each other.)*

TYRONE. Big, ol' Tubby-Tuba.

JOE. I'm not a Tubby-Tuba! I'm good-lookin', you hear me?! I'm an Adonis!

TYRONE. You're a big, ol' Blubber-ball!

JOE. I am not a Blubber-ball! *(To Marylee. Pleading.)* Baby, you don't think I'm a Blubber-ball, do you? I mean, you don't think I'm a Benny-Blimpo type a' guy, do you? *(Marylee runs out of the room.)*

TYRONE. Porky-Pig! Porky-Pig! Porky-Pig! Porky...!

JOE. STOP IT!!! YOU'RE HURTING ME!!!

TYRONE. *(Pause.)* So what do you want, heh? What do...?

JOE. I want my daughter.

TYRONE. Well, you can't have her.

JOE. And I want my ear. The fat kid wants his ear back. *(Tyrone reaches into his pocket. Pulls out the ear. Dangles it.)*

TYRONE. Well, come n' get it. *(Joe lunges for it. Tyrone pulls it away.)* Marylee told me all about it. The years of abuse. *(Joe lunges again. Misses.)* And the river. The grave inside the river.

JOE. You don't know nothin' 'bout the river! *(Lunges again. Misses.)*

TYRONE. How could you do that, heh?! Your daughter! This wonderful girl! How the hell could you do that?!

JOE. Gimme me my ear! *(Lunges. Misses. Marylee comes out of Big Gus's room holding the baby's cradle.)*

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TYRONE. Heh?! Tell me, moron! How could you do that?!

JOE. GIMME ME MY EAR BACK!!! *(He lunges. Tyrone sidesteps him. Joe falls to the ground, the gun and the crutch spilling away from him. On all fours he starts barking like a dog. He leaps at Tyrone's leg and starts biting his pants. Barking the whole time. Marylee whacks him on the head. He stops. Swaying on his knees. She picks up his gun. He lets out a wild howl and leaps for her. But Tyrone shoots him from behind. He drops to the ground.)*

TYRONE. *(Pause. To Marylee.)* Let's go, baby. The Frontier's about to open. *(He moves to the door. Marylee stays, standing over her father's body.)* Marylee! *(He grabs her hand. They exit. A beat passes. Joe lifts up his head. Mumbles.)*

JOE. My ear. I want...I want my ear. Old fatso wants his ear back. *(Outside we hear the horses racing down the street. Joe, in response, screams once then howls like a coyote. He slides on his hands to the telephone. Dials.)* Happy Man? Listen good. I want guns, I want Cruise missiles, I want helicopters, I WANT A MILLION HELICOPTERS! We're goin' straight to the President! *(Pause.)* Why?! Why, you ask me?! Because someone just KIDNAPPED my daughter! *(He slams down the phone. Then reaches for the ear that isn't there. Lights shoot to black. Music rises.)*

END OF ACT 1

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