

Send in the Clowns

A full-length play

Characters

RICHARD “RICK” CAGE	Vice President of a large corporation; also the play’s narrator. About forty.
DEB SMOOT	His secretary. About thirty.
ANDY FEATHER	A junior executive working with Cage. About twenty-five.
FIRST CLOWN	A terrorist, made up as a circus clown. Age unknown.
SECOND CLOWN	The First Clown’s partner. Age unknown.

Scene

All three acts are set in an office on the top floor of a corporate headquarters. The action occurs during the morning of a single day.

Time

The present.

ACT ONE

The stage is dark, and for a long moment nothing happens.

Now, illuminated by a spotlight, a man comes strolling along. About forty, the man is roguishly handsome. His thick wavy hair is neatly combed and freshly barbered. He's wearing a white Oxford shirt with a red repp tie, charcoal slacks and matching wingtips. Despite his professional appearance, something in his carriage makes us suspect he might be fun at a late-night party. At the moment, however, his demeanor is rather remote and abstracted. His name is RICHARD CAGE; he is the play's narrator and, within the core narrative, a high-ranking executive for a major corporation.

When his stroll has carried him halfway across the still-dark stage, he stops, assumes a cheerier expression and addresses the audience.

CAGE

So how you doing? Huh?

(Pause)

However you're doing, I'm guessing it's gotta be better than *I* am, you know?

As somebody once said, I got tricks in my pocket. Probably my biggest trick is, I'm dead. That's right, dead and buried. Not something I'm happy about especially, but not much I can do about it either.

Course, it wasn't always this way. There was a time, not too long ago, when I was alive and kicking, same as you. Had me a pretty cool gig, too; I was Vice President in charge of PR for Burgerville. Remember us? One of the top three burger chains in the country for a while, till we fizzled out like a wet firecracker on the fourth of July.

(Counts on his fingers for emphasis)

There was McDonald's, there was Wendy's, and there was us--Burgerville--and man, I was Vice President.

Then I had a day to end all days. Hey, we all have bad days. But you take the worst day you ever had and multiply it by twenty-seven--that's the kinda goddam day *I* had.

I probably shoulda seen it coming. Inside the company things had been sliding downhill for the last six or eight quarters. Sales were off, morale was down, the shareholders were raising holy hell, and we all had this feeling that doomsday was upon us.

Which it was.

I remember the morning of my last day on the planet Earth. How could I not? We were on the top floor of the Burgerville building--that's where I had my office--and I was getting ready for a meeting with the media. Figured to be one bear of a meeting, too.

(As he continues with his monolog, the
lights begin slowly to rise)

I was there with Andy Feather and Deb Smoot. Andy was my protege. I have no idea what his title was other than that. But he was my guy, my kid brother, so to speak. Had some real talent, too, from what I could judge. Ask him to do something, he got it done. Course he was young and not always the most disciplined, but that goes along with youth. You shoulda seen me at the same age.

And then there was Deb. She was my secretary. Again--fancier title, I'm sure, but she was my secretary. Pretty solid worker, far as that goes.

(Hesitates, seeming slightly
uncomfortable)

She and I were having some issues. We had some history together, I'm sorry to say. Some of that personal, intertwined, lovey-dovey type history, OK? She was single, but I was a married man, so, uh . . .

(Shrugs and shakes his head regretfully)

No excuses from me. No excuses. God, I made a mess of that.

Anyhow, with one thing and another, I could really feel the heat that morning, you know? Way too hot for that hour of the day, even with the AC humming. Like I was living inside a Henny Penny pressure cooker.

(Pause)

But I had to act like I was in charge, even if I felt like everything else was in charge of *me*.

By now the lights have risen to their optimum strength, revealing an office setting. The office should be rendered sparsely; the effect is one of starkness and emptiness, as might be seen in an Edward Hopper painting. Facing each other are two desks; one of them, CAGE's, is bigger and grander than the other. Each desk accommodates a computer, a phone, some trifles. Upstage is a picture window through which we observe the gray skyline of a large, impersonal city. Below

the window is a table with a coffee pot and some mugs. And over to one side is a door through which characters will come and go.

Seated at the smaller of the two desks is DEB SMOOT. About thirty, DEB is a plain-faced, short-haired woman wearing scant makeup. Her manner tends to be sincere and searching; not much about her could be classified as flippant or irreverent. Or sexy. She's dressed in a pale, ice-blue pantsuit and staring intently at her computer screen.

Hovering behind DEB and peering down over her shoulder is ANDY FEATHER. He's in his mid-twenties and, aside from his mop of unruly hair, looks a lot like a younger version of CAGE. Like CAGE, he's dressed for the office, sporting an ensemble he acquired from Brooks Brothers. In his hand is a bound sheaf of papers.

Briskly, CAGE enters the scene, approaching ANDY.

CAGE

Andy, my man, my *main* man--how you doing?

ANDY

(Turning)

Hey, Rick.

CAGE

You got that report all banged out, ready to go?

ANDY

Right here.

CAGE

All right, good good, let's have a look-see.

(Takes the papers and begins leafing through them)

I got that meeting with the press this afternoon, they're gonna be coming at me like the Oakland Chapter of the Hell's Angels, you know?

ANDY

That's, uh . . .

CAGE

Gotta be heavily armed when I go in there.

ANDY

That's one o'clock?

CAGE

Yeah. One, two. Whenever I get there, I guess.

(Focusing on the report)

Lemme see here . . .

ANDY

Those guys oughta find something better to do with their time.

CAGE

Now this report is current as of . . .

ANDY

Last quarter.

CAGE

Really?

(Pause)

Doesn't say so.

(Pause)

Does it?

ANDY

Somewhere it does.

CAGE

(Notices something in the text)

Jesus. What the hell's that?

ANDY

What?

CAGE

That word. There.

(Points)

“Tergi . . .”

ANDY

Tergiversate.

CAGE

Tergiversate!

ANDY

To repeatedly change one’s attitude or opinion about something.

CAGE

(Amazed)

No shit.

ANDY

It’s what we’ve been doing with our own products.

CAGE

Uh huh.

ANDY

It’s what our customers’ve been doing to *us*.

CAGE

Yeah, I know what our customers’ve been doing to us. They’ve been *leaving* us. In droves.

DEB

Rick? . . .

CAGE

(Ignores her; to ANDY)

Where’s the financial stuff?

ANDY

In the back.

CAGE

(Searching)

I don’t see it.

ANDY

I got some pie charts, some bar graphs. I kinda favor bar graphs.

CAGE

Where's the numbers? I'm looking for numbers.

ANDY

They're in there.

CAGE

Top line? Bottom line? Profit margin?

ANDY

It's there.

CAGE

I don't see it.

ANDY

What I did, Rick--I kept everything very, very subtle. Just sorta *wove* it in there.

CAGE

You *wove* it. . . .

ANDY

Easy on the eyes, easy on the liver.

CAGE

Man, people could dig through this bad boy from now till Halloween and not be able to find a *damn* thing.

ANDY

You think?

CAGE

Not with a magnifying glass. Andy, what you got here is as vague and complicated as it could possibly be. Greenspeak!--you familiar with that term?

ANDY

(Nods)

Alan Greenspan.

CAGE

One of the great fog machines of all-time.

(Pause)

And what *isn't* here . . . well, it isn't *here*.

ANDY

So you like the report or not?

CAGE

Like it?

(Laughs)

I love it!

(Holds it up exultantly)

It's gorgeous, it's perfect. Bernie Madoff couldn'tna hidden the truth any better.

ANDY

Thanks, Rick.

DEB

Rick, I'm ready with the PowerPoint.

CAGE

(To DEB)

I'll be right there.

(To ANDY)

How many copies of this you got?

ANDY

How many you need?

CAGE

I dunno. Load me up, a whole great big pile of 'em.

ANDY

I'll take care of it. Say, Rick?

CAGE

Yes?

ANDY

How do you feel about cats?

CAGE

(Puzzled)

Cats?

ANDY

Yeah.

CAGE

I'm OK with 'em. Why?

ANDY
You ever watch a cat take a crap?

CAGE
Have I? . . . Ever watched a cat? . . .

ANDY
Yeah.

CAGE
I dunno. I suppose.

ANDY
When a cat takes a crap, it's a beautiful sight to behold.

CAGE
They're graceful animals.

ANDY
I'll tell you what's even more beautiful. When they do it on a regular commode. Like a human being.

CAGE
They can do that?

ANDY
They can be trained. It's a step-by-step process.

CAGE
Huh.

ANDY
Operant conditioning.

CAGE
(After a moment)
Why're you telling me this?

ANDY
I thought you might find it interesting.

CAGE
Well, I--

ANDY

I got this Persian cat named Doofus. I'm gonna train him to crap on the commode.

CAGE

Doofus, huh? Good luck with that.

ANDY

I'm gonna do it just for the sheer *challenge* of it.

CAGE

I hope you got more patience than I think you got.

DEB

Rick? . . .

CAGE

(To ANDY)

C'mon over here.

(They move toward DEB)

Deb, my highly esteemed and magically skilled assistant, your moment has come. You got the . . .

DEB

The PowerPoint, yes.

CAGE

Bravo. Let's see what's what.

(Each man stoops over one of her shoulders and studies the screen)

How many slides you got?

DEB

Twenty.

CAGE

Now I noticed that Andy's report is divided into . . .

(Gives ANDY a glance)

ANDY

Ten sections.

CAGE

So I'm assuming two slides per section?

DEB

Isn't that logical?

CAGE

(Frowns)

Mmmmm, maybe *too* logical. We'll come back to that. Go ahead and scroll through.

(She clicks her mouse, pauses, clicks it

again)

All this is coordinated with the report?

DEB

I hope it's not obvious.

CAGE

Looks pretty obvious. What about the language? I'm seeing a lotta crisp, clean, clear, simple words that anybody could understand.

DEB

I try to be obscure, but sometimes it isn't easy.

ANDY

(Points at the screen)

"The stock price went *down*."

CAGE

(Alarmed)

Where's that? Christ almighty. Does it say that?

(Leans in for a closer look)

DEB

But it did go down. Didn't it?

CAGE

Yes, but my God, we can't *say* that.

DEB

Why not?

CAGE

Way too transparent, Deb.

ANDY

Too negative.

CAGE

We gotta change that.

ANDY

Gotta fix it.

CAGE

Blur it.

ANDY

Transfigure it.

CAGE

In fact this whole slide show could use some inspired revision. Let's see if we can get some more *mud* in there, all right?

ANDY

Gotta muddy it up.

DEB

(Petulant)

But I put a lot of work into this.

CAGE

I'm sure you did. Little more work won't hurt. Andy, what're we here to do?

ANDY

We're here to work.

CAGE

There you go.

ANDY

And to make money.

CAGE

We're here to make as much money as we can for as long as we can!

ANDY

I'm buying a new Corvette, Rick.

CAGE

We're gonna bust our butts till the Powers That Be come in here and turn off the lights and board up the windows.

ANDY

A ZO6.

CAGE

Which might not be too long from now, I hate to say. But if we're gonna go down--

ANDY

Never happen.

CAGE

We're gonna go down fighting!

ANDY

Fighting, baby!

CAGE

So here's what I want you to do. Andy, you go hunker down in your office and come up with a better version of this PowerPoint. Or a *worse* version. You know what I mean. Deb, you stay here and do the same thing. In exactly one hour we'll meet again and see who takes the blue ribbon. OK?

ANDY

Rick?

CAGE

(Insistent)

OK?

ANDY

Sure.

DEB

(Dreary)

If you say so.

ANDY

Rick?

CAGE

Yes?

ANDY

I gotta ask.

(Pause)

Why do they hate us?

CAGE

Why does who hate us, Andy?

ANDY

All the haters out there. Why do they hate us?

CAGE

Well, that's what haters do.

ANDY

We don't hurt people. We *feed* 'em. Millions and millions of delicious hamburgers. But a lotta people hate us.

CAGE

Some of 'em do, Andy. Not all of 'em.

ANDY

Even some of our own customers. They resent us, they despise us, they vilify us. They want us to fail. Why is that?

CAGE

(Sighs)

I dunno.

ANDY

Is it because we have money? We have power?

CAGE

Maybe they got nothing better to do.

ANDY

Is it because we're a corporation?

CAGE

I dunno. Who do I look like--Socrates?

ANDY

Some people just automatically hate anything that's big and powerful, like a corporation.

CAGE

Even if you're little and weak, not everybody's gonna like you. You shoulda learned that back in kindergarten.

ANDY

I tell you, Rick, soon as I get my new Corvette--

CAGE

C'mon, man, to work.

ANDY

I'm gonna drive that jewel to the poorest, most crime-ridden, most envious neighborhood I can find and just sit there in the middle of the road and rev that monster engine, you know? VROOM! VROOM!

CAGE

That's a--

ANDY

Let 'em ogle me from afar. Anybody gets close, I'm layin' rubber. VROOM!

CAGE

That's a warm, Christian idea.

ANDY

VROOM!

CAGE

C'mon, get busy.

Hands up in front of him as if he were holding a steering wheel, ANDY exits.

CAGE walks around, shakes his head, chuckles.

CAGE (CONT'D)

Ol' Andy's one of a kind, isn't he? At least I *hope* he is.

(Pause)

Actually, he reminds me of myself when I was the same age.

(Brooding at her desk, DEB says nothing)

Deb, you still among the living?

(No response)

Hey, Deb!

DEB

Yes?

CAGE

Whatsa matter?

DEB

Nothing.

CAGE

Nothing! You look like a painting.

(Raises his hands in a framing gesture)

Woman in an Office.

DEB

I'm fine.

CAGE

(Still framing her)

Portrait in Blue.

(Drops his hands)

C'mon, toss a few words at me.

DEB

I can't believe you didn't like my slides.

CAGE

Didn't like 'em! What're you talking about?

DEB

I'm supposed to go back and "muddy them up."

CAGE

I *worship* your slides. Couple adjustments, I'll worship 'em even more.

DEB

Everything Andy does is always perfect.

CAGE

I dunno about that. Andy's very much a work--

DEB

Andy, Andy, Andy.

CAGE

A work in progress.

(Pause)

So what is this, a case of sibling rivalry?

DEB

No.

(Faces him directly)

No, I think this is about us.

CAGE

Us? What us?

DEB

You and me.

CAGE

Me and you?

DEB

Us. Lately you've been so . . . cold to me. So . . . distant. It's as if--

CAGE

Oh, I don't, I wouldn't--

DEB

As if you consider me nothing more than a . . . professional colleague.

CAGE

(Very cautious)

Well, you--you *are* a professional colleague, Deb. Aren't you?

DEB

Richard Cage!

CAGE

And--and a very sweet and wonderful person on top of it.

(Pause)

Those things too.

DEB

Richard Cage--how can you *say* that?

CAGE

What? Say what? What'd I say?

DEB

Rick, after all we've been through, you describe me as if I were just another coworker!

CAGE

No. Never.

DEB

Some of the moments we shared, all those trips we took together . . . They *affected* me, Rick. They changed my life.

CAGE

Mine too. Absolutely.

DEB

(Dreamily)

We went to Dublin, and to Barcelona. . . .

CAGE

(Nods)

Lotta market share to be had overseas.

DEB

That time we went to London, and you showed me Big Ben . . .

CAGE

You were impressed.

DEB

I was *thrilled*. I never dreamed it would be so huge.

CAGE

(Shrugs)

Seeing is believing.

DEB

And then to Key West. Key West was special to me in so many ways, Rick.

CAGE

(Uneasy)

Deb, I know I said some things when we were down there--

DEB

Yes, and did some things too.

CAGE

But you gotta remember what that place is like.

DEB

It's heavenly.

CAGE

It's fulla palm trees and music and booze and sun and sand and bikinis and *booze*. . . .

DEB

Heavenly.

CAGE

It can distort a guy's ability to think.

DEB

And what's that supposed to mean?

CAGE

It means I apologize if I got . . . carried away.

DEB

You apologize?

(She stands up)

CAGE

Yes. I'm sorry.

DEB

For saying you love me? You apologize?

CAGE

(A touch frantic)

Deb, I'm a *married man*. You know that. I can't just walk away from my wife.

DEB

(Flatly)

Even though you promised you would.

CAGE

That's right. Even though I promised I would.

(Long pause)

I was caught up in the spell of that damn subtropical island. I was enchanted by your own feminine charms.

(Pause)

I was *drunk*.

Suddenly ANDY reappears, looking troubled.

He looks even more troubled when he realizes that he's blundered into a private conversation. Awkwardly, he stands to the side.

DEB

(Angry)

Yes, you were drunk all right. Drunk with power. Drunk with the twisted, patriarchal power that some men, some Neanderthal men--

CAGE

Oh, for God's sake, Deb, I made a *mistake*.

DEB

That you did.

CAGE

What, I can't make a mistake? I'm not entitled to a single, solitary--

ANDY

Um, excuse me.

Both CAGE and DEB are startled; they stare open-mouthed at ANDY as if he'd just flowed like a genie from a lamp.

ANDY (CONT'D)

I hope I'm not . . .

CAGE

Andy!

ANDY

Interrupting anything. I can . . .

CAGE

No, no. So what's up? You're not done with those slides already?

ANDY

No.

CAGE

So what's up?

ANDY

(With an effort)

Down the hall, they're not having some sorta *party* today, are they?

CAGE

A party?

ANDY

Birthday party, retirement party . . .

CAGE

Not that I know of. Why?

ANDY

I was headed to my office, I saw these two clowns stepping off the elevator.

CAGE

(Admonishing)

A little respect, Andy, for the people you work with.

ANDY

No, I mean these were actual *clowns*, Rick.

CAGE

Huh?

ANDY

Like Barnum and Bailey circus clowns.

CAGE

Really.

ANDY

They had the whole getup. Fright wig, red nose, white face, big blousy polka-dot costume
...

DEB

Oh my God, I *hate* clowns. They're so creepy.

ANDY

Had on those goofy, super-long shoes, too.

(Spreads his hands to indicate length)

Where would you even *shop* for a pair of shoes like that?

CAGE

I wouldn't know. Listen, Andy--

ANDY

It was like an apocalyptic vision!

CAGE

Listen--

ANDY

I thought you should know.

CAGE

I appreciate it. But listen. I can't explain why this morning we got circus clowns running around our building, OK? But I do know we all got plenty of work to do. So let's . . .

(Makes a shooing motion with his hands)

ANDY

(Nods distractedly and goes on his way)

Not just one clown. A *pair* of 'em! . . .

(Exits)

After ANDY leaves, CAGE moves around a bit, trying to collect himself--to recover his poise and his air of authority and control.

CAGE

(Quietly)

What I just said to Andy, I think it's good advice for us too. We definitely got work to do, so let's get on it.

DEB

(Hands on hips, defiant)

You don't love her.

CAGE

What?

DEB

You heard me. You don't *love* her.

CAGE

My wife? Of *course* I do.

DEB

Not possible. I know you, and I know her.

CAGE

(With baffled outrage)

You've never *met* my wife.

DEB

I've heard you talk about her. Madilyn. She's not your type.

CAGE

I've been married to her for fifteen years!

DEB

Doesn't matter. She's not your type.

CAGE

How do you . . . What do you mean?

DEB

She lacks sophistication. I can tell.

CAGE

Sophistication.

DEB

There are certain things the wife of a corporate executive should know, and from what I can judge she simply doesn't know them.

CAGE

Take it from me, Madilyn knows plenty.

DEB

Does she know about colors?

CAGE

Excuse me?

DEB

Colors. Does she know her colors like a true woman of the world?

(Annoyed and bewildered, CAGE just
watches her)

For example, does she know the difference between sky blue and electric blue?

(Pause)

What about emerald green and forest green?

(Pause)

For that matter, how about pink versus rose? Or purple versus plum?

CAGE

(Genuinely perplexed)

The hell are you talking about?

DEB

A worldly woman would know these things, Rick. But I don't think Madilyn does.
Comes in handy if you're thinking of remodeling your home or updating your wardrobe.

CAGE

Uh huh.

DEB

Same way with fragrances. A woman of sophistication should be able to walk into a perfumery and recognize quality.

CAGE

(Bemused)

Right.

DEB

Is Madilyn familiar with Armani Code? Calvin Klein Eternity? Christian Dior Poison? Does she even know about Chanel?

CAGE

Madilyn doesn't wear perfume. She doesn't need to.

DEB

Ahh, Coco Chanel said: "A woman who doesn't wear perfume has no future."

CAGE

(Wry)

Coco Chanel--didn't she invent hot chocolate?

(Pause)

I'll tell you what, Deb. Ms. Smoot. You and I have worked together for many years, and for the most part it's been agreeable.

(The word choice causes her to exhale loudly)

But if you don't get back to work right quick--and I mean now--the woman with no future is gonna be *you*.

DEB

(Mildly)

What if I don't feel like going back to work?

CAGE

Don't test me.

DEB

(Undeterred)

Sir, when you recall some of the things you've done . . . your behavior toward me . . .

CAGE

Yes?

DEB

Are you really in a position to tell me what to do?

CAGE

(Irkcd)

I believe I am. I'm your direct supervisor. I'm Vice President of this company.

DEB

You're also a man who's engaged in a pattern of sexual misconduct with an underling.

CAGE

Misconduct! A flirtation? A harmless flirtation?

DEB

It was more than that.

CAGE

Not much. Not really.

DEB

Vice President Cage, don't you watch the news? Don't you know how these matters are viewed today?

CAGE

(Jabs his finger at her, incensed)

OK, listen. I'm warning you. You can consider this a flat-out warning from me to you--

CAGE breaks off his tirade as two male circus clowns, the FIRST CLOWN and the SECOND CLOWN, abruptly barge into the office. He and DEB stare thunderstruck at the intruders, who appear more or less as ANDY has described them--they are thoroughly made-up, colorful and surreal. Although their age is indeterminate, they move (and will speak) like relatively young men. And while it may not be noticed immediately, each clown is casually carrying an assault rifle, the muzzle dangling down near the floor.

FIRST CLOWN

(To CAGE; aggressive)

Who are you?

CAGE

(Indignant)

I beg your pardon, who the hell are *you*?

FIRST CLOWN

(Raises his weapon at CAGE)

I asked you a civil question. I trust you'll be kind enough to provide me with a civil response.

CAGE

(After reevaluating)

My name's Richard Cage. What's this all about?

FIRST CLOWN

You work here?

CAGE

That's right.

DEB

(Blurts in fear)

I'm Deborah Jean Smoot, and I work here too.

CAGE

Is this some sorta prank? If it is--

DEB

You're not gonna *kill* us, are you?

FIRST CLOWN

(Calm and deliberate)

Please. One question at a time.

(To CAGE)

Let's take your question first. No, appearances notwithstanding, I don't think you should regard this as a prank.

(Pause)

Unless you've been blessed with a truly *bizarre* sense of humor.

(To the SECOND CLOWN)

You wanna field Ms. Smoot's question?

SECOND CLOWN

Happy to. What was it again?

(The FIRST CLOWN nods at DEB)

DEB

Are you . . . you're not going to kill us, are you?

SECOND CLOWN

(Stands just in front of her, angles his rifle
at her face)

As Bugs Bunny always used to say: “Mmmmm, it’s a possibility.”

FIRST CLOWN

All things are possible.

(Pause)

But don’t force us to decide right this second, all right? I hate making snap decisions. Act
in haste, repent at leisure.

Blackout.

ACT TWO

A few minutes have passed. As before, the stage is dark.

Presently a spotlight captures the lone figure of RICHARD CAGE, who's meandering along in the foreground. His manner is reflective and somewhat analytical, as befits a man still trying to wrap his mind around an event that doesn't quite make sense to him. But he also strikes us as amiable and good-humored, particularly when we recall his unfortunate circumstances.

CAGE

(To the audience)

I was never a morning guy anyway, you know? Never cared much for mornings. Some folks are morning people, some are afternoon people, so on. Far as I'm concerned, we coulda just done away with mornings altogether and started each day at *noon*.

Course the day in question wasn't doing much to improve my attitude toward mornings.

Didn't take our gate-crashers long to give us some idea of who they were and what they were up to. Turns out they were members of a group calling themselves Occupy the World. "Ow," for short. Home-grown militants, and God forbid you call 'em *terrorists*.

Their cause was, they didn't like anybody who was rich. Didn't matter about your religion, your sexual orientation, whether you were Republican or Democrat, whether you wore boxer shorts or bikini briefs--if you had some long green, they didn't like you. Needless to say, they weren't fond of big banks, Wall Street, corporations, any of that.

(The lights begin to rise)

It's funny. You're a kid growing up, your parents'd tell you about the American Dream. Set some goals, get an education, work hard . . . maybe one day you'll make it big. Then when you do, you get these *clowns* wanna put a hole in you just 'cause you succeeded and they didn't. Little nightmare twist to the dream, there.

Way I got it, Ow'd been looking around for a place to hit. A major company. Coulda been any place, I guess. Microsoft, JP Morgan, WalMart, GE . . . And this is exactly how our luck was running. The sons of bitches picked *us*. Burgerville. Our business was in a shambles anyway--we were like two inches away from bankruptcy--and then we got hit by Ow.

Talk about bad karma! Our karma was worth about the same as a jigger of porcupine snot.

As to why those clowns were decked out like *clowns* . . . well, I was wondering about that myself.

By now the lights have risen to their normal level, and we see the office looking essentially as it did before. The two clowns are huddled together conferring; DEB is seated tensely at her desk. Blithely, CAGE turns and eyes the clowns just as they notice he isn't where he's supposed to be.

FIRST CLOWN

Hey. Mr. Sharp-Dressed Man. Over here.

(Uses his rifle to motion CAGE to his desk)

This is your spot right here.

CAGE

Thought I'd stretch my legs.

FIRST CLOWN

Stretch 'em all you want, but stay put. The hell'd you say your name was?

CAGE

Richard Cage.

(Sits at his desk)

FIRST CLOWN

Lemme see some ID.

(CAGE pulls out his wallet)

Give it here, the whole thing.

(CAGE complies)

My goodness! What is this, alligator? Very nice.

(Briefly lays down his weapon while the SECOND CLOWN keeps CAGE covered. The FIRST CLOWN finds a card; reads)

Richard M. Cage . . . Senior Vice President, Public Relations, Burgerville, Inc. And look at this.

(Withdraws some money)

Five, six, seven one-hundred dollar bills. A hoard of cash worthy of a veep.

(To the SECOND CLOWN)

You got seven hundred clams in *your* wallet?

SECOND CLOWN

I don't have a wallet.

FIRST CLOWN

(Tosses the wallet to the SECOND CLOWN)

Now you do.

(Waves the money around and then stuffs it into one of his own sizeable pockets; to CAGE)

That's what we call "redistribution of wealth."

Without a word DEB stands and approaches the clowns, who follow her movements warily. She holds out a small object to the FIRST CLOWN.

FIRST CLOWN

What's that?

DEB

A cell phone.

FIRST CLOWN

What's it for?

DEB

Communication.

FIRST CLOWN

I know, but why're you giving it to me?

DEB

I figured you'd want it. To . . . to keep us from communicating.

FIRST CLOWN

(Considers this)

It's a valid point.

(Drops the phone in one of his pockets as DEB returns to her desk)

Cage--gimme your cell phone.

CAGE

I don't have one.

FIRST CLOWN

What do you mean?

CAGE

I don't own one. I'm kinda old-fashioned that way.

FIRST CLOWN
(To the SECOND CLOWN)

Pat him down.

SECOND CLOWN
(After doing so)

He's clean.

FIRST CLOWN

No cell phone?

(Stands almost face-to-face with CAGE
and holds this pose for a few seconds)

What are you--some kinda *weirdo*?

(To the SECOND CLOWN)

Do something with these other phones. The computers too.

(The SECOND CLOWN proceeds to
disable these devices with enthusiasm,
tearing them apart, knocking them over,
flinging them around. Satisfied, the
FIRST CLOWN pauses to marshal his
thoughts)

Now. Here's the scoop. We came here today hoping to find a certain gentleman named Frank Pennyworth. Do you happen to know Mr. Pennyworth?

CAGE

Frank's the CEO.

FIRST CLOWN

He is indeed. You know where we can find him?

CAGE

What do you want with him?

FIRST CLOWN

I'm asking the questions. You think I came here so you could ask me questions?

CAGE

Why would I think that?

FIRST CLOWN
(Wags his finger)

That's another question.

(Pause)

Where's Mr. Pennyworth?

CAGE

No idea.

(The FIRST CLOWN makes eye contact with DEB, who shrugs and shakes her head)

FIRST CLOWN

Nobody's seen him today?

(CAGE and DEB shake their heads)

SECOND CLOWN

He must have an office.

FIRST CLOWN

Where's his office? Is it on this floor?

CAGE

No.

DEB

Yes.

DEB

It's down the hall on the right.

FIRST CLOWN

Think he's in there?

CAGE

No chance.

DEB

Could be.

CAGE

That office is usually locked anyway.

FIRST CLOWN

Even when he's in there?

CAGE

Especially when he's in there.

FIRST CLOWN

Anybody got a key?

CAGE

No.

DEB

Yes.

(Produces a key and holds it up)

FIRST CLOWN

(To the SECOND CLOWN)

Go check it out.

(Indicates DEB)

Take her with you. Keep your eyes peeled and your mouth sealed.

(Pause)

And don't shoot anybody unless you have to. Or unless you really, really want to.

(The SECOND CLOWN moves off with
DEB in front)

Hey. No clowning around.

(They exit)

CAGE

(After a moment)

What'd Frank ever do to you?

FIRST CLOWN

Not a thing. But he *is* the Top Dog, right?

CAGE

That's right.

FIRST CLOWN

The Head Honcho? The Big Cheese?

CAGE

That's right.

FIRST CLOWN

Well then, it behooves him to take some responsibility.

CAGE

For what?

FIRST CLOWN

For being a capitalist pig.

(Pause)

I understand he's one of the richest men in America.

CAGE

He founded the company. He runs it. You want him to be poor?

FIRST CLOWN

I want him to be *dead*.

CAGE

Why?

FIRST CLOWN

(Points his rifle at CAGE)

I warned you about all those questions.

(Bobs the rifle two or three times, then
lowers it; pause)

Because he's rich, that's why.

(Pause)

Guys like him suck up all the money, nobody else can get any, you see? It's evil.

CAGE

Right.

FIRST CLOWN

It's wicked, it's nefarious. It's sinful.

CAGE

Right.

FIRST CLOWN

Makes me wanna *kill* him.

CAGE

(Smiles)

Dunno if that's gonna happen today.

FIRST CLOWN

No? Why not?

CAGE

I don't think he's here. Nobody's here.

FIRST CLOWN

You're here.

CAGE

How many others you see out there?

FIRST CLOWN

(Mulls this over)

Not too many. Where the hell *is* everybody?

CAGE

Beats me. Haven't you been following Burgerville in the news? We're on the ropes, man. Market's giving us a pounding with both fists.

FIRST CLOWN

On the ropes . . .

CAGE

Afraid so. We don't stand a fart's chance in a hailstorm. So we got scads of people just . . . just . . .

FIRST CLOWN

Laying off?

CAGE

Sick leave, vacation leave. Frank's probably on vacation.

FIRST CLOWN

He is.

CAGE

He's got this beach house in Hawaii. Island of--

FIRST CLOWN

That prick. Hawaii!

CAGE

Island of Maui. Probably sipping a My Tai even as we speak.

FIRST CLOWN

Plutocratic prick.

CAGE

Feel like I could use a My Tai myself.

(Pause)

Course some of our people've quit, some've been canned. . . .

FIRST CLOWN

(Accusingly)

You guys made all that money--

CAGE

Some of 'em are just plain AWOL.

FIRST CLOWN

You made all that money, you couldn't manage it.

CAGE

(Shakes his head sadly)

Around here, money just kinda flies right out of our wallets.

FIRST CLOWN

As it should.

(Pause)

You know what your problem is?

CAGE

What.

FIRST CLOWN

Your problem--

CAGE

My problem is, I can't keep track of all my problems.

FIRST CLOWN

Your problem is, you're not as smart as you *think* you are. That's your problem.

CAGE

Could be.

FIRST CLOWN

You *think* you're smart, but you're not.

CAGE

Could be. Lotta things I can't get a handle on. Like . . . why're you and your buddy made up as clowns?

FIRST CLOWN

You can't figure that out?

CAGE

I just said.

FIRST CLOWN

Give it an honest effort.

CAGE

Well . . . OK.

(Takes a breath)

For one thing, you look like a clown, hides your true identity. Right?

FIRST CLOWN

Uh huh. What else?

CAGE

I dunno. Maybe . . . you're a clown, you're more likely to enjoy free passage. People are less likely to stop you, to question you. . . .

FIRST CLOWN

Uh huh.

CAGE

'Cause you appear to be a figure of innocence and fun.

FIRST CLOWN

Well put. And true. Anything else?

CAGE

All I can think of.

FIRST CLOWN

I take it you're not an ardent fan of Saul Alinsky.

CAGE

Who?

FIRST CLOWN

Wrote a book called *Rules for Radicals*. He said: "Whenever possible, go outside the experience of the enemy." You've never been molested by a clown before, have you?

CAGE

Not unless you count my Uncle Bruce.

FIRST CLOWN

You look like this . . .

(Lifts his arms and does an elegant
pirouette)

. . . and go on the attack, you're gonna catch the enemy off guard.

CAGE

I'll grant you that.

FIRST CLOWN

You can freak the enemy out.

CAGE

Grant you that too.

FIRST CLOWN

And a freaked-out enemy is more easily defeated.

CAGE

OK.

FIRST CLOWN

This clown motif also harks back to the Golden Age of radicalism. Remember Abbie Hoffman?

CAGE

No.

FIRST CLOWN

Clown prince of protest. Wrote a book called *Steal This Book*.

CAGE

Catchy title.

FIRST CLOWN

Said one time he was gonna use psychic energy to levitate the Pentagon.

CAGE

Did he do it?

FIRST CLOWN

Doesn't matter. It was a clownish thing to say. He had a clownish quality about him that people found endearing.

CAGE

Whatever happened to him?

FIRST CLOWN

Committed suicide.

(Pause)

Might also mention I have enormous respect for Stephen Sondheim.

CAGE

The composer.

FIRST CLOWN

And lyricist. He's the guy that wrote "Send in the Clowns," maybe the greatest show tune ever. What more need I say?

CAGE

I think you've said it all.

(Pause)

I must admit, you come across as something more than an ignoramus.

FIRST CLOWN

I'll take that as a compliment.

CAGE

I mean, you're a culturally literate man.

FIRST CLOWN

These days, doesn't take much.

CAGE

Regardless! How's a guy like you get to be a terrorist?

FIRST CLOWN

(Taken aback)

I'm not a terrorist.

CAGE

You're not?

FIRST CLOWN

I'm an *activist*.

CAGE

With a machine gun?

FIRST CLOWN

I'm a very serious activist. Besides, this isn't a machine gun; it's an assault rifle. There's a distinction.

CAGE

Either way, you shoot people.

FIRST CLOWN

Potentially, yes. Shoot 'em dead. Machine guns are illegal for civilians, by the way. This baby's legal.

CAGE

Good. Wouldn't want you breaking the law.

FIRST CLOWN

Hah!

(Wipes his weapon for a while with his sleeve)

I'll tell you who's breaking the law. Rich people.

CAGE

Well, maybe some of 'em . . .

FIRST CLOWN

Some of 'em, my particolored ass! *All* of 'em. The one-percenters are in violation of moral law every minute of every day.

CAGE

Oh, I dunno. That's a pretty broad--

FIRST CLOWN

(Fervently)

Everything's set up to favor the rich. They fly around in their private jets, the rest of us can't find a minimum wage job. They avoid paying taxes while the rest of us get soaked. They own the companies, control the banks and manipulate the government. On the rare occasions they get in trouble for something that *they have in fact actually done*, they hire a high-priced legal team and weasel out of it.

CAGE

They say rank has its privileges.

FIRST CLOWN

Rank's gonna have its problems too, we get done with 'em. The ninety-nine percent are gonna rise up in this country and everywhere else.

CAGE

Yeah?

FIRST CLOWN

We're gonna kick some hoity-toity, aristocratic ass.

CAGE

Are you?

FIRST CLOWN

From Austin to Boston, from Maine to goddam Spain.

(Pause)

And you're seeing the start of it, brother. Right here today.

CAGE

I'm honored.

(Pause)

You really believe all that stuff?

FIRST CLOWN

What stuff.

CAGE

What you just said. The rich control the banks, manipulate the government. . . .

FIRST CLOWN

Hell *yes*, I believe it. I'm standing here with a mother-humpin' machine gun, you think I'm *posturing*?

CAGE

I'm just trying to understand. And that's an assault rifle, not a machine gun.

FIRST CLOWN

Don't be a smartass.

CAGE

What else you believe?

FIRST CLOWN

(Sighs)

Man, I could never work for you. You're just too . . .

CAGE

So I've been told.

FIRST CLOWN

That lady was just in here--what's her name?

Smoot.	CAGE
How's she put up with you?	FIRST CLOWN
Not too well, actually.	CAGE
I'm not surprised.	FIRST CLOWN
(Pause)	
Fact of the matter is, I believe in all kinds of things.	
Such as.	CAGE
I believe that pink trees are beautiful.	FIRST CLOWN
Big trees?	CAGE
Pink trees.	FIRST CLOWN
Fig trees?	CAGE
<i>Pink</i> trees, dammit.	FIRST CLOWN
Oh.	CAGE
Like crabapple trees.	FIRST CLOWN
(Musingly)	
They're beautiful in and of themselves, but the unexpectedness of the color brings an added delight. We expect trees to be green, but then we see one that's pink, and it kinda seduces the eye.	
I'm cool with crabapple trees.	CAGE

FIRST CLOWN

Dazzles the imagination . . . Then the crabapples fall off the tree and muck up the yard--but that's another story.

CAGE

Yes.

FIRST CLOWN

I believe we have too many different types of peanut butter.

CAGE

Peanut butter.

FIRST CLOWN

(Nods)

I don't mean the brands. I mean the types. Think about it. We've got sugar-free, sodium-free, reduced fat, Omega-3, whipped, smooth, chunky, chocolate, honey, organic, natural, regular. . . .

CAGE

Variety is good, though, right?

FIRST CLOWN

(Shakes his head)

Confusing. The other day I went to the supermarket, they had peanut butter with the jelly *already layered into it*--inside the jar!

CAGE

Huh.

FIRST CLOWN

Grape jelly, strawberry jelly . . . Now that's more than society truly needs. *That* kinda happy horseshit can definitely overload the circuits.

(Taps his temple with his index finger)

CAGE

I suppose so.

FIRST CLOWN

On that same topic of food, I believe that cornbread is without a doubt the most delectable bread of all--better than banana bread, cherry bread, pumpkin bread, monkey bread or even French toast.

(CAGE nods indulgently; pause)

Here's one. Different topic. I that believe the artificial lenses that cataract patients receive can sometimes--depending on the lighting and the precise angle of observation--produce a genuine twinkle in the eye.

CAGE

I've never noticed.

FIRST CLOWN

It happens. And it's terrifying.

CAGE

Is it?

FIRST CLOWN

Absolutely terrifying. I mean it's one thing to read in a novel, let's say, that so-and-so has a "twinkle in his eye."

(Pause)

But to actually witness a human eye twinkling--like a small piece of china jammed into the skull--is so eerie that it makes me almost wet my pants.

(CAGE opens his mouth to comment, then
refrains)

And I believe this as well. That musical group from many years ago, the Village People?

CAGE

Uh huh.

FIRST CLOWN

They took a lotta flack for being--I dunno--*different*.

CAGE

Yes.

FIRST CLOWN

But the lead singer had a powerful voice, a very compelling voice.

CAGE

The black navy officer.

FIRST CLOWN

That's him. Sometimes he was a cop.

(Pause)

But I'd say take all the underlying symbolism that marked the group and set it aside for a moment and understand this. That lead singer could sing.

CAGE

You believe that.

FIRST CLOWN

I do.

(Sings)

Macho, macho, macho man . . .

(Pause)

Here's another one.

(Chortles)

You know, this is kinda fun.

CAGE

I'm ready.

FIRST CLOWN

The Great Pyramid of Khufu.

CAGE

OK.

FIRST CLOWN

Khufu was King of Egypt during the Fourth Dynasty, if memory serves. About 2600 BC.

CAGE

Uh huh.

FIRST CLOWN

People marvel at the sheer *craftsmanship* the ancient Egyptians poured into that monument. They say the giant stones that make it up are so perfectly fitted that you can't slip a sheet of paper between them.

CAGE

Pretty remarkable.

FIRST CLOWN

And how'd they even transport the stones from the quarry to the site in the first place?

CAGE

I give up.

FIRST CLOWN

Well, here's your answer. I believe that the stones were not quarried and transported at all but instead were *made* right there on the spot.

CAGE

They were "made"? How?

FIRST CLOWN

Quite simply: the ancient Egyptians had figured out how to *cast* synthetic stones that looked just like real ones.

CAGE

They . . . you mean they *molded* them?

FIRST CLOWN

Yep--out of limestone glop. A chemical process. And this man, this French professor, has proven it!

CAGE

Fairly advanced technology for that point in history, don't you think?

FIRST CLOWN

Hyper-advanced technology, yes indeed.

CAGE

How'd they come by it?

FIRST CLOWN

Thought you'd never ask.

(Pause)

That technology was provided to them by alien astronauts who traveled to Earth thousands of years ago from a small, watery planet revolving around the star we know as Vega.

CAGE

I see.

FIRST CLOWN

Course they call Vega a different name.

(Pause)

An alien name.

CAGE

What, uh . . . what did these alien astronauts look like?

FIRST CLOWN

(After some thought)

They looked . . . something like radishes.

CAGE

Really.

FIRST CLOWN

With long spindly arms and legs.

(Gestures absurdly, trying to call up the
image of a walking, thinking radish)

CAGE

Radishes.

FIRST CLOWN

Even their color was a deep, deep purplish red, and they had this spicy, pungent scent
about them. . . .

CAGE

Well. Jeez. That's, uh . . . that's--

Suddenly, to the men's surprise, a woman's
voice obtrudes. The voice belongs to DEB,
who's apparently standing just outside the closed
door.

DEB

(Calling out)

Yoohoo! Hello? . . .

Rattled, the FIRST CLOWN scrambles over to
the door, his finger on the trigger of his rifle,
which he holds upright alongside his head.

DEB (CONT'D)

Yoohoo! . . .

FIRST CLOWN

(Sharply)

Who is it?

DEB

It's me. Deb.

FIRST CLOWN

Who?

DEB

Deb Smoot. The secretary.

After a bout of concentration so intense it almost seems to pain him, the FIRST CLOWN jerks open the door and shoves the rifle's maw in DEB's horrified face.

DEB (CONT'D)

(Screams)

Aaaaaaaaaauughhh!!!

DEB is standing there by herself. Instantly the FIRST CLOWN seizes her arm and yanks her inside the office. His weapon still at the ready, he thrusts his head very carefully through the doorway and glances around. Evidently he sees nothing. Closing the door, he turns his attention to the quivering DEB.

FIRST CLOWN

(Curtly)

Where is he?

DEB

Who?

FIRST CLOWN

Who?! Who the hell you think?

DEB

I, I don't--

FIRST CLOWN

My *partner*. The guy was *with* you.

DEB

I, I--

FIRST CLOWN

The *other clown!*

DEB

I'm sorry, I--I thought maybe you meant Mr. Pennyworth.

FIRST CLOWN

(Willing to take whatever he can get)

OK--where the hell's Pennyworth?

DEB

I don't know.

FIRST CLOWN

Well then, where the hell's my partner?

DEB

(Helpless)

I don't know that either.

(Begins to weep, discomfiting the FIRST CLOWN)

FIRST CLOWN

(Puts his hand lightly on her shoulder; consolingly)

It's all right. It's all right.

(Pause)

C'mon over here.

(Guides her to her desk)

Suppose you tell me what happened out there.

DEB

(With difficulty)

We . . . we went to Mr. Pennyworth's office.

FIRST CLOWN

Yes?

DEB

And I used my key to let us in.

FIRST CLOWN

OK.

DEB

He wasn't there. So I checked his schedule--

FIRST CLOWN

Uh huh.

To see where he might be today.	DEB
And what'd the schedule say?	FIRST CLOWN
Nothing. It was blank.	DEB
Just . . .	FIRST CLOWN
Blank.	DEB
Nothing about Hawaii?	FIRST CLOWN
No.	DEB
Thank God for <i>that</i> .	FIRST CLOWN
(Pause)	
So what happened to the guy you were with?	
The other clown?	DEB
(The FIRST CLOWN nods)	
He just . . . walked away. I think maybe he saw something--	
He walked away?	FIRST CLOWN
Or heard something . . .	DEB
Just walked away.	FIRST CLOWN
Yes.	DEB
Leaving you behind.	FIRST CLOWN

DEB

Yes.

FIRST CLOWN

(Sarcastic)

Makes perfect sense to me. Then what'd you do?

DEB

I stood there for a while. . . .

FIRST CLOWN

Then what?

DEB

I went looking for him.

FIRST CLOWN

Why?

DEB

I thought I was supposed to be with him.

FIRST CLOWN

True.

(Pause)

Did you find him?

DEB

No.

FIRST CLOWN

Then what?

DEB

I came back here.

FIRST CLOWN

(Scratches his red ball of a nose)

You didn't try to escape?

DEB

(With a hint of exasperation)

What we're doing here today is *new* to me. It's *completely* outside my realm of experience.

CAGE
(Piping up)
Score one for Saul Alinsky.
(Both the FIRST CLOWN and DEB stare
at CAGE as if he'd just spoken in
tongues)

May I offer a suggestion?

FIRST CLOWN
No.

CAGE
Listen. Listen. If you're trying to find Frank Pennyworth, I'm afraid you're outta luck.

FIRST CLOWN
Are we?

CAGE
He's not here.

FIRST CLOWN
You know that for a fact?

CAGE
Lately I don't know anything for a fact.

FIRST CLOWN
He could be here somewhere.

CAGE
Where?

FIRST CLOWN
Or he may yet show up.

CAGE
Or we may yet be visited by aliens from another star system.
(The FIRST CLOWN glares at him)
All I'm saying is, I think you picked the wrong day and the wrong place for . . . for
activism.

FIRST CLOWN
I'll be the judge of that.

CAGE

Why don't we call this whole thing off, we'll all just go home, relax.

FIRST CLOWN

Quiet.

CAGE

So far, no real harm done.

FIRST CLOWN

Quiet. I need to think.

(CAGE starts to say something, but the
FIRST CLOWN cuts him off)

Quiet, I said. I want *complete silence.*

(A long and silent pause)

That's better.

A beat, and then a series of gunshots from just beyond the door. The shots--one blast followed by two more--are stunningly loud. CAGE and DEB dive to the floor, and the FIRST CLOWN crouches behind a desk, aiming his rifle at the door. From outside, another shot is heard.

Blackout.

ACT THREE

Again, the stage is dark. A spotlight picks up CAGE as he drifts pensively along. Upstage from him, and not too far away, we can discern the shadowy shape of the SECOND CLOWN, who stands facing us silently and patiently. In due course CAGE comes to a halt and speaks to the audience.

CAGE

Long time ago somebody wrote a poem about a purple cow. Goes like this.

I never saw a purple cow,
I never hope to see one.
But I can tell you anyhow
I'd rather see than be one.

(Pause; smiles)

At this particular hour of my final day, I can tell you, I'd rather've been a big fat purple cow. 'Cause then I'da been off in a pasture someplace, eating grass and taking it easy. And I'da been *away* from that goddam office with the terrorist clowns and the bullets zipping around left and right. Christ almighty! . . .

(Crinkles his brow)

Far as the purple cow goes, I have to wonder: What color hamburgers would that cow yield? Purple hamburgers?

Any case, I could go on at some length about the angst I was feeling as I was cringing there on the floor of my office. A man doesn't drive to work in a Lexus hoping to cringe on the floor of his office. But it occurs to me that rather than state the obvious, maybe I should get a new voice in here, a different point of view.

So I've asked one of the clowns to step forward, share his thoughts with us. This would be the guy I think of as the Second Clown, the subordinate clown. The one that so far hasn't said very much. Could be interesting.

(Turns to the SECOND CLOWN and
signals him)

So if you'd be so kind . . .

(Timidly, woodenly, the SECOND
CLOWN approaches CAGE and stands
with him)

SECOND CLOWN

What, uh . . . what should I say?

CAGE

Whatever you like.

(The SECOND CLOWN has no
response)

Tell us about your background.

SECOND CLOWN

(Vapidly)

When I was a kid, I was very good at shooting marbles. I was the best in my seventh grade class. Even as I got older, I was way above average at shooting marbles.

(Pause)

But shooting marbles isn't a marketable skill. Playing guitar, dunking a basketball, being a whiz at math--those *could* be marketable skills.

(Pause)

I could shoot marbles.

I feel as if I got pushed through high school thanks to a flawed system. I learned next to nothing, but the teachers all gave me A's and B's. I thought Al Qaeda was the third baseman for the Boston Red Sox. Every chance I got, I'd go to the restroom and smoke a Marlboro. To this day, I'm hooked on Marlboros.

When I got to college, I realized how woefully unprepared I was. Success was not an option. So I flunked out of college, but not before I became a social outcast. I wasn't cute enough to get any of the hot girls, and not clever enough to get any of the smart ones. The straight guys figured I was gay, and the gay guys considered me aloof.

CAGE

What were you thinking when you and the other clown carried out an armed invasion of the Burgerville Building?

SECOND CLOWN

I wasn't thinking much of anything.

CAGE

Do you feel it was the right thing to do?

SECOND CLOWN

Yeah, what the hell.

CAGE

Does it bother you that you brought pain and suffering to a number of innocent people?

SECOND CLOWN

Not really.

CAGE

Anything more you'd like to tell us?

SECOND CLOWN

I have no ideology per se. I like guns, and I'm a born follower.

CAGE

Thank you. We appreciate your time.

(The SECOND CLOWN offers to shake hands, but CAGE simply says:)

Why don't you go on back there, and we'll get ready to roll.

The SECOND CLOWN nods and wends his way back through the darkness. He exits using the door, which he then closes.

CAGE (CONT'D)

(To the audience)

There you have it. A man of few words, and mercifully so.

(Pause)

All right. We're gonna pick up where we left off.

CAGE moves upstage to assume the same ungainly position--flat on his face--that he was in at the end of Act Two. In fact, as the lights are now restored, we see that nothing in the scene has changed. DEB is prone on the floor, and the FIRST CLOWN is poised rigidly behind a desk, training his rifle at the door and whoever might be lurking outside it.

FIRST CLOWN

(Fiercely)

Who's there? Who is it?

SECOND CLOWN

(Offstage)

One!

FIRST CLOWN

(Hesitates)

Two!

SECOND CLOWN
(Offstage)

Buckle my shoe!

FIRST CLOWN

Three, four!

SECOND CLOWN
(Offstage)

Open the door!

Relaxing somewhat, the FIRST CLOWN goes to the door and opens it. The SECOND CLOWN enters nonchalantly, rifle in hand.

FIRST CLOWN
(Pointedly)

What the hell happened?

SECOND CLOWN

When?

FIRST CLOWN

Just now!

SECOND CLOWN
(Blase)

Oh, I squeezed off a couple rounds.

FIRST CLOWN

At what?

SECOND CLOWN

Nothing. The wall.

FIRST CLOWN

Why?

SECOND CLOWN
(Shrugs)

Frustration.

(Pause)

That damn secretary gave me the slip.

FIRST CLOWN

She's right here.

(Gestures at DEB, who, along with
CAGE, is shakily attempting to stand)

SECOND CLOWN

She is!

(Goes over to her, looks her up and down
scathingly)

You're damn right she is.

(To DEB, at close range)

You think you were gonna get away as easy as that? Huh? What do you take us for?

(Pause as the question is allowed to hang
in the air)

FIRST CLOWN

(To the SECOND CLOWN)

Hey. You can't be firing shots off like that just for the hell of it. Everybody on the whole floor heard that racket.

SECOND CLOWN

There's nobody on the floor, except us.

FIRST CLOWN

You sure?

SECOND CLOWN

Sure, I'm sure.

FIRST CLOWN

Well, I'm *not* so sure. Go out there and check.

SECOND CLOWN

I already checked.

FIRST CLOWN

Check again! My God, there, there--

SECOND CLOWN

I'm hungry.

FIRST CLOWN

There must be *somebody* else out there. There *must* be. If you can't find Pennyworth--

SECOND CLOWN

Any food around here?

FIRST CLOWN

Find *somebody*.

(Indicates the two captives)

Hate to say it, but this is a pretty sad haul.

SECOND CLOWN

(To CAGE)

Where's the eats?

CAGE

Vending machine in the copy room.

SECOND CLOWN

(Not too impressed)

Vending machine.

CAGE

Cookies, crackers. Nuts, trail mix.

SECOND CLOWN

That's it?

(CAGE nods)

This is goddam Burgerville, you got *crackers*?

CAGE

Lucky we got that.

FIRST CLOWN

(To the SECOND CLOWN)

C'mon, man. Get out there.

SECOND CLOWN

(As he departs)

Goddam crackers. Goddam *vending* machine . . .

The FIRST CLOWN shuffles around awhile in irritation, then sits down heavily on the side of DEB's desk. He emits a world-weary sigh.

FIRST CLOWN

He thinks *he's* frustrated. God. I suppose I should be used to it by now, but some things you never get used to.

CAGE

I say the same thing every time my office gets taken over by a pair of clowns with assault rifles.

(Staring moodily at the floor, the FIRST CLOWN has no reaction)

DEB

(To the FIRST CLOWN)

Is he . . . is he difficult to work with?

FIRST CLOWN

(Snorts)

You have no idea.

DEB

Maybe I do.

(With a glance at CAGE)

Some people . . .

FIRST CLOWN

They, they . . .

DEB

They just . . .

FIRST CLOWN

They don't *think*--

DEB

They don't *feel*, they don't *understand*. . . .

FIRST CLOWN

They make you wonder what the point of it all is, you know?

DEB

Oh, I know. I know all too well.

FIRST CLOWN

Been this way my whole life.

(Pause)

DEB

Would you . . . care to talk about it?

FIRST CLOWN

No.

DEB

I'm a very good listener.

FIRST CLOWN

No, no.

DEB

Sometimes it helps to talk about these things. Get 'em out in the open--

FIRST CLOWN

No, hell no.

DEB

Instead of keeping them all bottled up.

FIRST CLOWN

God, you sound just like my mother. That's what she always used to say.

(Pause)

The ol' drunk. She'd be sitting there with a can of Milwaukee's Best in one hand and a shot of rotgut in the other--

DEB

Oh, my.

FIRST CLOWN

And she'd say:

(Lifts his voice to a falsetto)

"*Talk* about your problems, honey. *Talk* about 'em."

(Pause)

Course my biggest problem then was having a mother who was a genuine, one hundred percent, 24-carat *lush*.

DEB

I'm sorry to hear that.

FIRST CLOWN

I was sorry to live it. Only time she refused a drink was when she misunderstood the question.

(Pause)

Father wasn't much better. Fact, he was worse. The two of 'em would sit around every evening and soak up the booze like two giant barrel sponges.

DEB

Gracious!

FIRST CLOWN

Dad would look at me, and he'd say: "Learn how to switch-hit." And I'd say: "Dad, I don't play baseball." He'd say: "Learn how to switch-hit." Used to make me nervous.

(Pause)

Then he'd break wind. And he'd always put the blame on Mom. He'd let one go, and he'd look over at Mom and say: "*Gwendolyn!!!*"

(Pause)

Got to be a running gag. She could be somewhere else in the house, he'd cut loose, he'd still say: "*Gwendolyn!!!*" Even after she died, same thing. "*Gwendolyn!!!*"

(Pause)

His idea of humor.

DEB

You were a victim.

FIRST CLOWN

Tell me about it.

DEB

Parents should be more helpful.

FIRST CLOWN

Tell me about it. Kid growing up, most inspiring person I knew was our next-door neighbor. She was a hundred-and-some years old, still lived by herself. Completely independent.

DEB

That's extraordinary.

FIRST CLOWN

To be able to do that, you've gotta have fantastic genetics.

DEB

I should say.

FIRST CLOWN

Most people, they reach a certain age, they become subject to maladies. You know--heart disease, cancer, diabetes . . .

DEB

Uh huh.

FIRST CLOWN

This woman--nothing. Just kept boppin' along. The Energizer bunny.

DEB

Did you learn a lot from her?

FIRST CLOWN

Didn't learn a *damn* thing from her. Only thing I learned from her is some people are born luckier 'n others.

DEB

I guess that's true.

FIRST CLOWN

Goddam right, it's true.

(Pause)

One day I put on a ski mask and robbed her at gunpoint.

DEB

(Shocked)

You didn't hurt her, did you?

FIRST CLOWN

No, I didn't hurt her--what kinda scum you think I am?

(Pause)

I did make off with her purse. I think she might've had fifty cents in there. A lot less than *some* people.

(Glances at CAGE)

I actually liked that old woman.

DEB

Of course you did.

FIRST CLOWN

I simply had her pegged as a soft target. Which she was.

DEB

But you didn't hurt her.

FIRST CLOWN

No. No.

DEB

And that's important.

FIRST CLOWN

Mm hmm.

(Pause)

I'll tell you somebody I wanted to hurt. Lady named Luba Lubov.

DEB

You don't mean that.

FIRST CLOWN

Yes, I do. I wanted to rough her up.

(Remembering)

Years ago I had the lead in this musical called *The Prancing Prince*.

DEB

You're an actor!

FIRST CLOWN

(Modest)

I've had my aspirations. Well, Ms. Lubov was the choreographer. And I had this scene where I was supposed to do a dance sequence.

DEB

Really!

FIRST CLOWN

And I didn't like the way the sequence was being--ah--inflected.

DEB

What was wrong with it?

FIRST CLOWN

Much too constrained, much too austere. See, you have to appreciate the *context*. The prince had fallen in *love*, for God's sake. He was head over heels for this beautiful young peasant girl--

DEB

That's so romantic.

FIRST CLOWN

--but because she was socially beneath him--she was barefoot, didn't even own a pair of hand-me-down shoes!--he felt this epic storm of conflicting emotions raging through his soul.

DEB

Yes. Certainly.

FIRST CLOWN

So I was supposed to do a little dance, you know, first by myself and then with the girl.

DEB

Uh huh.

FIRST CLOWN

It was like . . . Well, here. I'll show you.

(Still gripping his rifle, goes to center-stage)

Let's see, I was in a moonlit garden, singing this song, this love ballad. . . .

(Adopts a stilted and artificial pose, gazing off into the distance, free hand pressed to his heart)

Something, something . . .

(Sings, loudly and not too melodiously)

Should I despair? Or will she be there? Under the silvery moooooooooooooon!

(Back to his normal voice)

Then I'd do this.

More nimbly than we might expect, the FIRST CLOWN dances to his left, dances to his right, twirls around and goes gliding along for some distance. He now pretends to have encountered his forbidden love, and he moves in a way that suggests recognition, excitement, anguish and longing. Finally he mimes the action of taking a girl into his arms and dancing a pas de deux, lightly and tenderly.

FIRST CLOWN (CONT'D)

There. You see?

CAGE

(Unable to resist)

Didn't I once catch you on *Dancing with the Stars*?

DEB

(To the FIRST CLOWN)

That was exquisite.

FIRST CLOWN

No no no no no. That was how Ms. Lubov wanted me to do it. But it's all wrong. As I said to her, we need some more *feeling* in there, some more *passion*. I wanted to do it like this.

(Heads back to his starting point)

DEB

Uh, may I . . .

FIRST CLOWN

Hmm?

DEB

May I dance with you?

FIRST CLOWN

Excuse me?

DEB

I'd like to dance with you. I'll go over there.

(Points)

I'll be the girl.

FIRST CLOWN

(Gallant)

All right. If you like.

DEB takes off her shoes and goes to her spot. After a nod from her, the FIRST CLOWN reassumes his hokey stance and launches again into his routine. Although he holds largely to the same pattern as before, this time his movements are much more grandiose and melodramatic; he therefore looks even sillier than usual. Near the end of the sequence, however, we observe that he and DEB dance together very smoothly and gracefully; she nails every step.

FIRST CLOWN (CONT'D)

You see the difference?

DEB

(A little breathless)

Yes. I do.

CAGE

I'da joined you, but I'm afraid I got two left feet.

FIRST CLOWN

(Ignoring him)

Naturally, we did it Ms. Lubov's way, and the whole business fell flat as a syrupy pancake at your local IHOP.

DEB

Oh no.

FIRST CLOWN

The reviews were . . . unkind.

DEB

I'm sorry.

FIRST CLOWN

(Shrugs)

Doesn't matter now.

(Pause)

By the way, and I hope I'm not being too personal, Ms. Smoot, but I simply adore that shade of blue you're wearing.

DEB

Why, thank you.

FIRST CLOWN

Would that be baby blue?

DEB

(Charmed)

Why yes. Yes, it would.

FIRST CLOWN

And please forgive me once again, but I must say your fragrance is nothing short of divine.

DEB

Thank you!

FIRST CLOWN

I believe I'm sensing in the bouquet some guava and just a hint of honey. . . .

DEB

Yes?

FIRST CLOWN

Also a bewitching blend of musk and patchouli--am I wrong?

DEB

No, you, you--

FIRST CLOWN

Perhaps I'm far, far afield, but I'm going to hazard a guess that this morning you decided to grace yourself with the perfect dollop of . . . mmmmm . . . Gucci.

DEB

(Awestruck)

That's . . .

FIRST CLOWN

No?

DEB

No, that's it. Gucci. Yes.

FIRST CLOWN

Superb choice.

(Turns to CAGE, who isn't quite sure
what to make of all this)

Don't you agree?

CAGE

Yeah. Definitely. Superb.

DEB

(To FIRST CLOWN)

Are you a coffee drinker?

FIRST CLOWN

Can't go without it.

DEB

You like Folgers?

FIRST CLOWN

Love it.

DEB

I'll pour you a cup.

(Goes to the table)

How do you take it?

FIRST CLOWN

Little cream, little sugar. Not too much sugar--my doctor tells me I've got too much of that already.

DEB

Little cream, little sugar . . .

FIRST CLOWN

(Jokes)

If my doctor told me to give up alcohol, I'd give up alcohol. If he told me to give up coffee, I'd give up doctors!

He and DEB chuckle as she hands him a steaming mug. CAGE seems unamused.

CAGE

(Sarcastic)

No, thanks. I don't want any coffee.

(The FIRST CLOWN and DEB give him a dour look)

Hey. Reality check. Here's where we are.

(To the FIRST CLOWN)

You and your pal came here this morning with the cockamamie . . . the misguided notion that you were gonna grab our CEO and do something to him. God knows why, but that was the plan--right?

(The FIRST CLOWN listens passively)

But the CEO, Frank Pennyworth, *isn't here!* Hardly anybody's here. So let's just call it a wrap for today, is my suggestion. We'll close up shop, and we'll all get the hell outta here before something really bad happens.

(Pause)

Whadaya say?

Noncommittal, the FIRST CLOWN sips his coffee.

In the next instant, ANDY reappears, striding through the doorway with an air of confidence and triumph. In his hand is a flash drive. He's so full of himself that he somehow manages to completely overlook the armed, coffee-sipping clown standing not far from him.

ANDY

Art is long, mes amis, and life is short. But relax and rejoice--what I have here is pure, unadulterated art.

(Holds up the flash drive)

As they say in Vegas, read it and weep. I changed everything. Not totally--just enough. I changed the number of slides, their order, what they say and how they say it--just enough. So while this isn't your full-scale mudslide--that's not what we needed--I *have* come up with a nice string of really dark and icky mud *puddles*.

(Notices that the computers have been
knocked over)

What happened to the computers?

FIRST CLOWN

Guess I'm responsible for that.

ANDY

(Oblivious)

Uh huh. Well, let's go someplace where I can show off my masterpiece.

FIRST CLOWN

I don't think so.

ANDY

Rick?

CAGE

Andy--

ANDY

C'mon, we'll go to my office.

CAGE

Not now.

ANDY

Not now?

(Pause)

When? We got that meeting coming at us like a big ol' wrecking ball.

Wrecking ball's already here.
CAGE
(Tilts his head toward the FIRST CLOWN)

Morning.
FIRST CLOWN

Jesus. What's this?
ANDY
(Finally registers the clown)

Our new CEO.
CAGE

Ha! No way.
ANDY

He's in charge.
CAGE

No! Not in a million--
ANDY

You've heard of Occupy the World?
FIRST CLOWN
(To ANDY)

Occupy the . . .
ANDY

Also known as "Ow."
FIRST CLOWN
(Pause)

I'm one of *them*.
CAGE
(To ANDY)
Look in his hand.

Coffee?
ANDY
(Does so)

Other hand.
CAGE

ANDY

(Looks again)

A toy gun? What, are we playing games?

CAGE

Andy, I think it's real.

ANDY

No . . .

FIRST CLOWN

(To ANDY)

Please park your bottom on the side of Mr. Cage's desk.

ANDY

Man, I don't take orders from you.

DEB

Andy, please.

ANDY

I take orders from *him*. Rick Cage. Until I get the word from him, I don't budge.

CAGE

Andy, get the hell over here and sit your ass down.

ANDY

(Doesn't move)

And you know *why* I take orders from him?

FIRST CLOWN

I assume he's your boss.

ANDY

'Cause I *believe* in him. I *respect* him. 'Cause he's *earned* that respect. Rick Cage is a *leader*, not some . . . bozo.

CAGE

Get the hell over here.

ANDY

(Doesn't move)

Does that mean he's perfect? Far from it! Rick Cage makes mistakes. He makes some *whoppers*. God, his sexual misadventures are the talk of the building.

CAGE
(Droll)

Thanks, Andy.

ANDY
But he's been good to me, so I try to be good to him.

FIRST CLOWN
You gonna listen to him?

ANDY
And I might point out that he's a much more highly evolved being than *you* are. Have you looked in the mirror lately?

CAGE	DEB
Andy, for Chrissake.	Oh, Andy.

ANDY
(Firmly)
So here's the deal. My man Rick Cage has a meeting this afternoon, and I'm gonna help him prep for it. After that, I got a date with a Chevy dealer who's gonna sell me a brand-new ride that you're not fit to wash and wax. In the meantime, I'm gonna go fetch my laptop.

FIRST CLOWN
You best stay put.

CAGE
Hey, Andy? . . .

ANDY
(Walks toward the door)
I'll be back in two shakes.

CAGE
Andy!

FIRST CLOWN
(Sets down his coffee and raises his rifle)
Stop, dammit, or I'll shoot you!

But ANDY continues on his way. Arriving at the door, he opens it, turns and faces down his adversary with another brief show of defiance. Just when it seems the FIRST CLOWN will

follow through with his threat, he grimaces in defeat and lowers the weapon.

ANDY steps into the doorway, and, as he does, a shot rings out. Loudly and abruptly. Struck in the chest, ANDY crumples to the floor and lies there motionless. Moments later, the SECOND CLOWN, both hands on his rifle, appears in the doorway.

SECOND CLOWN

He's not going anywhere.

FIRST CLOWN

(Approaches his partner; shaken)

What'd you do?

SECOND CLOWN

I shot him. What'd you *want* me to do?

FIRST CLOWN

This is . . .

SECOND CLOWN

Tickle him to death?

(Swings his rifle at CAGE, who has instinctively taken three or four steps in their direction)

Back.

(CAGE holds his position)

Back.

(Grudgingly he retreats)

Siddown.

(He sits)

FIRST CLOWN

(Peers down at ANDY)

Mmmmm.

SECOND CLOWN

Huh?

FIRST CLOWN

Unfortunate.

(Pause)

You'll need to . . .

SECOND CLOWN

Huh?

FIRST CLOWN

Move him somewhere.

SECOND CLOWN

Move him . . . Why?

FIRST CLOWN

I don't want to see him.

SECOND CLOWN

Why not?

FIRST CLOWN

Because I *don't*.

(Pause)

SECOND CLOWN

Where do you want him?

FIRST CLOWN

Gimme that.

(Snatches the SECOND CLOWN's rifle)

Put him in the hall.

(The SECOND CLOWN takes ANDY by the wrists and begins to drag him)

Don't put him in the hall. Someone'll see him.

SECOND CLOWN

There's nobody out there.

FIRST CLOWN

Put him in a room. In the copy room.

SECOND CLOWN

Where is it?

FIRST CLOWN

We passed it on our way here. With the vending machine?

SECOND CLOWN

Where.

FIRST CLOWN

(Infuriated)

For *Godsake!*

(To CAGE and DEB)

You two stay where you are. Don't move a muscle. Don't even blink.

(To the SECOND CLOWN)

Down that way.

Dragging ANDY away, the SECOND CLOWN vanishes into the hall, and the FIRST CLOWN, clutching both rifles, vanishes with him. Soon as they're gone, CAGE speaks to DEB quietly but intensely.

CAGE

When they come back, create a distraction, OK? Get their attention. I don't care how you do it.

DEB

A distraction . . .

CAGE

Laugh, cry, moan, yodel. Tell 'em you're sick. Whichever clown's closest to me, I'm gonna rush him, try to take him out.

DEB

You're . . .

CAGE

Yeah. It's a long shot, but I think it's our only chance. They're crazy as bed bugs. I think they're gonna kill us.

DEB

(Weakly)

Ohh.

CAGE

Just gimme some cover.

Wielding a single rifle, the FIRST CLOWN steps into the doorway. For a few seconds his focus is elsewhere.

FIRST CLOWN
(Shouts to the SECOND CLOWN,
offstage)

. . . And then close that door!

(Enters; very somber)
Well, folks, it appears we've reached what's sometimes called a "tipping point."

DEB
(Moves toward him, drawing his
attention)

Uh . . .

FIRST CLOWN
Yes?

DEB
I, uh . . .

FIRST CLOWN
What.

DEB
You, you . . .

Craftily, unseen by the FIRST CLOWN, CAGE
has crept like a commando closer to his target.
He's almost ready to spring forward in an all-out,
do-or-die assault.

FIRST CLOWN
(To DEB)
What is it? What's the matter?

DEB
(Screams with all her might)
WATCH OUT! HE'S GOING TO ATTACK YOU!

The FIRST CLOWN pivots to face CAGE, who
now charges at him. The gunman fires twice,
and CAGE collapses and dies, sprawled within
touching range of his executioner's elongated
shoes.

White-faced and trembling, DEB hurries over to
the FIRST CLOWN and nestles against him for

comfort. He drapes his arm gently around her.
Belatedly, the SECOND CLOWN shows up, his
rifle ready.

FIRST CLOWN
(Holds up a hand)

It's all right.

SECOND CLOWN

You got him?

FIRST CLOWN
(Long pause)

I got him.

SECOND CLOWN

What're we gonna do?

DEB

We need to leave.

SECOND CLOWN
(Looks at her dubiously)

"We"?

FIRST CLOWN
Somebody'll be here soon. The cops. Somebody.

DEB

They'll be after us.

SECOND CLOWN

"Us"?

FIRST CLOWN
(To the SECOND CLOWN)

What are you, deaf?

SECOND CLOWN

I just--

FIRST CLOWN
(To DEB)

Is there a back way outta here?

DEB

(Nods)

I'll show you. Opens into a parking lot.

FIRST CLOWN

Put on your shoes.

(Quickly she puts them on)

DEB

We can use my car.

FIRST CLOWN

Let's do it.

(To the SECOND CLOWN)

You coming or what?

SECOND CLOWN

Ain't staying here.

DEB and the clowns bolt out the door.

Gradually the lights diminish to a soft, dusky grayness. But as they do, a spotlight brightens the fallen figure of RICHARD CAGE. Soon enough, he rises to his feet, apparently in sound condition. He brushes himself off, smiles and addresses the audience.

CAGE

And that was *it* for me, man. Just like that. Where was the ceremony? I didn't even get a "Sayonara, don't let the door smack you."

Course, that was it for Andy, too. I probably felt worse for him than I did for myself.

To say I was disappointed with how things went would be one helluvan understatement. But once again, maybe others have a different perspective, I dunno. So let's have a little postscript here, huh? Little postscript with some comments from all those who contributed to my grand finale.

First up, the Second Clown.

The SECOND CLOWN troops out through the dimness to be captured by a spotlight. He halts and faces the audience.

SECOND CLOWN

(Blandly)

I have nothing further to say.

CAGE

OK, fair enough.

(The spotlight abandons the SECOND CLOWN as he drifts back into the shadows where he'll stand watching us in hazy silhouette, not moving)

Next up, my pal Andy. Hate to see him under these circumstances, but what're you gonna do.

Looking much livelier than last time we saw him, ANDY comes sauntering out. The spotlight finds him, and he faces the audience.

ANDY

Hey, Rick.

CAGE

Andy, how you doing?

ANDY

I been better.

CAGE

I hear you.

ANDY

But what happened to me that day, I brought that down on myself, really. Youthful folly, you know? Acting like a young dumbass.

I read about this guy once, fourth of July, he put this giant firecracker on his head. He set the thing off, and it basically blew out his brains. Maybe twenty years old. Everybody said: "Well, young dumbass." Which was *true*. I mean, being young and stupid isn't the best excuse, but sometimes it's the only one you got. Now I didn't exactly put a firecracker on my head--but I might as well have.

Tell you what gripes me the most. I never did get a chance to run that 'Vette. That gripes me something awful.

CAGE

Andy, catch you later.

(ANDY waves, holds up his hands as if

driving a car and motors off to stand
beside the SECOND CLOWN)

And now, the First Clown. Yeah, I'll be paying special attention to this guy, since this is the one that officially snuffed out my life.

Like the others, the FIRST CLOWN advances
toward the audience and stands in the spotlight.

FIRST CLOWN
(To CAGE)

It was nothing personal.

CAGE

Says you.

FIRST CLOWN
(To the audience)

My life has been filled with ups and downs--more downs than ups, frankly. I've known difficulty, and I've brought difficulty to others. What I've always wished for, and what I've never had, is stability.

It occurs to me that I didn't miss my era so much as I missed my species. I should've been a tree. A pink tree, a crabapple tree. I wouldn't've had to do much--just stand there--and I would've been tall and strong and beautiful. And stable! What's more stable than a tree?

(Extends his arms upward)

And at night I would've stretched my limbs up toward the stars and watched for anything unusual, anything wonderful. . . .

(Turns, recedes into the gloom and joins
the others)

CAGE
(Confounded)

Well.

(Pause)

OK.

(Pause)

Finally, let's listen to my one-time secretary, Ms. Deb Smoot. What I'm hoping for here is something kinda contrite, you know, something kinda remorseful. Just for old time's sake.

DEB emerges, wafting through the twilight, and
finds her mark as the spotlight beams down on
her.

DEB

(Almost trancelike)

Where to begin. My my. So much to say . . . I've always thought the best of people, and I've always tried to believe their words when they tell me something, and so of course I believed the words of Rick Cage as well, especially since we were so close, or we were at one time. . . .

But I've been hurt a lot in my life, and I never seem to learn--hurt me once and I'll let you hurt me again--but this time when he hurt me I said to myself: "I've had my fill, I've taken enough, and now I'm going to fight back, and I don't care where it goes or who gets destroyed as a result. . . ."

So I put myself in league with some people who maybe weren't the finest I've ever met, but when things started to move, I could tell they were moving my way, and I knew what would happen to Rick even before it happened--it's like when you drop a piece of china over a hardwood floor, and you understand it's going to shatter even before it does--and that's exactly how it was that morning in the office. . . .

And when they shot him to death, I have to admit I didn't feel too bad about it--frightened yes because I didn't know what might happen next--and I actually felt pretty good about it, and I know what this says about my blister of a soul at that moment, but I also know that God is supremely wise and kind and just and merciful, and I know that He's forgiven my sins, and He loves me absolutely as only God can, and He loves me even though when Rick got shot that morning I thought to myself, and I almost said it out loud: "Go on and die, you son of a bitch, die for me, you bastard, you deserve it, so die *die DIE*. . . ."

(Pause)

Thank you.

(Curtseys and goes to stand with the others)

CAGE

(Purses his lips for some time)

Probably comes up shy of the mark on remorse . . . but I gotta give her some points for candor. Besides which, who the hell hired her?

(Pause)

I did.

JFK once remarked that life is unfair. And then somebody shot him to death. And yeah, I know what you're thinking--I'm no JFK. True. Yes. But I do know where the man was coming from on that one. Life is unfair.

Death is unfair too. Regardless of *how* you go. You die of a heart attack--what, is that fair?

So we live as well as we can, as long as we can. Boats against the current and all that.
And when it's over, we chalk it up.

That's me, baby. Chalking it up.

(Winks at the audience)

Take care of yourself. I'm gone.

The spotlight follows him as he turns and walks
past the four wraiths standing in a row, goes to
the door and passes through it.

Blackout.