

THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE

An opera in two acts
based on the novel by Richard Condon

Music: Kevin Puts
Libretto: Mark Campbell

Draft

4.30.14 (Second workshop)

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CAST

Principal Roles

Eleanor Iselin
Sergeant Raymond Shaw
Captain Ben Marco
Jocelyn Jordan
Rosie Chayney
Johnny Iselin
Senator Thomas Jordan
Holborn Gaines

Featured Roles

Mrs. Lowe
Dr. Yen Lo
Major General Bollinger
General Tracy
Young Raymond
The Secretary of Defense
Dora, the Bartender
Bobby Lembeck
Ed Mavole
Andrew Hanley
The Nominee
The Nominee's Wife

Chorus of 20 that can include featured roles as well as reporters, garden club ladies, Communist officials, partygoers, convention attendees, FBI officials, etc.

TIME

Act I: 1953-1960
Act II: One day in 1960, morning to night

SETTING

An outpost in Manchuria.
Various locations in New York City and Washington, DC.

ACT I

Draft

Scene 1.

[Lights up glaringly on a platform on which sit five soldiers: Raymond Shaw, Andrew Hanley, Bobby Lembeck, Ed Mavole and Ben Marco. In front of the soldiers at a dais is a Caucasian woman dressed in Mamie Eisenhower fashion: hat, gloves, etc. In front of her are gathered an audience of nine ladies, all dressed in a similar fashion. To the left of the stage is a sign that says "Ladies Garden Club of Northern New Jersey."]

MRS. LOWE: *[Formally.]*

Gentlemen—and ladies—
 You see before you
 Five soldiers,
 All from one platoon,
 Recently captured,
 Put under our "care."
 Please forgive their expressions of boredom.
 At this very moment,
 They believe they're at a meeting of
 The Ladies Garden Club of Northern New Jersey.
[The ladies laugh. Mrs. Lowe points out each soldier.]
 Ben Marco, Ed Mavole, Bobby Lembeck, Andrew Hanley.
 All of them, but this man:
[Pointing to Raymond.]
 Who has no idea where he is!
[The ladies titter.]

MRS. LOWE:

Comrades, I present...Raymond Shaw.
[To Raymond.]
 Stand, Raymond.

RAYMOND: *[Standing, responding dutifully.]*

Yes, sir.

MRS. LOWE:

Once a mediocre soldier,
 A malcontent,
 Hated by his platoon,
 Raymond now represents
 Our supreme achievement:
 The perfect assassin.
 He can kill,
 Kill and kill again,
 Without memory of it.
 And without memory
 He suffers no guilt.
 Or fear of being caught.
 He can go about as
 A normal member of society.
 The perfect assassin,
 The perfect assassin,
 The per—

MRS. ZILKOV: *[Impatiently interrupting Mrs. Lowe.]*

Such braggadocio, Doctor Lo.
Get on with it.
Show us what he can do.

MRS. LOWE: *[With a smirk.]*

Ah, Zilkov, you Russian men
Are too eager to rule the world.
[Mild laughter from only a few of the ladies.]

As you command.

Raymond, why don't you pass the time
By playing a little game of solitaire?

[Mrs. Lowe hands Raymond a deck of cards. He deals cards to play solitaire.]

When he encounters

The Queen of Diamonds

It triggers complete receptivity.

[Raymond flips over the Queen of Diamonds. He stops and stares off.]

There she is.

Raymond, have you ever murdered anyone?

RAYMOND:

None that I recall, sir.

MRS. LOWE:

And who do you hate least
In your group here today?

RAYMOND:

That would be Captain Marco, sir.

MRS. LOWE: *[To the ladies.]*

Note his love of authority.

No, we need Captain Marco.

[Back to Raymond.]

Who else?

RAYMOND:

Then Ed Mavole, sir.

[Mrs. Lowe lovingly produces a large bayonet from her dais. Mrs. Berezovo stands and interrupts her.]

MRS. BEREZOVO: *[Brandishing a scarf and bringing it to Mrs. Lowe.]*

No, use this.

MRS. LOWE: *[Pleasantly.]*

My pleasure, Comrade Berezovo.

[Sweetly, to Raymond.]

Raymond: strangle Ed Mavole.

[Mrs. Lowe hands Raymond the scarf. He placidly moves behind Ed Mavole's chair and wraps it around Mavole's neck.]

RAYMOND:

Yes, sir.

ED MAVOLE: *[Protesting slightly.]*

Hey Sarge, what gives?

MRS. LOWE:

Relax, Ed.

ED MAVOLE:

Yes, ma'am.

[Raymond tightens the scarf until Mavole dies.]

MRS. LOWE: *[Sinisterly quoting The Star Spangled Banner.]*

“Oh, say can you see...”

[The ladies laugh and applaud.]

LADIES:

Bravo!

Splendid!

Remarkable!

Brilliant!

Kudos to you!

[Mrs. Lowe cuts off the applause with a gesture.]

MRS. LOWE:

Raymond, who is the young lad,
Next to Corporal Hanley?

RAYMOND:

Bobby Lembeck, sir.

[Mrs. Lowe produces a pistol.]

MRS. LOWE:

Such a sweet face.

Doesn't look old enough to be a soldier.

Shoot Bobby Lembeck

Through the forehead, Raymond.

[Raymond takes the pistol and stands in front of Lembeck.]

RAYMOND:

Yes sir.

[To Bobby.]

Hiya kid.

[Lembeck innocently beams at Raymond.]

BOBBY LEMBECK:

Hiya, Sarge!
What's cooking?

[Raymond shoots. Lembeck falls backwards on his chair in a pool of blood. The ladies applaud enthusiastically.]

MRS. LOWE: *[Quoting the Star Spangled Banner again.]*

"The twilight's last gleaming..."

LADIES:

Bravo!	What we could do with an army of them!
Splendid!	Image the potential!
Remarkable!	Americans are easy—
Brilliant! Brilliant!	It would never work with a Russian.
Kudos! Kudos to you!	Congratulations!

MRS. LOWE:

Enough fun.
Now we must put our perfect assassin to work.
Captain Benjamin Marco?

MARCO: *[Standing.]*

Yes, ma'am.

MRS. LOWE:

What will be the first order of business
When you return to your command?

MARCO:

To recommend that
Sergeant Shaw be given
The Medal of Honor.

MRS. LOWE:

For?

MARCO:

Destroying an entire infantry
And saving all of our lives.

MRS. LOWE:

All of our lives...minus two.

[The ladies titter.]

MARCO:

Yes, sir. Ma'am.

MRS. LOWE:

And?

MARCO:

For his valor,
And indomitable will
Against all odds,
Raymond Shaw is a true American hero.

[The ladies applaud; Mrs. Lowe signals them to stop.]

MRS. LOWE:

Corporal Andrew Hanley.

ANDREW HANLEY: *[Standing.]*

Yes, ma'am.

MRS. LOWE:

Who is Raymond Shaw?

ANDREW HANLEY:

A true American hero, ma'am.

MRS. LOWE:

Thank you, gentlemen.

[To the ladies.]

We will reconvene
At oh four hundred.

In the meantime
Please partake of
Tea and sandwiches

In the lobby,

While we mop up this mess.

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LADIES: *[With above, shaking hands with Mrs. Lowe.]*

Bravo!	What we could do with an army of them!	So long, America!
Splendid!	Imagine the potential (think of the potential?!)	Bang, bang,
Remarkable!	Americans are easy—	Bye-bye!
Brilliant!	It would never work with a Russian.	Our time has come!
Kudos to you!	Congratulations!	Our time has come!

*[Loud applause flows into the next scene and becomes cheers from the crowd on the tarmac at Idlewild.
End Scene 1.]*

Scene 2.

[The tarmac of Idlewild Airport. A small group of reporters have gathered below the nose of a plane. Raymond appears in uniform with his Medal of Honor. Everyone applauds and photo bulbs flash. Suddenly, from the opposite side, and making an entrance, is Eleanor Iselin dragging her husband Johnny Iselin behind her, and two men with a banner (the message of which is not revealed), and a brass quartet playing Sousa-like music loudly.]

ELEANOR:

Raymond! Raymond!

My son! My son!

[To Johnny.]

Remember to pump his hand,

Pump his hand and smile!

[Ordering the men with the banner.]

Bring that over here.

[Ordering to the band.]

Louder!

[To, Johnny, harshly:]

I said, "smile!"

[Raymond descends the stairs of the plane and meets Eleanor and Johnny.]

RAYMOND: *[Angrily.]*

Oh, God, mother!

A parade?

ELEANOR: *[Embracing her son.]*

Hardly.

Smile!

[Flirting with a reporter.]

Hello, Danny!

[To Raymond.]

(A.P.!)

JOHNNY: *[Smiling for the cameras and shaking his hand vigorously.]*

Raymond, my boy!

RAYMOND:

I'm not your boy.

I'll never be your boy.

[The banner is unfurled to read "Johnny Iselin's boy". Eleanor steps quickly aside for the photo.]

REPORTERS: *[Over above.]*

Raymond, what was it like to meet the President?

Raymond, over here!

Hold up your medal, Raymond!

Smile, Raymond! Over here!

Put your arm around your father!

Give your mother a kiss! Over here! Over here! Smile!

A true American hero!

RAYMOND: *[Vehemently to Eleanor.]*

Tell them to go away—
Now!
Or I'll hurl this piece of tin
At them.

ELEANOR: *[To the reporters.]*

All right! That's enough, gentlemen!
Thank you! Thank you!
I need to be alone with my darling son.
Enough! Thank you!
Please talk to Johnny,
Talk to Johnny.

[Johnny moves apart from Eleanor and Raymond and the reporters follow him.]

ELEANOR:

Raymond, it's pure serendipity,
Pure serendipity,
That we're here at Idlewild
At the same time.

RAYMOND:

Serendipity isn't scheduled.

ELEANOR:

We're on our way back to the Capitol.
Johnny was the guest of honor
At a function for The Rocket's Red Glare, and—

RAYMOND: *[Sharply.]*

What do you want, mother?

ELEANOR:

Want? You're my son, Raymond!
You're my son!
We're here to congratulate you.

RAYMOND:

Laughable.
Two years,
And not a peep from you,
Two years, at war,
And suddenly I'm your son again.
You're a fraud, mother,
An utter fraud.
I'm not your son,
I'm a publicity stunt
... Who is now
Saying good-bye.

JOHNNY: *[Over above.]*
 ... To always remember that
 God is on our side...

ELEANOR:
 Good-bye?

RAYMOND:
 I've accepted a position
 Here in New York.
 With Holborn Gaines and the *Daily Press*.

JOHNNY: *[Over above.]*
 Evil is on theirs.

ELEANOR: *[Furiously.]*
 Holborn Gaines?
 That Communist!
 And the *Daily Press*—
 That rag???
 Why ever for?
 He writes awful things about Johnny.

RAYMOND:
 That's one
 "Why ever for."

JOHNNY: *[Over above.]*
 Freedom is on our side
 Bondage on theirs.

[Raymond slips off, eluding the reporters. Eleanor calls after him.]

ELEANOR:
 Raymond!
 Raymond!
 Ray—

[Eleanor catches herself and preserves her dignity. She strides over to Johnny and puts his arm through his, beaming at the reporters. Johnny is at the end of a speech.]

JOHNNY:
 And as our crusade in Korea continues,
 We must remain ever vigilant abroad—
 And fight those who would deprive us of that freedom.

[End Scene 2.]

Scene 3.

[Darkness. A black and white TV displays a filmed version of Johnny's last speech, updated to express time passing.]

JOHNNY: *[On television.]*

...And as our crusade in Korea ends,
We must remain ever vigilant at home—
And fight those who would deprive us of our freedom.

[The TV goes to an "off the air" screen. Lights up on the same scene as Scene 1, only now it's played with mostly male Soviet and Chinese officials. The staging, gestures, tone, should mirror Scene 1 precisely. The sign that said "Ladies Garden Club of Northern New Jersey" now says "Tomorrow Today: The Perfect Assassin, Lecture and Demonstration."]

DR. LO YEN:

Raymond: strangle Ed Mavole.

[Dr. Lo Yen hands Raymond the scarf. He placidly moves behind Ed Mavole's chair and wraps it around Mavole's neck.]

RAYMOND:

Yes, sir.

ED MAVOLE:

Hey Sarge, what gives?

DR. LO YEN:

Relax, Ed.

ED MAVOLE:

Yes, ma'am.

[Raymond tightens the scarf until Mavole dies.]

DR. LO YEN: *[Sinisterly quoting The Star Spangled Banner.]*

"Oh, say can you see..."

[The officials laugh and applaud.]

OFFICIALS:

Bravo!
Splendid!
Remarkable!
Brilliant!
Kudos to you!

[Dr. Lo Yen cuts off the applause with a gesture.]

DR. LO YEN:

Raymond, who is the young lad
Next to Corporal Hanley?

RAYMOND:

Bobby Lembeck, sir.

[Dr. Lo Yen produces a pistol.]

DR. LO YEN:

Such a sweet face.

Doesn't look old enough to be a soldier.

Shoot Bobby Lembeck

Through the forehead, Raymond.

[Raymond takes the pistol and stands in front of Lembeck.]

RAYMOND:

Yes sir.

[To Bobby.]

Hiya kid.

[Lembeck innocently beams at Raymond.]

BOBBY LEMBECK:

Hiya, Sarge!

What's cooking?

[He shoots. Lembeck bounces backwards on his chair in a pool of blood. A light focuses on Marco. He screams loudly and long. He has awakened from a nightmare. The rest of the crowd is gone. He turns off the television, which is in Marco's apartment.]

MARCO: *[Manically.]*

Night after night.

The same thing.

Night after night.

Always there.

Soviet...

Chinese...

Big brass...

Cigars...

Laughing...

Night after night.

I can't sleep.

Night after goddam night.

I just watch.

Scarf...

Pistol...

Is it...a theatre?

Zilkov...

Doctor—

MARCO:

The war is over.
The war has *been* over.
But the killing goes on,
It goes on, it goes on.
Every night, every...
And I'm too afraid to sleep.
Too afraid to sleep.

Month after month.
Without break.
Over and over and over again.
Mavole...
Strangled...
Lembeck...
Shot.
And Raymond...
Raymond?
Raymond Shaw?
[Suddenly mechanical in speech.]
Sergeant Shaw
Is a true American hero.
Sergeant Shaw
Is a true American hero.
Sergeant Shaw
Is a true American hero.

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[End Scene 3, which segues right into Scene 4.]

Scene 4.

[This is a direct segue from the previous scene; Marco is now in an office of his superior officer, General Tracy.]

GENERAL TRACY: *[Singing in unison with Marco's last line in the previous scene.]*

Sergeant Shaw
Is a true American hero,
That's what you said.
A true American hero.
Exact words.

MARCO:

I know, Sir.
But they don't ring true.

GENERAL TRACY:

Battle fatigue.

MARCO:

And the bad dreams?
Night after—

GENERAL TRACY:

Battle fatigue.

MARCO:

I'm telling you,
There's more to this—

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GENERAL TRACY:

Fatigue.

[Tracy goes through a file.]

We'll assign you to
Something less demanding.

MARCO:

But that's not—

[Tracy finds a note card and hands it to Marco.]

GENERAL TRACY:

Press Rep.
That is all, Captain.

MARCO: *[Ungratefully.]*

Thank you. Sir.

[They stand and salute.]

[End Scene 4.]

Scene 5.

[A press conference with the Secretary of Defense. At a table in front of a microphone are the Secretary and Marco. There are TV cameras and monitors about. And there are Eleanor and Johnny Iselin.]

TV ANNOUNCER:

And so ends the Defense Department's hearing on budgetary pro—

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE: *[Over above.]*

If we've no further questions, then...

[Eleanor signals to Johnny who stands.]

This press conference is adjourned.

JOHNNY:

Mr. Secretary!

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE:

Yes?

JOHNNY:

Mr. Secretary! Mr. Secretary!

I have a question.

TV ANNOUNCER: *[Over above, signaling to cameraman.]*

Wait a minute. We're still on.

JOHNNY:

I am United States Senator
John Yerkes Iselin.

[All heads turn/all cameras refocus.]

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE:

Who?

[To Marco.]

Who is this moron?

TV ANNOUNCER: *[Over above, to audience.]*

United States Senator Iselin

Has interrupted the proceedings with—

JOHNNY:

No evasions, Mr. Secretary,

No evasions!

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE:

Evasions!

What the hell are you talking about!?

MARCO: *[Making sure the microphone is off; over above.]*

Sir, with all due respect,

He's a very popular senator.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE: *[Over above.]*

I don't care.

TV ANNOUNCER: *[Over above, to audience.]*

An announcement that—

JOHNNY:

United States Senator John Yerkes Iselin,
And I hold here in my hand,
The names of two hundred and seven
Known members of the Communist party,
Two hundred and seven Communists
Working in your organization!

REPORTERS:

Two hundred and seven! Did you catch that?
Johnny Iselin!

[Chaos erupts in the room, flashbulbs flash and the TV cameras all focus on Johnny, as his face appears on the monitors.]

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE:

Two hundred and—?
Give me that list.

ANNOUNCER:

You heard it here. Senator John Yerkes Iselin
Just announced that there are more than
Two hundred Communists in the
Defense Department.

JOHNNY:

You shall not soil this list with your hand!
This is now a matter for the United States Senate.
Good day, sir!

REPORTERS: *[Over above.]*

Two hundred and seven!
Johnny Iselin. Johnny Iselin.
Senator...Right of right.
It can't be true. Two hundred and seven!

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE: *[Over above.]*

I said "Give me that list."
What the hell IS this?

MARCO: *[Over above.]*

Sir, let me handle this.
I will talk to him.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE: *[Over above, to Marco.]*

TALK to him? How did he even get in here??
What's wrong with you?

[Eleanor and Johnny rush off followed by photographers flashing bulbs and TV reporters. The Secretary of Defense storms out. End Scene 5.]

Scene 6.

[Office of the Daily Press. Holborn Gaines and Raymond read a news dispatch.]

HOLBORN:

Two hundred and seven.
Two hundred and seven!

RAYMOND:

Pure fiction, Mr. Gaines.
Penned by my mother.

HOLBORN:

Fiction or not,
It's all over the wire.
His star is rising.
Very quickly.
And I'm doing all I can to stop him,
All I can.
But for now
I'm trading that dim vision
For *dim sum*
With my old friend, Thomas Jordan.
[He grabs a hat.]

RAYMOND: *[Shaken.]*

Senator Thomas Jordan?

[The phone on Raymond's desk rings.]

HOLBORN:

The very one.

RAYMOND:

I knew his daughter, Jocelyn.

HOLBORN:

Jocie...

RAYMOND:

The very one.

[Holborn waves and leaves. Raymond picks up the phone.]

RAYMOND: *[Spoken:]*

Yes? I told you to tell him I'm not here. Tell Captain Marco I'm away. Or dead!

[Raymond slams down the phone. He reminisces about Jocie again.]

Jocie...Jocie...

[End Scene 6. Scene segues directly into Scene 7.]

Scene 7.

[Raymond remembers the summer he met Jocie...]

RAYMOND:

The very one...

The summer before the war,
That summer by the lake,
When all shone
Brightly, brightly.

[Lights up on Raymond's memory: a bucolic setting on Long Island. Young Raymond lies on the ground; Jocie looks over him. They are frozen.]

It was the last summer of grace,
The last summer of innocence,
That began with a snakebite.

[Young Raymond and Jocie are suddenly animate. Jocie ministers to a snakebite.]

JOCIE: *[Dabbing at a wound on Young Raymond's ankle.]*

Stay still.
The poison could circulate.
I think I got it all out,
But we need to dress it.

YOUNG RAYMOND: *[With above, to himself.]* **RAYMOND:** *[With above.]*

Could she be more beautiful? Could she be more beautiful?

[Lights dim on Raymond. Thomas Jordan runs on with gauze and tape to dress the wound.]

THOMAS JORDAN:

You're a lucky young man.
If my daughter had not happened upon you,
You might've died.

JOCIE: *[With a vampire accent, followed by a giggle.]*

I save your life.
Now I can do vith it vaht I vill.

[Young Raymond is still agog at Jocie.]

YOUNG RAYMOND:

Thank you, thank you, Miss...

JOCIE:

Jocelyn...Jordan. Jocie.

[Young Raymond is silenced by her beauty.]

THOMAS JORDAN:

And now according the quaint local custom,
It's your turn to tell us your name.

YOUNG RAYMOND:

Raymond Shaw.

JOCIE:

A pleasure.

[There is a jolt of attraction between them.]

YOUNG RAYMOND: *[As if in a trance.]*

Sir...I would like...
Your daughter's hand in marriage.

[Thomas Jordan and Jocie laugh; then realize Raymond is not joking.]

THOMAS JORDAN:

Do you live around here, Mr. Shaw?

YOUNG RAYMOND:

Right across the lake, sir.

THOMAS JORDAN:

Is your mother Eleanor Iselin?

YOUNG RAYMOND:

Correct.

THOMAS JORDAN:

I sued your mother.
For defamation of character.
Cost her sixty thousand dollars.
But what cut her deepest
Was my donating all that money
To the ACLU.

[Offering a hand which Raymond takes.]

Thomas Jordan.

JOCIE:

Senator Thomas Jordan.

THOMAS JORDAN:

Your mother and I are, as they say,
Not on good terms.

YOUNG RAYMOND:

Then we have much in common, sir.

[All three laugh heartily. Then laugh again. Lights back up on Raymond. He looks on at Jocie and Young Raymond in love.]

RAYMOND:

The summer before the war,
That summer by the lake,
When all shone
Brightly, brightly.

YOUNG RAYMOND:

Jocie. Over here.

[They run into each other's arms and kiss.]

Swim?

JOCIE:

No.

YOUNG RAYMOND:

Walk?

JOCIE:

No.

YOUNG RAYMOND:

Kiss?

JOCIE:

Yes.

[They kiss again.]

It might storm.

YOUNG RAYMOND:

I'll protect you.
Oh, Jocie,
Can't we run away?
Go somewhere,
Somewhere no one can find us?

JOCIE: *[Over above, in response.]*

Run away?

We don't need to run away.

YOUNG RAYMOND:

I want to be this content forever.

RAYMOND: *[Over above.]*

To wake each morning...

JOCIE:
Forever?

RAYMOND: *[Over above.]*
And dream of more joy...

JOCIE:
We can be content
Here. Now.

YOUNG RAYMOND:
You don't understand—

RAYMOND: *[Over above.]*
Than the day before...

JOCIE: *[In the clear.]*
You can't kiss me
When you're speaking.

[They smile and kiss again.]

RAYMOND:
And find it.
The last summer of grace,
Of light, of innocence,
That began with a snakebite
...And ended with one.

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[Lights up on Eleanor sitting in a chair. Josie is gone.]

ELEANOR:
Raymond!

YOUNG RAYMOND:
What do you want, mother!

ELEANOR:
About that Communist tart...

YOUNG RAYMOND:
Shut up, mother.

ELEANOR:

I forbid you to see her!
Forbid it!
Raymond, if we were at war
And you fell in love
With the daughter of a Russian agent,
You'd *want* me to save you!
Well, we *are* at war.
And now every citizen
Must chose between
Right and freedom—our side—
Or that of the Thomas Jordans.
I can show you hard facts, hard facts,
That this man is pure evil.

YOUNG RAYMOND:

I'm not going to listen to you, Mother.
I love her.
I don't hear you.
I don't hear you.
I'll be enlisting soon.
I'll be dead next year anyway...

[Young Raymond breaks down in tears. Lights down on Raymond's memory.]

RAYMOND:

She won. She always wins.
Over...

RAYMOND/YOUNG RAYMOND:

Over.

[End Scene 7.]

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Scene 8.

[A train car. Captain Marco sits across from Rosie Chayne who reads a magazine but occasionally peers at him. He is clearly very shaken. He tries to pour a drink but trembles too much. He sees her notice this and tries to divert her.]

MARCO:

Maryland...is a beautiful state.

ROSIE: *[Smiling warmly.]*

This is Delaware.

I should know.

I was one of the original men

Who laid this stretch of track.

[She notices humor doesn't work.]

Where's home for you?

MARCO:

The Army.

Born in New Hampshire.

ROSIE:

Also a beautiful state.

MARCO:

But I'm on my way to New York

To speak with a buddy of mine.

We were in Korea together.

What's your name?

ROSIE:

Eugenie.

MARCO:

Pardon?

ROSIE:

Eugenie.

Fancy French pronunciation and all.

MARCO:

Pretty.

ROSIE:

But my friends call me Rosie.

MARCO:

Why?

ROSIE:

It's my middle name.
More "me."
Smells of brown soap and beer.
And you are...

MARCO:

Ben. Ben Marco.
Home?

ROSIE:

New York.
Fifty-Three West Fifty-Fourth.

MARCO:

So...may I call you Rosie?

ROSIE: *[Kindly, directly.]*

If you sit over here, you may.

[Marco moves to her side.]

MARCO:

Married?

ROSIE:

No, you?

MARCO:

Wouldn't be doing this if I were.

ROSIE:

That's comforting to know.
You're exhausted, Ben.

MARCO:

That ain't the half of it, Rosie,
Ain't the half of it.

[As Rosie consoles him, Marco slowly rests his head on her shoulder and stares off.]

ROSIE:

I don't know you,
I don't know you at all,
But your eyes are kind,
And tell me all I need to know.

ROSIE:

Total strangers,
But your soul seems good,
Though it's broken now,
I can tell it's a good soul.

Rest your head here,
Right here...

[Almost as if by suggestion.]

Fifty-Three West Fifty-Fourth, Apartment B.
Rest your busy, crowded head here,
And sleep

[Almost as if by suggestion.]

Eldorado nine, two, five three, two.
There's plenty of time to sleep before New York,
Plenty of time and
Miles to go,
Miles to go,
Miles to go.

[End Scene 8.]

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Scene 9.

[Outside Raymond's apartment. Raymond puts the keys in his door; Marco suddenly appears from the shadows.]

MARCO:

Raymond—

RAYMOND:

What are you doing here?

MARCO:

I tried calling—

RAYMOND:

I know. Can't you take a hint?

MARCO:

You have to hear me out, Raymond,
Hear me out.
I'm dying,
I'm going insane.
I can't sleep,
Can't sleep,
Afraid to sleep,
I beg you
To listen to me.
I keep having
The same dream
The same—

RAYMOND:

The war is over, Ben.
I've moved on.
Whatever happened over there
Is in the past.
I can't help you.

Draft

RAYMOND:

About some Commie officials and a gun and a scarf—

MARCO:

How did you know that?
How did you know?
You had it, too?"

RAYMOND:

I don't have dreams.
Corporal Hanley
Sent this to my office
Two weeks ago.

[Raymond brings Marco into his apartment and withdraws a letter from a desk and hands it to him. At the same time, lights come up on Corporal Hanley at a desk, rereading a letter by the light of TV that has gone to static.]

CORPORAL HANLEY:

Dear Sergeant Shaw:
 I hope you're well.
 I'm stationed in Alaska.
 And need your help.
 I keep having the same dream,
 Night after night.
 In it there are Soviet and Chinese men.
 Looks like big brass.
 One of them gives you a scarf
 And you strangle Ed Mavole.
 Another gives you a pistol
 And you shoot Bobby Lembeck.
 Night after night.
 The same dream
 Over and over
 The same damn dream.
 Then it ends when I keep repeating
 That you are a true American hero.

It may sound crazy, sir, but...
 Something's going on.
 Don't know what it means
 Something isn't right.
 And I cannot sleep
 Something needs to give
 If you've got a clue
 Something, anything—
 Won't you write me back?
[Folding the letter and looking out.]
 Please, write me back. Write me.

MARCO:

The same dream...
 Night after night...
 Soviet...Chinese...
 Big brass...
 Scarf...
 Mavole, strangled.
 Pistol...
 Lembeck, shot.
 Night after night.
 We're having the same dream
 Over and over, impossible!
 He and I—the same dream
 How can that be
 Sergeant Shaw is a true—

Something's going on.
 Know what all this means?
 Something's going on.
 Something not so good.
 Something's going on
 Someone may mean harm
 Jumbling up our brains
 Messing with our minds
 Something's going on.
 And someone needs to know.

RAYMOND:

But that's just it,
 I'm no hero—never was.
 I recall the facts about the night
 You say I saved the platoon,
 But I'm never really there.
 I'm never really there
 Don't know what that means, but
 Something's not all there.
 It feels like a hoax,
 A scam, bogus...
 And I was trying to forget
 The whole damn business.
 Trying to forget
 Something's going on.

MARCO:

Raymond, I have to go talk to
 A certain general.
 You can reach me at...

[Marco jots down a telephone number.]

RAYMOND: *[Reading.]*

Eldorado nine, two, five...
 I told you I don't care—
[Raymond's telephone rings.]

MARCO:

Three two.

RAYMOND: *[Suddenly softening.]*

Good luck, Ben.

[He turns to leave, then returns to Raymond and exuberantly bugs him.]

MARCO:

Thanks, kid.

[Marco leaves; the telephone continues to ring. Raymond runs to the phone and screams into it.]

RAYMOND:

HELLO!

[Raymond opens a drawer and removes a deck of playing cards. He listens intently.]

Yes, sir.

Yes, sir.

Of course, sir.

[End Scene 9.]

Draft

Scene 10.

[The bedroom of Holborn Gaines at 1:00 a.m. A bed slides on with Mr. Gaines in it, reading.]

[Raymond quietly enters in a dark coat and hat, hands in pocket.]

RAYMOND: *[Apathetically.]*
Good evening, Mr. Gaines.

HOLBORN GAINES: *[Startled.]*
Raymond?
What are you doing here?
And how did you get in?

RAYMOND:
They gave me a key.

HOLBORN GAINES:
They?
Look, Raymond,
If this is about work,
We can—
And what is that?

[Raymond attaches a silencer to his gun.]

RAYMOND:
A silencer, Mr. Gaines.

[Raymond kills Holborn; a single shot to the forehead. He coldly turns and leaves.]

[End Scene 10.]

Scene 11.

[Breakfast at the house of the Iselins. Eleanor reads the paper while Johnny prepares a speech for television.]

ELEANOR:

Poor, poor Mr. Gaines.
Police allege it was a robbery.
Wouldn't wish that fate on my own worst enemy.
Means a big promotion for Raymond.

JOHNNY:

"I am willing, fellow patriots,
To stand..."

ELEANOR: *[Still glancing at the newspaper, then noticing Johnny; very harshly:]*

What did I say about squinting down when you're on camera?
Makes you look like a goddam raccoon.

JOHNNY:

"...Stand or fall.
If there are not one hundred and—" **Draft**
One thing, honey.
Why do you keep changing the number?

ELEANOR:

I don't!
You just don't remember it.
Here.
Since you love ketchup so much,
Use this number.

[She shows him the Heinz ketchup bottle.]

JOHNNY:

"If there are not fifty-seven..."
Yes I like that!
"...card-carrying Communists
In the Defense Department alone."

ELEANOR: *[Looking at her newspaper, seeing an item, then looking up.]*

Lover,
I think it's time
We throw a party.
A homecoming party.
For that darling Jocelyn Jordan.
Says here she has just returned home
From teaching abroad.
I still feel just awful
About the shabby way
Raymond treated her.

ELEANOR:

And, we'll need Thomas Jordan
On our side
At the convention.
We can make it a benefit...
For the Loyal American Underground.
We'll dress in a dairy theme.
For the Wisconsin vote.
How does that sound, lover?

JOHNNY:

Whatever you say, sweetheart

ELEANOR:

And that's why our marriage
Is such a success.
Now, why don't you stop speechifying
And come over here, Daddy?
All work and no play...

[Eleanor kisses Johnny hotly.]

[End Scene 11.]

Draft

Scene 12.

[The office of General Tracy. Marco and the General sit on opposite sides of a table, a large envelope between them.]

TRACY:

Captain, you've been called here today
Because we have new information.

MARCO:

Did you guys contact Corporal Hanley—
Like I asked you to?

TRACY: *[Not answering.]*

Go through these photos.
Remove any of significance to you.

[Marco empties the envelope and begins looking through the photos; he recognizes some of the images.]

MARCO:

No...No...No...

Wait a minute.

This guy wears glasses.

I think his name is

Berezovo.

He handed the main guy a scarf.

[Tracy takes the photo.]

No...No...

That's him!

Lo Yen.

Doctor.

Smells like a goat.

[Tracy takes the photo.]

Oh, and this guy.

But he had a beard.

[Tracy takes the photo.]

TRACY:

We can stop now.

[A door opens and two men come in.]

One hour ago,

In Wainwright Alaska,

Corporal Hanley

Chose the very same photos.

The men you both identified are of

Real interest to

International security.

Gentlemen, Captain Marco.

Captain, these men are

With the FBI.

Any questions?

[After a short pause, Marco breaks down in joy.]

MARCO:

I was right.

All along.

Oh sweet God.

It's coming on.

At last.

I feel it.

Nothing about those dreams

Can scare me anymore.

Nothing.

Sweet, sweet slumber.

At Fifty-Three West Fifty-Fourth,

Apartment B,

Right beside one Rosie Chayney.

[End Scene 12.]

Draft

Scene 13.

[The home of Johnny and Eleanor Iselin. In a large banquet/ballroom, guests mill about in various costumes, all of iconic American figures, some parodied as to be overtly racist: President Lincoln, the Statue of Liberty, Aunt Jemima (in blackface), a Cherokee, Marilyn Monroe, Martha Washington, etc. Major General "Fightin' Frank" Bollinger stands in front of them, costumed as Ben Franklin. Johnny stands next to him, dressed as a cow. Eleanor slinks through the party dressed as a dairymaid with Raymond following behind her.]

RAYMOND: *[Insistently.]*
Where is she, mother!

ELEANOR: *[Obsequiously greeting her guests.]*
Good evening, Governor
[Acidly, to Raymond.]
I already told you...
[To a guest.]
What a delightful costume, Miss Maxwell.
She is on her way.

RAYMOND:
If you are lying—

ELEANOR: *[To Raymond.]*
Lying???? How dare—
[To a guest.]
So kind of you to be here, your Honor.

[Bollinger signals for the band to stop and clinks his glass to get everyone's attention at the party as they move to the banquet table.]

BOLLINGER: *[Spoken.]*
Quiet down, everybody. Quiet. I got something to say. Quiet down

[Raymond enters as a gaucho and looks around for Jocie; he is highly agitated. He is followed by his mother dressed as a dairy maid.]

BOLLINGER:
The future of
This great land of ours,
Lies in the hands of one man,
A true American hero,
Ladies and gentlemen:
I give you Johnny Iselin.
Our next president.
[The partygoers laugh.]
...Sorry, VICE-president.

ELEANOR:
Honestly, Raymond.
Would you calm down?
She's on her way.
You look as if your head
Is about to explode.
We need to calm you down.
Come with me...

RAYMOND:
Mother, you know how much
This means to me.
She means to me.
If this is a hoax
Or one of your goddam lies,
I will break every bone in your body.

[Applause and cheers from the guests. Johnny stands, removes the head of his cow costume and speaks while Raymond and Eleanor's argument escalates.]

JOHNNY:

MOOOOOO!

Thank you, General Bollinger, better known as “Fightin’ Frank!”

[The partygoers “moo” back and roar with laughter.]

Moouoooooover over, big government and stop milking us Americans!

[Lights down on the party, up on the library where Raymond paces and Eleanor sits watching him.]

ELEANOR: *[Placidly producing a deck of cards.]*

Raymond...

Why don’t you pass the time

By playing a little game of solitaire?

[Raymond obediently sits down and starts to play.]

ELEANOR:

With Holborn Gaines gone,

We may have only one thing in our way.

[Raymond plays the Queen of Diamonds.]

There she is.

Listen up.

I’m about to determine

If a certain senator

Is in our way.

If he is

You will get the pistol from the—

[Johnny yells from outside the door.]

JOHNNY:

Honey!

ELEANOR: *[To Johnny.]*

What!

JOHNNY:

Tom Jordan is here.

ELEANOR: *[Aside.]*

Speak of the devil.

[To Johnny.]

Two seconds, sugar.

[To Raymond.]

Do not move, Raymond.

Not one inch.

[She starts to leave, then turns back, and removes a card from the deck.]

Oh, and I’ll take this lovely lady with me.

[She sweeps out hurriedly. Suddenly, at a side door, Jocie appears. Dressed as the Queen of Diamonds. She rushes into Raymond’s arms. They kiss. The scenes between Eleanor/Jordan and Josie/Raymond run concurrently; the following lines should be layered, building in layering to the quartet.]

ELEANOR: *[Rushing toward Thomas Jordan with outstretched arms.]*

How good that you could be here, Tom.
Won't you join us for dinner?

JOSIE: *[Rushing toward Raymond with outstretched arms.]*

I've been watching you from outside.
Hold me.

[Raymond stands and holds Josie.]

THOMAS JORDAN: *[Ignoring the arms.]*

I don't break bread with fools.
I am here because my daughter asked me to be here.

JOSIE:

Oh, my dear beautiful Raymond.

THOMAS JORDAN:

I will not have it misconstrued
As an endorsement for you
Or your husband's idiocy.

JOSIE:

All those years apart from you
And my feelings are the same.

ELEANOR:

And do you intend to carry
This feeling into the convention?

THOMAS JORDAN:

Meaning?

JOSIE:

Let's run away from here.

RAYMOND:

Whatever you say.

ELEANOR:

Would you stop Johnny
From seeking the nomination
At the convention in two weeks?

THOMAS JORDAN: *[Incredulous.]*

For president?

ELEANOR:

No, not yet. We're after the second slot.
Will you stop us?

JORDAN:
 Stop you?
 Listen closely...

JORDAN:
 All you have is fear.
 You and your kind.
 Only fear.
 No ideas,
 No principles,
 Fear and fear alone.

JOSIE:
 We've nothing to fear
 This time, Raymond
 Nothing to fear.
 We'll run away
 Far, far away
 Where no one will find us.

JORDAN:
 You do more to hurt
 To our great land
 Do more harm
 Than any
 Enemy
 Ever, ever could.

JOSIE:
 Someone hurt us.
 Someone meant to.
 Do us harm.
 Not anymore.
 Take my hand, Raymond.
 Come with me.

RAYMOND:
 We've nothing to fear
 This time, darling.
 Nothing to fear.
 We'll run away
 Far, far away
 Where no one will find us.

ELEANOR:
 You don't know
 What you're saying., Tom.
 You don't know
 What you're saying.

Stop you? Stop you?
 I will do everything I can,
 Spend every cent I have,
 To stop you and your Johnnie.
 And I'll do it in the name
 Of my late friend, Holborn Gaines.
 Good evening,

They won't stop us
 Not this time
 Let us go.
 We've nothing to fear.
 Let us go.

They won't stop us
 Not this time
 Let us go.
 Nothing to be afraid of.
 Let us go.

You will regret this.
 You will regret this.
 I will give you
 Something to fear.
 Something to fear.

[Josie and Raymond have left, Josie shedding her Queen of Diamonds costume. Thomas Jordan pushes out of the party. Eleanor flies into a rage. The party has become a drunken bacchanalia; people tripping, a conga line, a woman stripping. Eleanor strides back into the study. She sees that Raymond is not there.]

ELEANOR:
 Raymond? Raymond?
 Gone. Gone!

[Seeing the Queen of Diamonds costume.]

It's the girl.
 She has taken him.
 She has taken him from me.
 Ah, my boy,
 My darling, little boy,
 We have so much to do,
 So far to go,
 In this holy crusade.
 Terrible, terrible things
 Will happen in this country.
 We will go through fire
 Time will roar.
 Blood will spill.
 And fools and mockers
 Will be brought down.
 And when that day comes
 And we have been cleansed
 Of the slime of oblivion,

ELEANOR:

And the purity of our founding fathers
 Is restored,
 And *you* are restored
 —For I will find you,
 I will find you, Raymond—
 You will kneel beside me,
 And thank me,
 Give only me your love,
 Only me, only ME,
 As will all of the people
 In this blinded land.

[A conga line led by Johnny lurches into the room as partygoers explode in a manic and ugly frenzy.]

JOHNNY ISELIN, PARTYGOERS 4-9:

[A drunken conga line led by Johnny.]

When you do the conga
 Nothing can go wrong-a
 Do it all night long-a
 It'll make you strong-a
 Conga conga conga conga, etc.

PARTYGOER 1:

["President Lincoln", orating drunkenly with above.]

Four score and seven years ago...
 Four score and seven years ago ...

PARTYGOER 2:

["Marilyn Monroe", miming shooting a gun at guests, blowing on the barrel, then shooting again and laughing.]

Bang! Bang! Shoot 'em up! Bang! Bang! Shoot 'em up!

PARTYGOER 3:

[Dressed as a cowboy, riding "Aunt Jemima", with above.]

Home, home on the range/Where the deer and the antelope play
 Where seldom is heard a discouraging word/And the skies are not cloudy all day.

PARTYGOER 4:

["Robert E. Lee," waving a Confederate flag, with above.]

Look away look away look away, Dixie Land.
 Look away look away look away, Dixie Land.

MAJOR GENERAL BOLLINGER:

[Grinding against and chasing "The Statue of Liberty", with above.]

You're a grand old flag, You're a high flying flag, and forever in peace may you wave.

[The conga line winds its way around Eleanor and goes off. Eleanor stands in the center looking upstage as the setting of the Iselin house disappears and is replaced by the convention scene of Act II: at the same time, floor-to ceiling banners descend, signs with "Welcome to the National Convention/New York City," walls of early 60s television sets appear with images of the convention and finally the face of Johnny Iselin that goes from appearing on every television to one image on all; at the last minute a banner descends with the phrase "Our Time Has Come." Eleanor turns to face the audience and smiles. Blackout. End Act I.]

ACT II

Draft

Scene 1.

[Raymond's apartment. Raymond sweeps in, carrying Jocie. They both glow with a light tan.]

RAYMOND:

Have I told you this morning
How deliriously happy
You make me, Mrs. Shaw?

JOCIE:

Only a dozen times, Mr. Shaw.

RAYMOND:

Let's return to San Juan.
I miss the sun.
I miss the sea.
I miss being somewhere
No one could find us.
Away from the evil world—
And that damned convention outside.

JOCIE:

Dear Raymond,
You're trembling again.
Repeat after me:
We're safe now,
Out of harm's way.
Go on...

Draft

RAYMOND: *[Weakly.]*

We're safe now,

JOCIE/RAYMOND:

Safe now...

JOCIE:

With feeling!

JOCIE/RAYMOND:

Safe now,
Out of harm's way...

JOCIE:

Command that army of cells up there
Not to worry,
Not to be afraid,
Whatever may have hurt us before:
Vanished,
Thin air,
Gone,
No longer.

JOCIE:

We're safe now,

RAYMOND:

Out of harm's way,

JOCIE:

Better.

JOCIE/RAYMOND:

You and I...

RAYMOND:

Safe now.

JOCIE:

Much better.

JOCIE/RAYMOND:

Out of harm's way.

RAYMOND:

Never to be hurt again.
Never to be hurt again.

JOCIE/RAYMOND:

Safe. Safe.

[A knock at the door.]

RAYMOND:

Now it starts.

[Raymond answers the door and brings Marco into the room.]

Draft

RAYMOND:

Ben, incredible news!
Be the first to congratulate me.
Meet Mrs. Shaw!
AKA Jocie.
Jocie, this is my best friend, Captain Ben Marco.

JOCIE:

He's told me all about you, Captain.

MARCO:

Ben. He has?

RAYMOND:

Isn't she the most beautiful thing you've ever seen?

MARCO:

Indeed.
Congratulations, kid.
I have to talk to you.
Alone.
[To Jocie.]
Sorry.

JOCIE:

Not to worry.
I'm having lunch with my father.
[To Raymond.]
Don't forget our plans with him later.

RAYMOND:

I will count the seconds till then.

[They kiss. Marco and Raymond leave. After they're gone, the telephone rings. Jocie goes to answer it.]

JOCIE:

Hello. Hello.
[A hang-up. She continues to pack, stops, and looks out with an expression of joy.]
Whatever hurt us before:
Vanished,
Thin air,
Gone,
No longer.

[Blackout. End Scene 1.]

Scene 2.

[Marco and Raymond sit at a bar. Dora, a female bartender, talks loudly to a customer on the other side of the bar.]

MARCO:

Listen up, Raymond.
 Listen up good.
 A lot has happened
 Since you disappeared
 A lot.
 The FBI put
 The pieces together.
 The short version:
 Your Medal of Honor —
 It's a big lie.
 A lie I told
 Courtesy of some Reds in Korea.

RAYMOND:

I thought so.

MARCO:

I'm sorry kid, but,
 You murdered Ed Mavole
 And Bobby Lembeck.
 Strangled Mavole.
 Shot Lembeck.
 Turns out my dreams
 Were very real.

Draft

DORA:

My sister's cousin...

RAYMOND:

But I don't remember—

DORA:

Just hanging around the house.
 Not doing nothing...

MARCO:

Of course, you don't remember.
 You *won't* remember.
 You've been programmed not to.
 You're a marked man, Raymond,
 A time bomb,
 And we need to know
 How they make you tick.

DORA:

And then I says to him
Just to get him to leave me alone...

RAYMOND:

But why would a bunch of Reds
Want to do this?

DORA:

Why don't you do something?
Why don't you read a book?

MARCO:

That's the million dollar question.
They're inside your head, Raymond.

DORA:

Why don't you watch the TV?

MARCO:

Deep.
And we have to get them out.

DORA:

Why don't you pass the time
By playing a little game of solitaire?

[Raymond freezes.]

RAYMOND: *[Snapping to Dora.]*

A deck of cards.

MARCO:

They're planning something big.
We just don't know what.

[Dora reaches in a drawer and slams down a deck in front of Raymond. He begins to play solitaire.]

DORA: *[To Raymond.]*

Sure.

MARCO:

Cards?
Raymond?
What gives?
Solitaire?

[Raymond deals the Queen of Hearts]

You have to listen to me!

DORA: *[Back to the customer.]*

So I says I says:

“Put your money where your mouth is.”

[Raymond reaches in his wallet, withdraws a pile of bills and sticks them in his mouth.]

MARCO:

Raymond,

What gives?

DORA:

So *he* says:

“Go soak your head.”

[Raymond takes his drink and pours it over his head. Dora notices and yells at Marco.]

MARCO: *[To Raymond, shaking him.]*

Raymond, you have to stop!

DORA:

Hey, what’s eating this clown?

MARCO: *[To Dora.]*

He’s not well.

[To Raymond.]

Raymond, stop!

Wake up!

Wake up!

I’m going to get Jocie.

[Raymond appears to come to consciousness when he hears Jocie’s name.]

RAYMOND: *[Quietly echoing.]*

Jocie.

MARCO: *[To Raymond, seeing that her name is waking him up.]*

Jocie. Jocie.

[The money falls from Raymond’s mouth and he revives.]

Raymond, do you know what just happened?

RAYMOND: *[As if nothing happened.]*

Of course! We were talking about—

Why am I all wet?

What’s all this money?

MARCO:

You just poured your drink on yourself.

And stuffed a wad of green in your mouth.

You started playing solitaire, and—

RAYMOND:

Solitaire?

MARCO: *[Figuring it out.]*

Hey, that's it.
Solitaire.

RAYMOND: *[Humiliated.]*

No, Ben.
No.
I'm not going to listen to you.
I'm not going to let you destroy my happiness.
I will not let you.
You can't ruin the best time of my life.
The only time of my life.
Good day.

MARCO:

You need help, Raymond.
I'm not trying to destroy—
I'm trying to protect—
You've got to listen to me.
Raymond! Raymond!

[Raymond leaves. When he's gone, Marco removes a tape recorder that was concealed in his jacket. He plays it back.]

V.O. MARCO:

They're inside your head, Raymond.

V.O. DORA:

Why don't you watch the TV?

V.O. MARCO:

Deep.
And we have to get them out.

V.O. DORA:

Why don't you pass the time
By playing a little game of solitaire?

[Marco shuts the tape recorder off, puts it back on and leaves.]

DORA: *[To her customer.]*

Going to be like this till the goddam convention is done.
A bunch of whackos in town.

[End Scene 2.]

Scene 3.

[Raymond's apartment. Raymond enters, looking for Jocie. She's not there. He paces, mind racing. He is falling apart.]

RAYMOND:

Gone.

[Remembering.]

At her father's,

At her father's.

[He makes himself a drink. And downs it. He makes another.]

A marked man.

A time bomb.

Lies,

Lies.

[He speaks in a voice not his own.]

Our supreme achievement:

The perfect assassin.

What was that?

Lies.

All lies.

All lies.

Josie!

Hiya Sarge...

What's cooking?

No.

What is happening to me?

No.

What is...

Not your fault.

No.

Something's breaking up,

Something's breaking

Something's...

What others?

Who else?

Lies.

RAYMOND:

Jocie, my Jocie,

You'll save me. You'll save me. You'll...

We're safe now.

Out of harm's way, out of harm's way, out of harm's...

Josie!

[Raymond turns on television; the convention is on. General Bollinger is declaiming. On another part of the stage, Rose's apartment appears; she is watching the same speech.]

V.O. GENERAL BOLLINGER: *[On television.]*

But Mother Russia
Will never take away
Our supreme achievement
First fought for by our Founding—

[Raymond and Rosie turn off the television in their separate spaces. Rosie tidies up her apartment.]

RAYMOND/ROSIE:

Idiot.

[It's very still. Suddenly, the phone rings piercingly. Raymond answers it. In Rosie's apartment, Marco enters and kisses Rosie.]

RAYMOND:

Hello.

ROSIE:

Well, hello.

MARCO:

What's for dinner?

[Raymond reaches into a drawer and withdraws a pack of cards. He begins playing solitaire. He deals the Queen of Diamonds and stops.]

ROSIE:

Me, apparently.
Don't stop.

MARCO:

Later.
So...it's solitaire.

ROSIE:

Solitaire?

RAYMOND:

Yes, ma'am.
Yes, ma'am.
Of course, ma'am.

MARCO: *[Revealing the tape recorder to Rosie.]*

Yes, ma'am.
That's the key.

[Raymond runs out. Lights down on his apartment.]

ROSIE:

Mystery solved.

MARCO:

Half-solved.
Solitaire turns the key,
But something else
Opens the door.
I need to find the code.

ROSIE:

You'll find it.
I know you will.

MARCO:

I don't deserve you.

ROSIE:

I'll never disabuse you of that notion.

MARCO:

You are my light,
My goddess,
My movie star,
My queen...

ROSIE:

Queen of hearts or
Queen of diamonds?

MARCO:

Hearts. You know I can't afford...
DIAMONDS!
Wait. That's it.
The Queen of Diamonds.
Something Dr. Lo said.

ROSIE:

Dr. Lo?

[On another part of the stage, lights come up on Thomas Jordan and Josie toasting and laughing in Thomas Jordan's apartment.]

MARCO:

The man from the dream.
"When Raymond encounters
The Queen of Diamonds—
It triggers complete receptivity."
So he plays solitaire until
He deals the Queen of Diamonds.
Which is what he did today.

[Exuberantly.]

Rosie, let's get married.

JORDON:

To your marriage.

[They kiss again heatedly.]

[Josie kisses Jordan's forehead.]

ROSIE:

Now?

MARCO:

Later.

JOSIE:

Thank you, Father.

ROSIE:

Always later!

ROSIE:

But you hardly know me.
What if I turn out to be a Martian
Or a crypto-Republican?

MARCO: *[Reprising what she said to him on the train.]* **JORDAN:**

I don't know you,	It's been a rough two weeks.
I don't know you at all,	Your dear parents-in-law
But your eyes are kind,	Accused me of high treason
And tell me...	And the press dubbed me
	"Senator Capulet."

MARCO/ROSIE:

All I need to know.

But it's all worth it
To see how happy you are.

MARCO:

I don't mean to scare you, but...

[Josie looks off happily. Then looks back at her father glowing.]

ROSIE:

I don't scare easily.

MARCO:

I know the man
I know what he can do.
A heartless killer
Who in the wrong hands
Could level our country.

JOSIE:

I love the man.
I know what he can be.
Devoted, gentle, warm
And with the right touch
Our world will be perfect.

ROSIE:

Now you sound like an Iselinite!

JORDAN:

Your mother would be so proud.

MARCO:

And now I found
A way into his mind.
I'll figure out their plans.
And end them
So help me God.

ROSIE:

Why be a hero?
I'm too young.
To be a widow.
At least let me be
Married first!

JOSIE:

And now we've found
A way into each other's life
We'll never be apart.
We will go on.
So help me God.

JORDAN:

Your happiness
Is all that matters
That has ever mattered.
Even if he is an Iselin.

MARCO:

If I don't return
Notify someone at this address.
It looks like a storefront
Across from the Garden.

JOCIE:

Thank you, Father.
I *am* happy. Beyond words.

[Marco and Rosie kiss. He runs out. Raymond slips on in the Jordan apartment, in a coat and hat, his hands in his pockets.]

ROSIE:
But you *will* be back here.

JORDAN: *[Noticing Raymond.]*
Raymond, you're here!

[Lights down on Rosie's apartment as she paces.]

THOMAS JORDAN:
Come in, my boy!
And congratulations!
We opened the best bubbly we could find.

JOCIE: *[With above.]*
Hello, my darling.
Take off your coat. Stay awhile.

[Raymond withdraws a pistol with a silencer.]

THOMAS JORDAN:
We're all a bit jumpy
About the damn convention this evening.

[Noticing the gun.]
Raymond, is that a—

[Raymond shoots Thomas Jordan once in the head. He falls. Jocie screams.]

JOCIE:
Daddy!
[Jocie runs at Raymond, arms outstretched.]
Raymond! Why?

[Raymond shoots her once in the heart at close range. She falls. Raymond looks around. He is confused. He sobs. He kneels beside her. Young Raymond enters and Raymond looks up to him pleadingly. Young Raymond turns and walks away. Raymond suddenly stops sobbing, rises abruptly and runs out.]

[End Scene 3.]

Scene 4.

[Raymond's apartment. Raymond runs in. A light goes on; Eleanor is there.]

ELEANOR:

Hello, Raymond.

[Raymond doesn't answer. He starts to weep.]

Raymond, why don't you pass the time
By playing a little game of solitaire?

[Eleanor hands Raymond a deck of cards. He deals the Queen of Diamonds. Eleanor speaks with urgency.]

Now, Raymond.

With the Jordans out of the way,

Only one obstacle remains.

This is what you are to do.

At nineteen hundred tonight,

You will don the costume of a priest.

You will enter the Garden.

You will carry a two-piece sniper's rifle

Concealed in a doctor's bag.

You will ascend to the

Top right lighting booth

Nearest Eighth Avenue.

It will be empty.

You will have a clear line of fire

To the stage.

You will hear the following words:

"Nor would I ask any American

In defense of his freedom

That I would not gladly give myself—

My life before liberty."

When you hear

"My life before liberty,"

You will shoot the presidential nominee

In the head.

One shot.

You will leave the gun

And exit on the Ninth Avenue side

Where a car will be waiting.

[She stifles a sob.]

You will never comprehend this, darling.

And right now it's like whispering

To someone on a distant star.

But I did not know they would do this.

I asked them to build me an assassin

And they did,

A perfect assassin,

But I did not know it would be you.

I did not know.

ELEANOR:

They found you in Korea,
 Chose you because they knew
 It would bind me forever to their cause.
 But do not worry, my boy.
 Do not worry.
 For as I am a mother first,
 And an American second,
 I will rise to power and when I do,
 I will ground them into dirt
 For what they did to you.
 To me,
 To us.

Smile for me,
 Won't you, darling?

[She cradles his head in her hands. Raymond smiles wanly.]

When you smile,
 You remind me of Daddy.
 And I am a little girl
 And the miracle of love
 Begins again.

[She kisses him on the mouth and leaves. After a moment, the door buzzes loudly. Buzzes again. Marco enters.]

RAYMOND:

Where is Jocie, Ben?
 Have you seen her?
 Where is Jocie?
 What are all these voices—
 All these voices inside my head.

MARCO:

It is time, Raymond.
 We're going to cut the wires,
 Rip out all the circuitry,
 Destroy those voices.
 We're going to break the code.
 And you know how?
 YOU will *say* it's broken.
 YOU will tell the voices
 To shut the hell up,
 To scam, to leave,
 Leave forever.
 Are you ready?

RAYMOND:

Yes, Ben.

MARCO:

Raymond, why don't you pass the time
By playing a little game of solitaire?

[Raymond hesitates, then plays. The Queen of Diamonds is dealt.]

There she is,
Miss America.

[Marco discreetly presses under his arm (where the concealed tape recorder is.)]

Now, very clearly,
Tell me what it is
They want you to do.

[End Scene 6.]

Draft

Scene 5.

[A very small office. A table and folding chairs. Mounds of coffee cups. Three monitors broadcast the convention. A large tape recorder on the table sits among the three agents and Marco.]

V.O. *[Marco]:*

“And when will you shoot the nominee, Raymond?”

V.O. *[Raymond]:*

“When I hear him say ‘My life before liberty.’ The priest’s outfit will help me escape. Of course, they may arrange to have me killed right after. That would be the human thing to do.”

[The tape cuts off.]

MARCO:

And that’s all she wrote.

AGENTS:

How could the tape break there?

What happened next?

What more did he say?

[On the television screen, the crowd sings the Star-Spangled Banner. One of the agents goes and turns up the volume. The agents react.]

CHORUS ON TELEVISION:

“O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave, o’er the land...”

AGENT:

No time, gentlemen.

We’ve got seconds, not minutes.

[Marco watches them leave. He stands looking at the images of the convention on the televisions. He removes the Medal of Honor from his pocket and holds it up. Rosie appears.]

MARCO:

What are you doing here?

ROSIE:

You said if you don’t return...

MARCO:

Rosie, this whole thing is about to explode.

[He tries to usher her out.]

ROSIE:

I’m staying.

MARCO:

But—

ROSIE:

By now, you should know better
Than to argue with me.

[She sits. As does Marco. The office stays in the next scene, but is relegated to a separate space as the convention rolls on.]

[End Scene 5.]

Draft

Scene 6.

[The stage of the Republican convention at the Garden—an explosion of American jingoism. Our audience represents the convention audience. Balloons, streamers and confetti fill the air. The scene opens with loud applause, cheers, whistles as if the nominee has just said something very popular. There is a bank of early 1960s TVs to magnify the action. The Nominee's wife and children sit on the platform as well as many notable-looking people behind them. Eleanor and Johnny sit in front applauding and occasionally waving. A banner hangs over them all with the words "Our time has come!" emblazoned on it. (If the staging of this moment can mirror the opening scene on the platform, that would be nice!)]

NOMINEE:

Fellow patriots,
I thank you for the nomination
To be your next president.
Tonight as I stand before you
I dream of a better America...

[He continues to speak. Eleanor looks up to where Raymond will be hiding. She sings to him.]

ELEANOR:

There you are.
Up in your booth.
Just as I commanded.

NOMINEE/CHORUS:

Beloved and blessed land...

ELEANOR:

I see you,
My blessed Raymond.
My beautiful son.
My true American hero.

NOMINEE/CHORUS:

Embracing the light of God...

ELEANOR:

Our time has come.

NOMINEE/CHORUS:

A greatness that cannot fail...

ELEANOR:

Soon, soon...

NOMINEE/CHORUS:

With fervor and firm resolve...

ELEANOR:

The nominee will lie dead before us.

NOMINEE/CHORUS:

Resounding throughout the world...

ELEANOR:

Johnny will rise from his chair,
Hold the warm corpse
In his arms
And offer it up
As if at an altar.

NOMINEE/CHORUS:

The spirit of pioneers...

ELEANOR:

Soon, soon...

NOMINEE/CHORUS:

To fearlessly blaze ahead...

ELEANOR:

He will rise to the podium,
Soaked in the nominee's blood...

NOMINEE/CHORUS:

May freedom forever ring...

ELEANOR:

He will deliver a speech—
Short,
But so inspirational
That it will sweep us
Right into the White House
With powers that make
Martial law seem like anarchy.

NOMINEE/CHORUS:

A greatness that cannot fail...

ELEANOR:

At last, we've come to the end
Of this terrible road.
The years of pain
Will soon be over.

[From the office, Marco pleads to the cameras. Rosie looks on.]

MARCO:

Okay, kid.
 It's all up to you now.
 All up to you.
 Maybe you'll earn your medal this time.
 The Army can't stop them.
 The FBI can't stop them.
 Only you,
 Only you.

ELEANOR: *[With above.]*

We have won,
 We have won,
 Our time is now,
 Our time is now,
 Our time is now,
 My darling boy.
 My Raymond.

[Other voices join in with Eleanor's final lines, over Marco and Rosie.]

JOHNNY: *[With above.]*

One shot.
 Hold him in my arms.
 Look up to God.
 Move to the platform.
 Slowly.
 Begin the speech.
 Jesus, I need a drink,
 Jesus, I need a drink.

Draft

NOMINEE'S WIFE: *[With above.]*

Yellow's a good color
 For the East Room.
 Not too pale, not too canary.
 With white curtains.
 Apricot is perfect
 For the study—
 Something bright, happy and floral,
 With teal carpet.

NOMINEE'S CHILDREN: *[With above.]*

Smile at Daddy, smile at Daddy,
 Don't look away, smile at Daddy.

CHORUS: *[With above.]*

I dream of a better America.
 I dream of a better America.

[The scene resumes, all are suspended. The music pounds.]

NOMINEE:

Nor would I ask any American
 In defense of that dream
 That I would not gladly give myself—
 My life before...

[He stops to stifle a cough, takes a sip of water from a glass on the podium and puts it back down.]

My life before liberty.”

[A shot rings out. It strikes Eleanor in the heart. Another shot hits Johnny in the heart. They both collapse on top of each other. For a second, time is suspended. Then a third shot rings out. The stage erupts in pandemonium. The agents run on and are crushed by the mob. Cameras and TVs whirl around to try to capture the moment. A scaffold with bunting and giant photos of the candidates collapses as the convention orchestra plays manically to try to cover up the scene. Suddenly, all the lights go out so it's just television sets. Then all of the television sets go out, but the three in the office where Rosie and Marco sit clutching each other.]

MARCO:

I had to, Rosie.
 I had to turn their own weapons against them.
 The only way.
 I didn't know he'd take his own life.

ROSIE:

One bullet for Mom
 One for Stepdad...

MARCO:

And one for himself.

ROSIE/MARCO:

Poor Raymond/Poor kid.
[Cradling Marco.]
 I'm afraid, Ben.

MARCO:

I am too, Rosie.
 I'm afraid.

[The images on the television flicker before them, then go out.]

[The End.]