

DEAD GUY OPRY

A Comedy Opera in Three Acts

Words & Music by Ty Hager

Adapted from his novel  
"Diary of a Dead Guy: a country ghost story"

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**CAST OF CHARACTERS:**

JARED WHALEY - The rising country star/victim. In his 30s-40s, scruffy. When referred to as JARED'S GHOST, he's unseen by the other cast.

ANGEL WHALEY - The wife/widow/defendant. 20s-30s.

WILLARD BLEVINS - The overweight 12-year-old redneck kid channeling the Dead Guy.

MACK BLEVINS - Willard's Pa. Good ol' Redneck - loves NASCAR and beer and is also overweight. Late 30s or early 40s.

ELENORE BLEVINS - Willard's Ma. Late 30s - early 40s, overweight, demure.

HARVEY BOYD - He's the small-town radio newsman Dead Jared lures into getting the word out. 20s-30s.

MARSHALL LAUGHLIN - Angel's high-dollar Nashville defense lawyer. Kinda Fred Thompson/F. Lee Bailey-ish. Bordering on boisterous, a showman with a keen mind. 50s or 60s.

HAYWOOD BRICE - The Prosecutor. Serious-natured, stern, 40s-50s.

JUDGE WAY - No-nonsense and fiery, in her 40s-60s.

CHAD - Jared's friend, 30s-40s.

AMANDA - Chad's girlfriend. 20s-30s.

DGO QUARTET - A group of 4 back-up singers appearing throughout, consisting of three females with one male BASS SINGER. At various times, they'll be unseen by the characters onstage, but other times they'll interact with them.

NORVILLE - Mack's barber. 40s-60s.

VARIOUS BIT PLAYERS and EXTRAS of all ages, including 6 SCHOOLKIDS (portraying sixth graders).

**BAND:**

LEAD GUITAR

RHYTHM GUITAR/UTILITY/HARMONY

KEYBOARDS/HARMONY

BASS/HARMONY

DRUMS

**UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED, ALL DIALOGUE IS SUNG**

ACT IScene 1

*BAND plays the OVERTURE as OPENING CREDITS roll on a SCREEN UC.*

*As the overture concludes, we hear the faint sound of TYPING.*

*LIGHTS DIM as SPOT RISES on JARED DC.*

*TYPING FADES.*

JARED

Some folks believe that when you die, you go to Heaven

Some folks think it's better up there

*The spot widens until we see - in the shadows UL - an attractive young woman in her 20s-30s, long hair flowing from beneath the dark hood of a monastic-looking cowl. This is ANGEL.*

JARED

Some folks'll say that  
when you're dead  
you're dead and  
there's just no  
gettin' past the fact  
you ain't goin'  
nowhere

ANGEL

Some folks'll say that  
when you're dead  
you're dead and  
there's just no  
gettin' past the fact  
you ain't goin'  
nowhere

JARED (CONT'D)

I don't believe no belief beats another

JARED (CONT'D)

I don't think thinkin'  
'bout it's gonna pay.

I had my life and if I  
had my 'druthers,  
there'd be something  
more than nothing on  
its way...

ANGEL

I don't think thinkin'  
'bout it's gonna pay.

...if I had my  
'druthers there'd be  
something more than  
nothing on its way...

*Angel steps back into the shadows.*

JARED

`Cause nothin' makes a really long day...

*We see UR a coatrack, on which hangs a worn straw fedora. Beside the coatrack is an acoustic guitar on a stand. Jared picks up the guitar and straps it on, then puts on the hat.*

JARED (CONT.)

Well I don't care about nothin' minus nothin'

*Angel steps once again from the shadows, now holding a reaper's scythe.*

JARED (CONT.)

And the old Grim Reaper's quite the special friend

*Angel steps back into the shadows.*

JARED (CONT.)

And if I may be bold, if the story be told

I just don't wanna know how the story ends

*As Jared and Band play, we see displayed on the UC screen a series of IMAGES: a snapshot of a young Jared playing guitar, another snapshot of him as a teenager, now with longer hair, playing with some other teenagers, a video of an adult Jared performing onstage, then a newspaper clipping of an article entitled, "Tulsa Native Signs Record Deal."*

JARED (CONT.)

Charlie Brown's gonna kick the football

Broken hearts are maybe gonna mend

But deep down in your soul, where the light ain't gonna go

You don't really wanna know how the story ends

You don't really wanna know how the story ends

It's gonna end...

*LIGHTS UP FULL as the Band rocks out. Four additional Grim Reapers, hoods down, enter DL, dancing with sickles across the stage, stopping DR. They are the DGO QUARTET (DGOQ). We'll see them throughout.*

JARED (CONT'D) DGOQ  
 Well we kinda got the Ooooh oooh  
 Cliff notes, but  
 without the when or Ooooh oooh  
 how Ooooh oooh  
 We kinda try to Ooooh oooh  
 redefine just what the  
 law will allow

*Angel, now sans scythe, her hood pulled down,  
 enters DR and strides to Jared.*

JARED AND ANGEL DGOQ  
 We kinda got a show to Ooooh oooh  
 do before we take a  
 bow. Ooooh oooh

*Angel begins removing her cowl.*

JARED (CONT'D) DGOQ  
 The curtain's gonna Ooooh oooh Ooooh oooh  
 drop but it ain't  
 droppin' now.  
 I don't really wanna Aaah aaah aaah  
 know how the story  
 ends.

*Angel, now dressed provocatively in tight jeans  
 and a low-cut blouse, her hair in disarray,  
 tosses the cowl to the side as MULTIPLE CAST  
 MEMBERS - including WILLARD, clutching a laptop  
 to his chest - wander in DR, looking bewildered  
 and suspicious of their surroundings, yet still  
 intrigued by the show.*

JARED AND ANGEL DGOQ  
 You don't really wanna Aaah aaah aaah  
 know how the story  
 ends.

CAST DGOQ  
 We just don't wanna Aaah aaah aaah  
 know how the story  
 ends.

*Jared looks at them, his eyes finding Willard's.*

JARED

(to Willard)  
You don't really wanna know how the story ends.

*The boy averts his gaze.*

JARED (CONT'D)

Let's just pretend...

*ALL get jiggy with it. Well, Willard not so much. He wanders offstage DL.*

DGOQ

Ooooh LA LA LA

Ooooh LA LA LA

Ooooh LA LA LA

Ooooh

LIGHTS DOWN

Scene 2

*LIGHTS RISE on the BLEVINS LIVING ROOM: a recliner sits C, facing a box TV, from which we faintly hear RACING SOUNDS. Beside the recliner is a table cluttered with magazines, an ashtray, and a TV remote. On the other side of the table (RC) is a cushioned chair, where sits ELENORE, knitting and smoking.*

*A sofa sits LC, near the front door DL.*

*Along a back wall are two doors - one half-open, one closed - separated by a section with framed photos and a wall clock.*

*MACK stands FAR R, beside an open refrigerator.*

MACK

I like NASCAR  
(he retrieves a beer from the fridge)  
And beer

*He closes the fridge door and begins making the trek back to the recliner.*

MACK (CONT'D)

And the only exercise I get is gettin' it from

here...

*He arrives at the recliner.*

MACK (CONT'D)  
To here

*He plops down and pops the top on his beer.*

MACK (CONT'D)  
I like NASCAR

Them guys is great

*He sets his beer down, grabs the remote, and  
RAISES THE VOLUME on the TV.*

MACK (CONT'D)  
Go straight take a left take a left go straight  
Take a left take a left go straight  
Go straight take a left take a left go straight  
Take a left take a left go straight

*RACING SOUNDS FADE as Mack chugs his beer.*

ELENORE

(knitting)

I like knitting, it helps relax my mind

I ain't kidding, sometimes it's the only peace I find

Just a needle and some thread and cigarettes and  
magazines

And I'll be the happiest country girl you never see

*RACING SOUNDS RISE again as Mack finishes off  
the beer and crushes the can.*

MACK  
Go straight take a left take a left go straight  
Take a left take a left go straight  
Go straight take a left take a left go straight  
Take a left take a left go straight

*Mack rises and begins dancing back to the fridge.*

MACK

I like NASCAR and beer

I kinda like to lose myself in anything that ain't right here

*He opens the fridge, grabs another beer, shuts the door, and makes his way back toward his recliner. He stops behind Elenore.*

MACK (CONT'D)

Elenore, she cooks real good, but she ain't no fun bein' with

(motions to the closed door)

And our boy's less like a boy than like a little bitch

*Elenore looks up from her knitting.*

ELENORE

(spoken)

Shhh Mack! Willard's in there, he'll hear ya!

MACK

I can't believe he's ain't screechin' at one of his stupid video games

(spoken)

You know, like "Immoral Combat" or "Assassin's Cream" or somethin' like that.

ELENORE

But you bought him that computer 'cause he was drivin' you insane

MACK

(spoken)

Little shit kept wantin' to change the channel from NASCAR.

(cont'd)

I traded all that whinin' for "BOOMS" and "KA-POWS"

MACK (CONT'D)

But he sure is quiet now

ELENORE

But he sure is quiet now

*Mack sits back down, pops the top on his new beer, and gets back to RACE.*

MACK (CONT'D)

I like NASCAR, NASCAR likes me

Go straight take a left take a left go straight

Take a left take a left go...

(spoken)

Uh oh...gotta pee

*Mack rises and crosses to the half-open door. He enters and shuts it.*

*We hear PANTS UNBUCKLING, then PEEING. Mack GRUNTS and SIGHS and FARTS as the PEEING CONTINUES, WANES, STOPS. We hear the TOILET FLUSHING.*

*Mack exits the bathroom and looks quizzically at Willard's closed door as the sound of TYPING rises.*

*He puts his ear to door, still mystified as the typing continues.*

MACK (CONT'D)

I know I've heard that sound before

Like squirrels in the attic

*He looks up and shakes his head.*

MACK (CONT'D)

But that can't be it

*He listens more intently, his ear to the door, his face reflecting his befuddlement.*

MACK (CONT'D)

(spoken)

Wait a minute...is that...?

Nah...

*He puts his ear to the door again. His eyes widen.*

MACK (CONT'D)

(spoken)

I'll be damned!

*He crosses toward Elenore as LIGHTS UP on DGOQ*







*sit at tables bordering the dance floor in front of the still-dark club STAGE.*

*DRC, we see CHAD and AMANDA standing behind a merch table, each wearing a JARED WHALEY t-shirt, selling CDs and t-shirts to more PATRONS.*

*Conversation dies down and scattered APPLAUSE is heard as STAGE LIGHTS RISE on Jared and Band.*

*A banner reading ORIGINALITY RECORDS PRESENTS JARED WHALEY hangs behind them.*

*An MC takes the stage.*

MC

Ladies and Gentlemen...Nashville Stage is proud to present Originality Records Recording Artist, Jared Whaley!!

*The audience APPLAUDS WILDLY as the MC exits the stage.*

JARED

Come with me to a time, things were dandy and fine  
And every sin we sinned was forgiven  
Man those were the days, just relaxin' in the rays  
Lookin' back, it sure seemed like Heaven

*Jared sways a bit. He takes a long pull from a beer, sets it down.*

WOMAN FROM CROWD

(spoken)

*We love you Jared!*

*Shouts and applause from the CROWD as the Band kicks in.*

JARED

Now that was livin'  
Now that was livin'  
Now that was livin'  
Now that was livin'

BAND (HARMONY)

That was livin'  
That was livin'  
That was livin'  
That was livin'

*Several couples move onto the dance floor.*

JARED (CONT'D)

Sowin' wild seeds with an imaginary need...

JARED (CONT'D)

Now that was livin'

BAND (HARMONY)

That was livin'

Now that was livin'

That was livin'

JARED (CONT'D)

Playin' with matches just 'cause I like the heat...

JARED (CONT'D)

Now that was livin'

BAND (HARMONY)

That was livin'

Now that was livin'

That was livin'

JARED (CONT'D)

Walkin' on a razor  
just 'cause I like to  
bleed. Drinkin' mind  
erasers till I turned  
into a dream...

Walkin' on a razor  
just 'cause you like  
to bleed. Drinkin'  
mind erasers till you  
turned into a dream...

JARED (CONT'D)

Some may say I missed it, but I didn't...'cause I was  
livin'...

*During the LEAD BREAK, the whole damn joint gets  
jiggy with it.*

JARED (CONT'D)

Walkin' on a razor  
just 'cause I like to  
bleed. Drinkin' mind  
erasers till I turned  
into a dream...

BAND (HARMONY)

Walkin' on a razor  
just 'cause you like  
to bleed. Drinkin'  
mind erasers till you  
turned into a dream...

JARED (CONT'D)

Some may say I missed it, but I didn't...

JARED (CONT'D)

'Cause I was livin'...

BAND (HARMONY)

That was livin'

I was livin'

That was livin'

That was livin'

That was livin'

Now that was livin'

That was livin'

Man that was livin'

BAND

Doo do do do do do do da do

Doo do do do do do doo

*The DGOQ enters DR and joins in with the jigginess.*

JARED

That was livin'

That was livin'

BAND/DGOQ

Doo do do do do do do do  
da do

Doo do do do do doo

JARED (CONT'D)

That was livin'.

*The song ends to wild APPLAUSE. As the applause dies down, Jared steps off the stage. ALL FREEZE IN PLACE as he and the DGOQ walk through the crowd.*

JARED (CONT'D)

Sometimes all you got are the memories

Sometimes reminiscin' is a blast

*He crosses to the bar, Patrons (now including Chad and Amanda) frozen mid-revelry, the BARTENDER frozen mid-serving.*

JARED (CONT'D)

Sometimes there's that moment that changed everything

DGOQ

Aaah aaah aaah

JARED (CONT'D)

Questions that you wish you'd never asked...

*Jared taps the shoulder of a FEMALE PATRON at the bar, facing away.*

*All UNFREEZE as the woman turns toward him.*

*It's Angel. Her eyes widen. She smiles.*

JARED (CONT'D)

(spoken)  
Hey, what's your name?

ANGEL

(spoken)  
My name's Angel.

*Jared laughs.*

ANGEL (CONT'D)

(spoken laughingly)  
What??

JARED

Angel? That's freakin' perfect!

ANGEL

(spoken)  
Perfect?

JARED

Well, I'm guessin' that it's meant to be ironic

ANGEL

'Cause I like drinkin' and smokin' and lovin' all night too?

*Jared appears pleasantly shocked.*

JARED

Good God in heaven, I think you'll do

*Angel opens her purse and retrieves two CDs and a Sharpie.*

ANGEL

I've got both your CDs  
(spoken)  
Will you sign 'em?

JARED

I'll sign anything that you want me to

*He takes the CDs and Sharpie and begins autographing.*

ANGEL

I love your music and your style, but what really makes me smile is your first tattoo

*Jared hands the CDs back to Angel.*

PATRON 1

(spoken)  
His first tattoo?

PATRON 2

(spoken)  
His first tattoo?

PATRON 3

(spoken)  
His first tattoo?

ANGEL

(spoken)  
It's on his first CD...

*She holds up the back of a CD. On a SCREEN UC, we see the back of Jared's CD, featuring an image of an arm with a tattoo that reads, in ornate calligraphy: "MY FIRST TATTOO."*

*Jared grins and bares his arm for the onlookers.*

PATRON 1

(spoken)  
It says "My First Tattoo"...

PATRON 3

(spoken)  
In fancy letterin' like that...

PATRON 2

(spoken)  
Oh that's just priceless!

JARED

My first tattoo

PATRONS

His first tattoo!

PATRON 3

In fancy letterin' like that

JARED

My first tattoo

PATRONS

His first tattoo!

JARED

It's a weird one

ANGEL

I've got one too

PATRON1

She's got one too!

PATRON 3

(spoken)  
She's got one too?

PATRON 2

(spoken)  
Imagine that!

ANGEL

I've got one too

PATRONS

She's got one too

She's got one too

She's got one too

ANGEL

(spoken)  
But it's a titty tat.

*From behind, we see Angel opening her top.*

*The Patrons GASP.*

MALE PATRONS

Titty tat

PATRON 1

(spoken)  
Oh look! It says "My First Tattoo" too!

MALE PATRONS

She gotta titty tat

PATRON 3

(spoken)  
In fancy letterin' like that!

MALE PATRONS

Titty tat

PATRON 2

(spoken)  
That's priceless!

MALE PATRONS

She gotta titty tat

JARED

Well, she's easy on the eyes, and she just showed me  
her breasts

MALE PATRONS

Titty tat

She gotta titty tat

ANGEL

Maybe later on, I'll show you the rest

MALE PATRONS

Not just her titty tat

She gotta titty tat

JARED AND ANGEL

Well loneliness is desperate

And desperation messes with your mind

MALE PATRONS

Titty tat

She gotta titty tat

JARED AND ANGEL

You know you can't resist it

Fate finds its own place and time

MALE PATRONS

Titty tat

*A drunk PATRON 4 lifts his head up from the bar.*

PATRON 4

(like a soused Tweety Bird)  
I tink I taw a titty tat

MALE PATRONS

Titty tat

She gotta titty tat

She gotta titty tat!

*All except Jared FREEZE.*

JARED

Sometimes all you got are the memories

*He crosses toward the stage.*

JARED (CONT'D)

I know things now I wish that I'd known then

*He pulls a cable from his guitar, then puts the guitar in its case.*

*Angel now sits alone at a table near the stage.*

ANGEL

When you're ready to go

I'm here waiting, you know

*Jared nods at her and smiles. He looks around, perplexed, then annoyed, then downright pissed off.*

JARED

(spoken)

GodDAMN it!

*All UNFREEZE and look his way.*

ANGEL

(spoken)

Jared, what is it?

JARED

I can't believe I fuckin' lost my fuckin' capo again!

ANGEL

(spoken)

I don't know what that is...

LIGHTS DOWN

Scene 4

*LIGHTS UP DC on a barber's chair, in which Mack sits, wearing a barber's cape, as NORVILLE*

*prepares to give him a trim. Willard sits in a waiting chair opposite, TYPING, staring into space.*

*Four waiting chairs beside Willard are occupied by the DGOQ, their faces hidden by four open MAGAZINES.*

NORVILLE

(spoken)  
Just the usual trim today, Mack?

MACK

(spoken)  
Whatever it is you always do there, Norville.

NORVILLE

(spoken)  
Gotcha.

MACK

(spoken)  
Just do that.

*Mack looks at Willard.*

MACK (CONT'D)

(spoken)  
Hey boy, if you wanna keep that typin' down to a dull roar, that'd be nice.

*Willard is oblivious.*

*Norville starts giving Mack a trim, clipping with the scissors and brushing the hair off throughout.*

NORVILLE

Hey Mack, your boy's sure actin' goofy  
Like some kind of un-dead court stenographer

MACK

Fuck a bird, Norville, this shit's gettin' spooky  
And what the hell's a court stenographer?

NORVILLE

It's just weird that's all

BOTH

It's just weird that's all

NORVILLE

Hey Mack, have ya seen just what he's writin'?

It could all be just gobbledy-gook

MACK

He's huggin' the damn thing when he's not typin'

Slams the fucker shut when I try to look

NORVILLE

It's just weird that's all

BOTH

It's just weird that's all

*The DGOQ, who we now see are dressed as a  
barbershop quartet, put down their magazines and  
rise.*

NORVILLE (CONT'D)

Maybe it's just a  
phase, like zits or  
masturbation

DGOQ

Aaah aaah

MACK

(spoken)

What?

MACK (CONT'D)

He's yellin' shit out  
in a weird voice  
though

Aaah aaah

NORVILLE

Aw hell, you didn't  
tell me that.  
Definitely Satan

Aaah aaah

MACK

Norville, what the  
fuck's a capo?

Ooooh ooooh

NORVILLE

(spoken)

You mean like a mafia thing?

MACK  
It's just weird, that's all

MACK AND NORVILLE  
It's just weird, that's all

DGOQ  
(whispering)  
It's just weird that's all

MACK AND NORVILLE	DGOQ (CONT'D)
It's just weird, that's all	It's just weird that's all

*Willard, still trance-like, suddenly slams his  
laptop shut.*

WILLARD/JARED (O.S.)  
Almost every dime I get from that music shit's  
recoupable...

*Norville GASPS. Mack shrugs.*

MACK  
(spoken)  
See there Norville? That's what I'm dealin' with.

NORVILLE  
(spoken)  
Dang buddy, that's weird.

LIGHTS DOWN

Scene 5

*Jared, wearing a worn bathrobe over pajama pants  
and a tee shirt, sits at a table in a small  
KITCHEN/DINING AREA, holding his guitar on his  
lap and a pen in his hand. On the table, we see  
Jared's open notebook.*

*Angel sits across the table in her nightgown, a  
wooden case in front of her. The open lid of the  
case blocks our view of what she's doing.*

JARED  
Goddamn Angel, a vacation's just not doable!  
  
Almost every dime I get from that music shit's  
recoupable!

*Angel looks up from her task.*

ANGEL

But your CD's climbin' up the charts  
You're on the radio

JARED

But what the record label spent gettin' me there was  
just a loan

*He places the guitar on a stand near his chair  
and rises.*

JARED (CONT'D)

If ya don't know much about the music biz  
I'm gonna help you out, I'm gonna clue you in  
It's recoupable  
Recoupable

*Angel rolls her eyes in his direction, then  
resumes her task.*

JARED (CONT'D)

All the money they spend on your great big hit  
Comes off the top, you don't get shit 'til they  
recoup it all  
Recoupable

*Angel stops what she's doing and glares at  
Jared.*

ANGEL

So you're damn near rich and famous  
But not so much with the rich  
This ain't what I expected, and I sure can be a  
bitch...

*As Angel holds out the word "bitch," we now see  
that she's been cleaning a revolver.*

JARED

(spoken)  
Angel...Angel!

*Angel resumes cleaning the gun.*

JARED (CONT'D)

(spoken)

We've been married six months, and every time we fight, you always start cleaning your damn gun.

ANGEL

(spoken)

Daddy says always keep it clean. You never know when you might need it.

JARED

(spoken)

Well it makes me nervous.

*Angel runs a small BRUSH through a chamber of the open cylinder, then blows.*

ANGEL

(spoken)

Tough titty.

JARED

If ya don't know much about the music biz

All the promises, all the love they give is recoupable

Damned recoupable

*Angel slams down the gun and brush and rises, furiously waving a finger at Jared, backing him toward his chair.*

ANGEL

Don't whine so much about your heavy load

I know what you do when you're on the road

THAT'S recoupable

*Jared sits.*

ANGEL (CONT'D)

Recoupable

*She walks back to her chair.*

JARED

(once again rising)  
 Angel, what happened? We were so meant to be  
 You were love's embodiment, my reason to breathe

ANGEL

Jared, I'm sorry, I just had this fantasy  
 I didn't expect so many hurdles

JARED

Won't you come with me tonight to the show  
 At the Thirsty Turtle?

ANGEL

(spoken)  
 That'd be nice.

*Angel sits and begins putting away the gun and  
 cleaning supplies.*

JARED

If you don't know much about the music biz  
 Not a dime I get from playin' gigs is recoupable  
 So they don't get it all

*Angel rises and joins Jared.*

ANGEL

I won't worry 'bout the state we're in  
 I won't shed a tear, 'cause I got him  
 Someday we'll have it all  
 Misery's recoupable.

JARED

Soon we'll play arenas  
 and the money'll roll  
 in

ANGEL

Soon he'll play arenas  
 and the money'll roll  
 in

JARED

And I'll be the man you dared to dream of

ANGEL

Jared, won't you play that song you wrote for me back

when?

JARED

(spoken)  
"Speechless"?

*Angel smiles and nods.*

JARED (CONT'D)

Anything for you love

*LIGHTS DIM as Jared sits back down and picks up his guitar. Angel looks up and around, reacting to the dimming lights, then shrugs and sits.*

*A BLUE LIGHT shines on Jared as he sings.*

JARED

I could write a song, clean as a summer breeze  
Soft as a baby's cheek, fresh as morning dew  
And I could write a song, about your Angel smile  
How you're the girl that I just can't believe is true  
But I just write the words, the music's you  
And words don't even have a clue  
'Bout how you make me feel  
I might as well be speechless

*Filtered LIGHTS RISE just enough to see the Band playing in the shadows behind Jared.*

*Angel leans in her chair, noticing them.*

JARED (CONT'D)

And I could write a song maybe make you cry  
With little thoughts that I just conjure into view  
And I could write a song about a lover's wish  
A song might get a kiss, might write about that too  
But I just write the words, the music's you  
And words don't even have a clue

'Bout how you make me feel  
I might as well be speechless

*LIGHTS UP as Jared and Angel both rise.*

JARED	ANGEL
There's a part of my heart always been achin'	There's a part of my heart always been achin'

*SPOT on the DGOQ as they enter DL.*

DGOQ  
Oooh oooh oooh

JARED  
Empty, waitin'

JARED (CONT'D)	ANGEL
I think for you	I think for you

JARED	
And I just die when I look into your eyes	And I just die when I look into your eyes

JARED	DGOQ
And see what justice words could never do	Oooh oooh

*LIGHTS DOWN on DGOQ.*

JARED (CONT'D)  
But I just write the words, the music's you  
And words don't even have a clue  
'Bout how you make me feel  
I might as well be speechless

ANGEL  
'Bout how you make me feel  
Might as well be speechless

JARED	ANGEL (CONT'D)
Might as well be speechless	Might as well be speechless

LIGHTS DOWN

Scene 6

*LIGHTS UP on Mack and Elenore, seated with Willard at the dining table. Willard's laptop is open, and he has that distant look on his face.*

WILLARD/JARED (O.S.)  
Might as well be speechless...

*Mack and Elenore are dumbfounded.*

MACK  
(spoken)  
Fuck a bird!

ELENORE  
(spoken)  
Shut the front door!

*Willard breaks from his trance and slams the laptop shut. He holds his plate toward his mother.*

WILLARD  
(spoken)  
More taters please.

*Elenore starts dishing potatoes onto his plate.*

MACK  
Goddammit Willard, you ain't sung no songs before

WILLARD  
I don't know what you're talkin' `bout  
(to Elenore)  
Please, could I have more?

ELENORE  
He's an only child, so I can't say for sure

ELENORE AND MACK  
But is this something normally endured?

MACK  
(spoken)  
Norville says it might be just like zits or masturbation.

ELENORE  
(spoken)  
What?

MACK

(spoken)  
That's what I said.

WILLARD

(spoken)  
Daddy, what's masturbation?

*Mack and Elenore exchange an uncomfortable look.*

MACK

Goddamn it Willard, you're gettin' weirder every day

*He picks up a remote beside him on the table,  
points it at an O.S. TV. We hear racing.*

MACK (CONT'D)

Go straight take a left take a left go straight

Take a left take a left go straight

MACK AND ELENORE

Go straight take a left take a left go straight

Take a left take a left go straight

WILLARD

Guess what? I'm gonna be on the radio

*Mack sighs and mutes the TV.*

MACK

(spoken)  
They got a freak show?

ELENORE

(spoken)  
Shhh Mack, be nice!

WILLARD

It's a field trip Monday morning

We might get to say hello

ELENORE

Honey, that's great

I can't wait to hear your voice

MACK

I'd use the non-cussin' one if you've got a choice...

*As Mack holds out the last note, Elenore and Willard look at him like he's losing it.*

MACK (CONT'D)  
(spoken)  
Just sayin'.

*Elenore rises and picks up her plate.*

ELENORE  
I seen that newsman from the radio at the courthouse  
Just the other day  
*She crosses L and exits.*

MACK  
(spoken)  
That's right, they got that big murder trial  
startin', don't they?  
(cont'd)  
They shut down the Thirsty Turtle  
I guess that singer had some sorta name

*Elenore returns to the table and sits down.*

ELENORE  
(spoken)  
I think it was "Jason" or "Jerry" or somethin'...they  
say his wife shot him right in the head!

*JARED'S GHOST, slinging his guitar, enters DR  
and crosses to Willard.*

*Willard and Jared's Ghost roll their eyes in  
frustration as Willard rises from his seat.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST  
Jared Whaley's who you're talking about  
And if you get me a thumb drive  
I'll get this shit out there!

*Mack and Elenore are, once again, dumbfounded.*

MACK  
(spoken)  
Fuck a bird!

ELENORE

(spoken)  
I did not see that coming.

MACK

(spoken)  
What the fuck's a thumb drive?

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

(spoken)  
Dude, it's that little doodad that goes in your  
computer...looks like a thumb.

MACK

(spoken)  
Boy, that is some freaky, nerdy shit there.

ELENORE

(spoken)  
Shut the front door!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

Well, I ain't done too much talkin'

Since I got shot in the noggin'

But I really got a lot to say

I gotta lotta aggravation

At this fuckin' situation

At the cards that I've been dealt to play

I'm a fat kid in a redneck house

I'm a fat kid in a redneck house

MACK

(spoken)  
You're just big-boned, like me and your mama.

ELENORE

(spoken)  
He's just husky.

MACK

(spoken)  
Elenore, you see what's goin' on here, don't ya?

ELENORE

(spoken)  
Shut the front door!

MACK

(rising from his seat)  
Well I really ain't no genius  
But ya got me kinda thinkin'  
Things are finally kinda makin' sense  
Ya started actin' creepy  
Like some zombie on the TV  
'Bout the time that feller met his end  
(to audience)  
That country singer done possessed my boy!

*Elenore rises from her seat. She and Mack look at one another.*

MACK (CONT'D)

That country singer  
done possessed our  
boy!

ELENORE

That country singer  
done possessed our  
boy!

*The DGOQ enters DR.*

DGOQ

Oooh oooh oooh  
Oooh oooh oooh  
Oooh oooh oooh  
Oooh oooh oooh

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

I guess that maybe in  
about a little while,  
I'll have forever

'Til then I got more  
important things i  
gotta do

I gotta get that story  
out there, 'cause I'm  
all about the truth

DGOQ

Oooh oooh oooh  
Oooh oooh oooh  
Oooh oooh oooh  
Oooh oooh oooh

Aaaah aaaah aaaah  
aaaah

Gonna use the tools  
I'm given, gonna be a  
fat kid on the news!

Aaaah aaaah  
Fat kid on the news!

MACK

That country singer  
done possessed my boy.

Oooh oooh oooh...

MACK AND ELENORE

That country singer  
done possessed our  
boy!

Oooh oooh oooh

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

This country singer  
done possessed your  
boy!

Oooh oooh oooh

MACK

What the fuck's a capo?

*LIGHTS DOWN on the DGOQ as the Blevins FREEZE in  
place.*

JARED'S GHOST

I don't really wanna know how the story ends  
(to the Blevins)  
You don't really wanna know how the story ends

*The Blevins unfreeze.*

JARED'S GHOST

We don't really wanna  
know how the story  
ends

MACK AND ELENORE

We don't really wanna  
know how the story  
ends

*Willard snaps out of his trance and looks at his  
parents quizzically.*

WILLARD

(spoken)  
Someone's tellin' a story? Cool!

JARED'S GHOST

Let's just pretend

LIGHTS DOWN

ACT IIScene 1

*LIGHTS UP DR on the DGOQ, standing around an old-timey microphone with a WTOR mic flag.*

DGOQ

Get rid of your blues, it's time for the news

With Harvey Boyd

On W-T-O-R!

*LIGHTS DOWN on DGOQ as LIGHTS UP UC on HARVEY BOYD, dressed in a suit and tie. He sits typing on his laptop behind a U-shaped console, on which also sits the mixing board, mic, and two computer monitors.*

*He stops typing and quickly puts on a set of headphones. A neon ON THE AIR light flashes on behind him.*

HARVEY

Murder! That's what's on everybody's mind!

Murder! Ratings have never been so high!

A trial - better than a TV show!

And here's the things you need to know...

*LIGHTS UP again on the DGOQ.*

DGOQ

We got the biggest baddest Nashville lawyer money allows

'Cause Angel Whaley's daddy went and sold his house

If there's a TV camera, you know Laughlin's around

Proclaiming she didn't do it!

*LIGHTS UP DL on LAUGHLIN, standing behind a podium in front of a small gaggle of REPORTERS.*

LAUGHLIN

The prosecution thinks they got an easy road

What with the fingerprints, ballistics, and the so  
and so

But just a tiny seed of doubt is all I need to grow

And I'm damn sure gonna sow it!

(spoken)

We've got DNA evidence that there was another woman  
in that dressing room! Not a single piece of the  
State's evidence is overwhelming enough to diminish  
the power of that single fact!

*LIGHTS DOWN on Laughlin.*

HARVEY

(spoken)

Wilson County District Attorney Haywood Brice,  
however, sees things quite differently...

*LIGHTS UP again DL. This time it's HAYWOOD BRICE  
behind the podium.*

BRICE

Guilty! Plain as the nose on your face!

She did it! The gun she left there makes our case

We'll prove it! The jury won't be able to resist!

BRICE (CONT'D)

We'll be right back  
with more after this

HARVEY AND DGOQ

We'll be right back  
with more after this

*LIGHTS DOWN for a beat.*

*SPOT on Harvey rising from his seat.*

HARVEY (CONT'D)

I'm a man of many hats

They call me the voice of Wilson County

*He grabs a small stack of CDS and walks to a CD  
cabinet along the back wall.*

HARVEY (CONT'D)

Nothing wrong with that

I don't mind playing songs and writing ads

*He begins filing away the CDs, then stops.*

HARVEY (CONT'D)

But there's a yearning that I have

Not a choice, but a voice deep down inside me

*He makes an open spot on one of the rows of CDs and just shoves the remaining CDs into it.*

HARVEY (CONT'D)

That really doesn't like the place I'm at

And thinks this murder trial might be my chance

To show the whole world I'm the man I was meant to be

*LIGHTS UP FULL as a TV PRODUCTION CREW - including members of the DGOQ - converges and hurriedly begins preparing for a news broadcast, wheeling out an anchor desk and chair.*

HARVEY (CONT'D)

I don't wanna be the country star

Gets shot in the head at a redneck bar

But I damn sure wanna be the guy who spills it

*Two Production Assistants approach - one holding a production clipboard, the other with a comb and mirror. While the former shows Harvey something on the clipboard, the latter begins touching up his hair.*

HARVEY (CONT'D)

And I don't wanna be that girl in black

Either devastated or just an actress

*PA 2 hands Harvey the mirror. Harvey examines his hair and nods approvingly.*

HARVEY (CONT'D)

I just wanna be the guy from whom you heard it

*He hands the mirror back and both PAs hurry off.*

HARVEY (CONT'D)

All in all I'd rather

*CREW MEMBERS 1 and 2 cross in front of the desk, holding a large old-timey TV frame, complete*

*with rabbit ears affixed to the top. They stop in front of Harvey, framing him for the audience.*

HARVEY (CONT'D)  
Fuckin' be Dan Rather!

*He rises and steps around the desk. The Crew Members holding the TV frame adjust accordingly as they follow his moves.*

HARVEY (CONT'D)  
I wanna be the guy you turn to  
  
When your world's in disarray  
  
I want my face in your living room

*Harvey turns to where CREW MEMBER 3 now holds up a smaller TV frame. Harvey's face now fills it.*

HARVEY (CONT'D)  
Most every single day.

CREW  
All in all, he'd rather fuckin' be Dan Rather!

HARVEY  
I wanna be the guys who asks  
  
The questions no one dares to ask

CREW  
He wants to tell you there were no survivors  
  
In the latest airline crash

*Harvey leaps atop the desk. As Crew Members 1 and 2 rush OS with the TV frame, the remaining Crew gathers around the desk below Harvey, looking up.*

HARVEY  
All in all, I'd rather  
  
Fuckin' be Dan Rather

*Crew Members 1 and 2 return carrying a huge TV frame, maneuvering it to capture the entire scene.*

CREW

All in all, he'd rather

Fuckin' be Dan Rather!

*The studio door opens and the RECEPTIONIST steps in. Harvey leaps down from the desk.*

*LIGHTS DS DIM as the TV CREW/DGOQ disperse.*

RECEPTIONIST

Harvey, I don't mean to burst your bubble at all

But your 9 o'clock's arrived, they're waiting in the hall

*The Receptionist steps over to a set of blinds covering a window by the door and opens them. Through the window, a group of SCHOOLKIDS is gathered.*

SCHOOLKIDS

All in all, we'd rather

Not listen to you blather!

*Harvey crosses back to the console.*

HARVEY

(sighing, frustrated)

As if there's not enough for me to do

There's a goddamn field trip comin' through

I really just wanna do the news in peace

*Sitting down behind the console, he motions to the Receptionist to let the Schoolkids into the studio.*

*Their TEACHER ushers them in and we see Willard, looking disinterested, clutching his laptop.*

HARVEY (CONT'D)

All in all, I'd rather

(glancing at the Schoolkids)

Freakin' be Dan Rather!

*The Schoolkids, except for Willard, chime in.*

SCHOOLKIDS

All in all, we'd rather

You fucking were Dan Rather!

TEACHER

(spoken)

Oh my God! Children!

SCHOOLKID 1

(spoken)

Who's Dan Rather?

HARVEY

(putting on his headphones)

I've never been so happy to be back

*He quickly holds up a finger, indicating the need for silence.*

*The ON THE AIR light flashes back on.*

HARVEY (CONT'D)

The trial just wrapped up its second day

An expert testified of DNA

The jury was shocked by what they heard next

HARVEY (CONT'D)

The gunshot closely  
followed oral sex!

DGOQ

The gunshot closely  
followed oral sex!

*An audible GASP from the Schoolkids.*

TEACHER

(spoken sarcastically under her breath)

Oh, great...

*LIGHTS UP DL on the MEDICAL EXAMINER, sitting in the witness chair.*

MEDICAL EXAMINER

The saliva on his penis was a different strain

Than the defendant's or his own - that would be real strange

His pants around his ankles and his splattered brains

Made one hell of a crime scene!

SCHOOLKID 2

(spoken)  
What's oral sex?

TEACHER

(spoken, as if expecting it)  
Mmm hmm.

*Harvey smiles uncomfortably at the Teacher, then at the Medical Examiner, who sits frozen, like a deer in headlights.*

*Laughlin steps out of the shadows DL.*

LAUGHLIN

But none of the physical evidence shows  
That the same mystery woman didn't also blow  
The head off the victim, maybe in the throes  
Of post-oral-coital psychopathy?

*The Medical Examiner now seems puzzled and caught off-guard.*

MEDICAL EXAMINER

(spoken)  
Ummm....no...I mean...did you just make that up?

*LIGHTS DOWN DL.*

HARVEY

Laughlin, on cross examination  
Sowing

HARVEY (CONT'D)

Those seeds of doubt  
he finds so fun!

The prosecution wraps  
up its case later this  
week, will we hear the  
defendant speak?

DGOQ

Those seeds of doubt  
he finds so fun!

The prosecution wraps  
up its case later this  
week...

Hear the defendant  
speak?

DGOQ

We've got your farm report up next!

*The ON THE AIR light once again goes off.*

*Harvey removes his headphones and walks around the console to address the Schoolkids.*

HARVEY

Okay, kids, I got just a few minutes

Won't you gather round and ask your questions?

I can tell you 'bout my job and everything that goes with it

Just ask me...

SCHOOLKID 3

*(raising his hand)*

Why would that guy have saliva on his penis?

SCHOOLKID 4

*(spoken)*

What's post-oral-coital psychopathy?

*Harvey's surprised and at a loss for words.*

*Willard, still shyly clutching his laptop, indicates Harvey's open laptop on the console.*

WILLARD

What do you do with your gizmo there?

Please tell me

*The other Schoolkids TITTER.*

SCHOOLKID 1

*(spoken laughingly)*

Willard's a freak.

SCHOOLKID 2

*(spoken)*

What's oral sex?

*Harvey looks uncomfortable and dodges the last question.*

HARVEY

Well, gosh, it seems

I've got time for one more question  
*(looking at Willard)*

That's the laptop I use to write the news  
 What's yours for, if you don't mind me askin'?

WILLARD

(shrugging)  
 Beats me

*The other Schoolkids TITTER again.*

SCHOOLKID 1

(spoken laughingly)  
 Willard's a freak.

SCHOOLKID 2

(spoken)  
 WHAT'S ORAL SEX?!!

*Harvey looks at the Teacher, who shrugs with a  
 "What did you expect?" look.*

HARVEY

(to the Schoolkids)  
 Let's go to the offices upstairs

Meet the others - you're just so cute I wanna share!

TEACHER

C'mon kids - Mr. Boyd knows where to go

Let's form a line and keep your voices low

*Harvey leads the Teacher and Schoolkids through  
 the studio door and past the open blinds.*

HARVEY

All in all, I'd rather

Fuckin' be Dan Rather!

SCHOOLKIDS

All in all, we'd rather

Be texting one another!

*As the LIGHTS DIM, Willard rises from his hiding  
 place behind the radio console. He looks scared  
 and confused.*

WILLARD

I don't really know what I'm doin' here...



Scene 2

*SPOT on Drummer C, then LIGHTS UP on the full Band rocking out in front of a screen, on which we see clock hands moving backwards.*

*LIGHTS UP DCL on Jared and the DGOQ.*

JARED

I gotta disenchant mirror hangin' on the wall and

JARED (CONT'D)

I can only see behind  
me

DGOQ

I can only see behind  
me

JARED (CONT'D)

But that don't hardly bother me at all

JARED (CONT'D)

'Cause I know that it  
won't blind me

DGOQ

'Cause I know that it  
won't blind me

And it's fun to  
sightsee

*LIGHTS DOWN on Jared and the DGOQ as the Band concludes the segment.*

*FULL LIGHTS UP as the screen is rolled away, revealing the THIRSTY TURTLE GREEN ROOM, so designated by a neon sign on the wall next to a small, dingy-curtained window.*

*In front of the window, Angel sits at a restaurant booth seat and table, around which Chad, Amanda, and the DGOQ sit in scattered chairs. All are laughing and partying, save for Angel, who sits looking slightly annoyed, arms folded.*

*Just in front of the group stands Jared, sans guitar, addressing the audience.*

JARED

We got a little show to do

It's gonna be a blast!

(sliding into the seat beside Angel)

But we've got an hour or two

Amanda's got the grass

*Amanda smiles and holds up a bag of weed.*

CHAD

It's just like back in college

Still barely gettin' by

JARED

But we're high, high, high, high, high, high, high

ALL

High, high, high, high, high, high, high!

*Amanda tosses Jared the bag of weed.*

JARED

(spoken)

Hey, Amanda, come sit on my lap. We'll talk about the first thing that comes up.

*Jared begins loading a bong as Angel glares.*

AMANDA

(spoken, coyly laughing)

Oh, Jared, you're so naughty!

CHAD

It's funny, after all these years

Ole Jared hasn't changed

(indicating Amanda)

He'd prob'ly do my woman here

If it could be arranged

AMANDA

(spoken, scoffing)

Oh Chad!

DGOQ (BASS)

It seems he's getting bolder

DGOQ (F)

Maybe Angel doesn't mind

ANGEL

(spoken, furious)

Oh, she minds!

*Angel scoots out of the booth seat and rises, turning her back on Jared.*

JARED

(spoken consolingly)  
Aw honey, you know I don't mean no harm.

AMANDA

(spoken, to Angel)  
It's just an innocent flirtation.

ANGEL

(spoken, angrily)  
Slut!

*Jared laughingly feigns shock as he finishes loading the bowl.*

JARED

Man, I'm high, high, high, high, high, high, high, high  
*He lights up the bowl.*

ALL BUT ANGEL

(laughing and carrying on)  
High, high, high, high, high, high, high, high!

*LIGHTS DOWN, then SPOT on Angel DCL.*

ANGEL

Maybe if I changed some things  
Made him feel more like a king  
Maybe then he'd notice me  
And not the other ones

*SPOT DOWN on Angel, then UP on Amanda DCR.*

AMANDA

Maybe I can make him smile  
Only for a little while  
He's a crazy grownup trouble child  
Pretending misery's fun

*SPOT on Angel. The spotlights nearly converge.*

ANGEL AND AMANDA

Ooh ooh

What's a lonely girl to do?

Ooh ooh

Is there any getting through?

ANGEL

Maybe he's just tired of me

A million fish, a thousand seas

AMANDA

Maybe love's not all it's cracked up to be

ANGEL AND AMANDA

Maybe I'm the cracked up one

Ooh ooh

What's a lonely girl to do?

Ooh ooh

How do we make it through?

*LIGHTS RISE on Jared and the Band.*

*Angel rolls her eyes. Amanda seems tickled.*

JARED

Hello there, I'm here with a suggestion

A simple answer to a complex question

ANGEL

(spoken, annoyed)

What?

AMANDA

(spoken, giggling)

What is it, Jared?

JARED

Hey girls, listen hard

If you wanna sure way  
to your man's heart

BAND (HARMONY)

Hey girls, listen hard

If you wanna sure way  
to your man's heart

Don't be a prude,  
don't be a snob

Don't be a prude,  
don't be a snob.

Do the pecker bob!

Do the pecker bob!

AMANDA

(spoken, laughing)

Jared!

ANGEL

(spoken, not amused)

What's wrong with you?

JARED

It's been around, they  
say it's true, since  
the caveman found out  
that the lips work too

If you wanna make your  
man smile a lot

Do the pecker bob!

BAND (HARMONY)

It's been around, they  
say it's true, since  
the caveman found out  
that the lips work too

If you wanna make your  
man smile a lot

Do the pecker bob!

*During the LEAD BREAK, as Jared and the Band  
rock out and Amanda and the DGOQ joyfully dance,  
Angel stands to the side, her arms crossed,  
scowling.*

DGOQ

Do it. Do it. Do it.  
Aaaah

Do it. Do it. Do it.  
Aaaah

JARED

Well, they do it in  
the North and they do  
it in the South

Lonely cowboys used to  
get it from the  
horse's mouth

You can do it in the  
kitchen, you can do it  
in the yard

BAND (CONT'D)

Do it. Do it. Do it.  
Aaaah

Do it. Do it. Do it.  
Aaaah

BAND/DGOQ

Do it. Do it. Do it.  
Aaaah

Do it. Do it. Do it.  
Aaaah

Do it. Do it. Do it.  
Aaaah

Do it. Do it. Do it.  
Aaaah

It's pretty easy, but  
you can make it hard

Do it. Do it. Do it.  
Aaaah

You can do it with  
your fingers, you can  
do it with your toes,  
but you'll get the  
best results right  
under your nose!

Do it. Do it. Do it.  
Aaaah

Do it. Do it. Do it.  
Aaaah

Do it. Do it. Do it.

If you wanna make your  
man smile a lot...

JARED (CONT'D)

Do the pecker bob!

BAND/DGOQ

Do the pecker bob!

Do the pecker bob!

Do the pecker bob!

ANGEL

(rolling her eyes, exasperated)  
Damn it, Jared, I already do that

AMANDA

(coyly, giggling)  
I do that too...

JARED

(smiling lasciviously, looking at Chad)  
She does that too??

DGOQ (BASS)

(smiling and nodding)  
She does that too

CHAD

(spoken)  
What?! What the fuck?

AMANDA

(spoken, to Chad)  
They're just kidding, honey.

ANGEL

(spoken, to Amanda)  
Slut!

JARED

(spoken, to Angel)  
Awww, babycakes...

ANGEL

(spoken)  
Fuck you, Jared! I'm outta here!

*She storms off L.*

AMANDA

(spoken, uncomfortably)  
Wow...that was awkward.

JARED

(spoken)  
It's still a fun song to sing.

LIGHTS DOWN

Scene 3

*LIGHTS UP on Blevins' living room. Mack's watching NASCAR, Elenore's knitting.*

MACK

Go straight take a left take a left go straight  
Take a left take a left go straight

MACK (CONT'D)

Go straight take a  
left take a left go  
straight, take a left  
take a left go  
straight

ELENORE

I like knitting, it  
helps relax my mind

*We hear a KNOCK on the front door. Elenore looks up from her knitting.*

ELENORE

(spoken)  
Door, Mack.

MACK

(spoken)  
I know, I know...

*He lifts himself from the chair.*

*Another KNOCK.*

*Mack starts toward the door.*

MACK (CONT'D)

(spoken, annoyed)  
I'm comin', I'm comin'.

*A final KNOCK as Mack reaches the door and flings it open.*

*There stands a smiling Harvey, a leather satchel draped over his shoulder.*

MACK (CONT'D)

(spoken)  
WHAT?!

HARVEY

(spoken)  
Hi! I'm Harvey Boyd!

*Mack looks puzzled.*

HARVEY (CONT'D)

Is there any chance there's something weird going on?

*Now it seems to register with Mack.*

MACK

(over his shoulder to Elenore)  
Hey hon, it's that radio man

*He looks quickly back at Harvey, then back at Elenore.*

MACK (CONT'D)

He's talkin' 'bout our spawn

*Elenore looks up from her knitting, startled.*

ELENORE

(spoken)  
Shut the front door!

*Mack quickly looks at Harvey, shrugs, and shuts the front door.*

ELENORE (CONT'D)

(spoken)  
Figure of speech, Mack.

*Mack rolls his eyes and shakes his head.*

MACK

(spoken)  
Ya think I'd a-known that.

*He re-opens the door to a still smiling Harvey  
and ushers him in.*

MACK (CONT'D)

(spoken)  
I'm sorry, Mr. Radio Man, come on in!

ELENORE

(spoken, to Mack)  
Shut the front door.

MACK

(spoken, confused)  
Huh?

ELENORE

(spoken, sighing again)  
Please.

*Mack realizes his wife's being literal this  
time.*

MACK

(spoken)  
I got ya honey.

*He shuts the front door.*

HARVEY

(holding up a THUMB DRIVE)  
I found this in my laptop  
And I'm really quite confused

MACK

That's a doodad for your gizmo

*He cocks his thumb over his shoulder, toward  
Willard's room.*

MACK (CONT'D)

Sybil's got one too

*Harvey is momentarily stunned but shakes it off.*

HARVEY

(spoken)  
No, no...it's HIS...his teacher said she caught him  
messing with my laptop, and he left it in  
there...and...

*Mack and Elenore stare at him, clueless.*

HARVEY (CONT'D)

(spoken)  
...never mind.  
(cont'd)  
It's not the method but the madness  
I'm more puzzled than annoyed

MACK

That country singer done possessed my boy!

*Harvey's jaw drops.*

MACK AND ELENORE

That country singer done possessed our boy!

MACK (CONT'D)

What the fuck's a capo?

ELENORE

(spoken, to Harvey)  
He keeps asking that.

HARVEY

Do you have the internet?  
This stuff might be online

MACK

(scoffing)  
We don't need that fancy shit  
Cable works just fine

ELENORE

(spoken)  
We ain't even got cell phones.

HARVEY

I thought that you might say that  
You live simpler than most

So I read some to the label head

It was like he'd heard a ghost!

MACK

That country singer done possessed my boy!

*Harvey excitedly retrieves a small stack of PAGES from his satchel.*

HARVEY

I printed out the pages

I think you need to see

*Macks eyes widen.*

MACK

But there's a sprint race in an hour

(pointing to the pages)

That's a lot of shit to read

HARVEY

(spoken)

But I think this might really be important...

*He thrusts the pages toward Mack, who eyes them warily for a moment.*

MACK

(spoken begrudgingly)

Okay...

*He takes the pages and crosses to his recliner.*

HARVEY

(spoken, to the Band)

Um...music people? You might wanna come down on the tempo justa smidge.

*The MUSIC SLOWS accordingly.*

HARVEY (CONT'D)

(spoken)

There ya go.

*Mack plops down in his chair. Harvey sits on the sofa, laying his satchel on a coffee table.*

*Mack starts reading.*

*Elenore continues knitting.*

*SPOT on Jared with guitar DL.*

JARED

Some folks believe that when you die, you go to heaven

Some folks think it's better up there

*SPOT DOWN on Jared.*

*Mack looks up from the pages.*

MACK

(spoken)

Elenore, I think our boy's gettin' religion!

*Elenore looks up from her knitting and smiles.*

ELENORE

(spoken)

Praise Jesus!

*She returns to her knitting as Mack continues reading.*

*SPOT on Jared again.*

JARED

I don't really wanna know how the story ends

*Mack looks up quickly, startled.*

*SPOT DOWN on Jared.*

MACK

(spoken)

Dang, Elenore...

*He leans over and shows her the page.*

MACK (CONT'D)

(spoken)

That kinda rings a bell, don't it?

*Elenore reads, nodding.*

ELENORE

(spoken)

I think we sang it.



ELENORE

(spoken)  
Well fuck a bird!

*Mack is even more shocked by this. He does a quick double-take, then yells toward Willard's door.*

MACK

(spoken)  
WILLARD!!!!

*Willard emerges from his bedroom, shyly clutching his laptop as he approaches the adults.*

HARVEY

Hey son, remember me

From the radio?

*Mack rises from the recliner.*

MACK

And how'd your doodad get in his gizmo?

*Willard looks quizzically at his father. Mack gestures to Elenore.*

MACK (CONT'D)

Your mother wants to know

*Elenore looks up from her knitting.*

ELENORE

(spoken)  
Remember, Mack? He said he was gonna do it.

WILLARD

I don't know what you're talkin' 'bout  
(looking at Harvey)  
But I remember meeting you  
(looking at his parents)  
But the doodad and the gizmo?  
(looking at Mack)  
Can I go to my room?

MACK

(spoken)  
No you may not!

*He looks at the pages he's just read, then thrusts them toward Willard.*

MACK (CONT'D)

(spoken)

I mean, did you write all this shit?

*Willard looks at his father, scared and confused. Harvey retrieves the thumb drive from his pocket and holds it toward the boy.*

HARVEY

(spoken gently)

Son, do you remember this?

*As Jared's Ghost enters DR, followed closely by the DGOQ, Willard is transformed. He snatches the thumb drive from Harvey.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

(spoken)

Gimme that!

HARVEY

(spoken)

Hey!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST (CONT'D)

I'm gonna need this back a spell

My story ain't quite done

We ain't got to the juicy part

Man I'm havin' fun!

MACK

That country singer done possessed my boy!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

Harvey, you know what you gotta do

And who you gotta see

You need corroboration

You-know-who's the key

MACK AND ELENORE

That country singer done possessed our boy!



I still recall the last words that you said

"Put that thing away"...now you're dead

*As the SONG kicks into overdrive, the DGOQ - now dressed in striped prison garb - enter L and R with additional DANCERS dressed as prison guards.*

*They commence to getting jiggy with it.*

ANGEL (CONT'D)

You knew I wasn't playin', you knew I had a gun

You thought that I had gone home mad

And while I ain't sayin' my finger was the one

That pulled the trigger, it still makes me sad

But don't look now, you're dead

Your smile's less disarming when it's full of melted lead!

Do you recall those words I said?

*A JAILER, Laughlin, and Harvey arrive at the jail door. Angel doesn't notice.*

ANGEL (CONT'D)

"YOU put that thing away!"

Now you're dead

*The DGOQ and Dancers exit L and R as Laughlin loudly clears his throat, getting Angel's attention.*

*The Jailer UNLOCKS and OPENS the jail door for Laughlin and Harvey to enter, then SHUTS and LOCKS the door behind them and retreats.*

LAUGHLIN

Harvey, I'm assumin'

This is all off the record

HARVEY

I'm not here as a newsman today

*His eyes are glued to Angel.*

LAUGHLIN

Angel, this is Harvey

He's found some sort of letters

HARVEY

(spoken, nervously stammering)  
More like a journal really.  
(cont'd, to Angel)  
Can I call you for a date?

*Angel is taken aback but amused.*

HARVEY (CONT'D)

(spoken)  
Did I just say that out loud?

ANGEL

(spoken)  
Well, you sang it, yeah.

HARVEY

(spoken)  
Too soon?

ANGEL

(spoken)  
Yeah.

*Harvey opens his satchel and removes a stack of pages.*

HARVEY

I found this on my laptop

ANGEL

(spoken)  
What is it?

HARVEY

I think you oughta see it

*He thrusts the pages toward Angel, who seems skeptical but takes them.*

HARVEY (CONT'D)

You might find it an int'resting read.

ANGEL  
I still don't understand

LAUGHLIN  
(spoken)  
On your laptop?

ANGEL  
(spoken)  
I don't get it.

HARVEY  
I kinda doubt you're ready to believe

*Angel shrugs and sits in the chair to read.  
Laughlin shrugs and has a seat on the other  
chair.*

HARVEY (CONT'D)  
(to Angel)  
Just read...

*Angel reads. She reads some more.*

*Harvey and Laughlin watch her: Harvey with keen  
anticipation, Laughlin skeptical but curious.*

*Angel raises her eyes, surprised, and smiles.*

*She flips a page.*

*She lightly GASPS.*

ANGEL  
(spoken, to Harvey)  
WHERE did you get this?

*Laughlin rises.*

LAUGHLIN  
(spoken, to Angel)  
What?

*Angel softly laughs, indicating the pages.*

ANGEL  
(spoken)  
Like, right here...  
(cont'd)  
We met in a bar, I was a big fan

*She shakes her head in amazement and points again to the pages.*

ANGEL (CONT'D)

And this is word-for-word exactly how it happened!

*Laughlin seems shocked, but decidedly less amused.*

LAUGHLIN

(spoken)

What?!

*He looks questioningly at Harvey, who smiles.*

HARVEY

(spoken)

She ain't read nothing yet.

*Angel reads. She reads some more.*

*Harvey and Laughlin lean forward in suspense.*

*Angel flips another page, reads briefly, then throws her head back and sighs.*

ANGEL

(spoken)

Oh, great!

LAUGHLIN

(spoken)

What is it, Angel?

*She drops the pages on the table and rises.*

ANGEL

(spoken)

Let me show you boys something...

*Angel, her back to the audience, unzips her jumpsuit.*

*Harvey and Laughlin's eyes widen as they gasp and look at each other.*

HARVEY AND LAUGHLIN

She gotta titty tat!

*They quickly look back at Angel, then back at each other.*

HARVEY AND LAUGHLIN (CONT'D)  
 She gotta titty tat!

*Angel zips her jumpsuit back up, sits, and continues reading.*

*She flips a page. She reads some more.*

*She suddenly screams and drops the pages on the table, rising and backing away, scared shitless.*

ANGEL

(spoken, to Harvey)  
 Where the FUCK did you get this?!!!

*Harvey's shocked; Laughlin's alarmed.*

LAUGHLIN

(spoken)  
 Angel, what is it??!

*Angel is freaking the fuck out.*

ANGEL

(spoken)  
 There's NO WAY anybody could've known about this!

Jared and I had a big fight about money that morning...

*She almost can't compose herself.*

ANGEL (CONT'D)

(spoken)  
 And Jared said...

*LIGHTS UP on Jared DR.*

ANGEL (CONT'D)

Goddammit Angel! A vacation's just not doable! Almost every dime I get from that music shit's recoupable!

JARED

Goddammit Angel! A vacation's just not doable! Almost every dime I get from that music shit's recoupable!

*LIGHTS DOWN on Jared. Angel picks up the pages and shakes them at Laughlin.*

ANGEL (CONT'D)

And then I said what it says here

And I swear it was all in fun

*She sobs and thrusts the pages at Laughlin.*

ANGEL (CONT'D)

But every time we'd fight

I'd always clean my gun!

*Laughlin glances at the pages, then shakes his head in frustration.*

LAUGHLIN

If you don't know much about the legal biz

This is all real nice but it don't mean shit!

It's inadmissible

And what's the point of it all?

*He thrusts the pages toward Harvey, who reluctantly takes them, looking disappointed.*

LAUGHLIN (CONT'D)

He might-a written something on the day he died

But what's the source? Will it help our side?

It's improbable

So this is no use at all

*Angel grabs the pages back from Harvey.*

ANGEL

Harvey, I wanna know how this came to be

I have so many questions, could you spend more time with me?

*Harvey lights up.*

HARVEY

(spoken enthusiastically)

Heck, yeah!

(cont'd)

I'll tell you all I know

But it's still a mystery

And wait...it just gets stranger...

*Angel and Laughlin react with surprise.*

LAUGHLIN

(spoken)  
What?!

ANGEL

(spoken)  
I don't see how...

HARVEY

This was written - every word - by a  
Redneck sixth grader!

ANGEL AND LAUGHLIN

WHAT?!!

HARVEY

(spoken)  
No internet, no cell phone, and this kid...well, he  
ain't exactly the *writer* type.

ANGEL

What the fuck?!

LAUGHLIN

Holy shit!

HARVEY

I don't think he's through with it

This makes no sense at all, but I think he wants to  
write it all

*Laughlin turns to Angel, pleading.*

LAUGHLIN

Angel, won't you come clean with me?

Will the truth set you free?

(looking at both)

This makes no sense at all...

(looking back at Angel)

Could this change it all?

*Angel looks at the pages, weighing her options.*

*She looks at the two men, her demeanor becoming*

*resolute.*

ANGEL

Don't look now, but he's still dead

*She shakes her head, waving the pages.*

ANGEL (CONT'D)

I don't see gettin' rescued

By some pre-teen redneck kid!

LAUGHLIN

I gotta tell the judge

Just shoot me in the head!

*He quickly realizes his gaffe.*

LAUGHLIN (CONT'D)

(spoken, to Angel)

Sorry.

*The DGOQ re-enters.*

DGOQ

Don't look now

ANGEL

Harvey, could this work somehow?

DGOQ

Don't look now

HARVEY

He's yet to take his final bow.

DGOQ

Don't look now

LAUGHLIN

I'm not sure that the law allows

Such written testimony from the dead

*The Jailer has arrived back at the cell door.*

JAILER

That dude was

JAILER AND DGOQ  
Shot right in the head!

LAUGHLIN  
(spoken)  
I'm setting up a meeting.  
(to Harvey)  
We'll need to bring in the kid.

HARVEY  
(spoken)  
I'll talk to his folks. I know they wanna get to the bottom of this.

*Laughlin nods toward the Jailer, who UNLOCKS and OPENS the cell door. Laughlin and Harvey begin to exit.*

ANGEL  
(spoken)  
Harvey?  
*Harvey perks up at her voice.*

HARVEY  
(spoken)  
Yes?  
*Angel smiles seductively.*

ANGEL  
(spoken)  
Dream of me?  
*Harvey beams.*

HARVEY  
(spoken)  
Heck yeah!

LIGHTS DOWN

Scene 5

*LIGHTS UP on JUDGE WAY, sitting at her desk, reading the print-out of a document as Laughlin paces.*

*Brice sits to one side of the desk, with Mack and Willard seated side by side on a loveseat.*

*Harvey is seated in a chair next to Angel, who now wears a conservative blouse and long skirt. Standing behind and to the side of the desk is a DEPUTY.*

JUDGE

I used to tell all my law students  
Never close your eyes to possibilities  
But never in my jurisprudence  
Have I so needed a drink  
It's just weird that's all

LAUGHLIN

(spoken)  
I know Your Honor

JUDGE AND LAUGHLIN

It's just weird that's all

BRICE

Your Honor, you've got to be kidding  
This is all some bizarre fantasy

JUDGE

(to Laughlin)  
I'm not even sure what you're asking  
What you want us to believe

BRICE

It's just weird that's all  
(to Laughlin)  
What witness would you call?

*Laughlin shakes his head dismissively.*

LAUGHLIN

(spoken)  
No, no...  
(cont'd)  
Just the writing is all

JUDGE WAY

Well first we must verify that he wrote it

*She looks pointedly first at Willard, who's*

*looking down, then at Mack, who looks like he really wishes the judge hadn't looked at him.*

JUDGE WAY (CONT'D)

(spoken)

I'm going to need the boy's laptop.

*Mack raises his hands and leans back, fearful of getting between his son and that laptop.*

JUDGE WAY (CONT'D)

(spoken)

Deputy?

*The Deputy steps over and, reluctantly at first, tries to coax the laptop from Willard, who resists.*

*The judge looks at the pair and sighs again, shaking her head in frustration.*

*The deputy gets more aggressive and Willard fights back, whining.*

WILLARD

(spoken, to the Deputy)

No!

(to Mack)

Daddy, don't let him!

MACK

Boy, you don't wanna go to jail over this!

ANGEL

It's a lonely place to be

*Judge Way looks at Mack.*

JUDGE WAY

(spoken)

Actually, as the parent...he's a minor, well...

(cont'd)

You can guess

*Mack is shocked. He looks at the Deputy.*

MACK

Use your gun if you need!

*All look at Mack, horrified and disgusted. The Deputy and Willard momentarily stop fighting*

over the laptop.

MACK

(spoken)

Just sayin'.

*The Deputy takes advantage of the pause and grabs the laptop from Willard.*

WILLARD

(spoken, whining)

Give it back!!

*The Deputy hands the laptop to Judge Way.*

JUDGE WAY

It's just weird, that's all

*She opens the laptop on her desk as Willard glares at her, angry and sullen.*

LAUGHLIN, BRICE, ANGEL, MACK, AND HARVEY

It's just weird, that's all

*Judge Way studies the laptop screen, touching and tapping the keypad until she seems to find what she's looking for.*

JUDGE WAY

This doc was created on March 28th

At 2:23 in the morning

*Both attorneys, Angel, and Harvey seem shocked.*

LAUGHLIN

That's not long after Jared's brains blew away

ANGEL

I can safely say not without warning

*All but Willard GASP in surprise.*

HARVEY

(spoken)

Um...awkward?

*Angel sighs and shakes her head.*

ANGEL

(spoken)  
 No, no, no...  
 (cont'd)  
 It's just weird, that's all

LAUGHLIN

That was off the record, y'all

ANGEL

(spoken)  
 No!

*She rises from her seat as the Judge hands the laptop to the Deputy, who hands it back to Willard, who clutches it to his chest protectively.*

ANGEL (CONT'D)

(spoken)  
 It doesn't have to be off the record!! I'm not saying I...I mean, I didn't...oh man.

*She plops back down in the chair.*

*Judge Way beckons the Deputy.*

JUDGE WAY

(spoken quietly)  
 Deputy, will you run to the liquor store for me?

*The Deputy's eyes widen.*

DEPUTY

(spoken)  
 Huh?

JUDGE WAY

(spoken)  
 Yeah, get me a pint of something strong.

DEPUTY

(spoken, shrugging his shoulders)  
 Yes, ma'am.

*He exits.*

BRICE

(angrily)  
 Your Honor, let me get this straight, or at least somewhat clear

You're thinkin' you might tolerate this sideshow  
we've got here?

The case laid out by the state, to a jury of her  
peers

Hasn't come near bein' refuted!

LAUGHLIN

Your Honor, I appreciate the spot I've put you in

But I don't deal the hands of fate, this ain't about  
the win

(he motions to Willard)

It seems he's got a tale to tell, and much to my  
chagrin

I just don't see how it can be excluded!

*The Judge, looking at the pages, seems puzzled.*

JUDGE WAY

(to Laughlin)

Now wait, do I have this right?

You think he'll write about that night?

And prove this whole thing's not just a ploy?

BRICE

Your Honor, we don't have the time

And no precedent comes to mind

MACK

That country singer done possessed my boy!

LAUGHLIN AND HARVEY

That country singer done possessed his boy!

WILLARD

(spoken)

Daddy, I wanna go home.

BRICE

Before this thing gets out of hand

Is the defendant willing to take the stand?

And swear these words from La-La Land ring true?

*Angel looks down.*

ANGEL

That's not something I'm prepared to do

*Laughlin sighs, rolls his eyes, and shrugs as Judge Way and Brice simply look surprised.*

ANGEL (CONT'D)

(spoken plaintively)

What? I don't know what else he's going to write!

*Judge Way tries to curb her enthusiasm and relief.*

JUDGE WAY

That's it! Brice, good call

I might get to keep my job after all!

LAUGHLIN

But, your Honor, my client has her rights

JUDGE WAY

Mr. Laughlin, I feel for your plight

*She quickly recovers from her empathy.*

JUDGE WAY (CONT'D)

But that's it! We're done!

I'll see y'all tomorrow, we'll have some fun!

LAUGHLIN

(spoken, pleading)

But your Honor...

JUDGE WAY

(to Laughlin)

You can't have your cake and eat it both

Someone'll have to swear under oath!

*As her words hang in the air, Mack looks questioningly at Willard.*

MACK

(spoken)

Uh, boy? You wanna break out that freaky shit you been doin' at the house?

*Eyes widen all around.*

HARVEY

(spoken, whispering)

I was wondering if he might do that...

*All eyes are on Willard as his features transform from shy and nervous to frustrated and annoyed.*

*He raises his eyes to the ceiling and SIGHS as Jared's Ghost enters DL with his guitar.*

WILLARD AND JARED'S GHOST

(spoken)

I really didn't want to have to do this...

*Willard places his left hand on his laptop and raises his right as Jared's Ghost raises his right hand as well.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST (CONT'D)

I, Jared Whaley, do solemnly swear

Every fuckin' thing I'm about to tell you is the truth!

*More GASPS.*

BRICE

(spoken)

Holy shit!

JUDGE WAY

(spoken)

I did not see that coming.

*Willard rises, clutching the laptop.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

I've handed you a miracle, but you don't seem to care!

(glaring at Judge Way)

Either that or you're just real fuckin' obtuse!

*Judge Way reacts in shock.*

MACK

(spoken)

What the fuck's "obtuse"?

*Angel seems simultaneously joyfully hopeful and scared shitless.*

*She looks pleadingly at Willard.*

ANGEL

Jared, honey, is that really you in there?

*Willard and Jared's Ghost smile mischievously.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

Baby, tell 'em 'bout the mole just above your pubic hair

*All stare in silent shock.*

*Angel lets out a loud, anguished MOAN and exits L.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST (CONT'D)

(spoken, laughing)

It's kinda shaped like a heart...

*After a beat of stunned silence, Laughlin is the first to regain his composure.*

LAUGHLIN

(to Judge Way)

Your Honor, I guess this changes things

I can't say I'm relieved

But I guess it's up to the jury to believe!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

You ain't seen nothin' yet

I got more up my sleeve!

*Brice, looking toward the door with a puzzled expression, interjects.*

BRICE

(spoken)

Ummm?

(cont'd)

I don't think the defendant's s'posed to leave

*All GASP again.*

JUDGE WAY

Oh shit!

*She reaches for her phone.*

*Harvey rises from his chair.*

HARVEY

(spoken)

She's just upset, your Honor. I'll get her!

*Judge Way sighs, shaking her head and shrugging her shoulders as Harvey exits.*

*LIGHTS UP on the Band as they rock out.*

LAUGHLIN

Your Honor, I'll need just a couple days

I gotta know what my witness has to say

BRICE

Your Honor, this charade's gone on long enough!

JUDGE

My God, the press is gonna be all over this

Gonna open up a practice in Anchorage

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

Judge, I think the voters'll eat this shit right up

`Cause I'm livin' dead proof that dyin' ain't so rough

MACK AND LAUGHLIN

Livin' dead proof that dyin' ain't so rough!

*As Jared's Ghost exits L, Willard becomes his old self.*

WILLARD

(spoken)

Daddy, I've gotta pee

*Mack looks around, embarrassed, shrugging his shoulders.*

MACK

(spoken, to Willard)

Whadya want me to do, hold it for ya?

*Willard exits L.*

MACK (CONT'D)

That country singer done possessed my boy

LAUGHLIN

That country singer done possessed his boy

*Angel emerges DR and runs across DS, crying and bewildered. Harvey emerges DR after a beat and follows.*

HARVEY

(spoken, breathlessly)

Angel, wait!

(cont'd)

That country singer done possessed that boy!

*Angel suddenly stops and spins around, overcome with emotion.*

ANGEL

My husband's all up in him!!!

*Angel motions Harvey closer.*

ANGEL (CONT'D)

(spoken, whispering)

Let me show you something...

*She looks both ways then - her back to the audience - lowers the waistband of her skirt.*

*Harvey shyly looks. His eyes widen.*

HARVEY

Oh my God she's got that tattoo and a heart on

Her skin

ANGEL

Play your cards right and I might just let you in!

*Both start as Willard and Jared's Ghost emerge DR and march toward them, the DGOQ close behind.*

HARVEY

(spoken)

Willard!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

I'm livin' dead proof that dyin' ain't so bad!

HARVEY, ANGEL, AND DGOQ

Livin' dead proof that dyin' ain't so bad!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

(to Angel)

And babycakes, you know your fate is in my hands!

HARVEY, ANGEL, AND DGOQ

Livin' dead proof that dyin' ain't so bad!

*Judge Way wags a finger at Laughlin.*

JUDGE WAY

I'm gonna give you two days, and then he takes the stand!

HARVEY, ANGEL, AND DGOQ

Livin' dead proof that dyin' ain't so bad!

BRICE

(spoken)

But Your Honor!

*She turns on him.*

JUDGE WAY

I know this trial ain't going like you planned!

(spoken)

That makes two of us, buddy.

MACK

That country singer done possessed my boy!

DGOQ

Ooh ooh ooh

ANGEL

This man of mine done possessed this boy!

DGOQ

Ooh ooh ooh

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

This country singer done possessed this boy!

MACK

What the fuck's a capo??!

*A pause, all eyes on Willard.*

*Willard/Jared's Ghost SIGHS heavily.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

(spoken)

It's that little springy contraption that a mediocre guitar player such as myself clamps onto the neck of his guitar to change keys without actually changing CHORDS.

MACK

(spoken)

Fuck a bird

JUDGE WAY

(spoken, to Laughlin)

You have two days.

DGOQ

See you in court!

LIGHTS DOWN

ACT IIIScene 1

*UL is the interior of a coffee shop, with several CUSTOMERS seated at tables and standing in line as a CASHIER takes orders. UR is the interior of a bar, also with several Customers and a BARTENDER.*

*All are chatting excitedly.*

VARIOUS CUSTOMERS

Did ya hear, did ya hear, did ya hear the news

About that Whaley trial?

CUSTOMER 1

Gotta hand it to that Laughlin

That lawyer's got some style

VARIOUS CUSTOMERS

Our own Harvey Boyd's on CNN

It's all over the dial!

CUSTOMER 2

Fox says it's a prophesy

But I don't see that in my bible

CUSTOMER 3

I don't know if this is a hoax for sure

ALL

But Wilson ain't a sleepy little town no more

VARIOUS CUSTOMERS

We got an almost-famous country singer, murdered by his missus

We got the dead guy in a fat-kid suit, gonna be a witness

CUSTOMER 4

We might just be a laughingstock

VARIOUS CUSTOMERS

Or we might become a Mecca

CASHIER

Right now we don't really care a lot

BARTENDER

`Cause are we making bank?

ALL

You betcha!

*The Band rocks, the Cast dances.*

*As the song ends, LIGHTS FADE. SPOT on Jared as he enters UC with his guitar.*

*The rest of the Cast FREEZES.*

JARED

Some folks believe that when you die you go to Heaven

That may be true, but the jury's out on when

I've got some truths to tell, but if that's the only reason

I'll be damned if other truths I've gotta tell ain't gettin' in

*LIGHTS UP FULL, the three DGOQ F singers now DL. All commence to getting jiggy with it.*

JARED (CONT'D)

Well, I was born in California, but like many Californians

I was raised in neighboring OK

VARIOUS CUSTOMERS

Born in California, raised in Oklahoma

JARED

Yeah, the winds come sweepin' down the plain

*The DGOQ Bass Singer, sitting at the bar, spins in his seat.*

DGOQ (BASS)

Sweep you down the drain

*He spins back.*

JARED

I was gonna be a clown, I was gonna be a rock star

I went from Hollywood to Tennessee

Where I learned to write a song and I learned to play  
a gee-tar

Where I searched but never quite found me

*Bass Singer spins back around.*

DGOQ (BASS)

He never quite found...um...him

*Bass Singer spins back.*

JARED

Well, I found a little love and she gave me little  
kids

So I ran away to Austin, I kinda think I flipped my  
lid

By the time I made it home, my family had run and hid

When Karma comes callin' it can be a bitch

But what was it I did?

*Bass Singer does that spinning thing again.*

DGOQ (BASS)

You were a drunken piece of shit

*Guess what he does now? He spins.*

JARED

(spoken)

Oh yeah...

(cont'd)

Sleepin' on the street, sellin' blood for drinkin'  
money

Borrowin' guitars so I could play

Lots-a shattered dreams, lots-a wishful thinkin'  
honey

Lots-a songs written and thrown away

*The Bass Singer spins back around. He seems a little dizzy.*

DGOQ (BASS)  
But a few turned out okay

*The Cashier speaks up from behind the counter.*

CASHIER  
(spoken)  
Um...music people? I've got to get back to work.

*The Bartender nods his agreement.*

DGOQ (BASS)  
I think he's still got more to say

CASHIER  
(spoken, sighing)  
Great. Maybe do the Cliff Notes version?

*All eyes turn to Jared. He shrugs and nods.*

DGOQ (BASS)  
Okay...

JARED  
So I got back on my feet, made a lotta sammiches  
For country stars over by Music Row  
Played a lotta gigs, and nothin' rhymes with  
sammiches  
I fell in love and got my fool heart broke

DGOQ (BASS)  
So guess what? He had to go

JARED  
Headed back to Austin, got myself a record deal  
A label from up New York way  
Who flew me back to Nashville, lookin' for that  
country feel

JARED AND DGOQ  
May the circle jerk be unbroken  
Then I met Angel, but you know about that

Then I cheated, then expired

I'd tell you more, but the fat kid needs a nap

DGOQ (BASS)

He'd tell you more, but the fat kid needs a nap

LIGHTS DOWN

Scene 2

*LIGHTS UP on a HOTEL ROOM. Mack stands beside a TV (turned off) as he and Harvey stare at a visibly angry Laughlin, who stands beside a printer, thumbing through a stack of pages.*

*The door UR opens, and the DGOQ Bass Singer sticks his head in.*

DGOQ (BASS)

He'd tell you more, but the fat kid needs a nap

*He shuts the door.*

MACK

(spoken)

He's just big boned, like me and his mama.

*Willard sits against a pillow propped up against the headboard of a bed still made (apart from the pillow), holding his open laptop.*

*Laughlin looks up from reading.*

LAUGHLIN

Goddamn it Willard, you little big boned asshole!

*Willard looks frightened.*

WILLARD

(spoken)

What?

(shutting the laptop)

I'm sleepy.

LAUGHLIN

Nobody gives a shit about what he did before that final blow!

HARVEY

Doesn't it lay a foundation of credibility?

MACK

All I understood was "lay," can I turn on the TV?

*Laughlin glares at him.*

LAUGHLIN

(spoken quickly)

No you may not!

WILLARD

(spoken quickly)

Daddy why's he mad at me?

*Laughlin angrily thrusts the pages toward Harvey, who takes them and anxiously begins reading.*

LAUGHLIN

If ya don't know much about the shape we're in

We're fucked as fuck, we just can't win

Unless he spills it all

About his curtain call

HARVEY

Do you think it's wishful thinkin' what he has to say

Is gonna get her off? Gonna go our way?

Dammit all

I mean your way is all

LAUGHLIN

It ain't just Angel's life we're trying here to save

My distinguished career has got one foot in the grave

HARVEY

I wish I could say I had no ponies in the race

Sometimes the heart don't break, but it bends

*The others look at Harvey quizzically.*

MACK

(spoken)

Huh?

LAUGHLIN

(spoken)  
What?

WILLARD

(spoken)  
What's that mean?

HARVEY

(spoken)  
I don't know...I think I got it from an old Woody  
Allen movie.

*Harvey's uncomfortable moment is interrupted by  
Willard as Jared's Ghost, with his guitar,  
enters DL.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

I know ya wanna know how the story ends

LAUGHLIN

(spoken)  
Finally...he speaks.

MACK

(spoken, to Willard)  
Well, it seems like he wants to know

MACK/HARVEY

How the story ends

LAUGHLIN

(spoken)  
Shit yeah I need to know

MACK/HARVEY/LAUGHLIN

How the story ends

LAUGHLIN

(spoken)  
I mean, we're due in court and you ain't told us jack  
shit!

HARVEY

(spoken)  
I'd also like to know...

ALL

How the story ends

*Willard rises from the bed as Jared's Ghost*

*starts playing.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

Well, I once had a friend and he had himself a girl

And I'm a covetous, narcissistic SOB

MACK

(spoken)

What the hell's a covetous, nar...narcisis...what?

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

And since my Angel flew, I thought I'd give that girl  
a whirl

And like what goes up, she went down on me

MACK

(spoken)

Now don't be talkin' smut, son...

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

And the next thing I know, there's Angel with that  
fuckin' gun

It was the worst kind of oral-coitus interruption

MACK

(spoken)

He didn't used to use the scientific dirty words.

*The others look at him.*

MACK (CONT'D)

(spoken)

Just sayin'.

*The DGOQ enters L.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

Well, the girl under  
the table liked to  
pitch herself a  
bitch...

DGOQ

Oooh, la la la...

Oooh, la la la...

And she jumped up and  
they struggled, and  
they scratched and  
they hissed...

Oooh, la la la...

Oooh, la la la...

And then there was a  
flash, but I didn't  
feel no pain

Oooh, la la la...

Oooh, la la la...

I'd been relieved of  
that portion of my  
brain

Oooh...

Aaaaah!

*Laughlin is beside himself with happiness.*

MACK

That country singer done possessed my boy

LAUGHLIN

I smell a victory, I could jump for joy!!

*He looks at the others.*

LAUGHLIN (CONT'D)

(spoken)

Don't you see?! There was a struggle! Reasonable  
doubt!!

*Mack and Harvey look at him skeptically.*

LAUGHLIN (CONT'D)

(spoken)

C'mon!

Somebody give me a hug!

*Laughlin's celebration is interrupted.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

Well I ain't sayin' that's how it happened

LAUGHLIN

(spoken)

WHAT??!!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

But I ain't sayin' that it ain't

*Laughlin is livid as Harvey turns his attention  
back to the pages.*

LAUGHLIN

(spoken)

You little shit!!

*Harvey's found something.*

DGOQ

Ooooh, lie lie lie

HARVEY

(spoken)

DGOQ

Oooh, lie lie lie

Umm, Mr. Laughlin, see  
if you can buy us some  
time. I think I might  
know who holds the key  
to all this...

*Harvey exits.*

DGOQ

Oooh, lie lie lie

LAUGHLIN

(spoken)

Fuck a bird!

MACK

(spoken)

Took the words right outta my mouth!

DGOQ

Ooooooh...

LIGHTS DOWN

### Scene 3

*LIGHTS UP on Laughlin and Brice standing at  
Judge Way's desk as she reads through the latest  
pages.*

*Willard sits sullenly, his head down, on the  
loveseat. Mack and Angel sit silently on nearby  
chairs.*

JUDGE WAY

(spoken)

Okay, Mr. Laughlin, let me see if I have this  
straight...

(cont'd)

He ain't sayin' that's how it happened

But he ain't sayin' that it ain't

(spoken)

Is that the gist of it?

*Laughlin seems uncomfortable.*

LAUGHLIN

(spoken)

Um...well...um...it's complicated.

LAUGHLIN (CONT'D)

Your Honor, I'm just askin' for a little delay

While Harvey tracks down a witness we think might corroborate

*Brice is exasperated.*

BRICE

He's actin' like the sheriff didn't investigate

Makin' a circus of an open-and-shut case!

JUDGE WAY

(to Laughlin)

I thought the kid was gonna name names

MACK

That country singer done possessed my boy

*Judge Way explodes in frustration. She rises and begins pacing in front of the curtained window behind her.*

*She throws the curtains open.*

JUDGE WAY

In case you didn't notice

It's a cluster-fuck out there!

*She gestures angrily through the glass.*

JUDGE WAY (CONT'D)

We've got satellite trucks and freaking people everywhere!

*She yanks the curtains shut and whirls on Laughlin, pointing her finger.*

JUDGE WAY (CONT'D)

I'm putting you on notice, you've got one hour I swear!

Or a goddamn mistrial I'll declare!

MACK

That country singer done possessed my boy

*There's a pause, then Angel raises her head.*

ANGEL

There's a part of his heart always been achin'

I think he's waitin' just for me

*She rises.*

ANGEL (CONT'D)

Just give me five, let me look into his eyes

*She turns to Willard, who looks up and catches her eyes for a moment, then looks down again.*

*Angel turns back to Judge Way, her eyes silently pleading.*

ANGEL (CONT'D)

He'll tell the truth and it'll set me free

*Judge Way scoffs, then pauses. She seems to reconsider.*

MACK

That country singer done possessed my boy

*It's Brice's turn to blow up.*

BRICE

Come on, Your Honor! This is pure lunacy!

Batshit crazy, with no precedent I see!

*Judge Way, at the end of her rope, shakes her head resignedly.*

JUDGE WAY

If it's okay with the boy, it's fine by me

WILLARD

(spoken)

Daddy, I gotta pee!

MACK

(spoken)  
Now, son, you can wait five minutes and talk to this nice lady.

*Willard shyly looks at Angel and almost smiles.*

WILLARD

(spoken)  
Okay.

*Mack looks to the others.*

MACK

That country singer done possessed my boy

LAUGHLIN

That country singer done possessed his boy

*Angel looks lovingly at Willard.*

ANGEL

My dear departed's all up in this boy

*Judge Way lets out an exasperated sigh.*

JUDGE WAY

(spoken under her breath)  
What the fuck...  
(cont'd)  
Let's go.

*All but Angel and Willard exit.*

LIGHTS DOWN

#### Scene 4

*LIGHTS UP on Amanda's and Chad's APARTMENT. The couple stands at the open front door and waves Harvey in.*

CHAD AND AMANDA

Hello Harvey, we've been expecting you

All in all, we're kinda glad you came

*Chad shuts the door.*

CHAD AND AMANDA (CONT'D)

That Wilson County Sheriff can't add two and two

And from what we've seen you kinda have a brain

*Harvey seems surprised.*

HARVEY

It's funny you should mention that

I've kept this underneath my hat

(looking at Amanda)

And I ain't layin' no kinda blame

*Harvey seems hesitant, but forges on.*

HARVEY (CONT'D)

But Jared had himself a fling

And it kinda seems that you and he

*He's almost cringing with embarrassment.*

HARVEY (CONT'D)

(spoken)

Aw, crap.

(cont'd)

Well, you know what I mean

(spoken, to Chad)

Sorry.

*Chad and Amanda both wave it off.*

CHAD

Don't worry, Harvey, I know all about it

I've known about it since that night

I stand by my woman, but I didn't wanna shout it

And ruin her alibi-bi-bi

*Harvey's now both surprised and puzzled, but also just a little hopeful.*

HARVEY

I hear there might've been a struggle

Just an accident went down there

*Chad and Amanda look at each other. It's their turn to be surprised.*

AMANDA

I'm sorry that you went to all this trouble, Harvey

It all went down when I came up for air

*Harvey's taken aback.*

HARVEY

(spoken)

WHAT?!

AMANDA

(somberly)

I stayed on my knees, prayin' I'd be spared

*Harvey's even more confused.*

HARVEY

(spoken)

I thought maybe...I mean...then why didn't you...?

*LIGHTS FADE as the SONG INTRO begins.*

*SPOT on Amanda, with Harvey and Chad in the periphery.*

HARVEY

(spoken)

Oh.

(to Chad)

She's about to tell me I guess...

*Chad nods. He and Harvey step back into the shadows.*

AMANDA

I've been around a block or two

I've been a lot of things

I've seen more than my share of altercations

But folks'll do what folks'll do

And life brings what it brings

And I don't really see the need for complications

*She turns toward Harvey and Chad.*

AMANDA (CONT'D)

When the bullets fly, ya gotta duck your head

Otherwise you might find yourself dead

Pay no attention to what he said

After the bullet flew

*Harvey steps into the spot.*

HARVEY

I've been around a block or two

I've seen a lot myself

Car wrecks and explosions and crime scenes

But I don't understand why you kept it to yourself

When you could've cleared up this whole thing

AMANDA

When the bullets fly, ya gotta duck your head

I thought she'd be convicted no matter what I said

There wasn't that much doubt until that voice from  
the dead

After the bullet flew

*Harvey still seems confused.*

*LIGHTS UP FULL.*

AMANDA (CONT'D)

I don't wanna be that familiar face

Known for bein' in the wrong place

I'd rather be the girl that you don't know of

I don't wanna be a celebrity

Not known for talent but a B-J

The girl whose ears the victim had ahold of

CHAD

She thought it'd be a bummer

*LIGHTS UP on DGOQ DL.*

CHAD AND DGOQ  
Bein' famous for a hummer!

AMANDA  
To be known as that dumb chick

AMANDA/CHAD/DGOQ  
Left lipstick on his dipstick!

*LIGHTS DOWN on DGOQ.*

HARVEY  
When the bullets fly, you gotta duck your head  
But I think he might be tryin' to get her off instead  
Sow the seeds of doubt just like Laughlin said

CHAD  
(spoken)  
Maybe he's just toying with the murdering  
psycho...I'm sorry, too harsh?

AMANDA  
(spoken)  
Maybe the murdering psycho has a big surprise coming.

*A cell phone VIBRATES. Harvey retrieves his  
phone and looks at the message he's received as  
the DGOQ crosses UC.*

*His eyes widen.*

HARVEY  
(spoken)  
This is from Laughlin...it's worse than I thought...  
(cont'd)  
I think he might be in danger!

*He shows the text to Amanda.*

HARVEY AND AMANDA AND DGOQ  
I think the boy might be in danger!

*Harvey shows the text to Chad.*

ALL  
The poor kid might be in danger!

LIGHTS DOWN

Scene 5

*LIGHTS UP on the Judge's Chambers. Willard, still seated on the loveseat, looks up at Angel, standing over him smiling an angelic smile.*

ANGEL

Just you and me

An empty room, a closed door

Just like before, before the world went crazy

*She sits on the loveseat next to Willard, whose eyes widen with uncertainty.*

ANGEL (CONT'D)

Just you and me

No distractions like before

Can broken hearts be restored to doom or save me?

*She suddenly rises and turns away.*

ANGEL (CONT'D)

And it only took bein' without you

To make me understand alone

And it only took a moment to get there  
(turning back to Willard)

From the top of the world to nowhere...

*She looks around them, motioning at their surroundings.*

ANGEL (CONT'D)

To here...

*She sadly looks back to Willard, who remains confused and now a bit frightened.*

ANGEL (CONT'D)

Just you and me

Fires burnin' deep inside, you can't hide

From what I know you're feelin'

And from what I've seen lately about you  
 You seem angry and alone  
 And I'm sorry I helped you to get there  
 From the top of the world to nowhere

*She sits again, gently placing a hand on  
 Willard's shocked face.*

ANGEL (CONT'D)  
 To here...

*She rises again and crosses to a light dimmer  
 knob near the door.*

ANGEL (CONT'D)  
 (spoken)  
 Let's just dim these lights a little...  
 (DIMMING LIGHTS)  
 ...get comfortable.

*She crosses back to the loveseat and sits beside  
 Willard, then pops back up as LIGHTS RISE again.*

ANGEL (CONT'D)  
 And I know that little voice inside you's  
 Cryin' out to just come home  
 And it only takes my touch to get there  
 Back to the top of the world we both shared  
 Look into my eyes, there's Heaven waiting there  
 Come to me...  
 (sitting beside him)  
 Come to me...  
 (spoken)  
 Jared, honey...I've missed you so much...kiss me.

*As Angel leans forward to kiss him, Willard  
 jumps up.*

WILLARD  
 Hey now, this is gettin' kinda creepy  
 But you're right, I just kinda wanna go home

Hey now, you're a little too old for me  
But I'll sure tell my friends you tried...

*He shyly smiles toward the audience.*

WILLARD (CONT'D)

Tell a little cougar lie

*As Angel angrily rises, Willard cowers back onto the loveseat.*

ANGEL

Goddamn it Jared! This is fucking unacceptable!

You're just playin' dumb, but the time has come to  
un-dig this hole!

I told you I'm sorry for the part I had to play

And if you ever loved me, you'll make everything turn  
out okay!

*A familiar glint appears in Willard's eyes. He jumps up.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

This country singer done possessed this boy!

*Angel lights up.*

ANGEL

(spoken)

Yes!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

This country singer done possessed this boy!

ANGEL

(spoken)

There you are!

*She turns somber and contrite.*

ANGEL (CONT'D)

Jared darling, please forgive me

The memories of that night still haunt me

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

There's a part of my heart

Still breakin' apart over you...

*Angel lights up again.*

ANGEL

(spoken)

Yes! I knew it!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

But you blew...

*Angel loudly SIGHS, instantly deflated and frustrated.*

ANGEL

(spoken)

What??

Really?

Oh, man...

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

My damn head off!

*Angel whirls and throws her arms in the air in disbelief.*

ANGEL

(spoken)

Here we go...

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

Hey bitch, listen hard!

So you're sittin' in a cell with a broken heart

I'd be hurt too, I'd cry and sob

But you blew my damn head off!

*Angel, fed up, spins on Willard, angrily pointing her finger.*

ANGEL

Listen dick, you got your due!

How many times can I say "I'm sorry" to you?

I mean it though, I swear to God!

*She regains her composure.*

ANGEL (CONT'D)  
(spoken)  
But yeah...

*She folds her arms and wags her head.*

ANGEL (CONT'D)  
I blew your damn head off!

*Angel, Willard, and Jared's Ghost commence to gettin' jiggy with it as the DGOQ enters L and joins in.*

DGOQ  
Blew it! Blew it! Blew it!  
  
Aaah...  
  
Blew it! Blew it! Blew it!  
  
Aaah...

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST  
Well you blew it on  
the wall and you blew  
it on the chair

DGOQ  
Blew it! Blew it.

ANGEL  
I can't believe she  
didn't get any in her  
hair!

Blew it!  
Aaah!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST  
Ya popped it like a  
pimple, it exploded  
with a bang

Blew it! Blew it!

ANGEL  
As long as you stay  
quiet, they won't even  
know her name!

Blew it!  
Aaah!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST  
Your fate is in my  
hands, am I a  
forgivin' guy?

Blew it! Blew it!

ANGEL  
If you say it was an

Blew it!

accident, no one has  
to fry!

Aaah!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST  
But she was under the  
table, just a-gobblin'  
my knob!

Blew it! Blew it!

ANGEL  
And that's why...

Blew it!

*Angel folds her arms and wags her head.*

ANGEL (CONT'D)  
I blew your damn head off!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST  
Blew my damn head off!

DGOQ  
(arms folded, wagging their heads)  
Blew his damn head off!

*LIGHTS DOWN for a beat. When they RISE again,  
Jared's Ghost and the DGOQ are gone.*

*Willard looks around, somewhat bewildered, and  
sinks back down on the loveseat, grabbing a  
throw pillow and hugging it.*

*Angel is suddenly conciliatory.*

ANGEL  
Jared, darling, please forgive me...  
But I can't chance your testimony...

WILLARD  
(spoken)  
Umm...ma'am?

*She sits beside him.*

ANGEL (CONT'D)  
And it breaks my heart  
Thinkin' about what I've gotta do...

*Willard looks on, horrified, as Angel suddenly  
rises. She violently messes up her hair and  
throws her clothes into disarray.*

WILLARD

Hey now, this is gettin' kinda creepy...

*Angel rips open the front of her blouse.  
Willard's eyes widen.*

WILLARD (CONT'D)

She gotta titty tat...

*Angel sits beside him, yanking the pillow away.*

WILLARD (CONT'D)

She gotta -

*His final "titty tat" is muffled as Angel covers his face with the pillow.*

*Willard's cries for help are indecipherable as he struggles beneath Angel's weight as she bears down, unrelenting.*

*The boy's struggles grow weaker...*

*LIGHTS UP DL, where Laughlin, Judge Way, Brice, and Mack stand outside the door.*

*The phone in Laughlin's jacket BUZZES. He retrieves it and reads a text.*

LAUGHLIN

(spoken)

Oh, shit, this is from Harvey...

*He looks at the others, frantically.*

LAUGHLIN (CONT'D)

(spoken)

We've gotta get in there!

*The others look at him, alarmed.*

LAUGHLIN (CONT'D)

(spoken)

We've gotta get in there now.

*He shoves the phone in his pocket.*

LAUGHLIN (CONT'D)

(spoken)

We've gotta get in there NOW!!

*He rushes the door.*

*Laughlin and the others burst in.*

*Angel, still holding the pillow to the now-limp Willard's face, yanks it away and jumps up.*

LAUGHLIN

What the fuck are you doing to my witness?!

MACK

(horrified)

Oh my God, my only son!!

ANGEL

He tried to kill me, as God is my witness!

*She looks upon the shocked and skeptical faces as Judge Way sits beside the boy and tries to revive him.*

ANGEL (CONT'D)

I swear it was my only option!

It was my only option!

LAUGHLIN

Self-defense with a cushion?!!

*Brice explodes at Laughlin.*

BRICE

I told you this was nuts from the beginning!

JUDGE WAY

He's not breathing, call the guard station!

*Laughlin frantically crosses to the phone on the Judge's desk and picks up the receiver.*

*Brice follows him, angrily pointing his finger.*

BRICE

All you fucking cared about was winning!

*Laughlin speaks into the phone, then hangs up.*

MACK

Please Judge, ya gotta save my son!

Use that CPR if ya got one!

*Judge Way holds two fingers to Willard's throat,  
then his wrist.*

JUDGE WAY

I can't find a pulse

*She looks angrily at Angel, then Laughlin.*

JUDGE WAY (CONT'D)

(to Laughlin)

Don't let her run!

I guess you got your delay!!

MACK

What'll I tell his mama?

JUDGE WAY

(spoken)

Where are the fucking paramedics?!

BRICE

(spoken)

I told you this was nuts!

ANGEL

I said I was sorry!

LAUGHLIN

She said she was sorry!

*Willard sits up on the loveseat as Jared's Ghost  
and the DGOQ enter L.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

She told me she was sorry!

*All GASP.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST/DGOQ (CONT'D)

She got a titty tat!

JUDGE WAY

(spoken)

Holy shit!

BRICE

(spoken)

I did not see that coming.

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST  
 Guess what? I'm back!

ANGEL  
 (spoken, horrified)  
 Oh my God!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST/DGOQ  
 You don't like that?  
 Let's go to court!

LIGHTS DOWN

Scene 6

*LIGHTS UP on a crowded COURTROOM. The Judge's bench sits UC, with the JURY box R and the GALLERY L. Laughlin and Angel sit at a table nearest the Jury(including the DGOQ), Brice at a table nearest the Gallery. Mack and Willard sit side-by-side in the front row of gallery seats. All rise as Judge Way enters.*

BAILIFF  
 The People of the State of Tennessee vs Angel Whaley  
 Is now in session  
 Judge Way sits and BANGS her gavel a single time.

JUDGE WAY  
 Mr. Laughlin, would you like to call the witness everyone's here to see  
 And ask some questions?  
 The Gallery, Brice, the Jury, then Angel look at Laughlin in anticipation.  
 He seems to waiver, then SIGHS and rises from his seat.

LAUGHLIN  
 The Defense calls Jared Whaley  
 PANDEMONIUM erupts in the courtroom.

SPECTATOR 1

(spoken)  
Oh my God!

SPECTATOR 2

(spoken)  
He really did it!

*Judge Way angrily BANGS her gavel.*

JUDGE WAY

(spoken)  
People...

*She isn't heard over the mayhem.*

JUDGE WAY (CONT'D)

(spoken more loudly)  
People!

*Still no response.*

JUDGE WAY (CONT'D)

(spoken, MUCH louder)  
PEOPLE!

*The mayhem only slightly ebbs.*

JUDGE WAY (CONT'D)

(shouting, a la Sister Mary Elephant)  
SHUT UP!!!

*Instant silence.*

JUDGE WAY (CONT'D)

(spoken quietly)  
Thank you.

SPECTATOR 3

(spoken)  
I gotta go to the can, man.

*Willard rises from the Gallery as Mack shrugs his shoulders at the onlookers.*

MACK

That country singer done possessed my boy.

*Judge Way bangs her gavel.*

JUDGE WAY

(spoken)  
Shut up!

WILLARD

Daddy, I've gotta pee...

MACK

(spoken)  
I TOLD ya you shoulda -

JUDGE WAY

(spoken)  
Shut up!

*Willard haltingly steps forward to the waiting COURT CLERK, who stands in front of the judge's bench, holding a bible.*

COURT CLERK

(spoken)  
Place your left hand on the bible and raise your right hand, young man.

*Willard, terrified, glances at his father, then back to the Clerk.*

*He promptly places his right hand on the bible and raises his left hand.*

*LAUGHTER from the Gallery.*

COURT CLERK (CONT'D)

(spoken)  
Um...other way.

*Willard looks like he wants to cry as he reverses himself.*

*The Gallery starts MURMURING.*

SPECTATOR 4

(spoken)  
Boring!

*Willard gets that familiar glint in his eye as Jared's Ghost enters DR, with guitar.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

(spoken)  
Aw, hell, I'm just messin' with ya.

*Willard defiantly reverses hands to take the oath.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST (CONT'D)

I, Jared Whaley, do solemnly swear

Everything I'm about to tell you is the truth!

*The Gallery once again erupts.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST (CONT'D)

I'll tell my little story 'neath the spotlight's hungry glare

*He crosses to the witness stand.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST (CONT'D)

I'm more famous than a goddamn Baby Ruth!

*More CHAOS as Willard takes a seat.*

SPECTATOR 5

(spoken, to SPECTATOR 6)

Oh my God a Baby Ruth!

*Judge Way furiously bangs her gavel.*

JUDGE WAY

(spoken)

SHUT UP!

*The Gallery falls silent.*

MACK

That country singer done possessed my boy

*Judge Way preempts the uproar with a bang of her gavel.*

JUDGE WAY

(spoken)

SHUT UP!

*She looks down at Willard.*

JUDGE WAY (CONT'D)

(spoken)

The witness will refrain from using profanity.

*Willard looks up at her as both he and Jared's Ghost scoff.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

(spoken)

Or what?

(cont'd)

Well I'm pretty fuckin' prosecution proof!

*Once again, chaos erupts. Judge Way once again bangs her gavel.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST (CONT'D)

(spoken)

What're ya gonna do? Throw the kid in jail?

*Again with the chaos and gavel-banging.*

*Laughlin, still standing behind the Defense table, steps toward the witness.*

LAUGHLIN

Jared, won't you tell us your story?

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

(spoken, chuckling)

Sure, I'd be glad to...

(cont'd)

I was born in California, but like many Californians

I was raised in neighboring O-K!

GALLERY

Born in California, raised in Oklahoma!

LAUGHLIN

Let's not go back so far, what say?

DGOQ (BASS)

We don't have all damn day

*Judge Way scowls at him. He shrugs apologetically.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

I guess ya wanna know all about what happened

On the night I lost my head

It was a good day till then

But I had to be an asshole instead

And I don't blame Angel for the anger she felt

I cheated and I lied

But I didn't have a clue I'd draw the card I was  
dealt until it

Hit me between the eyes

GALLERY

Hit him between the eyes!

*Laughlin approaches the witness.*

LAUGHLIN

Be more specific, tell us all about it!

BRICE

(rolling he eyes)  
I wonder which story he'll tell

JUDGE WAY

(spoken with a BANG of her gavel)  
Shut up!

LAUGHLIN

You said there was a struggle  
At least that's what you wrote about it  
Angel shouldn't be in jail!

BRICE

(spoken)  
Um...leading your Honor?

JUDGE WAY

(spoken)  
Yeah, kinda...

LAUGHLIN

Cruel fate just prevailed!

*Willard rises.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

I always lie and that's the truth

GALLERY/DGOQ

Ooh ooh ooh!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

This thing I always never do

JURY/DGOQ  
Ooh ooh ooh!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST  
But it ain't even me it's you...

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST  
(CONT'D) Has to tell the  
difference!

JURY/GALLERY/DGOQ  
Ooh ooh ooh!

*The DGOQ, Jury, and Gallery dance in their seats  
as Jared's Ghost rocks out C.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST  
I gotta little story to tell  
  
It don't really turn out that well  
  
But what the hell does if ya think about it?  
  
And sure, it sounds like it might be fun  
  
Two cheaters and a psycho with a gun  
  
But it ain't, and I'm here to testify about it  
  
I always lie and that's the truth

GALLERY/DGOQ  
Ooh ooh ooh!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST  
But I'm the dyin' livin' proof

JURY/DGOQ  
Ooh ooh ooh!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST  
Ain't namin' names or sayin' who

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST  
(CONT'D) Does it really make a  
difference!

JURY/GALLERY/DGOQ  
Ooh ooh ooh!

*Willard steps from the stand and joins Jared's  
Ghost C.*

*Judge Way begins to bang her gavel, then just  
shrugs a "fuck it" kind of shrug.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

When Karma comes callin', it can be a bitch

JURY/DGOQ

Be a bitch!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

When Karma comes callin' it can be a bitch!

In a room full of sinners, it can take its pick

GALLERY/DGOQ

Bitch can take its pick!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

But when Karma comes callin' it can be a bitch!

It can be a mean-ass dick...

JURY/DGOQ

Ooh ooh ooh!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

Patiently or really quick...

GALLERY/DGOQ

Ooh ooh ooh!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

A shattered life or splattered bits...

JURY/GALLERY/DGOQ

Ooh ooh ooh!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

...of brain on dingy curtains!

*The Gallery spills through the bar and dances onto the courtroom floor as the DGOQ leaves the jury box and joins them.*

*Judge Way bangs her gavel several times, until they return to their seats. Willard returns to the witness stand.*

LAUGHLIN

When Karma comes callin' it can be a bitch

GALLERY/DGOQ

Bitch bitch bitch bitch!

LAUGHLIN

I feel like I'm payin' for past transgressions

*Laughlin looks directly at his witness.*

LAUGHLIN (CONT'D)

And I don't give a shit which story that you pitch!

GALLERY/DGOQ

Pitch pitch pitch pitch!

*Laughlin turns to the jury.*

LAUGHLIN

Karma's gonna make its own impression

*Willard/Jared's Ghost is amused.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

Well that ain't very lawyerly

JURY/DGOQ

Ooh ooh ooh!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

Angel, she's countin' on you and me

GALLERY/DGOQ

Ooh ooh ooh!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

Come on, keep your dignity!

JURY/GALLERY/DGOQ

Ooh ooh ooh!

LAUGHLIN

I only want the truth!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

(spoken, a la Jack Nicholson in "A Few Good Men")

You can't handle the truth!!

*The Gallery sits silently, stunned.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST (CONT'D)

(spoken)

Oh, come on...that was a pretty good Jack Nicholson impression.

LAUGHLIN

(spoken)  
I think you WANT to tell us the truth! I think you  
NEED to tell us the truth!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

(spoken)  
You're goddamn right I do!

*The Gallery is still in shocked silence.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST (CONT'D)

(spoken, to Gallery)  
Really?

Nothin'?

MACK

That aging actor done possessed my boy!

*Harvey, Amanda, and Chad enter DL.*

*All eyes turn toward them as the Gallery  
excitedly MURMURS.*

SPECTATOR 6

(spoken)  
Oh my God! It's Harvey Boyd!

SPECTATOR 7

(spoken)  
Who's that woman?

SPECTATOR 6

(spoken, shrugging)  
I don't know.

*As Angel tries to contain her shock,  
Willard/Jared's Ghost reacts.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

(spoken)  
Oh...hi Amanda.

AMANDA

(spoken)  
Hi, Jared.

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

When Karma comes callin' it can be a bitch.

JURY/DGOQ

A nasty bitch!

*Amanda reacts with a "what the fuck?"  
expression.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

(looking at Amanda)

I see we've added something to the mix...

(to the Jury)

Well I was gonna be real nice

JURY/DGOQ

Ooh ooh ooh!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

(to Defense table)

Be Angel's savior, let it slide

GALLERY/DGOQ

Ooh ooh ooh!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

But now I gotta testify

JURY/GALLERY/DGOQ

Ooh ooh ooh!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

(pointing a finger straight at Angel)

The damn bitch killed me TWICE!!

DGOQ (BASS)

She freaking killed him twice

*As pandemonium erupts and Judge Way repeatedly  
pounds her gavel, Angel angrily rises.*

LAUGHLIN

(spoken)

Twice?

ANGEL

(spoken)

Jared, you're a fucking ASSHOLE!!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

(spoken)

Well what do ya expect? Kill me once, shame on you.  
Kill me twice, well shame on you both times.

*Angel, fuming, looks at Laughlin, who silently implores her to sit back down. She begrudgingly complies.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST (CONT'D)

When Karma comes callin', it can be a bitch...

JUDGE WAY

(spoken, to Willard)

What did you mean by "twice"?

*Angel can't take the taunting. She angrily leaps back to her feet and points at Willard.*

ANGEL

Don't look now, but you're dead!

JURY/DGOQ

You're dead! Ooh ooh ooh...

ANGEL

I'll languish in a cell

You keep the damn worms fed!

I still recall those last words you said

"Put that thing away!"

ANGEL (CONT'D)

I saw a titty tat...

GALLERY MALES

I saw a titty tat...

JUDGE WAY

(spoken again, to Willard)

What did you mean by "twice"?

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

(wryly smirking)

Just hold your horses, soon you'll know

JURY/DGOQ

Ooh ooh ooh!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

When Karma deals its final blow

GALLERY/DGOQ

Ooh ooh ooh!

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST

It ain't just the guilty go

JURY/GALLERY/DGOQ  
Ooh ooh ooh!

*Willard rises from the stand and looks sadly at Mack.*

WILLARD/JARED'S GHOST  
I'm sorry Mack this happened

*Willard steps from the stand.*

*Jared's Ghost exits.*

*Willard collapses to the floor.*

*The court is thrown into CHAOS, Judge Way frantically banging her gavel. Two Spectators rush forward to the boy's aid.*

*Mack hurriedly makes his way toward his son.*

SPECTATOR 8  
(spoken)  
Oh my God, he's not breathing!

JUDGE WAY  
(spoken, panicked)  
Is there a doctor in the house?

*The Jury exchanges anxious glances.*

*The Gallery exchanges anxious glances.*

GALLERY  
Holy shit the little boy is dead!

JURY  
Which little boy?

GALLERY  
The dead little boy!

GALLERY/JURY  
Holy shit...

*Judge Way, absolutely banging the shit out of her gavel, finally silences them.*

JUDGE WAY  
(spoken)  
No...no...no...

Oh my God, no...

Just...no.

*Mack, kneeling hopelessly grief-stricken beside his son's lifeless body, looks up at Angel and Laughlin, then to Harvey.*

MACK

(spoken)

What have you done to my boy?

*Silence in the courtroom, then:*

JURY/GALLERY/DGOQ

Pray for the dead and the dead will pray for you!

LIGHTS DOWN

#### EPILOGUE

*STAGE remains DARK as we hear a RADIO ANNOUNCER.*

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

(spoken throughout)

Judge Myra Way declared a mistrial Tuesday in the first-degree murder trial of Angel Whaley, accused in the shooting death of her husband, Jared Whaley.

*LIGHTS RISE SLOWLY on Harvey, sitting alone C at a desk bare but for a small radio and a closed laptop.*

RADIO ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

The proceedings were halted after the defense's star witness, 12-year-old Willard Blevins, tragically collapsed and died, moments after - as Jared Whaley - implicating the defendant not only in the murder in question, but also in the boy's death.

*Harvey, weeping, rises.*

RADIO ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Angel Whaley confessed to both crimes at the trial but wasn't under oath and has since recanted.

HARVEY

Some folks believe that when you die, you go to heaven

Until then, I've still got hell to pay

I played my part, and a nightmare happened

And nothing in this cursed world will ever be the same

RADIO ANNOUNCER

Preliminary findings from Wilson County Medical Examiner Roger Humphries indicate the boy died from suffocation, and - in a bizarre twist among many bizarre twists - that Blevins' body temperature seemed to indicate he had expired prior to his testimony.

HARVEY

I don't believe all things happen for a reason. Nothing but pain will ever come of this...

RADIO ANNOUNCER

Amanda Carlyle, the mystery woman from the Whaley murder case, has now stepped forward and is expected to be the prosecution's star witness in the retrial.

HARVEY

And I fell for a psycho with a tattoo on her tit...

RADIO ANNOUNCER

Angel Whaley remains remanded in the Wilson County Jail.

*Harvey's grief turns to anger and remorse as he turns off the radio, then swipes it off his desk.*

HARVEY

All in all, I'd rather be a wanna-be Dan Rather!

*Harvey shakes his fists violently to the sky, then suddenly becomes quiet and sits.*

*Several Dancers and the DGOQ enter from all directions, converging DC and obscuring Harvey as they commence to getting jiggy with it.*

*Willard's Ghost enters DR and crosses to join the others.*

WILLARD'S GHOST

When I was twelve years old a dead guy taught me how to type

Then his hot wife kilt me, now all I do is write

WILLARD'S GHOST (CONT'D)  
 I'm not really sure  
 how this story ends...

DGOQ  
 Aaah aaah aaah

I ain't too good with  
 words, but I'll  
 pretend...

Aaah aaah aaah

*The DGOQ and Dancers part, and we see Harvey  
 sitting in his chair, facing the audience with  
 an expressionless stare, typing on his open  
 laptop.*

WILLARD'S GHOST (CONT'D)  
 Don't be afraid,  
 Harvey, you're my  
 friend...

HARVEY  
 Don't be afraid,  
 Harvey, you're my  
 friend...

DGOQ  
 Ooh LA LA LA  
  
 Ooh LA LA LA  
  
 Ooh LA LA LA  
  
 Ooh...

LIGHTS DOWN