

Witchcraft



A PLAY IN ONE ACT

ROBERT R. BOWIE, JR.

Witchcraft

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“A word is not a crystal, transparent and unchanged, it is the skin of a living thought and may vary greatly in color and content according to the circumstances and time in which it is used.”

—Holmes, J. in *Towne v. Eisner*, 245 U.S. 418, 425. (1918)

THE TIME AND PLACE OF THE PLAY

Down stage is the inner office of the chief psychiatrist of an old and prestigious mental hospital outside of the city. There are books on bookshelves on the walls. There are also children's paintings on the walls. Off to one side there is a desk with a phone and light on it. Stage left has a large bay window that looks over the driveway to the intake emergency room that receives patients brought by ambulance to the hospital. Stage right also has a large bay window that looks out over the grounds. The office has a private door to the locked confines of the mental hospital.

The upstage area is a small waiting room with a bench and chairs, coat hooks on the wall and a door in the upstage wall to the outside corridors of the hospital. The waiting room holds baskets full of toys. There is an invisible wall which separates down stage and the up stage waiting area.

The grounds outside of the psychiatrist's office seen out the windows of the office are large and open and filled with calm old shade trees, winding roads for the occasional car traffic and the meandering pathways between the buildings. Despite the apparent controlled calm of the outside there is a disturbing tension about the place. The birds don't seem to sing outside the windows. People walk with a deliberate step. There is no laughter. The play takes place in the mid-1990's.

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Contact:
Robert R. Bowie, Jr.
526 E. Seminary Avenue
Towson, Maryland 21204
e-mail: bob@bowie.com
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ACT I, SCENE I

THE CAST OF CHARACTERS

- Adam: (A.K.A. Malcolm Jones, Esq.) Is in his late twenties and is tall and handsome.
- Herbert: Is in his mid-fifties. He is a court stenographer and the stepfather of Violet. He always has a set of tapedeck headphones either on his ears or around his neck. He has been a patient in the hospital. He has a pocket full of pistachio nuts which he breaks open and eats intermittently throughout the play.
- Dr. Mike Saunders: Is in his late forties. He is personally powerful, persuasive and manipulative. He is the chief psychiatrist at the hospital.
- Violet: Is in her late teens. She is rumped, shattered and manipulative, and quite beautiful under it all in a strung out, burned out sort of way. She is Herbert's stepdaughter. She has been a patient in the hospital.
- Author's Note This play is about a lawyer preparing two witnesses to lie. It should be directed with a maximum of speed and humor.

ADAM:

(As the play begins the earliest gray of dawn can be seen out of the windows, but the stage stays completely dark. It is six o'clock in the morning. Out of the dark, comes "ALL RIGHT - WE'LL DO IT AGAIN! DAMN IT! And if you've got to have the nuts put them in the basket!" Then after a beat, "Nature boy" sung by Nat King Cole begins to play up through the words "The greatest thing you ever learn is just to love and be loved in return" at which point several strokes of light cross the window down stage left as an ambulance approaches and eventually enters the building below. In the darkness Adam moves as a shadow at the window. Adam's shadow is wielding a gun. The song ends before the action occurs. After Adam has watched the ambulance enter the building below, he paces and then stops and yells at the top of his lungs and begins pacing again in the dark. A police radio on the doctor's desk gives off intermittent crackling reports. The telephone begins to ring on Dr. Saunders' desk. The answering machine picks up and Dr. Saunders' voice speaks the recorded message in a jovial, up beat, self-mocking tone.)

Hi, Welcome to Dr. Saunders' personal hot line:

If you are obsessive-compulsive, please press 1 repeatedly.

If you are co-dependent, please ask someone to press 2.

If you have multiple personalities, please press 3, 4, 5, and 6.

And for the rest of you poor undiagnosed people leave your message after the beep.

(Adam goes over to the desk and answers the phone.) Hello? *(Beat)* Yes, right above where the ambulance just entered. Dr. Saunders said he would be meeting you at his office? Good. *(Beat)* Right above you, yes. Just go through the doors and walk up the one flight of stairs. Did Dr. Saunders say he would be meeting you now? Good. *(Adam hangs up the phone and turns the police radio off quietly. He settles into the chair at the desk, holds the gun steady and aimed at the rear, up stage door, and waits. The up stage door to the waiting room*

opens slightly and a thin sliver of light cuts into the dark room. Herbert peeks through the door into the darkness for a long moment. He observes what he can see of the place, runs his hands along the inside wall to try to find the light switch and then after it is clearly established that the place frightens him he pulls his head back and shuts the door behind him and there is another long pause with the door closed. Adam slowly begins to put his feet on the floor and keeps the gun steady, pointed at the door. Herbert peeks his head in again and with a major act of courage he steps inside and shuts the door behind him. Herbert gathers himself once inside the room and starts groping along the walls looking for the light. He is tripping on the toys on the floor as he does. As Herbert turns on the light, Adam stumbles as he tries to stand up and the gun in his hand goes off and breaks a pane of the window across from him. Throughout the play Herbert reaches into his pocket and breaks open pistachio nuts, eats them and drops the shells on the floor rather than putting them in the waste paper basket.)

HERBERT:

(Herbert bolts for the door.) Oh my God.

ADAM:

(Stamping his feet in anger.) God damn it! *(Leveling the gun at Herbert.)*

HERBERT:

I guess this isn't Dr. Saunders' office?

ADAM:

Stay right there!

HERBERT:

(Holding up his hands in total fright.) ...Wait I have last words!

ADAM:

(Yelling at Herbert) God damn it. ...Why does a shrink need a hair trigger?

HERBERT:

(Stammering) I don't know. Yes I do. Give me a hint? ...You want me to guess? Please. Please. Please. I don't want to be a hostage!

ADAM:

Mr. Herbert?

HERBERT:

Who?

ADAM:

Mr. Herbert?

HERBERT:

You know my name?

ADAM:

Yes.

HERBERT:

How do you know my name?

ADAM:

Violet was just brought in here?

HERBERT:

You also know my daughter's name?

ADAM:

You're the court reporter for Judge Elliott.

HERBERT:

You know where I work?

ADAM:

I recognize you.

HERBERT:

Why do you recognize me?

ADAM:*(Beat)* I'm in love with your daughter!**HERBERT:**

You are? Oh shit! *(Herbert considers the comments and in an instant he has pulled the headphones that are around his neck up to his ears and assumes a fetal position in an effort to allow himself to believe he is invisible. He starts humming to himself and rocking back and forth with the headphones on his head.)* Dum-Dee-Dum-Dee...

ADAM:

You're listening to Nat King Cole, aren't you?

HERBERT:

What?

ADAM:

It's what you recorded last night? *(Breaking character)* Look, if you've got to have the nuts put them in the basket.

HERBERT:

(Pointing to his headset.) I'm, sorry I'm listening to Nat King Cole right now.

ADAM:*(Approaching him with the gun still in his hand.)* I want to help!**HERBERT:***(Looking up but not listening.)* Okay.**ADAM:***(Screaming)* You gotta get her outta here!**HERBERT:***(Rocking back and forth as he listens to his headphones.)* Okay.**ADAM:**

(Screaming) You gotta get her outta here right now! Do you understand?

HERBERT:

Sure.

ADAM:

Answer me one thing?

HERBERT:

(Louder) Dummed-Dee-Dummed-Dee-Dummed... *(He rocks back and forth hoping to become autistic and then he has a hopeful thought and takes off his headphones and addresses Adam.)* Oh, I get it! I understand now! *(Beat)* They want you to do that in here!

ADAM:

What?

HERBERT:

Shoot out the windows?

ADAM:

No. No. It was in his desk! It's a hair trigger! *(Throwing his hands up in the air.)* This is a good example! I touch it. It turns to shit. I mean yesterday

there is this parking meter...

HERBERT:

You were out yesterday?

ADAM:

Yes.

HERBERT:

You were?

ADAM:

Don't worry about it. I'm cured. You want to see? *(He goes over to the doctor's desk.)* They point at me and say "see -he was brought in here and now he's almost got a job..." I'm a statistic in a federal program.

HERBERT:

That's good... that you've almost got a job...

ADAM:

I recognized your address on the police radio. It's lover's lane.

HERBERT:

I don't live on lover's lane.

ADAM:

It's that dead end street.

HERBERT:

So it's a dead end street that doesn't mean it's lover's lane.

ADAM:

Okay, that was cute, but what are we doing here?

HERBERT:

Remembering?

ADAM:

So start remembering.

HERBERT:

Is it my fault that I keep forgetting what I am remembering?

ADAM:

Is it really a dead end street?

HERBERT:

I definitely remember I lived on Lover's Land. *(Beat)* For sure.

ADAM:

Okay, but she's not your real daughter!

HERBERT:

Yes she is.

ADAM:

I mean you married her mom.

HERBERT:

She is my real daughter.

ADAM:

I mean she's not your natural daughter.

HERBERT:

That doesn't matter.

ADAM:

Okay, but how would I know that if I didn't know her.

HERBERT:

(Beat) Well... I'll bet she doesn't like you.

ADAM:

I know... I don't have too much going for me.

HERBERT:

(Sarcastic and taking the advantage to go on the attack.) I don't know, you look like a natural with fire arms.

ADAM:

Mr. Herbert, don't say that.

HERBERT:

So, you been in here a long time?

ADAM:

Three days.

HERBERT:

(Sarcastic) Hey and you're cured already. That's great!

ADAM:

Didn't Violet tell you about me? About two weeks ago. She was hitch'n up Charles Street. It was two a.m. I brought her home to you. You were waiting up for her. I saw you hug her in the doorway.

HERBERT:

I was worried. I was waiting by the window. What's wrong with that?

ADAM:

Don't worry. She loves you very much.

HERBERT:

Does she?

ADAM:

Yes.

HERBERT:

(Beat) She won't eat.

ADAM:

That can't be your fault, is it?

HERBERT:

I thought maybe it is my fault.

ADAM:

Why?

HERBERT:

She locked the door and she wouldn't come out. I cooked apple pies. I put them outside her room and I called her name and then I took it all away and I made sugar cookies and put them on a tray with a glass of milk. She cut her wrists and the blood ran out from under the door. Who is this Dr. Saunders?

ADAM:

You don't know?

HERBERT:

He is the new head doctor in this hospital. That's what they told me.

ADAM:

Is he Violet's doctor?

HERBERT:

They gave me this number.

ADAM:

Were you in court yesterday?

HERBERT:

I can't remember.

ADAM:

(Exploding) You don't know? *(He regains himself.)* Civil case. Dr. Saunders said that the Plaintiff had been raped. The Plaintiff was twenty-six years old but she said that the rape had occurred twenty years ago. *(Breaking character.)* Look! If you've got to have the nuts put them in the basket!

HERBERT:

That's horrible.

ADAM:

No wait.

HERBERT:

I hope they kill the bastard.

ADAM:

Dr. Saunders said he got the victim to remember because she had been repressing her memory of it.

HERBERT:

Good for him.

ADAM:

But you don't remember me?

HERBERT:

What does that have to do with some man raping a little girl? I can't remember what I had for lunch yesterday.

ADAM:

Are you repressing it?

HERBERT:

My lunch?

ADAM:

Yes.

HERBERT:

Was it pepperoni?

ADAM:

No! It's all bull shit!

HERBERT:

My lunch?

ADAM:

No, that I was ever sick!

HERBERT:

I know! Your doctor said you were cured in three days... Who is your doctor?

ADAM:

Dr. Saunders.

HERBERT:

My daughter's doctor!

ADAM:

Yes.

HERBERT:

Oh my God! *(He fingers his headphones and contemplates putting them on again.)*

ADAM:

Don't you take it down in court each day? ..."Battered spouse syndrome", "urban fear syndrome", "over eating syndrome", "failure to file taxes syndrome", "football widow syndrome". Saunders or some other shrink testifies and the lawyers get them off all the time. You know its all crap. You want to see how it works? Watch. *(He goes over to the bookshelf and starts pulling out books.)* Look at the books he has: Michelle Remembers, (1980); Thou Shalt Not Be Aware: Society's Betrayal of the Child by Alice Miller (1989); The Assault on Truth: Freud's Suppression of the Seduction Theory, Jeffrey M. Masson. (1984). Look at the marker here: *(He opens the book and reads.)* Renee Fredrickson, Repressed Memories: A Journey of Recovery from Sexual Abuse. Look at this. This is a quote! "Avoid being tentative about your repressed memories. Do not just tell them; express them as truth. If months or years down the road, you find you are mistaken about details, you can always apologize and set the record straight."

HERBERT:

But that's all new stuff!

ADAM:

Yea, we don't want no old stuff.

HERBERT:

No, we don't want no old stuff?

ADAM:

No.

HERBERT:

Well that's good then?

ADAM:

So why does he need a gun?

(The lights go out on Dr. Saunders' office.)

ACT I, SCENE II

(The lights come back on up stage, in the doctor's office. Dr. Saunders enters and gets set to interview Violet. Herbert sits in the outer office with his headphone on and Adam is in the shadows.)

DR. SAUNDERS:

(Turning to Violet who has entered into the inner office.) Have a seat. Get comfortable. I just want to start with a brief history. You don't mind, do you? This is how we get to know each other. Name? *(He takes notes when he feels it relevant.)*

VIOLET:

Violet.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Last name?

VIOLET:

It's "Zero".

DR. SAUNDERS:

Date of birth?

VIOLET:

July 4, 1976.

DR. SAUNDERS:

The Bi-centennial?

VIOLET:

The fuck'n fourth of July. *(Beat)* About two weeks before Thanksgiving.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Date of conception.

HERBERT:

(From the outer office jumps to his feet - and beginning to sing out loud..) "Unforgettable ... That's what you are..." *(He bursts into laughter - totally self-consumed with his headset on.)*

VIOLET:

(Looking out at the sound of her stepfather in the outer office.) Does he have to be out there?

DR. SAUNDERS:

Yes.

VIOLET:

Why?

DR. SAUNDERS:

Because he is your stepfather.

VIOLET:

Is that why?

DR. SAUNDERS:

Does his laughter frighten you? When was the first time you heard that laughter?

VIOLET:

I don't know.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Did you remember "when" last night?

VIOLET:

I don't know.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Before the ambulance came?

VIOLET:

I think so.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Are you sure?

VIOLET:

I think so. Like an echo.

DR. SAUNDERS:

This is very important, Violet. You see we are trying to discover what may be troubling you. Do you understand?

VIOLET:

Yes, I think so.

DR. SAUNDERS:

When was the first time? When did you hear it first? Go back. Go way back.

VIOLET:

I don't know if I can.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Do the best you can. Give me a place.

VIOLET:

In the house.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Yes.

VIOLET:

After my bath.

DR. SAUNDERS:

And you were how old?

VIOLET:

Five or six?

DR. SAUNDERS:

Go on.

VIOLET:

I can't remember.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Take your time.

VIOLET:

I'm trying.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Have you ever tried to remember before?

VIOLET:

No.

DR. SAUNDERS:

You see, Violet, the laughter may be a clue. The mystery we have here is why you would try to kill yourself. We need clues. The laughter may be a clue. You heard it tonight. You recognize that it troubles you. We have

identified it as your stepfather's laugh and it sounds like you first heard that laugh when you were five or six. It may be that that laugh is only part of a traumatic event which happened back when you were just five or six? Try and remember - where in your house...

VIOLET:

A man came into my room when I was almost asleep.

DR. SAUNDERS:

And what did that man do?

VIOLET:

He sat on the floor and held out his hand to me.

DR. SAUNDERS:

What did he say.

VIOLET:

He said he loved me.

DR. SAUNDERS:

And what else?

VIOLET:

He wanted to hug me.

DR. SAUNDERS:

And what did you do?

VIOLET:

I didn't want him to hug me?

DR. SAUNDERS:

Why?

VIOLET:

He was a stranger.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Did he touch you?

VIOLET:

Yes.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Where?

VIOLET:

On my face.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Where else?

VIOLET:

On my mouth.

DR. SAUNDERS:

What did he do?

VIOLET:

He kissed me.

DR. SAUNDERS:

What did you do?

VIOLET:

I scratched his face.

DR. SAUNDERS:

And what did he do?

VIOLET:

He laughed that laugh for the first time...

DR. SAUNDERS:

That's good Violet. That is very good. You have real courage. You see what we want to do is get that other thing... the thing that has been covered up by the laughter... If you can get it out into the fresh air. Into the light. When you scratched his face what did the man do?

VIOLET:

I grabbed his hands.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Where were his hands.

VIOLET:

I don't know.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Try to remember.

VIOLET:

On me.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Where?

VIOLET:

On my body.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Where?

VIOLET:

In my hands - all around me.

DR. SAUNDERS:

What did he do?

VIOLET:

He ran my hands around my body.

DR. SAUNDERS:

And what did you do?

VIOLET:

I tried to push him away.

DR. SAUNDERS:

And then?

VIOLET:

I can't remember.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Try.

VIOLET:

I can't.

DR. SAUNDERS:

You see you are your own detective in this process. You alone can solve the mystery of troubles. Think of that house you used to live in when your family moved out you left things in there - we just want to go back in and get

them out and bring them out into the fresh air. Do you understand?

VIOLET:

Okay.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Try to imagine a lock.

VIOLET:

A lock?

DR. SAUNDERS:

And a key. Now if you want to - turn the key.

VIOLET:

Why?

DR. SAUNDERS:

Something is keeping you from eating. Something drove you to try to kill yourself tonight. As your doctor, I am trying to help you find if there is a connection between the two. You see the eating disorder is an odd game of control when often a patient has lost control for some other reason. But also deep within the attempt at control manifested in eating disorders is often a profound self-hatred. That is at the root of this thing, isn't it? You're not eating, are you?

VIOLET:

No.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Why?

VIOLET:

I don't know.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Unlock the key. Let it out. Where were his hands on you?

VIOLET:

I don't know.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Where were his hands and why were you pushing him away?

VIOLET:

On my night gown?

DR. SAUNDERS:

Did he try to get under your night gown?

VIOLET:

I tried to keep him from going into my nightgown.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Could you?

VIOLET:

No.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Try hard to remember. I know it is scary.

VIOLET:

I think I screamed and nobody answered. Nobody ever answers. He just does what he wants and my mother doesn't protect me. No one will ever look at me after this if they knew. Would you touch me if you knew? He rubbed his hands all over me! And touched his fingers in my mouth - he did worst things than that!

DR. SAUNDERS:

Where did he touch you?

VIOLET:

He didn't.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Where did he touch you?

VIOLET:

I can't say it.

DR. SAUNDERS:

You have to be very accurate.

VIOLET:

I don't know!

DR. SAUNDERS:

You have to say it.

VIOLET:

I can't.

DR. SAUNDERS:

I can't help you then.

VIOLET:

I can't remember!

DR. SAUNDERS:

Try to picture it. Shut your eyes. What room of the house did this happen in?

VIOLET:

My room.

DR. SAUNDERS:

What do you see?

VIOLET:

The curtains are closed and the bathroom light is on down the hall.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Where were you?

VIOLET:

Under the covers.

DR. SAUNDERS:

What do you hear?

VIOLET:

He is coughing.

DR. SAUNDERS:

He's coughing? Don't you mean he's laughing?

VIOLET:

Laughing?

DR. SAUNDERS:

How old are you?

VIOLET:

Five or six.

DR. SAUNDERS:

How do you know?

VIOLET:

Herbert had just come to live with Momma.

DR. SAUNDERS:

After you heard the laughing what did you feel?

VIOLET:

I felt so afraid.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Why?

VIOLET:

He would come into my room and hug me.

DR. SAUNDERS:

What did you do?

VIOLET:

I always pretended to be asleep.

DR. SAUNDERS:

He had done this before?

VIOLET:

Yes. Before he moved in he would come in before he went home at night.

DR. SAUNDERS:

What happened this night?

VIOLET:I tried to stay asleep but he hurt me. *(She starts to cry.)***DR. SAUNDERS:**

How did he hurt you?

VIOLET:

He hurt me and I screamed and he hit me and told me not to tell anybody and when I opened my eyes he had his pants off and lay down on me and covered my mouth so I couldn't scream and when he was finished with me he told me not to tell anybody.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Do you remember anything else?

VIOLET:

No.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Look around the room. Anything?

VIOLET:

By the door...

DR. SAUNDERS:

Who is by the door?

VIOLET:

Someone holding something in their arms.

DR. SAUNDERS:

What is it?

VIOLET:

I don't know.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Yes you do.

VIOLET:

(Bursts into tears.) She is holding my teddy bear.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Look back and tell me who is by the door... *(Violet sobs more violently.)*
Is it your Mother?

VIOLET:

(Pleading with Dr. Saunders.) Can't I have a rest? *(Dr. Saunders stops and stares at Violet for a moment and then relents.)*

DR. SAUNDERS:

You sure you want a rest?

VIOLET:

Yes please. Everything is coming at me so fast. I just want to go back to my room for a while?

(The lights go out on the main office.)

ACT I, SCENE III

The lights come back on. Dr. Saunders is sitting in the inner office. Herbert is sitting in the waiting room with his headset on and Adam sits next to him, looking at him.

HERBERT:

(He looks at Adam who is sitting in the waiting room with him.) No! No! No! *(He takes a deep breath and screams as loud as he can. It is a long disturbing animal scream. Beat. He takes off the headphones.)* Primal scream therapy. *(Beat)* Nat just killed me again! *(He sings)* "This he said to me: The greatest thing you ever learn is just to love and be loved in return." But I can handle it. I'm go'n for a walk. *(He gets up and starts to leave.)*

DR. SAUNDERS:

(Dr. Saunders exits the inner office and goes over to Herbert.) Would you mind coming in here? *(Dr. Saunders moves Herbert toward his inner office.)*

HERBERT:

Me? *(Dr. Saunders goes over to Herbert. Adam sees his chance and goes into the inner office and heads for Dr. Saunders' desk and opens the drawer. Adam, now alone in the inner office, pulls the gun out of Dr. Saunders' drawer and holds it in his hand.)* Will this help Violet?

DR. SAUNDERS:

Yes. *(Breaking character.)* Who's gonna clean up the shells? We've been asking you to put the fuck'n nuts in the basket!

HERBERT:

She is my own child.

DR. SAUNDERS:

I understand.

HERBERT:

(Still in the up stage waiting room with Dr. Saunders.) I don't want her unhappy. *(Adam, down stage, is handling the gun at Dr. Saunders' desk. Adam closes the chamber of the gun and puts something in his pocket and holds the feel of the gun in his hand and then puts it back in the drawer.)*

DR. SAUNDERS:

(To Herbert) Let's go in my office and then I would like to ask you some questions.

HERBERT:

(As he enters Dr. Saunders' office.) I used to make lemonade. I had this big tray. *(Herbert is very frightened as he is about to be interviewed.)* There were all these little girls in the neighborhood. When I'd see them come over I'd make it with fresh lemons and bring it out. They were all my little girls. *(He sits down but does not relax.)* I had no children in the neighborhood before them.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Did the "girls" move in before you adopted Violet?

HERBERT:

(He is looking all around. He is confused and frightened.) Nope. Same neighbors until the "girls" moved in - then different neighbors - because the girls moved in... I'm going to take it real slow. I hope you won't be offended.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Of course not. Tell me about the adoption.

HERBERT:

The first two weeks after we got her I'd leave my new wife's bed and I slept on the floor next to Violet's bed. When she's wake up I'd take her over to the window and rock her back and forth until she would go back to sleep. The moonlight would keep us cool in the window and the darkness of the room was all around us.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Would you say she changed your life?

HERBERT:

Oh yea.

DR. SAUNDERS:

How?

HERBERT:

I don't know. Her mother and her were truly a gift to me from God Almighty.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Can you explain it?

HERBERT:

I can't explain it. It's just I didn't have anything before Violet and her mother.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Why are you being defensive?

HERBERT:

I'm not.

DR. SAUNDERS:

I'm just trying to take a simple history.

HERBERT:

Excuse me?

DR. SAUNDERS:

I think you are playing "hide the point."

HERBERT:

I don't have a point.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Why are you being so defensive?

HERBERT:

I'm frightened. I'm scared.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Really?

HERBERT:

I wake up and my daughter - is sick and then I'm surrounded by helicopters and doctors and shrinks. Violet is why I work. Now you keep me in waiting rooms and I can't go see her and I'm scared. Why wouldn't you let me see her last night?

DR. SAUNDERS:

Don't you know what you are asking?

HERBERT:

You didn't think it would be prudent?

DR. SAUNDERS:

I'm sorry to have frightened you. I apologize but your daughter looked into my eyes and said that from the age of five you have been "abusing" her.

HERBERT:

What does "abusing" mean?

DR. SAUNDERS:

You've transcribed the word before? You know how to spell it?

HERBERT:

I never hurt her.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Are you sure?

HERBERT:

I would never hurt her.

DR. SAUNDERS:

She says that you touched her.

HERBERT:

Of course I touched her.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Tell me about it.

HERBERT:

I never touched her private parts.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Never?

HERBERT:

No.

DR. SAUNDERS:

You changed her diapers?

HERBERT:

But I never touched her private parts.

DR. SAUNDERS:

You've transcribed these cases in court?

HERBERT:

Yes.

DR. SAUNDERS:

You know what "denial" is?

HERBERT:

Blocking things out?

DR. SAUNDERS:

Are you blocking out?

HERBERT:

Nothing.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Did you ever watch dirty movies?

HERBERT:No. *(Beat)* I never watched them. And. And. They were not dirty.**DR. SAUNDERS:**

Do you want to help Violet?

HERBERT:

Yes.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Imagine what happened. Release it through imagination.

HERBERT:

I can't.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Go on.

HERBERT:

I can't.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Shut your eyes.

HERBERT:

I can't see anything.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Okay, forget it.

HERBERT:

No wait.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Don't make up things. Making up things is not what will help. Forget this. I've got better things to do.

HERBERT:

No. Wait.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Don't blame yourself, it's natural denial. This went on ten - fifteen years ago - forget about it. Do you think she is lying?

HERBERT:No. *(Beat)* She doesn't lie. My child wasn't raised to lie.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Well somebody is lying here.

HERBERT:

No she is not!

DR. SAUNDERS:

Okay.

HERBERT:

If I try to imagine, will it help?

DR. SAUNDERS:

It might.

HERBERT:

(Beat) I see myself coming into a room that is filling with moonlight. I am looking at her. *(He starts rocking back and forth as if in a trance.)* I take my bathrobe off. I'm standing there naked. I take her clothes off. She is looking back at me. She is frightened. *(Violet enters with an attendant and stands at the door from the hospital and watches out of sight.)*

DR. SAUNDERS:

How old is she?

HERBERT:

Maybe five or six.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Five?

HERBERT:

...I get into bed with her. I run my hands over her and then I take her hand. *(He screams a horrified and frightening scream.)* I can't do this.

VIOLET:

(Standing at the door and crying violently.) I remember who was at the door. And they would go outside with me...

ADAM:

(Adam has reached back into the desk drawer and taken the gun out of it and is pointing it at Dr. Saunders.) Stop this.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Stop what Adam?

ADAM:

Stop all of this!

DR. SAUNDERS:

Why?

ADAM:

It will be over!

DR. SAUNDERS:

Give me the gun.

ADAM:

They will never be able to love each other again.

DR. SAUNDERS:

(Picking up the phone and dialing 911.) Hello. This is Dr. Saunders.

ADAM:

Back away from the phone.

DR. SAUNDERS:

(Still on the phone.) This is an Emergency...

ADAM:

Hang up the phone. *(To Herbert and Violet.)* Run!

DR. SAUNDERS:

This is an Emergency! *(Adam charges the phone and rips it out of the wall.)*

ADAM:

(To Herbert and Violet.) You two will never be able to love each other again. Run!

DR. SAUNDERS:

The police will find you. Give me the gun.

ADAM:

(To Violet.) Go! *(Pointing at Herbert.)* Look at him. He could never hurt you. Look at him he loves you like no other person in the world.

VIOLET:

I don't want to go.

ADAM:

Don't let them make you selfish. Selfish is never happy. Go. Go. Go!

VIOLET:

I am sick. I admit it. That's the first step, isn't it?

ADAM:

Think about your father. He tried so hard. Think about your mother...

VIOLET:

He hurt me.

ADAM:

No, he didn't. Look at him. He never hurt anybody. You people don't have to be here!

VIOLET:

Then why do I remember these things?

ADAM:

You don't have to be here! You two should both be going to baseball games together. Violet, you should be talking to your father about boyfriends and bringing them home to meet him. Run. Run out of here. Go. Please. All you will think about is "Am I getting better?" "Am I fixating?" "Am I transferring?" Run! There is no forgiveness after this. *(Pointing at Dr. Saunders.)* He is changing your past forever. Herbert, is this how you want to spend the money you saved for your daughter?

HERBERT:

(Unintentional funny line.) It's okay... I'm in an HMO.

ADAM:

No. No. No. Run. Do you remember hurting your daughter?

HERBERT:

I can't remember hurting my daughter.

ADAM:

What if it didn't happen? Isn't that possible?

DR. SAUNDERS:

Aren't you talking about you and your parents, Adam?

ADAM:

No!

DR. SAUNDERS:

I want to help you Adam.

ADAM:

Why? *(Sarcastic humor)* I don't have insurance. *(Pointing the gun at Dr. Saunders.)*

DR. SAUNDERS:

Adam, I want to help you. Just admit that you were talking about your parents. This is just repression. How far will you go to keep your secret? You have had your catharsis. This is good. Now give me the gun.

ADAM:

(Addressing Dr. Saunders as he points the gun at his own head.) Why do you believe Violet? ...All because you unlocked some hidden memory they didn't know they had?

DR. SAUNDERS:

In my professional opinion yes! *(Beat)* Hand me the gun Adam.

ADAM:

No. The truth is you're nuts! *(Addressing everybody but Dr. Saunders.)* I'm going to prove it to you. *(Addressing Dr. Saunders)* I'm going to prove that you don't know anything about my psychology and you don't know about theirs either! *(Turning to the others.)* I'm going to free you! It doesn't matter what happens to me. *(He moves toward Dr. Saunders.)* Okay Doctor, I want your professional opinion and then I'm going to prove that its wrong. *(Flashing lights of police cars and ambulances strobe through the windows as they did in the first moments of the play.)*

DR. SAUNDERS:

(Reaching out for the gun.) Give me the gun!

ADAM:

In your professional opinion, will I pull this trigger?

DR. SAUNDERS:

Adam, you are too narcissistic to blow your head off with a hand gun and further, given your psychological history, what you are doing is transferring your anger at me. That's my opinion. Now the police are on their way. Once they come in here it will be too late. Give me the gun.

ADAM:

No. Let me do it exactly the way I heard them ask you when I saw you testify in court. *(He gets ready, steadies his feet and asks the formal opinion mouthing it as exactly as he can remember.)* Dr. Saunders, do you have an opinion based on a reasonable professional probability as to whether I will pull the trigger.

DR. SAUNDERS:

Yes, I do.

ADAM:

Okay. What is your professional opinion based on your training and your knowledge of my files and my history and the interviews of me.

DR. SAUNDERS:

No. You don't have the balls.

ADAM:

Surprise. *(Beat)* You are wrong! *(Adam pulls the trigger. The gun does not go off.)*

DR. SAUNDERS:

Jesus Christ. *(Dr. Saunders snatches the gun out of Adam's hand and levels it at Adam.)*

ADAM:

At least admit your opinion was wrong.

DR. SAUNDERS:

(Leveling the gun at Adam.) No.

ADAM:

Did I pull the trigger?

DR. SAUNDERS:

Yes, but...

ADAM:

But what?

DR. SAUNDERS:

You didn't kill yourself. .

ADAM:

What do you want, an apology?

DR. SAUNDERS:

No. I was right.

ADAM:

So the damn gun, didn't go off - The question was - did I intend to kill myself?

DR. SAUNDERS:

(Exploding) You pulled the Goddamn trigger, didn't you?

ADAM:

(Threatening Dr. Saunders.) But - we don't have any answer yet, do we Doctor? What if I knew the gun would not go off? Would that change your opinion?

DR. SAUNDERS:

(To Adam) No!

ADAM:

But how will you ever know what my intentions were? Was it an accident or did I really mean to do it? You can't figure it out, can you? Not with the information you have, can you? But I'm coming at you now. Maybe I am violent. Maybe I'm not narcissistic either. Maybe I am going to kill you now for what you have done to these people who came to you for help... or at least die trying. Think! Think! Think! What is your professional opinion? *(He starts toward Dr. Saunders and Dr. Saunders empties the gun at Adam but there are five clicks and the gun does not go off. Adam stops in his tracks just before he reaches Dr. Saunders.)* See that proves it! Think about it Dr. Saunders! *(Addressing the others.)* I am not your victim! I do not choose to be your victim! Look at me! *(Screaming)* Look! *(Adam opens his hand and the bullets of the gun drop on the floor.)* First, you thought I wouldn't kill myself, then you thought I would kill you! But in your professional opinion twice you were wrong! Twice! Within a minute. Admit it! You are the egocentric manipulator of these people. You will change their past to prove your purpose. They will be puppets to your purpose...

DR. SAUNDERS:

(Beat) That's it? *(First, Dr. Saunders starts to laugh as he looks around at the others and invites them to join in laughing; and then the attendant starts to laugh and then Herbert and Violet.)* Adam, tell me, what the hell does that prove? We'll see who's opinion holds up in court. *(Adam knocks out the lights in the inner office leaving only the strobe lights outside the window. Adam runs for the door up stage in the waiting room and flips on the lights. The atmosphere is changed. Everyone stops in their tracks and looks at Adam.)*

MALCOLM JONES, ESQ./ (ADAM):

(Malcolm Jones, Esquire stops being Adam. He is rolling down his sleeves and taking charge as he speaks. He is completely different then before. He has stopped playing the role of Adam.) Okay? Is that how it went down? *(He is now*

completely flushed with his perceived success and is caricatured as a little Napoleon strutting around the stage.) It's based as best as we all could remember on Dr. Saunders' deposition - right? *(Herbert, Violet and Dr. Saunders all nod yes.)* Now we've all spent all day on this. *(Pointing at Herbert and Violet.)* Nobody took your depositions. Nobody expected you guys to get summonsed. It's got to be clean and its got to be the truth. Right? *(Herbert and Violet and Dr. Saunders all nod yes.)* I'm serious. We have done everything we can to prepare. All we want from you is the truth - you understand? *(They all nod again.)* Three years ago is a long time, but we have gone through calendars, reports, Dr. Saunders' deposition, everything to recreate what happened on this one day - did we get it close to right? *(He breaks into a big smile.)* Okay, Herbert and Violet, listen to me. I don't know why the lawyer on the other side summonsed you. It's a suicide case so Adam sure isn't going to testify. He's got nothing. He can't win so he summons you two - okay? Adam run out of here kills himself down in his room before the cops can stop him. It's not Dr. Saunders' fault. He was psychotic. He didn't take his medication. He threatened to kill Dr. Saunders for Christ sake - All this crap about "repressed memory treatment causing the suicide is just some jackass plaintiff's lawyer looking for a "cause of action." It's all bull shit. Bull shit through and through. Now if the lawyer on the other side asks you if I talked to you about your testimony what will you say?

HERBERT AND VIOLET:

No.

MALCOLM JONES, ESQ./ (ADAM):

Wrong! I did, didn't I? I told you to tell the truth - right?

HERBERT AND VIOLET:

Yea. *(Both saying the same line but at slightly different times.)* I forgot. Sorry.

MALCOLM JONES, ESQ./ (ADAM):

Don't forget. Dr. Saunders' professional life is on the line here. *(They both nod.)* He saved your relationship, right? Didn't you both tell me that? *(He*

goes back into the main office and pulls out his coat from the closet and begins to put it on.) Your accurate recollection is everything. And for Christsake when they ask you, tell them: *(Pointing at Herbert)* "convicted" - say it loud - "Child abuse two years ago" - in recovery - on parole - because of Dr. Saunders you are now in recovery and reconciled with your daughter, right? *(To Violet.)* Say it loud and clear - right! *(She nods)* Okay. Now I'm looking out for Dr. Saunders. You all know that? *(They nod yes.)* And for you my good doctor *(To Dr. Saunders as he slaps him gently on the back.)* Don't worry until I tell you to - okay? And I'm not telling you to worry. You got that? *(Dr. Saunders smiles and nods.)* Any questions? With this testimony - We show up. We win. You hear me, Doc? *(Dr. Saunders nods and smiles.)* Good. *(To Herbert)* Herbert, what the hell is this nut fetish? You're supposed to eat these things at baseballs games and no where else. You've got to clean up these fuck'n nuts before you go home? I'm supposed to clean up after you? *(Pointing over to Dr. Saunders.)* This guy is your savior for Christ sake. You are sitting in his office not in some sorry ass bleacher seat.

DR. SAUNDERS:

(Extends his hand to Malcolm Jones, Esq.) Great job. No one can ever say I caused the death of one of my patients and get away with it! I have total confidence in you tomorrow. I just want to say formally that I was worried when this case was brought, but you read the materials and understood our philosophy here. No secrets. Full disclosure. Nobody will ever say I killed one of my patients! All this hospital's legal work, if you want it, is coming your way.

VIOLET:

(To Dr. Saunders.) Can I ask one stupid question that struck me as funny while we were just doing this?

DR. SAUNDERS:

(Smiling) Go ahead. There are no stupid questions.

VIOLET:

Did you have a gun in your office?

HERBERT:

(Almost to himself.) I don't remember the gun.

VIOLET:

(To Herbert as she is surprised by his recollection.) You don't remember the gun either?

DR. SAUNDERS:

It was there. To protect me against people like Adam. That's why.

VIOLET:

(To Dr. Saunders) He threatened you with a gun?

DR. SAUNDERS:

Yes. It was in my desk drawer.

HERBERT:

(Pointing to the gun.) And that's the gun?

DR. SAUNDERS:

Of course it is. Wait a minute.

VIOLET:

I don't remember the gun.

MALCOLM JONES, ESQ./ (ADAM):

Do we have a problem here? Do we? I don't think so. I'm sure we don't. *(As he puts on his coat and prepares to exit.)* Well one thing we know for sure, we've got a judge. Herbert, Violet, I want you all and Dr. Saunders to line up on the curb at 8:30 a.m. sharp so we get there on time. This judge wants everybody there on time and since *(pointing at Herbert and Violet)* you both have been summonsed by the plaintiff this judge would default us if we don't get there on time so get a good night's sleep - both of you. Trust me, all we have to do is get there on time. Okay? *(Looks at his watch as he starts to exit,*

he calls back over his shoulder to Dr. Saunders.) Doctor, I'll meet you at the restaurant in fifteen... *(Both Herbert and Violet are side by side and looking out in the audience throughout the rest of the play.)*

VIOLET:

I don't remember the gun...

HERBERT:

I don't remember the gun...

VIOLET:

I remember him going back to his room...

HERBERT:

He was crying...

VIOLET:

Crying and saying he would be a "prisoner without the truth" - Violently crying - No gun though? Daddy? Did I tell the truth?

HERBERT:

Oh Violet, I raised you to tell the truth.

VIOLET:

But you still don't remember? *(She reaches out to him.)*

HERBERT:

You told the truth - it's okay. I went to jail for that.

VIOLET:

But if I don't remember now?

HERBERT:

(Circling around behind her and putting his hands on her shoulders.) No, Violet you are a good girl. I raised you to tell the truth. It's over now.

VIOLET:

I don't remember the gun.

HERBERT:

Shhh.... I love you Violet, don't think about it anymore.

MALCOLM JONES, ESQ./ (ADAM):

(Stamps over and turns each light switch off one by one until full darkness fills the stage and then out of the darkness he yells: "ALL RIGHT - WE'LL DO IT AGAIN!" And the first notes of "Nature Boy" begins and after the song finishes the lights come up.)

End Of Play