

Self-Storage

a play by
David Bucci

© 2002 David Bucci
32 Ave B #7
New York, NY 10009
212.598.9339
davidbucci@aol.com
www.davidbucci.com

Representation:
Rosenstone/Wender 38 E. 29th St. 10th floor
New York, NY 10016
212.725.9445

SELF STORAGE

By David Bucci

CHARACTERS:

Penelope - a serious young woman raised by her father (18-22)

Victor - drifter, an independent contractor, a nervous man (30s)

Hollis - Penelope's father, a landlord, an unreasonable man
(40s-50s)

Wretch - very slightly de-formed (30s)

Chintzy - pawn shop puppetmaster (40s-50s)

SET:

The set is short row of concrete bunker style self-storage spaces with rolling metal doors. At least three. The set is barren and utilitarian.

TIME:

None.

Pauses last for a count of five.

1.

(The hiss and pops of a scratchy phonographic record begin to play. PENELOPE shows VICTOR the self-storage space. PENELOPE has a clipboard.)

PENELOPE

I would strongly suggest wrapping all your personal effects in plastic and putting them up on blocks.

pause

VICTOR

I have plenty of money, you know. You don't have to worry about me. I have several letters of reference: personal as well as industrial. On many occasions I've been referred to as a "safe risk." So, you know, are you gonna need to run a credit check now or something?

PENELOPE

These storage units get flooded a lot. You must take responsibility for your own water damage.

VICTOR

Oh, ah, yeah. That's okay. I like a challenge. I'm handy. I'm very prompt. I just like people, that's all. You know? I'm a nice man.

PENELOPE

Are you easily frightened?

VICTOR

Who me? Well, I'm not sure. I'm certainly respectful. Yes, respectful, that's kind of like frightened, isn't it?

PENELOPE

This is a dangerous place but I'm not frightened. I can take it. I'm tough.

VICTOR

You're a very brave woman. I have a lot of respect for you. And your mom and pop self-storage business. I understand what you are saying.

PENELOPE

That's very nice to hear.

pause

VICTOR

So, what is the rent again? Not that that's a problem of any kind, you know. Just for my records.

PENELOPE

Rent is sixty-six dollars a month.

VICTOR

That won't be a problem.

PENELOPE

Due on the first.

VICTOR

That won't be a problem. Where shall I deposit my check?

PENELOPE

Money order.

VICTOR

Of course, money order.

PENELOPE

Father and I live in the house on the other side of the parking lot. The payment center is located there.

VICTOR

So you live with your father? You're not married.

PENELOPE

I'm a very busy woman. I have a lot of responsibilities to respond to.

VICTOR

Of course, Ms. Penelope.

PENELOPE

I'm not sure my time would be best spent socially. I mean, I'm sort of important and Father angers easily.

VICTOR

That won't be a problem.

pause

PENELOPE

Sign here.

So what kind of possessions are you intending to self-store? Seasonal clothing? Periodicals? Frightening marionettes of some kind?

VICTOR

Actually. (*inhaling confidently*) I plan to use the space to build a forge.

PENELOPE

A forge? Really?

VICTOR

Yeah. Just the bare bones for me. That's the way I like it. Everything starts from scratch. I like to do things the hard way. It makes me feel a big man.

PENELOPE

I can understand that.

VICTOR

It's what's on the inside that counts to me. But, hey, whatever, that's just who I am. That's not gonna be a problem is it?

PENELOPE

You know what you're doing. You know exactly who you are.

VICTOR

That's exactly what the panel said when they discharged me.

pause

PENELOPE

So, "Victor," what exactly will be involved in this "forge" of yours?

VICTOR

Straight forward kind of stuff. Usual things. A little

sacrifice, a little furnace, a kiln, a couple crucibles, and I got this cardboard box and I got the blower of course. Just the basics. I'm sort of a drifter, so I have less to lose. But, I'm not poor. I hope you can understand that. I'm a safe risk.

PENELOPE

I'd never make sacrifices if I could avoid it.

VICTOR

I like the way you think, Ms. Penelope.

PENELOPE

That's just bad planning.

VICTOR

You know, I bet I could learn a lot from you.

PENELOPE

What kinds of sacrifices are you planning to make in your self-storage space?

VICTOR

None of the activities I would conduct on your premises would, you know, be construed as inappropriate in any way. I'm an independent contractor.

pause

PENELOPE

I certainly hope you realize that there will be no "living" in the self-storage spaces. This zone is strictly non-residential. Those are the laws. I didn't make them up, but I do enforce their implementations. That makes me kind of a big deal here at the self-storage space.

VICTOR

I'm not gonna squat in your self-storage space, all right? I am perfectly capable of providing for my own needs as a person. I'm living in the crotch of luxury. Oh it's true. It's true. See that van in the other side of the parking lot? I live in there.

PENELOPE

You live in a motor vehicle?

VICTOR

That's not going to be a problem now is it?

PENELOPE

Is that a sacrifice you're making?

VICTOR

Not at all. I know tons of people who are doing it. It's the latest thing.

(The record hiss stops.)

VICTOR

What just happened?

PENELOPE

I don't understand you.

VICTOR

It just got quieter. Can you hear it?

PENELOPE

I don't hear anything.

VICTOR

Really? I'm sure it's nothing. Maybe there's a factory nearby. Maybe it just shut down.

PENELOPE

There's nothing nearby. How long have you been in the business of hearing voices in your head?

VICTOR

There's nothing wrong with me. Just so you know.

pause

PENELOPE

Are you a creative type?

VICTOR

Absolutely not, you have nothing to fear. I'm a safe risk.

PENELOPE

That's good. It will probably make Father less uncomfortable.

VICTOR

Do you think your father would be willing to sublet some electricity to me? I have this orange cord that runs out of the van. It plugs in the Tv and the reading lamp. I just need a power socket and I'm ready to go.

PENELOPE

Father is a wonderful man. A wonderful man, somewhat otherly-balanced. Additionally, I believe Father is already using all the electricity that has been allotted to him. He builds and restores analog organs. This apparently requires the maximum about of electricity.

VICTOR

I can see why your father would be so protective of his electricity. I hope we can still be friends?

pause

PENELOPE

I am required to obtain the name of your emergency contact person, in the event of your death and/or damage.

VICTOR

What if, say, I don't have one of those? Could that pose a problem of any kind? 'Cause I definitely wouldn't want to do that.

PENELOPE

(sigh) Well how would you like us to respond to the event of your death and/or damage?

VICTOR

I keep my last will and testament in my boot. You can just check that out. If anything happens. Which it won't. Because I'm a safe risk.

PENELOPE

Writing

"Keeps will in boot."

How long a lease would you like? 10 years? 25 years?

VICTOR

Wow. I really didn't give it much thought. I'm not sure. Can I go month to month? Would that be a problem?

PENELOPE

That will make Father uncomfortable.

VICTOR

It's just that, I sort of move around a lot. I'm interested in the pursuit of the near future.

PENELOPE

Well that sounds like a stupid thing to be interested in, if you don't mind me saying that.

VICTOR

You're very smart, Ms. Penelope. But I bet you hear that a lot.

PENELOPE

Not actually. I don't spend much time in society. Father is a wonderful man, but angers easily.

VICTOR

That must be very difficult for you.

PENELOPE

I am a very busy woman. I have a lot of responsibilities to respond to.

VICTOR

I can make this work. I don't need much to get by.

pause

(HOLLIS enters.)

HOLLIS

Penelope! Penelope what are you up to out here?

PENELOPE

I am introducing a new tenant to his self-storage unit, Father.

HOLLIS

You're renting Storage Unit Two?

VICTOR

Yeah. My name is Victor. I keep to myself. I'm a safe risk.

HOLLIS

A safe risk, huh? I've heard that before. There's no such thing. Risks are inherently fraught with danger. What are you sticking in my storage space?

VICTOR

Nothing, sir, absolutely nothing.

HOLLIS

Right off the top, that's suspicious. What are you talking about? Don't you have important financial records? Don't you have full length fur coats? You're not gonna try to operate some sort of non-profit organization out of my self-storage space, now are you?

VICTOR

Not at all, sir. I'm an independent contractor. I intend to use the space to build a forge. I like to do things the hard way.

HOLLIS

I don't care about you. Just pay your bill and obey the law.
My name is Hollis. You can make your money orders out to me.

VICTOR

Every month, on the first.

HOLLIS

Damn fuckin straight on the first. Penelope, get back to the house.

PENELOPE

Father, I have a lot of responsibilities...

HOLLIS

Go.

PENELOPE

Why?

HOLLIS

Cause I'm the frickin' mayor of the self-storage place, all right?

PENELOPE

Yes, Father.

(PENELOPE exits.)

HOLLIS

Now you listen to me, "Victor". If I didn't need your sixty-six dollars a month, I'd veto your ass so fast that it'd make your ding dong. I got no abidings for creative types. I'm not impressed. You can forge whatever you like in your self-storage

HOLLIS (cont)

space, but I don't want you running around the place, making a ruckus.

VICTOR

That won't be a problem, Mr. Hollis.

HOLLIS

You see that it's not. And there is *no* living in the storage space. It's non-residential.

VICTOR

I'm not a hobo.

HOLLIS

You'd better not be.

VICTOR

I live in a van.

HOLLIS

Oh. New Frontiersman, huh?

VICTOR

Yeah. I guess I'm sort of proud of who I am.

HOLLIS

Well that's a stupid thing to be proud of. I used to be into that shit. Parking in cul de sacs, sleeping in the truck, crapping at the public library. I don't know what you think you're trying to prove. I hope you don't think you're gonna be bumming any power out of my sockets, buster. Because I'm at the limit. I got nothing for you. I'm looking out for me and my little girl, you're just some wretch who gives me money on a regular basis.

VICTOR

I just want to keep to myself and stay out of your way.
Hopefully you'll never see me again. I'll just slide my checks
under the door.

HOLLIS

Money orders.

VICTOR

Of course, money orders.

pause

HOLLIS

If you know what's good for you and your health, you'll keep
your distance from my little girl. Penelope is my most precious
accomplishment and I won't have her corrupted or further
damaged.

VICTOR

Further damaged?

HOLLIS

That girl has a ground-cracking future and we don't need some
hobo squatting in a self-storage space to slap her with some New
Frontier hex. No television, no magazines, no puppet shows.
Her input is to be minimized.

VICTOR

Isn't that her decision to make?

HOLLIS

No it's not. I'm doing her a favor.

VICTOR

Of course you are, Mr. Hollis.

pause

HOLLIS

I should probably let you know, I'm pretty handy with a gun and a knife.

VICTOR

You don't have to worry about me, Mr. Hollis. I know how to behave appropriately.

2.

(The WRETCH stands in a slowly flashing light. He activates a record player. The record hisses.)

HOLLIS' VOICE

That important girl is the perfect excuse for everything. She keeps me here and she keeps me going. I've worked with thousands of organs, and she is far and away, the most complicated and satisfying. My best work.

Before obtaining Penelope, I had my hands full getting fucked by the frontier. I had nothing going on. Pushing around the country. Trying to slap something together on the fly. Stab blindly for a few months. Then back out there. It was pathetic. And also sad.

But I got it all now. Damn fuckin' straight. I finally found it. I'm finally here. I'm a home owner. I'm a motorist. I'm a business owner. I'm a consumer of both goods and services. I'm a responsible man with a legitimate family, damn it. And no one, I say, no one, is gonna stop me from keeping what's mine.

And I'm pretty handy with a gun and a knife. Did I mention that already?

(The record hisses.)

3.

(VICTOR enters, foot bound in bandages. He's carrying a cardboard box. The sound of 66 cats emanates from the box. PENELOPE is standing by Storage Unit One.)

PENELOPE

Do you have cats in that box?

pause

VICTOR

I've always been something of an experimentalist at heart.

PENELOPE

Experimentation in the common area is strictly prohibited. It is clearly typed into your leasing agreement.

VICTOR

That won't be a problem, Ms. Penelope, let me assure you of that. I'll be keeping the box in my unit. I would never let my own activities interfere with the operation of you and your Father's business establishment.

pause

PENELOPE

Do you have cats in that box?

VICTOR

I don't know exactly how to explain this to you. I'm not exactly sure I know what it is you want to hear, so you know, it's hard to talk about it. There's a perfectly reasonable explanation for everything, you know, or so they say. I'd like to believe them. That would certainly be convenient...

PENELOPE

What happened to your foot?

(record hiss begins.)

VICTOR

Oh? You mean that little thing? Yeah, it's been a rough day, but I'm still feeling up. I'm an up guy. You don't have to worry about me. This may slow me down, but I'm a very capable chap. A little thing like a de-formed foot isn't gonna keep me from paying my bills. So you know, if your father asks, nothing's wrong. Nothing's different. I'm an up guy.

PENELOPE

You're perspiring more than usual.

VICTOR

You have quite an eye for detail, Ms. Penelope.

PENELOPE

How do you manage to produce moisture in such volumes?

VICTOR

It's just who I am. I hope that's not going to be a problem.

pause

VICTOR

Do you hear that?

PENELOPE

I am listening to your voice.

VICTOR

No. I mean that cracking.

PENELOPE

Well I don't hear any cracking and I like to think of myself as a pretty observant person.

VICTOR

It's like a hissing. A crackling. Are you sure there's not a factory around here anywhere?

PENELOPE

What happened to your foot?

VICTOR

Oh, this? This is nothing. You should see some of the guys I know. I've got nothing to complain about.

PENELOPE

When did it happen?

VICTOR

Yesterday. I was filling an order at the forge. Another gargoyle.

PENELOPE

And this gargoyle attacked your foot?

VICTOR

No. It was a mold.

PENELOPE

You're confusing me.

VICTOR

When regular people pour liquid metals they usually dig a hole in the sand. Then bury a concrete investment mold in it. I can be an impatient man sometimes. I just propped the investment up in the middle of the cement floor. I pulled the crucible up. I looked down into the gargoyle's mouth. And let the metal slide. Halfway through the pour, I spilled some of the molten bronze on my boot. A drop the size of a silver dollar. Two thousand degrees Fahrenheit. It was melting the steel toe of my boot. If I stopped the pour, the mold would shatter. The investment would be lost. I couldn't afford to replace the materials. No one to help me get the boot off and no way to stop the pour. So I just let it happen. I finished the pour and let the bronze burn through my foot.

PENELOPE

That must've been very uncomfortable for you.

VICTOR

I inspected the remains of my boot for salvageable materials. I found my last will and testament, burned to the crisp.

pause

PENELOPE

Were you going to leave me anything? It's a valid question on my part, I believe.

VICTOR

All I have is that van. And these keys.

PENELOPE

Would you like to leave them for me?

VICTOR

Ah, ok, I guess so. I can't believe there's anyone else who wants them. So, sure. Why not. I'll just bury them over here. If anything bad happens to me, you can just dig them up and do whatever you want.

(VICTOR goes over to Storage Unit Three.)

PENELOPE

Thank you, Victor.

VICTOR

It's coming from in here. The hissing noise. Something's in the third box.

PENELOPE

Step away from Storage Unit Three.

VICTOR

Why?

PENELOPE

Step away from Storage Unit Three.

pause

That's Chintzy's box.

VICTOR

Is he in there?

PENELOPE

We don't want to know that.

VICTOR

You mean, he gets to live in his unit?

PENELOPE

He's been living in there since before Father purchased the facility. In fact, Chintzy was the one who sold it to him.

VICTOR

He sounds like a big man.

PENELOPE

He's a damaged wretch of a man with his lawless devices and his two heads and a giant bug up his ass. And he's a bastard. According to Father. And he makes the rules.

VICTOR

I love rules. It would be my pleasure to follow them. I'll just bury the van keys over here instead. In case something bad happens.

4.

(The WRETCH stands in a slowly flashing light. He activates a record player. The record hisses.)

VICTOR'S VOICE

On a personal note, today I saw the arrogant girl who lives in the house across the lot. It is possible that she may be avoiding me. But this will not stop me from associating myself with her. As I sit in the forge, I can hear her next door, banging and bonking around Storage Unit One. I hear her enter and move. Standing, sitting, adjusting the contents of her space. I have begun to imagine that we live together. It is somehow very reassuring to construct a relationship of some kind between she and me. I imagine that she is coming home from work. Entering our house and conducting personal business. Because we are so close, words are no longer necessary. She's home. Just doing her thing. In the other room. At any moment she could pop her head in and ask me about the activities of my day. At any moment. But right now, in the present, she's in the other room. I'm excited when she comes home. And I'm lonely when she leaves.

.(The record hisses.)

5.

(Victor's cardboard box begins meowing. PENELOPE is listening to the box when VICTOR enters.)

VICTOR

Excuse me, Ms. Penelope, I was wondering, if perhaps, you would pardon me but, I have some information that I thought might be appropriate to express to you in some way.

PENELOPE

I haven't done anything wrong.

VICTOR

What's that?

PENELOPE

I am behaving appropriately.

VICTOR

I have something I want to share with you, Ms. Penelope.

PENELOPE

Are you going to tell me how you got those cats in that box?

VICTOR

No.

PENELOPE

Victor.

VICTOR

Yes?

PENELOPE

I need to know.

Pause

VICTOR

It was very difficult. I had set up a forge next to this trailer on small bit of land I was leasing. The trailer belonged to a large colony of feral cats. I lived in the van. They lived in the trailer. But we were more than neighbors. We were that other thing. The thing with the comfortable things. We needed each other to live. They'd whine at me. I'd throw them whole raw chicken to shut 'em up. And so forth. So when I was no longer welcome to lease that little bit of land, I had to take care of the colony. That's where I got the box. Actually, there were a lot of boxes. Over half a dozen. It was very difficult. I tried to divide the cats up by personality. To make sure there weren't any "problems." I'd have to. Real fast. Herd 'em up. Get 'em in the box. And tape it shut. Real fast. I brought them with me all the time. This is the only one I have left.

PENELOPE

What happened to the other boxes?

VICTOR

I have made a lot of very upsetting choices in my life. It was very difficult. But, that's not what I need to share.

PENELOPE

Why are you talking about, Victor?

VICTOR

Please be patient with me. This is not my best thing. You see, for the first time. Ever. I think I've found that thing with the things. Something even more important than the box.

PENELOPE

Really. How interesting.

VICTOR

I've finally found something, I mean someone, who makes me think it might be time to open the box and dig a hole.

PENELOPE

How very exciting for you. And who this important individual? Will it possible for me to meet him or her?

VICTOR

You make me laugh, Ms. Penelope. I could never get tired of you. Do you ever get the feeling that something is missing?

PENELOPE

Maybe. I don't know.

VICTOR

Then you sense it too?

Pause

PENELOPE

What was it you were trying to share again?

VICTOR

I'm afraid I might have feelings, Ms. Penelope. I'm afraid I might be in love. With you, that is.

PENELOPE

Well that's hardly a surprise.

VICTOR

What?

PENELOPE

You're a human man. You have feelings. In your dinger. Father explained it to me.

VICTOR

Your father knows!

PENELOPE

Not about you specifically. But he does frequently touch on the topic of dinger feelings in his many lectures about society.

Pause

VICTOR

So?

PENELOPE

Yes?

VICTOR

What are you thinking?

PENELOPE

Pardon me?

VICTOR

What are you thinking about right now?

PENELOPE

What happened to the other boxes?

VICTOR

Penelope, I've just confessed to you. I've shared feelings with you. I think I'm in love. With you. Doesn't that mean anything to you?

pause

PENELOPE

I sympathize with you? Is that right? I can definitely understand how you might feel this way. I mean, I am important. And of course that's a very attractive thing. And of course, I'm female. That's another contributing factor, I'm sure. What else should I say?

VICTOR

That's plenty.

PENELOPE

Oh. I got one more: It's ok, Victor. I'm not gonna hold this against you.

Pause

(record hiss begins.)

VICTOR

Do you hear that?

PENELOPE

What?

VICTOR

Can't you hear it? It's cracking up. In there.

(VICTOR goes to Storage Unit Three. The record hiss grows louder.)

PENELOPE

Step away from the storage unit. You've been warned.

VICTOR

I don't care. This is just who I am. I hope this isn't gonna be a problem.

PENELOPE

Victor. I'm a big deal here at the self-storage facility.

(VICTOR bends down to pull up the metal door of Storage Unit Three.)

PENELOPE

Victor. Don't release the wretch.

(VICTOR opens the door to Storage Unit Three and reveals Chintzy's Pawn Shop. CHINTZY sits in his jam packed pawn shop/storage space. He's listening to a phonographic record player and talks through a ventriloquist dummy or marionette, but not a hand puppet.)

CHINTZY

Two days ago, I said fifteen years ago, I experimented with cocaine. But that was fifteen years ago. I don't believe in public transportation. That's just who I am. The only people who use it are hobos and drifters.

PENELOPE

Are you Chintzy?

CHINTZY

No I'm the frickin' governor of the self storage place. What do you think? Of course I am. What's going on here? No. Let me guess. Honeymooners? Right? Did I get it?

VICTOR

No you didn't.

CHINTZY

Who asked you, sad sack? So what are you missing? What are you looking for? I got everything.

VICTOR

Good for you.

CHINTZY

I accept trades. What do you say? Let's do some business. I'll take anything. Except National Geographics. And analog organs. If that crackpot Hollis tries to trade me one more of his antique noise boxes, he's gonna get a head butt right in the baby maker.

VICTOR

So where's that goddamn hiss coming from?

CHINTZY

I was merely cueing up one of my many phonographic records that I have in their original vinyl format.

PENELOPE

Why are you doing that? What are you trying to accomplish?

CHINTZY

Check it out.

(CHINTZY plays a record on the phonograph. "Steppin' Stone," by the Monkees. PENELOPE is astounded. She has no idea how to behave.)

CHINTZY

Hey your girlfriend really loves this song, huh?

VICTOR

She's not my girlfriend. She's the landlord's daughter.

CHINTZY

Penelope? Holy frick. Look at you. You're an adult.

PENELOPE

I want this box. Now. Please.

CHINTZY

So you're interested in the old phonograph, are you? I don't think Hollis would appreciate me letting you get your hands on something like this little device here. Do you have any money?

PENELOPE

No. I want this box. Now.

CHINTZY

What do you have to trade?

PENELOPE

Analog organs.

CHINTZY

No analog organs.

(VICTOR'S cardboard box begins
meowing again.)

CHINTZY

Hey, champ. Whatcha got in that box?

VICTOR

Nothing.

CHINTZY

Are there cats in that box?

VICTOR

This box is very important to me.

CHINTZY

I'll trade you the phonograph for it.

PENELOPE

Yes. Please. Yes. Now. I want it.

VICTOR

The thing is this is my favorite box. I just can't see myself
living without it.

PENELOPE

Victor. It is very important that I get this box. Please help me. I need it.

VICTOR

Can you take anything else in trade?

CHINTZY

What do you got?

VICTOR

I got the van. I could drive out and check your PO box for you or something.

CHINTZY

You got a van, huh? Well. I got this guy at the PX in Boise. He's supposed to lease two vending machine from me. Now he's stickin' me with the delivery. If you haul those vending machines for me, I'll let your girlfriend have the record player.

VICTOR

I can't fit those in the van. I've got a lot of very important papers in there. Where would I put my television and magazines?

pause

VICTOR

Well I guess I could put them in storage.

PENELOPE

Victor. That is an incredibly good idea. I say do it!

VICTOR

Fine. I'll do it. But you gotta throw in some records too.
She'll need something listen to.

CHINTZY

Hot damn it's a deal.
Do you want me to look after that box of yours, for ya?

VICTOR

That's ok. It fits in the passenger seat.

6.

(The WRETCH stands in a slowly flashing light. He activates a record player. The record hisses.)

PENELOPE'S VOICE

I am now the kind of person that meticulously prepares for the coming insanity. I have in recent days made a most discomfoting discovery. I have come to believe that I am damaged. Or more specifically, de-formed.

With much wheezing and after many rest breaks, Victor finally moved his important papers into storage. He then began his delivery haul to the city of Boise. As Victor labored, I withdrew to Storage Unit One to experiment with my newly acquired possession.

After opening the brown box, I supplied it with 120 volts of electricity via a thick black extension cord. A circular palette built into the top of the box began rotate. After studying the revolutionings, I decided to experiment with the brown box by placing a variety of objects on the spinning palette: a stone, a strike-anywhere match, several uncooperative insects, an inanimate possum carcass. Nothing. Then I finally placed one of Chintzy's vinyl format discs on top of it. The brown box began to speak. And that is my last memory at this time.

(The record hisses.)

7.

(VICTOR enters, exhausted, with a yellow receipt. He opens the door to Storage Unit Three.)

CHINTZY

Holy frick, you're back already?

VICTOR

Yeah. Here's your receipt.

CHINTZY

You must have made incredible time.

VICTOR

Yeah. I've developed this system I use.

CHINTZY

What's your secret?

VICTOR

I travel with this big empty spaghetti sauce jar so I don't have to stop on the way.

CHINTZY

Yeah, well that's not an issue for me, but it might be a good thing for the old ball and chain back there.

pause

VICTOR

So. What's the deal with the puppet?

CHINTZY

Oh, you mean the big guy? He's just like an employee or something.

VICTOR

Like a life partner?

CHINTZY

How'd you get so frickin' stupid? It's like I'm the manager and he's the team. I call the shots, he takes the shots.

VICTOR

Nice set up for you.

CHINTZY

Why accept anything less?

pause

VICTOR

Where's Penelope?

CHINTZY

You're not gonna like it.

VICTOR

What?

CHINTZY

She's gone.

VICTOR

What? Where?

CHINTZY

I don't frickin' know. Off her nut, I guess.

VICTOR

What happened?

CHINTZY

She lost it. You're glad you missed it. She was all locked up in Unit One, blasting that record player. She was kicking up quite a frickin' racket. Hissing. Music. Banging. Bonking. She really kinda threw a nutty.

VICTOR

This is bad.

CHINTZY

Wait. There's more. After she played all the records, she broke into *your* storage unit.

VICTOR

Oh shit.

CHINTZY

Yeah. It was bad news. She started perusing all your periodicals and flippin' through the stations on your Tv. She had the volume cranked. The soundtrack was deafening.

VICTOR

I should try to find her.

CHINTZY

Yeah. There's one other thing.

VICTOR

What?

CHINTZY

You might want to air out your storage unit.

(VICTOR opens the door to Storage Unit Two. The interior of VICTOR'S unit has been gutted by fire.)

CHINTZY

Hollis heard the Tv and found Penelope in there with all your stuff.

VICTOR

He torched it.

CHINTZY

Yeah, I know. He traded me 2 bags of cookies and the tail-light assembly from a '73 Plymouth for all the gasoline he used on it.

VICTOR

My forge. My magazines. My television. All gone.

CHINTZY

And Penelope. Don't forget her. She's gone too.

VICTOR

I can't believe this is happening. I just unloaded the van. For the first time ever, I completely emptied it out. What was I thinking? What a stupid place to dig a hole. I've got nothing now. What am I supposed to be doing?

CHINTZY

You know what?

Pause

VICTOR

What?

CHINTZY

I feel sorry for you, kid. I'm feeling a lot of sympathy for your situation right now. In fact it's probably impairing my judgement, but what the hell. Look. I got something that'll change your life. It's an art. It's a craft. It's a whole new way of living.

VICTOR

What is it?

CHINTZY

It could be yours.

VICTOR

What do you want?

CHINTZY

How about that cardboard noise box of yours?

Pause

VICTOR

I can't give that up. It's like the thing with the things. It's my last one. All that I have left.

CHINTZY

Jeez, that's too bad. I could really see you taking off with this new gig I got for you. I hate to see people suffer. Especially someone who's already made as many sacrifices as you so obviously have.

VICTOR

I don't have anything to trade. All my collateral is damaged.

CHINTZY

Well, you know, that's not entirely true.

VICTOR

What are you talking about now?

CHINTZY

You know, this might be hard to believe. But. There is quite a ferocious market out there for human organ donations.

VICTOR

What? You want to harvest my organs?

CHINTZY

Not while you're alive, corn cob. After you expire. You can sign over your organs to me in this will. So when you're done using that body of yours, I can make a killing. Selling select cuts of New Frontiersmen on the human organ market.

VICTOR

You're sick.

CHINTZY

How many magazines have you picked out of people's trash? Was that sick? I mean come on. They were *done* with those magazines. It's the frickin' circle of life, man.

VICTOR

You do make a certain kind of sense.

CHINTZY

Come on, what else are you gonna do?

(VICTOR signs over his organs to CHINTZY.)

8.

CHINTZY

I love haggling.

In no instance, is the feeling of holding your future in the palm of your fist, more evident than when on parade, in the age old tradition, of high stakes haggling. Everything's worth is negated completely. Such a business transaction takes place in the unreal world. Actual value is suspended and temporarily replaced with sheer human will. Who knows more? How rare? How scarce? How missing? Objects are won and lost only on the merit of a given haggler's skill in the manipulation of contexts.

I love haggling.

9.

(VICTOR has rigged up a pulley and rope, attached to a heavy log. VICTOR hoists up the log as PENELOPE enters. VICTOR drops the log smashing an aluminum can.)

PENELOPE

Victor! I have incredible, outstanding news!

I'm back.

VICTOR

Yeah.

PENELOPE

What is this that you have built here with your pulley and your log?

VICTOR

It's a smasher.

PENELOPE

It's seems like a truly lawless device.

VICTOR

I got it from Chintzy.

PENELOPE

Has your forge ceased operations? Are you still in the industry of pouring metals into molds?

VICTOR

I'm really too busy with the smasher, to mess with those gargoyles anymore. Besides, your father torched my forge after you disappeared.

PENELOPE

Father angers easily. To the extreme.

Pause

VICTOR

Where did hear that word?

PENELOPE

Which word?

VICTOR

You know which one.

PENELOPE

I have a confession to make for you.

VICTOR

I don't want to hear it.

PENELOPE

I heard the word on your television. I read all your magazines. I think you are a very wise man.

VICTOR

What did you see in there?

PENELOPE

I watched a static-y story about an angry man in a stone house. The man and his de-formed son dug holes in the ground and removed large wooden boxes from the earth. They used knives and sticks to poke and tear at the contents of the box, removing what I came to learn were organs. But not analog organs. They were much smaller, like little sacks of goo. Everything seemed more important inside the static stone house. That lawless device compelled me to do things. To be associated with something of importance. To keep reaching for the stars.

Pause

Are you trying to avoid me?

VICTOR

I'm busy.

PENELOPE

I have been busy as well. I've become involved in a musical project.

VICTOR

Are you restoring analog organs like your father?

PENELOPE

Certainly not. The business of musical instrument restoration is certainly a worthy venture, however, I find significantly more interest in the industry of the actual music itself. It just seems like a highly effective means of communication to me. You know, like all the different notes.

VICTOR

You're putting together a group? I'm sure you'll be a monstrous success.

PENELOPE

I agree. I'm sort of important.

VICTOR

Of course you are.

pause

PENELOPE

Are you still feeling in love?

VICTOR

No.

That was just a slip up. An accidental miscalculation. I just hope that you realize that I was just making up conversation. I was just making a joke. To fill the gaps.

PENELOPE

You do not love me.

VICTOR

Yeah, I just said that. It was just small talk. Simple misunderstanding. I do not love you.

PENELOPE

Obviously. I'm boring to you. You're not interested in me. You're only interested in yourself.

VICTOR

Whatever.

PENELOPE

Your oscillating feelings with regard to me must be a natural byproduct of my horribly creative spirit.

VICTOR

If you say so.

PENELOPE

I think you need to stop working with your smasher, and take a moment to really consider your feelings about me.

VICTOR

What for?

PENELOPE

I think you've made another mistake. I think you are still feeling love for me.

VICTOR

No I'm not.

PENELOPE

Really? Are you sure? Does that *really* seem right? I mean, I am me. Now more than ever. Wait I know.

(PENELOPE lifts the door to Storage Unit One. She reveals a tiny stage with an analog organ and a microphone.)

PENELOPE

I can sing a song for you. Do you want to hear me sing a song? I'm very talented.

(VICTOR smashes another can.)

VICTOR

Busy. Working.

(PENELOPE takes the tiny stage.
PENELOPE starts to play the
organ.)

PENELOPE

singing

I read all about it, in the future periodical
It got me feeling, all kinds of narcotical
The coming insanity won't be episodical
So I'll lay out my clothes, all neat and methodical

chorus

I'm not damaged, I'm just de-formed
I'm not broke, I'm just non-conformed
I, don't, wanna, be experimental
But I'm sort of important, and that's confrontational

All the crazy cats in this box, wanna piece of me
They all call my name, like a Tennessee prophecy
I know what they want, I know what they mean
They put me on the cover of mean machine magazine

I'm a black and white woman in a sepia scene
I can't stop playing this obscene tambourine
I just can't plan, I won't think ahead
I won't dig a hole, til I'm one day from dead

Thank you. Thank you all.

(HOLLIS enters.)

HOLLIS

What the bloody hell is going on out here? All right crap face. What the fuck are you trying to pull? I said, what the fuck are you trying to pull?

VICTOR

I can't even begin to count how many times I've heard those words spoken at me.

HOLLIS

Where'd this corn husk get the nuts to sass me? I'm gonna fuck your wagon good, boy. I found your shit in Unit Two. No living in the self-storage units.

PENELOPE

He was only storing his magazines there temporarily.

HOLLIS

Penelope? You're back. What the hell were you thinking about? Where were you?

PENELOPE

I had an epitome, Father. I understand you now. I know why you thought I was so important. Because I am important. I can see that very clearly now. I've witnessed the near future. You see I am, what they call in the industry, "happening."

pause

HOLLIS

You. Shit sack, you're outta here, bub.

VICTOR

What?

HOLLIS

You can't be trusted. You want what I got. This girl is very important and you are damaging the crap outta her. Her input is to be minimized. No television, no puppet shows, no magazines. I spelled it out for you already. It's not my fault that you can't live by the tenets of the facility. You blew it. Hit the road.

VICTOR

But I just paid you for a full month two days ago.

HOLLIS

Tough cookies, hobo. You're outta here. Get your stuff and go.

PENELOPE

But Father. He loves me.

HOLLIS

That's it. I'm getting the knife and the gun from the house. When I get back you better be out of here. This girl is the most important investment of my life and I will not risk it all so some bum can smash cans on my property. You're back out there. Get out. Now.

10.

(The WRETCH stands in a slowly flashing light. He carries the closed record player at his side.)

WRETCH

I guess it feels good to have other people make decisions for me. My asshole landlord has decided that renting a storage unit was not something I was ready for. Perhaps one hundred years in the future I will thank him for this. But not now. I'm a very impatient man sometimes. It's sort of uncomfortable.

11.

(VICTOR stoops near the storage units and digs a small hole with his hand. VICTOR pulls his van keys out.)

PENELOPE

You're leaving.

VICTOR

I was thrown out.

PENELOPE

Where will you go?

VICTOR

It's all the same when you live in the van.

PENELOPE

You're not by any chance, I don't know, you're not, I mean... Are you going to Nashville, Tennessee?

VICTOR

Ah, I wasn't planning on it. What's in Nashville?

PENELOPE

Industry. I should like to go to Nashville, Tennessee in the near future. It seems like an excellent place to make the most out of my life.

VICTOR

Really? I never thought of it that way. This isn't about your singing career now is it?

PENELOPE

I'm sort of important.

(VICTOR'S cardboard box begins meowing again.)

VICTOR

So you want to go to Memphis do you?

PENELOPE

Nashville, actually.

VICTOR

Yeah, I think that I might possibly under the given circumstances be able to be convinced to go to Nashville. Given the right incentive.

PENELOPE

I am listening to your voice, Victor.

VICTOR

Well. Ms. Penelope. I could feasibly give you a ride to Nashville, but the thing of it is, I got this box, you know?

PENELOPE

I am aware of the box.

VICTOR

This smasher has got me thinking. you can start the next chapter until you've finished the current chapter. There just really isn't enough room in the passenger seat for both you and the box.

PENELOPE

What are you driving to, Victor?

VICTOR

I can take you, if you take care of this box for me. I guess it's finally time. I just. I can't bring myself to do it on my own.

PENELOPE

The dumpster is located on the opposite side of the parking lot.

VICTOR

Yeah, you know the thing is, I just don't think that's gonna be good enough, you know?

(VICTOR places the meowing box under the smasher.)

PENELOPE

Victor. Were using sarcasm when you said that you don't love me anymore?

VICTOR

You know, I'm not sure, Ms. Penelope.

PENELOPE

Do you have feelings of love for me?

VICTOR

I think it would be fun to drive to Nashville with you in the passenger seat. But, you know. The box.

I'd just love it if you could take care of this for me.

PENELOPE

I suppose I could make that happen.

(PENELOPE hoists up the smasher as HOLLIS enters.)

HOLLIS

What the bloody hell is going on out here? Why are you still here?

VICTOR

I'm just getting my keys.

HOLLIS

Penelope, what do you think you're doing with that thing?

PENELOPE

I'm going to Nashville, Tennessee.

HOLLIS

Like hell you are.

VICTOR

I'm just getting my keys.

(HOLLIS show his knife to VICTOR.)

HOLLIS

I'll be taking those keys now, dusty. What have you done to Penelope? You hexed her? Didn't ya? Huh? I got no abiding for creative types, you were warned. But did you listen? What? I said did you listen? What? Of course not. You roll up here with your magazines and your television. You start forging. You start smashing. And now? You got my main thing killing kittens and running off to America's belt buckle. Penelope, what in the hell has possessed you?

PENELOPE

I'm very important. It's true. It's true. Yes, no. It is my objective to make you proud of me.

HOLLIS

Merciful crap, Penelope. It was supposed to be your objective to make me happy, not proud. Well, I got the keys now. No one's going anywhere.

VICTOR

Are you gonna let me stay?

HOLLIS

Sort of.

(HOLLIS stabs VICTOR. Then shoots him with a gun.)

HOLLIS

Well. Now things are back to normal.
Be a good girl and burn up the corpse for your daddy.

PENELOPE

But Father, I mean. Yes, Father.

HOLLIS

When you're done cleaning up this mess get your ass back to the house. There is a long list of things I need to yell at you. You've in trouble, missy. Big damn trouble.

(HOLLIS exits. PENELOPE pulls out a large can of gasoline. SHE pours it over VICTOR'S body. SHE lights a strike-anywhere match and stares at it. SHE blows out the match and drags VICTOR'S body into his self-storage unit. BLACKOUT. Lightning. Cats howl. The sound of the smasher falls. Lightning. Cats wimper. The sound of the smasher falls. Lightning. SILENCE.)

12.

(The WRETCH is a character created by PENELOPE from the carcasses of VICTOR and his cats. The WRETCH sits behind an analog organ. PENELOPE stands over him.)

PENELOPE

All you have to do is press the buttons with your fingers. That's how the sounds are made.

WRETCH

What am I supposed to be doing?

PENELOPE

You're my organist. You accompany me while I sing. You push the buttons while I sing the words.

WRETCH

Why?

PENELOPE

We're a group. A musical group. We're known as The Total Foxes.

WRETCH

The Total Foxes.

PENELOPE

I think it's a very good name. We should be quite successful.

WRETCH

What does that mean?

PENELOPE

It means good. Like when people appreciate you for helping them replace the missing things. Like when they talk about you in the Tv or on the magazines and they make puppets that look like you for children to buy. But it's really about the music. With all the different notes? I'm sort of important.

WRETCH

You're important.

PENELOPE

Excellent. You've made me very proud of you. Thank you. You don't know what this means to me. It's the most satisfying moment in my short existence. You are a miracle.

WRETCH

I'm a miracle.

PENELOPE

I love you.

WRETCH

I also love you.

(PENELOPE fishes the van keys out of her pocket.)

PENELOPE

I took these keys from Father while he slept. Have you ever been to Nashville?

WRETCH

No. Is it nice?

PENELOPE

Oh it's the best. It's where all the missing things go.

WRETCH

Yes. I've heard good things about it. Do you know how to drive a van?

PENELOPE

No. But I'm sure I'll be very good at it.

WRETCH

Everything's happening so fast.

PENELOPE

Let's play a song.

(PENELOPE sings, while the WRETCH accompanies her.)

PENELOPE

Singing

The townfolks do say, that the mountain is haunted/
In gold older days, it took many a life/
Up on the mountain, the devil is dancing/
He's pretty handy, with a gun and a knife/

I traveled along the dry bed creek, to face the fiend at last/
I banged and bonked up towards the peak, my rhythm so slow and
steadfast./

When I found the top, such a shadow he cast, as old scratch let
out a laugh/
I was under his spell, lost and outcast, I spun in his shadow
like a brown phonograph./

PENELOPE (cont)

I was moved by the spirit, now I know who I am./
Like a white lightning strike, I'm the creative type, damn./
He kissed my hard lips, gasoline tongue on fire,/

Then I let out a shriek like a tube amplifier./

I saw a sight like a wretch bounded in sutures,/

I saw the past getting fresh with the future./

Right now is nowhere, you can't stop the flood,/

So I'll pack up the van and wait for the thud./

The townfolks do say, that the mountain is haunted/

In gold older days, it took many a life/

Up on the mountain, the devil is dancing/

He's pretty handy, with a gun and a knife/

(Storage Unit Three opens.
CHINTZY claps for The Total
Foxes.)

CHINTZY

Wow. Frick. Penelope. Damn. I had no idea.

PENELOPE

I know. Everything is falling into place. You can't stop it.

It's just falling into place.

CHINTZY

What's with the Wretch?

PENELOPE

He's my organist.

CHINTZY

Actually. You know. Jeez, I hate to say it. But, the thing is. He's actually *my* organist now.

(CHINTZY pulls out the contract that VICTOR signed.)

PENELOPE

I'm afraid you must be quite mistaken.

CHINTZY

Nope. Got it all here in black and white. Victor traded on to me the entirety of his bodily remains. In exchange for the smasher. That Wretch is going nowhere.

PENELOPE

You can't. He's my own. We're going to Nashville.

CHINTZY

Sorry, that ass is mine.

pause

PENELOPE

Can I buy his ass off you somehow?

CHINTZY

You know I can never pass at a chance to do a little business. What to you have to offer?

PENELOPE

I'll give you the publishing rights on my first blockbuster album.

CHINTZY

Do you have anything more concrete? I don't know, say, what about those van keys there?

PENELOPE

How will we get to Tennessee?

CHINTZY

I'm sure a couple bright looking bulbs like you two, would have no problem getting picked up. By any number of people.

PENELOPE

My organist is the most important thing my life. I just can't see myself living without him.

CHINTZY

Yes, yes, I'm sure it would be very painful. But this contract clearly states that the remains of X are well within my jurisdiction. Then again, I've always sort of thought of myself, secretly, as something of a van guy. I mean, everything that being a van owner suggests about a person, (importance, mystery) are all things I'd feel very comfortable sharing with the world at large. You know there's no telling what a guy like me could do with a van like that.

Pause

PENELOPE

I've given this a lot of thought. I've decided to give you the van for the Wretch.

CHINTZY

I don't know. I mean, this guy, he's a good kid. I really like him a lot. How do I know you won't damage him further?

PENELOPE

He's not damaged, he's just de-formed. You can't break up The Total Foxes, Chintzy. You can't.

CHINTZY

I've never had any self-control when it comes to you Penelope. Sign here. (*she signs a contract*) He's your Wretch now. Salud.

(HOLLIS enters.)

HOLLIS

Penelope. Where are the keys? Give 'em back. Now.

CHINTZY

I got 'em right here, old timer.

HOLLIS

You!

(HOLLIS and CHINTZY begin simultaneously cursing each other out.)

HOLLIS

With CHINTZY

You damn wretched bastard. What do you got in your ass now. You fuckin' damn shit sack ass wiper.

CHINTZY

With HOLLIS

What the frick are you looking at old timer? I am a goddamn frickin' professional who's conducting a frickin' business transaction.

Pause

HOLLIS

With CHINTZY

I told you never to fuckin' speak to her. That damn girl is the perfect excuse for everything. Your damn fuckin' rear is getting the business end of my boot.

CHINTZY

With HOLLIS

I hear one more frickin' curse outta your mouth and you're getting the frick kicked outta your stink hole.

Pause

Pause

PENELOPE

I think that is important that we all behave appropriately.

HOLLIS

Give me those keys.

CHINTZY

These keys belong to me, old timer. I obtained them legally, with business transactions.

PENELOPE

Father. The keys were mine. Victor left them to me in his last will and testament. He kept the will in his boot.

HOLLIS

What is this garbage falling out of your mouth, sweetie pie?

PENLOPE

I traded the keys to purchase the freedom of my organist.

HOLLIS

Sees the Wretch

Bloody hell.

PENELOPE

Don't hurt him, Father. He's the organist. For my group?

HOLLIS

Your what?

PENELOPE

My musical group. The Total Foxes?

HOLLIS

I had no idea things had gotten this bad.

CHINTZY

I guess it takes more than trading 30 boxes of National Geographics, a Tv, and a damaged puppet to make a man fit for fatherhood, huh, Hollis?

pause

(HOLLIS pulls his knife. CHINTZY laughs and closes his door.)

HOLLIS

All right, Wretch. I'm not afraid of you. This is a Ginsu knife. It goes through anything.

PENELOPE

Father stop. Please. He's very important to me. Can't you see that, Father?

HOLLIS

No I can't. I told you to burn his body, not sew a bunch of cat guts to it. I'm very disappointed at you, Penelope.

WRETCH

I'm a nice man. I'm an up guy.

HOLLIS

This is all my fault. I had no business dragging you into this damn life of mine. I'm an idiot, Penelope. Your father is an idiot.

PENELOPE

Please stop talking crazy, Father.

HOLLIS

All I wanted was to do was be a regular person. I had just gotten everything the way I like it. And this happens. I swear I had your own interests inside me. I was trying to save you from inevitable disappointment. I've made a horrible mistake. You're damaged beyond repair.

PENELOPE

No. I'm just a little de-formed.

HOLLIS

You better pack your things.

PENELOPE

Why? What's happening?

HOLLIS

Well. Looks like I'm gonna hafta take you to see the brain doctor. You're gonna need a serious tune up. The lady at the post office knows a guy. He's supposed to do very neat work. Minimal scarrings.

PENELOPE

I don't want that.

HOLLIS

That doesn't matter. We're leaving. That's final.

(The WRETCH attacks HOLLIS. They struggle for the knife. The WRETCH stabs HOLLIS.)

PENELOPE

What are you doing!

(The WRETCH suddenly stops. Then stabs HOLLIS repeatedly.)

pause

PENELOPE

What are you doing?

WRETCH

I'm not really sure.

PENELOPE

You killed him. What am I supposed to do now? He was, you know, a really important part of my life. For a long time. What am I supposed to be doing?

Pause

WRETCH

Should I dig a hole?

PENELOPE

What would anyone want to do that for?

WRETCH

For the corpse.

PENELOPE

You're just like the rest, aren't you? You just want a piece of me and my importance. You won't ride *me* like mule, you damn wretch. You've cost me everything. My Father. My van.

WRETCH

You can trust me, Ms. Penelope. I'm your organist.

PENELOPE

The time has come for me to leave this place.

WRETCH

What about The Total Foxes?

Pause

PENELOPE

As long as I'm alive. The Total Foxes will live on.

WRETCH

That makes me very comfortable.

PENELOPE

No. You're not coming. You're out of the band.

WRETCH

Please, don't go.

PENELOPE

I hear the near future calling. I have to walk this line alone. Just the basics. The hard way. Sacrifice. That makes me feel important. You can't love someone like me, Wretch... That's my job.

(PENELOPE exits with flourish. Time passes. The WRETCH begins to dig a hole. Storage Unit Three opens.)

CHINTZY

Holy frick, I thought she'd never leave. Now it's just you and me, kid. Why are you digging that damn hole?

WRETCH

I don't know. It just seemed like the right thing to do. It seemed comfortable. But something's missing. I can't figure out what I'm supposed to be doing with myself. There are too many choices. Stand here. Stand by the van. Stand in the house. I'm somewhat overwhelmed. You see, someone who was a very important part of my life for a really long time, just left forever. The digging seems to calm me.

CHINTZY

I like your spunk, kid. You remind me of a younger and more deformed version of myself. I like that. It makes be feel like a big man.

WRETCH

Do you like feeling like a big man?

CHINTZY

Are you kidding? It's best. It's like digging and standing and playing the organ all rolled into one.

WRETCH

That's sounds comfortable.

CHINTZY

Here put this thing on your melon for me.

(CHINTZY hands a wizard's hat to the WRETCH. The WRETCH puts on the cap.)

WRETCH

Like this?

CHINTZY

Now you're ready for business.

WRETCH

The time between the knife wound and the gunshot was long and purpose-filled.

CHINTZY

Tell me about it. Have you ever been to LA?

WRETCH

What's that?

CHINTZY

Los Angeles? It's the best, kid. You'd absolutely love it there. The most comfortable people in the world live there. It's truly a city of the future. There's no telling what a

CHINTZY (cont)

couple fellas like you and me could accomplish for ourselves out there on the New Frontier. Nothing makes you feel more alive than high expectations.

WRETCH

What will we do when we get there?

CHINTZY

We're gonna pop that town a new peanut shooter. We're gonna stomp in there like a couple real cannons on the loose. Cashing checks and breaking necks. Nothing makes your heart pound so hard like it's gonna bust out of your throat like a little high stakes haggling.

WRETCH

Are you sure?

CHINTZY

Nothing makes a person more comfortable than trying to build something of their own.

WRETCH

Really?

CHINTZY

Why would I lie?

WRETCH

Who will we stay with when we get there?

(CHINTZY pulls out the van keys.)

CHINTZY

We can just park the van behind a mall somewhere and sleep in there.

WRETCH

This sounds like a great plan.

(The WRETCH picks up the record player.)

CHINTZY

Come over for a second. Gimme your hand, will ya.

(The WRETCH takes the puppet from CHINTZY. CHINTZY collapses.)

PUPPET

Damn I could get used to this.

WRETCH

How long will all this take?

PUPPET

No time. No time at all.

(Fake black snow begins to fall.)

WRETCH

What's this?

PUPPET

I'm not sure I know what you're talking about, son.

WRETCH

This stuff. Falling from the sky? This fake black snow.

PUPPET

Oh. You mean the static?

WRETCH

Static?

PUPPET

Yeah. Comfy isn't it? It just sort of fills in the gaps, you know? Makes the whole thing a just little more important and a little less urgent.

WRETCH

Do they have static in Los Angeles?

PUPPET

Oh yeah. I think that's where the factory is.

WRETCH

That's something to look forward to.

PUPPET

You're a real positive guy, you know that? Has anyone ever told you that? I like that.

WRETCH

I try to be nice.

PUPPET

Excellent.

Ok, now, if I could just get you to do me a little favor for me here. Just for kicks. I'm gonna need you to go ahead and load

PUPPET (cont)

up *all* of my pawn shop stuff? Into the van. So you can just put me in the passenger seat and take care of all that stuff moving, ok? That would be just great. Ok?
Excellent.

WRETCH

Can I get you a beverage while you wait?

(END OF PLAY)