



THE CITIZEN'S ENSEMBLE
VOLUME 1 WORKS

THE FURNACE Δ CLOWNISM Δ THE BEARDED MAN

The Dream Logic of the Citizen's Ensemble

In looking back over this material, I'd just like to say that its *thoughtless originality* is still quite inspiring. Thoughtlessness in retrospect deserves a slim volume any day.

Much of the text was transcribed from various tapes of the performances, as a great deal of the Citizen's Ensemble was improvised. This document is not meant to be a simulation of theater but an imitation of Real Life in text form! The (laughter) in the Clownism piece was the audience's and the performer's.

Much thanks to Mike Ballou who ran the space Four Walls where these performances took place. Considering what has happened in the artistic enclave of Williamsburg Brooklyn since 1992, you might call Mike a bohemian pioneer. Mike took a chance on crazy stuff like this. Just Awesome.

Extreme thanks to Stephen Reinhert for the glorious photos. Thanks in that he actually cared enough to not only document these performances, but develop, print and give them to us.

I distinctly remember that the address was completely wrong on the handbill we created for the later show, and a few people showed up at an old lady's house across the street from Four Walls. Thanks to that woman too, whoever she is. She was in the show without knowing.

In retrospect. I think I enjoy the dreamlike logic most in re-reading these pieces.

For instance, when the Bearded Man tells of accidentally shooting the angry Irishman with the blowgun through the cellar window, the angry Irishman is fixing an "electrical circuit". Why wouldn't he be fixing that. Detail is reality.

Notice that James Lenick played the parts of both Detective #1 and #2 simultaneously when his brother did not appear the night the Furnace was staged. I remember his self-assimilating deduction was unparalleled.

When the floor was opened up for real questions from the audience in Clownism, Sam Henderson smuggled in a strange garbage bag into the show without telling anyone, and then proceeded to reveal a bizarre sculpture apparently created by one of the panelists. Of course the artist who created the sculpture couldn't remember doing it.

In the Furnace, the Freak Brothers incorporate the corpse of "Louie the Hispanic Boy" to better their demented creation. John Bacon McVay's language is intentionally artificial and cumbersome, as if he was a character whose every action has been rehearsed. "I think I can accommodate those requests." He says like an incorrectly programmed machine!

It just goes to show that there is nothing more attractive than a twisted logic structure or purpose. It's like being on a drug I tell you, or within the center of a vibrant dream.

Without further ado, The Citizen's Ensemble!

– J.F. Culhane (1999 NYC)

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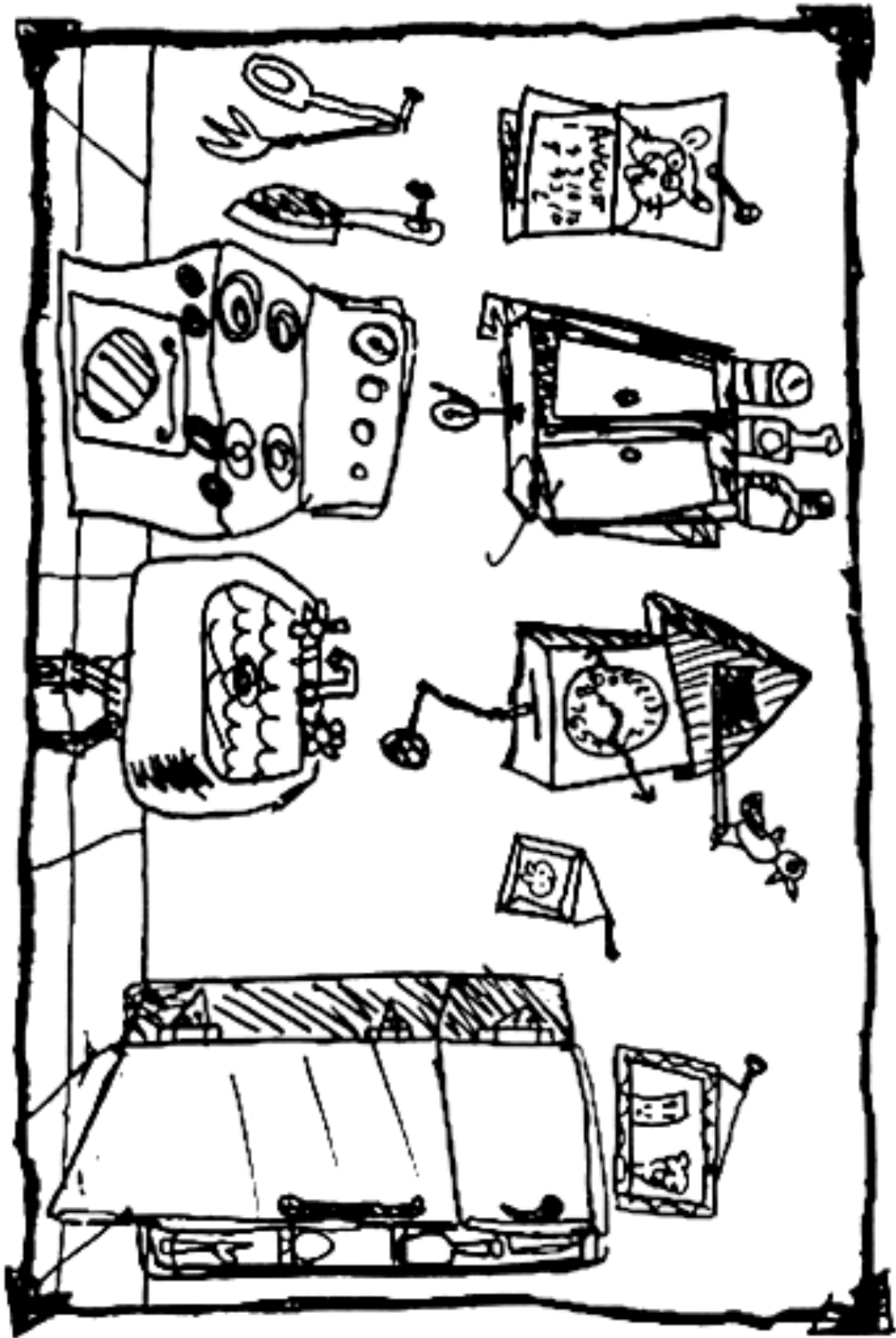
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THE FURNACE

Story by Bob Turner
 Directed by Bob Turner
 Script and Production by
 The Citizen's Ensemble

The Furnace was staged on August 23rd 1992 at FOUR WALLS
 in Williamsburg Brooklyn.

HARVEY – Bob Turner
 SONNY – Sam Henderson
 JOHN BACON MCVAY (REX SLATE)– J.F. Culhane
 LOUIE – Brian Dentz
 DETECTIVE #1 – James Lenick
 DETECTIVE #2 – James Lenick

THE SUBMARINE BAND:
 CHRIS TANIS
 DOUG SMITH
 JOHN N. MILLS

SCENE 1. TWO MEN WALK FROM THE BACK OF THE HALL
 AND STEP UP TO THE STAGE. THE MAN WITH THE
 SUITCASE TURNS TO THE AUDIENCE.

JOHN BACON MCVAY: Hello, My name is John Bacon McVay,
 or at least it was back in Charlottesville, as I was at one time a
 southernly gentleman. But with opportunity greeting me, and
 extending it's hand of new ventures and excitement outward, I
 moved east to the Big City where I was a mere face in a
 swarthy crowd.

Until, of course I became an actor, and altered my name to something more enticing. A stage name virtually magnetic in appeal and refined. An image worthy of a Kings Majesty.

Hello my name is Rex Slate, and I am an actor.

SCENE 2. AT THE FRONT DOOR TO THE KITCHEN, THE TWO MEN STOP.

LOUIE: (knocking) Harvey, Sonny, open up, it's me Louie. You're border's here.

THE DOOR OOPENS SLOWLY.

SONNY APPEARS FROM BEHIND THE DOOR. HE IS THIN AND STRANGE IN APPEARANCE. A SINGLE ARM PERTRUDES FORM THE CENTER OF HIS CHEST.

LOUIE: Well here it is. I haveta go.

LOUIE TURNS AND LEAVES QUICKLY.

SONNY: HI! Come on in.

JBM: (Entering the kitchen) Hello, I'm John Bacon McVay.

HE IS SURPRISED TO SEE THAT SONNY IS AN ODD LOOKING FREAK. HE AWKWARDLY TRIES TO SHAKE HIS SINGLE ARM.

THE APARTMENT IS SMALL AND TWISTED. NOTHING IS AT A RIGHT ANGLE.

JBM WALKS TO STAGE LEFT WHERE THERE IS A SMALL ROOM WITH AN IMPOSSIBLY SMALL BED, WHICH IS HALF THE SIZE OF A NORMAL BED.

HE TURNS BACK TO SONNY.

JBM: (cont) AH, but you may call me Rex Slate, thee actor.

SONNY: Oh Yeah?! An Actor?! That's great! Great. I'll get Harvey. Harvey! Harvey is my brother.

HARVEY WALKS IN GRUIMBLING. HE IS AN ODDER LOOKING AND MORE AN EVEN MORE ABSURD FREAK THAN SONNY. HE HAS A SECOND SMALLER HEAD GROWING OUT OF HIS SHOULDER, AND A HUNCHED BACK. HIS LEFT ARM IS ALSO EXTREMELY SMALL IN APPEARANCE. HIS GAZE IS HORRIFYING.

HARVEY: Hello. Well, as you can see we're freaks, so lets stop pussyfooting around. Louie said you can make this month's rent and the deposit. If that's the case you can move in tonight.

JBM: Good that's what I was hoping for.

HARVEY: Alright then, but two things. Don't make loud noise at night. During the day, I don't care. But at night, no. Second, don't bring anyone over- ever. Got that?

JBM: I think I can accommodate those requests.

SONNY: (to JBM) You're not supposed to make any noise at night, but I hope we won't bother you with any noise we make.

HARVEY: What's your name? I didn't catch it.

JBM: John Bacon McVay or Rex Slate, thee actor.

SONNY: Can we be in a movie?

JBM: Well gee, I don't-

HARVEY: Don't you get it Sonny? Don't you get it?

SONNY: I just thought-

HARVEY: You thought what? Mr. McVay, If you're hungry we can give you something to eat. We have sandwiches.

SONNY: (to himself) I make good sandwiches.

HARVEY: Ham, Swiss, Baloney, Salami.

SONNY: Oh Salami, that's the meat!

HARVEY: Some provalone. We got peanut butter and jelly.

JBM: Peanut butter and Jelly would be just fine. Thank you. A little southern treat! (JBM laughs at himself)

HARVEY AND SONNY LOOK AT JBM WITH SOME BEWILDERMENT.

HARVEY: Sonny, make Mr. McVAY peanut butter and jelly. On white bread?

JBM: That presumption is correct.

SONNY BEGINS TO MAKE A SANDWICH, WHICH IS VERY HARD, BECAUSE HE HAS ONLY ONE ARM.

HARVEY: You said you were an actor?

JBM: That's correct. My father envisioned me to follow him into the field of the medical arts, and to become a doctor. I much to my father's initial dismay heard the call of the stage and became a thespian.

HARVEY: An Actor?

JBM: That's right.

HARVEY: How'd you get up here?

JBM: I flew. Fine flight.

HARVEY: Me and Sonny've never been on a plane before.

JBM: It was a fine flight. Never had a flight I didn't enjoy.

SONNY: I'd really like to fly.

JBM: It's always been a dream of mankind to fly like the birds.

HARVEY AND SONNY LOOK AT MR. MCVAY WITH BEWILDERMENT AGAIN.

THERE IS AN AWKWARD PAUSE AFTER MOST OF MCVAY'S COMMENTS AS THE FREAKS JUST DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE WAY HE THINKS.

JBM: Oh, pardon me. Do you think I could change my order to ham and Provolone? I'd be much obliged.

HARVEY: (groaning) Did you get that Sonny?

SONNY: I heard. That's Okay. Ham, that's the meat. And Provolone.

Provolone's great. I'm almost done with the peanut butter and jelly. You can have it if you want.

HARVEY: We'll give it to the dog!

SONNY: Wow, you're an actor! That's great. Have you been in any movies?

JBM: Up to this point, I have yet to appear in on any screen large or small.

HARVEY: I heard that only 7% of actors work, ya know, as actors, that most of them so other stuff.

JBM: Around that figure, yes, I think so. You must remember that it is a hard world out there with a great deal of competition. Some of us like to think that only 7% of actors are really deser-vid of full part time work as actors.

SONNY: Do you know Franklin Panghorn?

HARVEY: Franklin Panghorn. Shut-up!

HARVEY POINTS SONNY BACK UP TO THE SANDWICH HE'S BEEN MAKING.

HARVEY: So how do you make money? From Acting?

JBM: At this conjecture in my life, no.

SONNY PUTS DOWN A HORRENDOUSLY CONSTRUCTED SANDWICH IN FRONT OF JBM.

BLACKOUT
MUSICAL INTERLUDE.

SCENE 3. JOHN BACON MCVAY IS IN HIS TINY BEDROOM LATE AT NIGHT. HE SPEAKS TO THE AUDIENCE.

JBM: It took all of my actor's abilities to disregard the horrific appearance of the freaks, and imagine them as normal human beings. An ordinary man, would never consider living in such misanthropic circumstances. But being that the room's rent was applicable to my actor's earnings, I managed to survive.

SLIDES ARE PROJECTED ON JBM'S BEDROOM WALL OF WHAT HE SEES IN AN AVERAGE DAY IN THE CITY.

JBM: Much sleep was required to combat the daily fatigue of scouring the streets for the single role that would jettison me to stardom, and make Rex Slate a well known fact for all. As I pursued the greatest role of my life, the freak brothers tinkered with their obscene junk business for the day. I would return to the sparse isolation of my room in the evenings where I could meditate and prepare myself for the next day's battle with that elusive animal called fame.

BLACKOUT
MUSICAL INTERLUDE.

SCENE 4. KITCHEN IN THE EVENING. JBM IS JUST ARRIVING HOME.

SONNY: How was your day?

JBM: Well, but not for the exercise given my legs, it was rather futile.

SONNY: Umm.

JBM: I can only hope my shoes hold up long enough for some sort of employment.

SONNY: Well, if you need to, me and Harvey can fix your shoes.

JBM: Oh? Why that would come much appreciated!

HARVEY ENTERS ANGERED.

HARVEY: I'm not fixing any shoes.

SONNY: You don't have to if you don't want-

HARVEY: Remember what happened with those other shoes?

SONNY: They didn't fit.

HARVEY: You wore'm once! Once! You could have at least given them to me.

SONNY: They wouldn't have fit you either.

HARVEY: I don't care about wearin' the things! I was in line to sell them! I had them all planned. Mikey talked to Tommy, and YOU forgot to call Frank Steak!!!

HARVEY POINTS AN ACCUSING FINGER AT SONNY.

SONNY: You talked to the phone company so that they came and replaced the jack!

SONNY POINTS AT HARVEY

HARVEY: Dad replaced the jack cause of all those crazy things you were saying about the telephone.

SONNY: Not the telephone Dad used, cause he kept it in his drawer!

HARVEY: Oh, if only I sold those shoes! Dammit Shoes!!!

SONNY: I would rather have thrown them in the river then have you make a cheap buck!

HARVEY: Isn't that what you did?!?!

SONNY: Of course not!

HARVEY: And what did you do with Dad's tools?!?!?

SONNY: Shut-up!

HARVEY: What'dya do? You tried to fix the shoes! You tried to fix the shoes with Dad's tools didn't you?!?!?

SONNY: NO! NO! Shuttup! That happened eleven years ago!!! Why do you always bring that up?! Especially in front of our new friend.

JOHN BACON MCVAY WATCHES THE FREAK FIGHT.
HE FEELS EMARRASSED AND SHOCKED AT WHAT HE IS WITNESSING.

JBM: Woee Woee, pardon me there. We've all had our hard days. Let's try and enjoy the rest of the evening.

HARVEY: The rest of the evening??!? THE REST OF OUR LIVES!!!! How can we as twisted, truncated, hideous FREAKS!!!!

JBM: Well hey there.

BLACKOUT

MUSICAL INTERLUDE. MORE AGGRESSIVE.

SCENE 5. JBM IS SITTING IN HIS BEDROOM LATE AT NIGHT. HE ADDRESSES THE AUDIENCE.

JBM: As the days progressed into the cold months of winter the freaks would continue to argue about trivial matters, long after I would retire and try to sleep.

THE FREAKS ARE REVEALED ARGUING IN PANTOMIME AND JBM SPEAKS.

JBM: They would keep me awake throughout the night sometimes causing irritability and sluggishness during my constant search for my part. My part, my part- (disoriented pause) Many mornings I would find myself half mad with their insipid arguments and bickerings from the night prior, ringing through my head when I tried to audition to sing. (JBM breaks into a song) I am a falling star- falling- (he snaps out of it) THESE FREAKS were keeping me from my greatest role of success. With their annoyances I could no longer act. Or could I?

JBM GOES TO THE KITCHEN.

JBM: Do you fellows mind at all, if you might just hold your voices down for a spell, so I drift off to sleep, then you can talk.

BOTH SONNY AND HARVEY LOOK AT JBM AS IF WERE SPEAKING ANOTHER LANGUAGE.

HARVEY: (to Sonny) YES, we got into the junk business because of Dad, you're right. It's a wonder how we still have it with the kind of work you do.

SONNY: I go to work and do a good job of running the business. I do my best.

HARVEY: Just like you did your best taking care of Mr. Pibb!

SONNY: I was young.

HARVEY: You killed him! (to JBM) Mr. Pibb, was his pet. A hamster. Not anymore though. He's dead!!!

SONNY: He was dead when I found him. He'd been drowned!

JBM CREEPS BACK INTO HIS ROOM AND SITS DOWN AGAIN ON HIS BED DEFEATED.

HARVEY: What?!?!

SONNY: He'd been drowned, I said!!!

BLACKOUT

MUSICAL INTERLUDE. NOW SLOW AND DISTURBING.

SCENE 6. IN THE BATHROOM, HARVEY STANDS ALONE TALKING IN A MIRROR AS IF SOMEONE IS THERE.

JBM IS SEEN PEERING OUT OF THE DOOR TO HIS ROOM WATCHING HARVEY TALK TO THE MIRROR.

HARVEY: -and I want ya all done up nice, cause your going out with me, and any doll that goes out with me has gotta look good. I don't go for any of that second rate crap. Later on we can go back to my place, where you could see my train collection. You wouldn't believe it. Oh, you like trains. I thought you did. I might even let you drive em, around the

track. Around and around. They become quite hypnotic. I could fix you a drink, whatever you want-

JBM MAKES A NOISE AND HARVEY HEARS HIM AND IS SURPRISED THAT HE IS THERE.

HARVEY: Get outta here!

JBM: Well, pardon me, I had no idea this room was occupied.

HARVEY: Get the hell out of here!!!

JBM SLIPS QUIETLY AWAY BACK TO HIS ROOM.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 7. JOHN BACON MCVAY IS SITTING ON HIS BED TRYING TO SLEEP ONCE AGAIN. HE ADDRESSES THE AUDIENCE.

SONNY AND HARVEY ARE IN THE KITCHEN VERY BUSILY BUILDING SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT OUT OF LONG WOODEN BEAMS AND METAL JUNK. THEIR INSTRUMENTS AND METAL TOOLS ARE LAID OUT ON THE KITCHEN TABLE. JBM SPEAKS WITH DIFFICULTY OVER THE NOISE OF HAMMERING, AND THE DROPPING OF TOOLS.

JBM: I tried as much as possible to avoid my pathetic deformed landlords, but it was a difficult task. At night they would work on their hobby. An insidious project I could not begin to define. It seemed the freaks did not sleep. My days were spent now, letting acting parts which could have easily been mine, slip out of grasp, and be given to imbeciles, and children. An entire city of children surrounded me. A city of fools acting as children acting as fools. Cretans playing my part, and stealing my right to act away from me.

JBM GETS UP AND SUDDENLY SWINGS THE DOOR TO HIS ROOM OPEN. HIS HAIR IS IN DISARRAY, AND HE LOOKS QUITE INSANE NOW.

JBM: (Yelling) Shut up You lousy FREAKS!!! I MUST WORK TOMORROW!!! I MUST ACT!!! Don't you see that??? Are you blind as well as deaf to my words!?!?!

THE FREAKS PAY NO ATTENTION TO JBM, AS THEY ARE TOO INVOLVED WITH THEIR BUILDING.

JBM THEN WALKS AS IF POSSESSED BY AN INSANE MACHINE TO THE KITCHEN TABLE AND PROCEEDS TO FLIP THE TABLE OVER TO THE FLOOR WITH A TREMEDOUS CRASH.

THE FREAKS SUDDENLY STOP AND STARE AT HIM IN HORROR. JBM BEGINS TO SOB HYSTERICALLY.

BLACKOUT
MUSICAL INTERLUDE

SCENE 8. IN THE KITCHEN THE NEXT DAY, THE FREAK'S HOBBY PROJECT IS STILL IN PIECES. THE TABLE HOWEVER IS RIGHTED.

LOUIES CREEPS INTO THE HOUSE THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR. HE CALLS FOR HARVEY AND SONNY, AND THERE IS NO RESPONSE. REALIZING THERE IS NO-ONE AT HOME, HE BEGINS TO SEARCH FOR SOMETHING TO STEAL. HE LOOKS AT WHAT THE FREAKS CREATED THE NIGHT BEFORE AND BEGINS TO LAUGH.

LOUIE CREEPS INTO JOHN BACON MCVAY'S LITTLE BEDROOM TO FIND HIM TIED IN A CHAIR WITH A GAG IN HIS MOUTH.

AS LOUIE BECOMES MORE CONFUSED, HARVEY COMES THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR, AND SNEAKS UP BEHIND HIM.

HARVEY: What are you doing?!?!

LOUIE: Nothin!!

HARVEY: Nothing???. Nothing?!? I've had it with you. I've had it with the whole stinkin world! Sonny!

SONNY ENTERS THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR.

HARVEY: Come on Sonny! We're gonna string him up! Come on, let's get him!

SONNY TRIES TO STEP BACKWARDS TOWARDS THE DOOR, UNTIL THE FREAK BROTHERS GRAB HIM.

HARVEY: Come On!!!

A FRENZY OF MUSIC BEGINS.

THEY BOTH PULL LOUIE ONTO THE KITCHEN TABLE, AS HE STRUGGLES.

HARVEY: Short change me for the last time!

THE FREAKS START TO CUT LOUIE OPEN. SONNY OPENS THE OVEN AND PUTS SOME OF LOUIE INTO A BAKING PAN. SONNY JUMPS AROUND WILDLY WITH A BOTTLE OF LIQUOR. HARVEY BEGINS TO DRINK AS WELL. THEY GUT LOUIE AND BLOOD SPILLS OUT OF HIS MOUTH. SONNY SLAPS LOUIE WILDLY.

HARVEY: We'll get Mr. McVay, is what we'll do.

THEY BOTH GO TO JBM'S ROOM AND DRAG HIM OUT, STILL TIED UP IN THE CHAIR. THEY PUT HIM IN FRONT OF THE KITCHEN TABLE AS LOUIE IS STILL WRITHING IN PAIN. HARVEY SLAPS JBM. HARVEY SLAPS LOUIE.

SONNY: (screaming) It's an orgy of VIOLENCE!!!

LOUIE NOW APPEARS OT BE DEAD.
HARVEY AND SONNY FORCE LIQUOR AND PARTS OF LOUIE
DOWN JBM'S THROAT.

THEY CONTINUE TO SLAP HIM AROUND UNTIL HE PASSES
OUT.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 9. JOHN BACON MCVAY WAKES UP TO FIND BLOOD
ALL OVER HIS CLOTHES. HE IS STILL TIED IN THE CHAIR.
IT IS HOURS LATER. IT'S ALL VERY QUIET.

THERE IS A SHEET OVER THE DEAD BODY OF LOUIE.
HARVEY AND LOUIE STAND THERE WAITING FOR JOHN
BACON MCVAY TO BECOME CONSCIOUS. THEY ARE NOW
CALMED DOWN FORM THE PREVIOUS FRENZY, AND HAVE
BECOME SLIGHTLY WORRIED.

HARVEY: You can't let anybody know about what happened.
You're and accessory understand. You understand that?!?!?

SONNY: Please don't say anything about what we did. You
musn't.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 10. TWO DETECTIVES STAND IN A POOL OF LIGHT
IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE.

DETECTIVE #1: Rumor has it that somebody got Louie the
Hispanic boy.

DETECTIVE #2: Not Rumor, fact!

DETECTIVE #1: Fact is, we don't know where it happened.

DETECTIVE #2: Or any idea how it happened.

DETECTIVE #1: Where, how, or when!

DETECTIVE #2: Yessss.

DETECTIVE #1: If the river flows in such a direction-

DETECTIVE #2: -as to bisect the elevated highway-

DETECTIVE #1: -or to significantly alter it's course of direction-

DETECTIVE #2: Right.

DETECTIVE #1: Then the murder of Louie the Hispanic boy, must have taken place right-

DETECTIVE #2: --THERE!!!!

THEY BOTH POINT TO THE FREAKS APARTMENT.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 11. IN THE APARTMENT, THE FREAKS SIT IN THE KITCHEN WITH THEIR PROJECT STREWN AROUND THEM. LOUIE'S BODY HAS SOMEHOW BECOME PART OF THE INSANE CONTRAPTION.

JOHN BACON MCVAY WATCHES FEARFULLY FROM HIS BEDROOM THROUGH A CRACK IN THE DOOR.

HARVEY: You can't take care of the company, the shoes, or Mr. Pibb!!!

SONNY: You! You!!! You killed Mr. Pibb. Not ME. You! You drowned him. We all knew you did it. That's why Dad gave you the short end of the stick.

HARVEY: Oh Why!!! Aaaagh! If only I could have sold those shoes.

SONNY: No Harvey! No! That wouldn't make it better. You can't blame your mishap on my shoes!

HARVEY: Shoes!!! Shoes!!!

SONNY: Shuttup! You've done all you can. The shoes would make no difference!

HARVEY: Those shoes were antiques!

SONNY: You want the shoes!?!?! You Want the shoes!?!?!?
HERE ARE THE GODDAM SHOES!!!

SONNY THROWS SHOES AT HARVEY.

HARVEY: You had them all along. What do you think you're doing with my life?!?!?

SONNY: You're LIFE?!?!? You taunt and torment me every day of my life about those shoes- Mr. Pibb- and- and-

HARVEY: And what? That girl? That girl you liked at camp?

SONNY: You leave her out of this! You leave her out of this or I'll bite you! I'll bite you! I'll bite you!

HARVEY: We all saw you push her into the mud. She never liked you after that Sonny. She didn't like you because you were a freak. A FREAK!!!

SONNY: You were a freak, she was a freak, we were all freaks!
It was a camp for freaks!!!

THE TWO BROTHERS'S START TO FIGHT. AFTER A PITCHED BATTLE, SONNY KILLS HARVEY. HARVEY FALLS AND DIES VERY SLOWLY.

HARVEY: (as he is in a death agony) I'm all right, I'm all right-

HARVEY FINALLY LAYS DEAD ON THE FLOOR.

SONNY: I am free of him at last!

THE DETECTIVES BEGIN TO KNOCK ON THE DOOR LOUDLY.

DETECTIVE #1: Police, open up!

SONNY: No, not during my triumph! Not now!

SONNY LOOKS OUT THE WINDOW, AND BACK AT THE DOOR.

SUDDENLY THERE IS SILENCE, AND JOHN BACON MCVAY ENTERS THE KITCHEN AND ADDRESSES THE AUDIENCE.

JBM: Sonny's pitiful attempt at escape out the window had him meet with the dark hand of death itself. A ferocious watchdog, jowls open and frothing awaited him in the yard. His freakish body was ripped to bloody shreds. Yes, Sonny had met the jaws of his fate, but he had won in the end against his brother forever. (pause)

And what became of me you ask? As the detectives pounded on the fibers of the splitting door, I assumed my greatest role. More masterful than any average actor. More realistic than the most unimaginable scenario. A breath of great vision which would surpass the stage itself in one tremendous dramatic leap!

JBM LETS THE TWO DETECTIVES IN CASULALLY.

JBM: (to detectives) Let me introduce myself gentlemen, I am the greatest thespian the world has ever seen, I am Rex Slate the actor. Pleased to meet you.

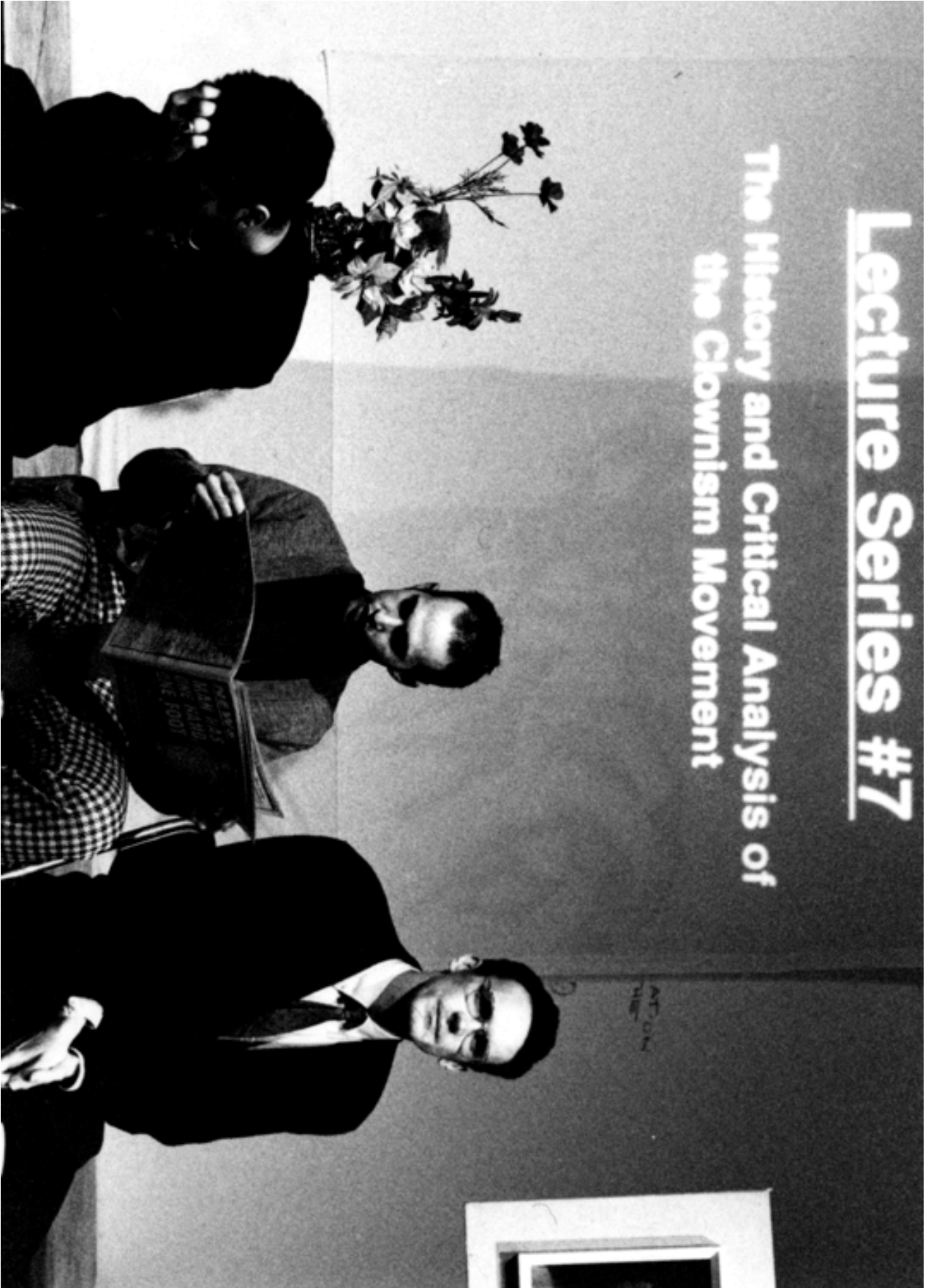
THE DETECTIVES ARE DUMBFOUNDED AND CONFUSED.
THEY SHAKE HANDS WITH JBM.

JBM: The carnage you see before you, is solely my testament. A testament also and afterwards, which is dedicated to the memory of John Bacon McVay, my former self.

JBM LAUGHS FIENDISHLY AS HE IS TAKEN AWAY
FORCEFULLY BY THE DETECTIVES.

BLACKOUT TO MUSIC.

THE END



Lecture Series #7

The History and Critical Analysis of
the Clownism Movement

A PANEL DISCUSSION ON CLOWNISM

Clownism was staged on December 7th 1994 at FOUR WALLS
in Williamsburg Brooklyn.

Directed by Melissa Shachat
Script and Production by The Citizen's Ensemble

KAREN COOPER – Melissa Shachat

PANEL:

JIMMY BOJANGLES – Bob Turner
GEORGE MOSHENBURGER – J. F. Culhane
TOMMY HOOD – Brian Dentz

Also VARIOUS AUDIENCE MEMBERS

KAREN COOPER: Okay, Okay My name is Karen Cooper. I'd like to welcome you all to the last lecture in a week long series on Clown Art. It's been a wonderful week at the Holiday Inn, hasn't it? (APPLAUSE)

KAREN COOPER: Before we get started though, I'd like to thank all the people who made this ground breaking event possible. First of all, I'd like to thank the Holiday Inn, of Secaucus NJ for providing this beautiful ballroom space, and lunches at no extra charge.

I have to make a confession, I'm on a diet, but I could not resist those scrumptious chillidogs. How about you guys? (LAUGHTER) (APPLAUSE)

I'd also like to thank Georgios, of Bayonne, New Jersey, for providing the beautiful floral bouquets, that I think add some

color and excitement to the whole event, don't you?
(APPLAUSE)

And last, but not least, I'd like to thank all of you, for your support and dedication to the Clownism movement has been so wonderful for me to see. I don't know about you guys, but I made some really special life long friends here this evening. Thank you. Thank you. (APPLAUSE)

Okay. Basically, the program's going to run like this. I have prepared a short overview history on the history of Clownism And then we will open up the discussion with the panelists here. And now is a good time to introduce these fine gentlemen over here. Okay. First of all, George, could you please stand up? Mr. George Moshenberger. (APPLAUSE)

GEORGE: Yes!

KAREN COOPER: You are a collector of Clown Art.

GEORGE: Yes, that's right.

KAREN COOPER: And you've been collecting for about?

GEORGE: I've been collecting for approximately 15 to 20 years.

KAREN COOPER: Okay, good.

GEORGE: I've collected a-- somewhere in the neighborhood of 200 to 300 paintings. No, 100-- approximately 100 hang in my home, and then the other hundred are in a locker, which I keep it locked (LAUGHTER).

KAREN COOPER: Interesting. And you are also a Clown Art critic?

GEORGE: Yes, I'm a critic-- yes, as well.



KAREN COOPER: Yes you've written for such publications, and Redbook, and Ladies Home Journal.

GEORGE: Yes, that's right. And I'm very excited about writing for the European publication, known as Three Ring Circus (LAUGHTER), Yes, which is currently coming up.

KAREN COOPER: Oh, well thank you very much George thank you for coming.

(APPLAUSE)

KAREN COOPER: Next, I am so proud to have this man with us tonight here. Mr. Jimmy Bojangles, Jimmy.

(APPLAUSE)

KAREN COOPER: Jimmy Bojangles is a clown artist in his own right. I, personally, own three of his paintings, and they're wonderful. And he's such a talent and I'm so happy that you're here with us tonight.

JIMMY BOJANGLES: Oh, sure, Oh thanks a lot. I'm really glad to be here tonight here to listen to us all (LAUGHTER). And I've got something here that I've just drawn. This is my latest work. And I finished it last night upstairs in my room. And if you wanna see I have it right here, and you can look at it.

KAREN COOPER: Oh, absolutely.

MALE VOICE: There it is.

JIMMY REVEALS A STRANGE PAINTING OF A CLOWN FROM BEHIND HIS CHAIR.

KAREN COOPER: Oh!

JIMMY: I just did this last night and I think it's not too bad. And it's for sale too like everything else that I've done (LAUGHTER)-And here, you can look at it. (to George)



GEORGE: The line quality is stunning.

JIMMY: Yeah-- yeah, I know, and that's part of the whole stunned effect of it because he looks a little stunned, and that's it's purpose. He's a man-- and he's a funny man, and he's a clown. (LAUGHTER)

GEORGE: And the way he looks at you, you know--

JIMMY: Yeah, that's the eyes. That's the secret of the whole thing, because the eyes are what you do last. You paint the eyes last and that's how it's done.

KAREN COOPER: Why?

JIMMY: I don't know. I think when you do the whole thing then you put the eyes on at the end. I guess that way-- that's the last thing on your mind, I guess (LAUGHTER). But I mean I guess if it works you can't knock it. But it-- it's not-- it's pretty nice.

GEORGE: It just kind of stares at you.

JIMMY: You know, yeah, it does (LAUGHTER). And you know I've never done a hat this small before.

(APPLAUSE)

KAREN COOPER: Last, but not least, my friend, and business partner, Mr. Tommy Hood. Tommy.

(APPLAUSE)

TOMMY HOOD: Did you mention the book?

KAREN COOPER: I was getting to that.

HOOD: 13.95

KAREN COOPER: Yes, Tommy is my business partner. And he is a Clownism purist like myself. And we co-wrote the book,

"Where Have all the sad Clowns Gone". It isn't quite available at the stores yet, but you can buy it from us at the door. And-

HOOD: Rednose Press. I'm gonna have copies, 13.95.

KAREN COOPER: Yes, I was getting to that. Thank you, Tommy. Okay, well, I guess now's the time for my short overview. And Tommy, could you please work the slide projector, Like we discussed? Thanks, Tommy.

HOOD: I'm a purist.

HOOD WALKS OFF TO RUN THE SLIDE PROJECTOR.

KAREN COOPER: Okay. I have dedicated my life to the study of the Clown painting genre. Every art movement has been analyzed, studied, and written about, except for the movement which Tommy and I have made Clownism.

How could other historians have neglected this highly influential art form? I hope by this event, we have finally made public those unsung artisans whose labor of love hangs in many suburban rec-rooms across this great country of ours.

Since there were no records kept, Tommy and I had a very difficult time finding the exact origins of the clown art. However, through exhaustive research, we traced the very first clown painting all the way back to 1880. Ladies and gentlemen, behind me hangs the first clown painting ever painted in North America.

We traced this beautiful painting from flea markets to garage sales, until finally, we found what we'd been looking for. This invaluable piece of history was found in the basement of a dead, elderly woman in Omaha, Nebraska, along with the artist's own personal diary.

This woman had no idea what a goldmine she had on her hands. The artist, William Cortland Butterfield wrote in his diary about that momentous day when he created the masterpiece. I'd like to read to you this passage from his diary.

First slide please Tommy.

"Once again, creative block came upon us. Nothing was coming to me as I stood in front of that blank white canvas which I so despised. (LAUGHTER) The ideas weren't flowing. I finally decided to put down my paint brushes for a little while and enjoy the sun and fresh air. Perhaps that would help loosen my creativity.

As I walked down Main Street, I noticed a colorful poster advertising that the Barnum and Bailey Circus was in town. The circus seemed like a carefree way to spend the rest of the afternoon. So I went.

I first entered the circus sideshow of freaks and oddities, where such well-known names as Pip and Flip, 'Jojo the Dogfaced Boy', and 'Serpentina' were performing. I then made my way to the main tent where the greatest show on earth was just about to begin.

As the troupe of performers paraded around the ring, my eyes were drawn to the five clowns who danced and laughed with childhood abandon. These were grown men who seemed to have never left the innocence of childhood. I envied them. And I became obsessed with these five clowns.

After the show, I invited them over for dinner. At first, they were dis-trustful. Blinky asked if I was a pervert or a faggot. After I assured him that I was not a pervert, he agreed to come.

Billy Boy, the star clown, demanded that I provide with 50 milligrams of morphine to satisfy his habit. I said I would. And he also agreed to come. Bobo told me to fuck off. But

when I told him I'd pay him \$30 just to have dinner with me he agreed.

Squeaky was much more simple-minded than the rest. He immediately said yes to dinner, just as long as I provided him with a bottle of Jack Daniels. Happy Harry said nothing when I offered the invitation. He simply nodded his head yes and motioned for me to get out of his dressing room. I later found out that Happy was a mute.

By the end of dinner, Blinky, Bobo, Squeaky, Billy Boy, and Happy Harry's stomachs were filled with corned beef, potatoes, Jack Daniels, and morphine. (LAUGHTER) At that point, I knew they'd do anything I asked.

I brought them up to my attic where I had my painting studio and posed them each with a different expression. It was brilliant. And I knew then that I had a masterpiece on my hands. I began painting furiously, hoping to finish before the clowns passed out. The creativity flowed through my fingers like never before. And the brush strokes came to me as if God Himself was moving my hands. I finished the painting in 15 minutes."

What the hell is that?

HOOD: Huh?

KAREN COOPER: Excuse me.

HOOD: Sorry-- sorry, Karen.

KAREN COOPER: "I finished the painting in 15 minutes, just as the clowns nodded off. That night, I knew I had made history." William Cortland Butterfield. July 20th, 1880.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are truly in the presence of a master-work. The very first clown painting ever painted in North America.

Mister Butterfield was so prolific he went on to paint thousands more clown paintings. (LAUGHTER) Clown portraits, sad clowns, clowns on wood, fabric, and metal. He's a true innovator, And he continues to be an influence to all clown painters today.

During the 1920s and '30s, while surrealism and Dadaism flourished, the lone unsung clown painter kept creating. Some feel this is the peak of Clownism, with such artists as Freddy Wits, James "Big Thumbs" Mahoney, and Myra Goldberg changing the clown painting and experimenting with such techniques as paint by numbers and the use of painting on velvet.

I personally feel the peak period of Clownism came in the 1960s. The freedom of the counter culture movement along with the anarchy of the times fueled these clown artists to go beyond the typical clown portrait. They began to put clowns in different landscapes with snow capped mountains as backgrounds. Or purple skies filled with flying geese. One of my favorites by Timmy Jones, Called "Pandora's Box," is an inferno of jocular and hijinx. The stasis of the spiritual awakening.

The 1970s, however became the dark time for clown painting. Jim Shell's big sad-eye children paintings were overtaking the market, And it was not until the early 1980s that the clown painting had a resurgence in popularity. The Regan era was a great time for clown painters.

Collectors had more money than ever. And the general public became sick and tired of modern art. Echh. All these disgusting paintings filled with nudity and perversion, paintings with messy brush strokes and ugly colors? I don't know about you, but I don't want something hanging in my living room that's going to disturb me. Why would I want that why would anyone else. (LAUGHTER)

Now we are in a new era of Clownism. What's interesting about the nineties artists is that they've gone back to the beginning, Back to the traditional purist style of William Cortland Butterfield. One can see it in Mr. Bojangles' work. (LAUGHTER)

Now this has gone full circle. Back to its very origins. Back to tradition. As with many important art movements of our time, Clown Artists went through periods of experimentation and abstraction, and eventually found themselves yearning for history. The new artists are now paving a way to an exciting future, a bright future filled with carnivalesque colors and smiling clowns. (APPLAUSE)

Thank you. Thank you, Tommy.

Now we're will open up a discussion with the panelists. And if anybody in the audience has any questions or responses, please feel free to join in. We want this to be kind of an exchange of ideas. It's going to be an exciting time. Okay. Let's begin with you, George.

GEORGE: Yes.

KAREN COOPER: I was curious. How'd you actually get interested in becoming a clown art collector?

GEORGE: Well, let me first say that your-- your overview was very stimulating.

KAREN COOPER: Thank you.

GEORGE: Why I became a collector. Why does anyone become a collector. It's for two reasons. You know. It's-- It deals, I think, one with profound love of the art and two, a-- a sense of our identity. You know.

KAREN COOPER: Yes.



GEORGE: Yes.

KAREN COOPER: Yes. Absolutely. And one can find a sense of identity in these paintings can't they.

GEORGE: That's true. Very true. Yes.

KAREN COOPER: Well, thank you very much, George.

GEORGE: It's almost in a way-- an endless jug. And I've used this analogy before. It's-- It's an endless jug that never fills. You know. (LAUGHTER)

A broken jug you might say, that never fills. I've often looked at it that way. A gentleman who has done a great job in filling that jug is Mr. Bojangles here.

My salutations Mr Bojangles (LAUGHTER)

KAREN COOPER: Oh yes, absolutely.

(APPLAUSE)

GEORGE: Are your paintings available at any time?

JIMMY: Oh, sure all the time. I have a boutique-

GEORGE: Is this one of those?

JIMMY: Certainly, Yes it is. I just painted it last night. And you can either contact the boutique booking agent of this hotel or I have a showroom. I have a porch in my house, we cover the front up, And I sell my stuff there. And I've in the Boise Idaho Showroom, and Boy's Life Magazine. And the I-Dee-Ho Showroom.

KAREN COOPER: Thank you Jimmy.

JIMMY: I've been in Three Ring Circus too.

A man in the stands up.

MIKE REX: Excuse me. I was wondering if Mr. Bojangles could talk a bit about "The Crying on the Inside".

MIKE BALLEAU: And painting on the outside.

JIMMY: Well painting on the outside I can do. But I-- I don't think I ever-- I don't think I ever really cried in my life-

I can say a lot about painting on the outside. Except that I really haven't painted much outside. I paint mostly in my basement. With a photo, and I'll paint it. I usually don't work from life like a clown.

KAREN COOPER: Really I didn't know that.

JIMMY: Yeah. I know. It's true. I'll look at a photo and I'll paint it. And I'll look at a book too, that tells you what to do.

That's how I do it.

KAREN COOPER: Thank you very much, thank you for your question.

JIMMY: They're not wet though. I mean, you can talk about something like crying on the inside. It's dry. And I'll make sure it's dry when I sell it. If you're talking about that.

(LAUGHTER)

KAREN COOPER: O.K. Well we do have to move on Jimmy. Actually my next question is for you Jimmy.

JIMMY: Oh.

KAREN COOPER: Obviously, I really want to get into the artist's mind here. Who do you think influenced you the most?

JIMMY: Well, I think my father did. Cause He painted all his life. But he lost a-- a leg in the war, And, you know, he used to paint with his arms. He lost his leg.

But he had an accident at his work, this was later, and he lost his arms. That left him with his foot. And he painted with his one foot. But he was always a happy guy. And that's why he painted clowns. And, so, I guess if you only have a foot, that you can still paint. You know. A clown-- I figure that I don't even have a foot. I-- I can paint just as good with my arms.

(LAUGHTER)

JIMMY: So, I did.

KAREN COOPER: That's so fascinating. I had no idea it was your father.

JIMMY: Yeah. It was my father.

GEORGE: Very inspirational.

JIMMY: I have some of his work, too. I think I have a few left. But some, I keep up on the wall. But they're there.

KAREN COOPER: Very inspiring thank you so much.

Another member of the audience stands up

SAM HENDERSON: Yes. I-- I--I, for a long time too, I am a big admirer of -- of Walter Keene art, Poker Playing Dogs, and also of Clown Painting as well. I'm an admirer of you Mr. Bojangles.

JIMMY: Oh, thank you.

SAM HENDERSON: And coincidentally, I have to say that there has not been enough attention to Mr. Bojangles'

sculpture work. I happen to have actually purchased a piece of Mr. Bojangles the other day.

KAREN COOPER: Oh that's great.

SAM HENDERSON: If I could get you to sign it.

JIMMY: I don't have a pen. But I think I could.

SAM HENDERSON: Isn't a beaut? Maybe after the show.

GEORGE: I'd be very interested in seeing that.

JIMMY: I can't autograph that though.

SAM HENDERSON: O.K. We'll we have to find somebody who has a pen. We'll talk about it later.

JIMMY: A magic marker, not a ballpoint. It'll go right through.

KAREN COOPER: I didn't even know you did sculpture work.

JIMMY: Yeah. Well, I mean, not many people do. As a matter of fact, I really don't remember doing that much of it. But I have done it because I see it there. So, I know--

(LAUGHTER)

KAREN COOPER: Well, thank you very much. Tommy, I'd like to ask you, as a Clownism Theorist- Can you talk about work of Myra Goldberg and James Big Thumbs Mahoney here a little bit?

HOOD: Nah, I don't think so.

KAREN COOPER: No?

HOOD: Nah.



KAREN COOPER: Okay. (Pause) We'll go on to George. George!

GEORGE: Yes!

KAREN COOPER: I'd like to ask you your opinion of Mr. William Cortland Butterfield's work. Why is he so influential to other artists?

GEORGE: Well, when you examine a Butterfeild. I mean, you're looking at a certain consciousness, You know. It's-- It's very interesting the way the color seems to oscillate. And-- it's remarkable how-- the-- the progency involved in a Butterfeild has all its influences-- Therein. You know.

It's passed down to such artists as the Italian-- Paul Pasquale and the American, Max Fisher. Who, incidentally, went to Europe and came back to America and then went to Europe and came back.

But, anyway, it's-- it's a Butterfeild where it seems to be the genesis of the best of clown art. And it's very important point.

KAREN COOPER: Absolutely.

GEORGE: Yes.

KAREN COOPER: Does anyone have a response to this? Okay.

MIKE BALLEAU: I think we have one back here.

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Yeah. I-- I was just wondering if you think that the appeal of clownism-- clown art, might be its accessibility, the fact that-- that it doesn't take very much to understand what you're looking at, and clown art isn't particularly challenging.

KAREN COOPER: I don't feel that way at all.

GEORGE: When you say challenging, what do you mean by that? I mean, challenging is another way of saying COMPETITIVE.

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Well, I mean, everybody likes clowns, and everybody likes to look at clowns-

GEORGE: Yes, of course.

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: And they make people feel happy And um- You know, you don't actually have to get through anything to get into the thing or the place where you're going to appreciate clown art. You know, it doesn't necessarily explain anything.

GEORGE: Well, it does take that ingenuity-

HOOD: Moshenberg, I believe this man had a point. You must be-- Are you man of the people?

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Yes. I am.

HOOD: So I thought. This man has a point.

KAREN COOPER: Yeah. But I think this painting's much more complicated than he's saying.

HOOD: No, no, no.

KAREN COOPER: It has much more depth.

HOOD: It's-- but it's about-- it's about people.

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Yeah. That's exactly what I was trying to say.

HOOD: Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: I thank you for understanding my point.

GEORGE: In, in, In any art, you have depth. You know. It's a question of that I'd say. I mean, I'm astounded continually by the infinite nature of this art, you know?

KAREN COOPER: Yes, Yes,

MIKE BALLEAU: Did you feel slighted by not being included in the last Whitney bi-annual?

GEORGE: Who is that question directed towards?

MIKE BALLEAU: The whole panel.

GEORGE: It's very funny you should mention that.

KAREN COOPER: What? What?

JIMMY: What?

KAREN COOPER: I don't know. What is a Whitney?
(LAUGHTER)

JIMMY: Whitney Houston-

MIKE BALLEAU: It's a building on Madison Avenue. They show art.

HOOD: Oh, no. No. But that's-- that's nowhere near where clown art is centered. No. No.

JIMMY: It's nowhere near where I live.

HOOD: Clown art is more about the people. Thank You.

GEORGE: Well, I found that I-- I personally, am familiar with what you're talking about here. It's funny you should mention this, because-- I found it to be OVERLOOKED. In a word, yes.

KAREN COOPER: Thank you for your question.

GEORGE: But that's their problem!

KAREN COOPER: We have to move on. Thank you. Jimmy, I'd like to ask you what is your creative process like? I mean, is it difficult to keep coming up with ideas?

JIMMY: Well, no. I was once a little kid. A man went up to me and said, You are an endless PIT of imagination. And I'm thinking, that he said that, I'm thinking, if HE said that, it's a jug and there's a hole in it, and I'm filling it, it's good that-- I'm the pit. and my pit is filling the jug.

And it's good that I'm endless because if I wasn't endless, it would all empty out the jug, and I could never fill it up. But since-- I guess it keeps falling out of the jug. Since I'm endless, I keep coming into it too. So it's alright.

KAREN: Yea.

JIMMY: But-- you can turn on-- I'll turn on the tv or the radio. You could listen to someone like Ray Stevens. Or you can turn on the tv-- he's on the radio-- but you can turn on the tv and you may watch a Jimil White or a Reginald Val Johnson of FAMILY MATTERS or the Olson Twins of the FULL HOUSE show. And then, all the make-up on the tv, they-- I mean, they look regular. But you can see it in your mind when you paint it.

And you paint it on their face. You can paint them, and it's there. Then you can touch it once you've painted it. They have make-up on and everything. (LAUGHTER) But they're still clowns if they have make-up on or not, I guess. But they're on tv.

GEORGE: That's interesting. I suppose clowns are all around.

MALE VOICE: Oh yeah. I agree.

KAREN COOPER: Yeah. I never realized that.

MALE VOICE: I-- I did. (LAUGHTER)

KAREN COOPER: Okay, Tommy-- I wanted to ask you-- where do you think the future of clownism is going? And what can we expect from future artists?

GEORGE: Fucking bullshit, Karen. Artists like this, Mr. little Bobo Jangles? He knows not how to create, how to-- how to be a driving force, originality! He re-appropriates .

(MUTTERING)

KAREN COOPER: Okay. Oh my God. Jimmy-- I was wondering, how long does it actually take you to-- to paint a painting?

JIMMY DOES NOT RESPOND, DUE TO HOOD'S ANGER.

KAREN: Jimmy? Okay. (LAUGHTER) George?

GEORGE: Yes?

KAREN COOPER: I'd like to ask you-- your opinion-- of Mr. Bojangles work as a critic.

GEORGE: Well, I've been both a critic and fan of Mr. Bojangles' work for some time now. I-- I-- I can't get over the continuum within his work. And to me, a certain truth in the color that-- that is-- most remarkable. It's a treatment of the reds, and the blues, and dare I say the illicit magentas that seem to hover about, you know?

If you were to put it into the equation, I'd say where X is equal to color and Y was the continuum, X times Y would equal quote humor unquote. (LAUGHTER)



You know, it's all very interesting. And I-- I must confess that on another level, there's a certain subtext to his work which seems-- well, relevant- in a Butterfield as well. It's a certain subtext of-- of the darkest part, you know? Do you know what I mean, Karen, by the darkest part?

KAREN: I'm trying to understand.

GEORGE: Well, it's-- subtext I know you know. A certain-- a certain germination, a festering-

HOOD: Moshenberg - Were you referring quote unquote--

GEORGE: No. quote humor unquote.

HOOD: When you refer to humanism quote unquote--

GEORGE: No. Quote humor unquote.

HOOD: Unquote humorism quote?

GEORGE: No. Quote humor unquote.

HOOD: When you refer to quote humorism unquote, you analyze it like it's a math problem my man. This is humor. This is Clownism. This is the-- this is the art of the people of the masses of the man on the corner with a cigar, of the old lady with a post on subway. It is not meant for a man like you with your academic towers, hoarding the art in your boxes of metal and chains.

GEORGE: Well, that's silly. (LAUGHTER)

HOOD: What-- what do you mean, Man?

GEORGE: If you examined my writings, you-- you-- you would see the complexities involved here.



HOOD: (LAUGHING) –I’ve read your writings.

GEORGE: It's a psychodynamic in a multi-level-- leveling-- part. You know what I mean? You-- you can't-- you can't look at it for what it is.

HOOD: Moshenburger, I’ve read your writings. They’re vapid. They’re useless.

GEORGE: Well, Mr Hood, I’ve read your book, and I’ve found it to be nearly illiterate.

I found the punctuation to be incorrect in many instances. The references were – bogus, in many instances as well. You made up half the references in that book.

HOOD: Karen did.

KAREN: Noooooo. (KAREN BEGINS TO CRY)

HOOD: Karen did the research, I didn’t.

GEORGE: Bogus references Sir. What kind of a literate is that? And you also failed to even examine the element of humor. How could you even skip that? The element of humor! Your dealing with clowns.

HOOD: My man, you know not know no not what humor is.

HOOD STANDS UP AND THROUGHS WATER IN GEORGE’S FACE, AND THEN SITS BACK DOWN.

HOOD: That my man is Humor.

GEORGE: I am thouroughly amazed at your terrible antics at this panel discussion. I find it to be reflexive of your upbringing.

HOOD JUMPS UP AGAIN AND ATTACKS GEORGE.

HOOD: You know no-----

GEORGE: Self Defense! Self Defense!!!

HOOD AND GEORGE KNOCK OVER THEIR CHAIRS AND BEGIN TO WRESTLE VIOLENTLY ON THE FLOOR IN FRONT OF THE CHAIRS.

KAREN IS SOBBING HYSTERICALLY.

JIMMY SUDDENLY STANDS UP ABOVE THE FIGHT.

JIMMY: Stop, Stop, Stop!!! In the name of Clownism Stop! Stop!

Clowns don't fight! clowns make people laugh! Clowns don't fight. Clowns make people laugh. Right?! They make people laugh.

And painting. Painting! Clown painting. That's good too. You see.

You've got to know something. You see there are three of you. It's like A three ring circus. The three of you.

You the Theorist, You the collector, you the Enjoyer.

And me I'm the doer. Which means I do it, so I have to tell you what to do, because if I weren't doing it you'd all have a problem.

So it's like eternal, there will always be the doers, and there will always be the Theorists, and Collectors who buy my stuff, and you may not like it, but you enjoy it. I guess you buy it when you can, but that's good.

It's eternal like a circus, and I'm the RINGMASTER!

THE LIGHTS SLOWLY FADE AS JIMMY'S VOICE BECOMES SOFTER.

JIMMY: With a big hat, and a coat that's red, and I've got a whip, and the horses come around. And of course there's clowns.

THE END

THE BEARDED MAN

“What I Had to Do”

ENTIRELY BY BOB TURNER ©1994

I was going out with this girl and we didn't like each other. She didn't like me more than I didn't like her. But the thing is, she didn't like me, her family liked me even less, and this was terrible thing. I don't mind that people don't like me. I'm used to someone not liking me.

But if someone likes everyone else and makes a point of not liking me, that really bothers me. And that was the case with these people. They pretty much liked everybody but me. They're friendly-- friendly, genial sorts of people. And they would always throw parties and barbecues there at these big hairy men, Big Jim and Little Jim.

And Evelyn was the mother. She was the practical one. And they would throw these parties. And they would talk and tell jokes and drink beer. Except to me, the men wouldn't really talk much at all. And Evelyn, she didn't talk much anyway. Just won't say anything to me, period. Wouldn't even look at me. She'd look right through me.

And one Thanksgiving, this really bothered me. They invited me over once for Thanksgiving. And they dished out all the stuff. They gave me noticeably less than everyone else's. Like mashed potatoes and turkey, they gave me less. And then they gave me the cranberry sauce. They said, "Here, you can have the cranberry sauce first."



So they're giving me a dish of this cranberry sauce like a purple cylinder. It's like a gel. It wasn't whole berry, it was a gel kind. And said, "Here, have some." So I dig in, and I had it, even though it was purple and stuff. And I bite, and it was beets, pickled beets. It's not that I don't like pickled beets. But I wasn't expecting 'em, and I kinda choked a little bit and I was surprised. And they kinda act like they were surprised. And they're like, "Oh sorry. We thought that was cranberry sauce." But it really wasn't, they knew it.

They were kinda like snickering, like it was funny. And it would've been. But I can tell they just did it maliciously. The thing is, we break up and you think her family would be happy. I think the only reason why she went out with me in the first place was just so she could piss off her family.

And that's the thing, she got along well with her family. But she would do something like that and it would make sense if you knew her. But you would think they'd be really glad that we broke up. And she broke up with me.

You think they'd be happy about that. But they weren't. They hated me even more for it for some reason. Now they really had something against me. And her brother, her older brother, Little Jim, this big guy-- he has this monkey, a pet monkey.

Little Jim lives in a basement apartment. And you can get there through the front—from off the street. You go in this little fence and you walk down these steps and there's his door. He's got this basement apartment. The monkey's got the whole front half of this apartment to himself.

Little Jim lives in the back with his kitchen, bedroom and bathroom, so he can do whatever he wants. But the whole living room belongs to this monkey. And it's got the T.V. in there and everything. It's got this leather furniture. It's kinda old leather furniture, and it's really seedy and kinda ripped up, with the stuffing kinda all sticking out of the cracks. And

smells like, oh you know, to high heaven in there. It just stinks with this monkey who poops all over the place. Little monkey poops all over the floor. And newspapers, all pissed on, sort of shredded and crumpled all laid out on the floor to catch the poop.

And I was there once. I was there once when they made me feed him. It was a terrible lousy place. And he doesn't even care. The thing is, he trained his monkey to call my apartment. He trained it—taught it what numbers to press. So this monkey could call my apartment.

Now, I guess if you're a person, a human being and you're gonna-- you know, you're gonna crank call someone, you do it a few times, you get bored. Maybe you'll do it like a couple of minutes later. But I guess a monkey, it doesn't have a job. It doesn't do anything. You know, so it can basically call anytime it wants. So I guess it really wanted to call all the time, 'cause it did. It started slowly-- it started slowly, but it kinda built up to the point where he was calling me like 18 to 20 hours a day I guess. He would nap, I guess he would sleep like a cat. He would nap, and then he'd wake up and he's calling me.

And sometimes the phone would ring maybe twice. And I would go and pick it up and then it would stop and I'd go back, sit down. And sometimes I'd pick it up, and I'd hear dead air. Like someone's on the other end. I guess the monkey's looking at the phone or something.

This was the tip-off when I finally knew, when the monkey actually screeched in the receiver. Like that monkey screech they do in a zoo. He screeched in the receiver, and that was the tip-off. I knew then for sure that I had a monkey calling me.

So I would do different things to avoid the calls. I'd take the phone off the hook, but that kinda bothered me. And I had unplugged the jack sometimes too, I kinda alternated,

depending on my mood. But the thing is, I don't get a lot of calls. My phone's not really off the hook except for the monkey. But I'm thinking someone might wanna call me. So I'm just the type of guy to keep the phone on the hook in case I get a real call.

But you know, I didn't get any of those. I got this monkey. So eventually, I couldn't watch my programs, I couldn't do anything. So, I spent a lot of time in this park across the street. And I started to get those characteristics of someone who spends a lot of time out of doors. I got kind of a stale feeling all over me.

And I would spend a lot of time outdoors. If I had to make a phone call, I'd make the call down the street on a pay phone. So one time I bought a what do you call it? An answering machine. I spend like \$30 on an answering machine. So I figured, "Well, the answering machine can answer the phone for me." I figured I'd save myself all this time. And I thought I was really gonna get modern with this friggin' machine.

The thing is, the monkey was the only one that left any messages. And I couldn't even listen to those messages, because messages were coming in as I'm trying to listen to messages. So it just didn't work. So I go, "Screw it. Thirty dollars for nothing on this machine." Did me no good at all.

So finally, you're probably thinking, "Well you know, you should've changed your number." And I did. I finally got around to changing my number. The only reason why I didn't do it sooner was because I don't trust little things like the phone company or anything. I figured I'd get charged an arm and a leg or something. But it wasn't that-- I should've done it sooner. It wasn't that hard. So I got my number changed.

And I didn't tell anyone. It was an unlisted number. I didn't tell anybody. I didn't tell my work or anyone. I didn't tell anybody about my number. So I'm thinking, "What's the point of even having a number if no one knows about it?"

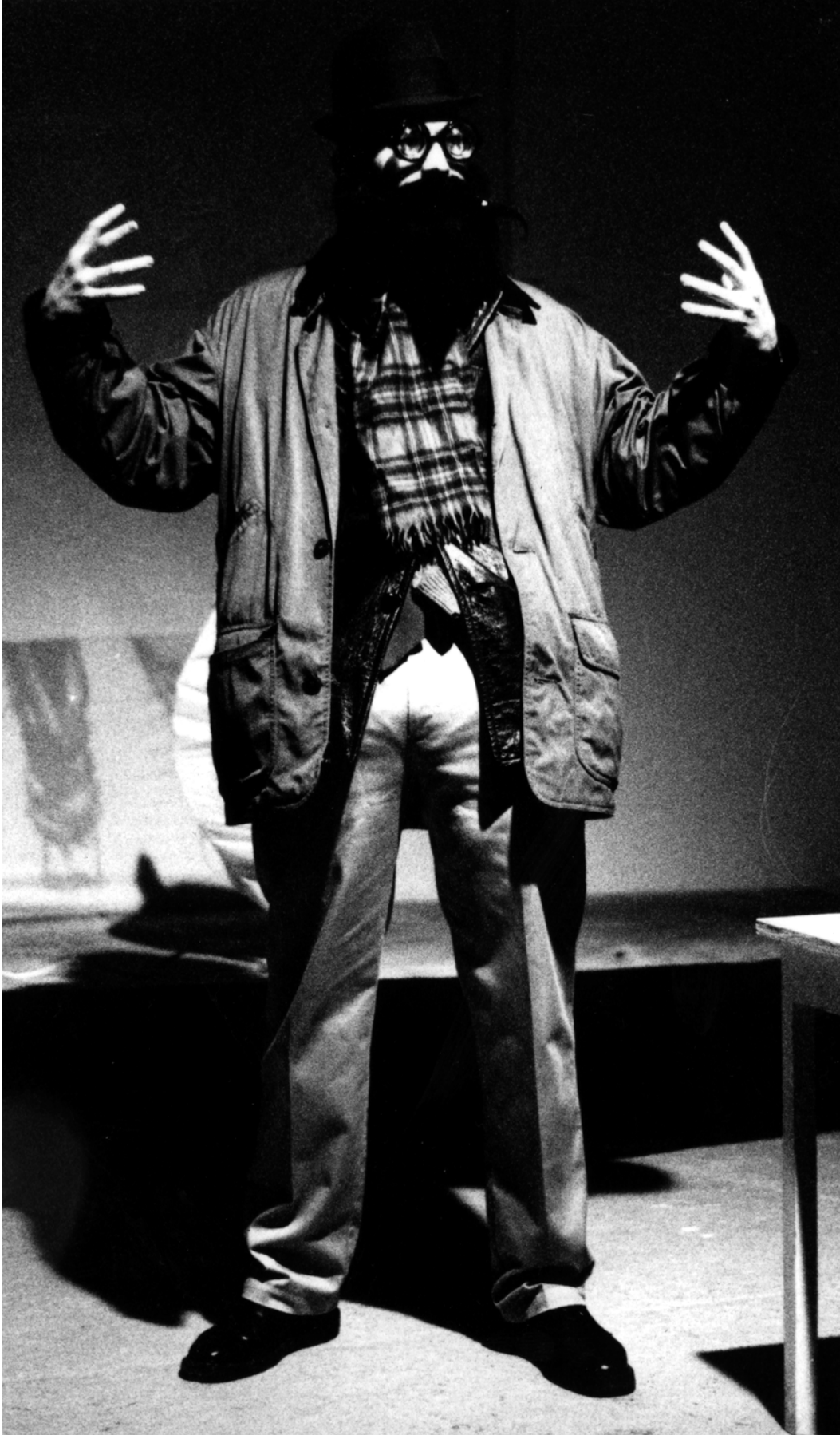
But at least the monkey couldn't call, you know. So I don't get any calls. The calls stop. I'm like, "This is great." A couple weeks later, the phone rings. And I'm like, "Well, this might be the phone company. but I know who it is." I pick up the phone, and it's the monkey. And this is after a coupla weeks. And this really got to me. I kinda freaked out. Because I'm thinking, "No one knew this number. There's no way you could've gotten this number. And yet somehow he did and he re-trained the monkey to dial this new number." And that's in two weeks. So I figure, you know, sure he's bigger than I am and he's got a monkey and he's got a better job than I do.

But I always figured we were on kind of equal terms. But I know now we're definitely not. He's definitely like the better man than I if he can do this. I was dealing with a power greater than my own.

I go out to the park now thinking. I thought about killing this monkey before, but only really in anger. But I'm thinking now, I really seriously have to kill this monkey. That's the only thing I can do. So I'm thinking it's final, I've made the decision, I'm gonna kill this monkey. I'm a low-key kinda person. I figured I'm not gonna go busting in with a gun, blasting away at this monkey. I figure that's not my style. But I'm thinking, "You know, I'm probably better off if I kill Little Jim. I mean, in New York, who would care if you kill some guy? You know, no big deal."

But if I kill the monkey, I think that would like get me in a lot of trouble. I remember once someone killed a dog on the subway track. And that raised this big stink. So I figure a monkey's kind of a step up from a dog. It's kind of like a person, but it's a pet too.

And there are probably not as many of them in New York. So it's like, I killed a rare Manhattan monkey. And I can definitely get in trouble for it. But I'm thinking, "You know, I'm not a bad guy and I can't kill Little Jim, I've got to kill the monkey."



But then I'm thinking, "I don't even have to kill the monkey. I'm gonna blind it. If I blind the monkey, he won't be able to call." So I go to the same place I got the answering machine, like this Army Navy camp store. And I bought a \$70 halogen lamp. It's a portable light and you plug it in, and you charge it all day.

And then you unplug it, and you can shine it. And it makes everything like daylight. This was a bright light. And it's night. So I figure I go over to the front windows, they look into the living room, kinda rap on the window, and the monkey would come to the window and I'd blast him with the light.

And the venetian blinds aren't shut, they're open. And you could blind him. He's got really little eyes, his retina would just like short-circuit. And he'd be blind. Or maybe even have a heart attack. And he would be dead. So it's night now, I'm walking over to this place with the lamp, but I'm really nervous. Because you know, I'm gonna go through with it. I'm really, really nervous. And right in front of his place I dropped the light, and it goes off in my face. And I'm like blinded.

And I'm standing there in the middle of the street and staggering around with my hands over my face, blinded. Blinded. And this night, half the street's like nighttime. The other half's like daytime. And everyone's looking out their windows at me and this light. Luckily, I had my hands over my face because I was blind, so no one recognized me.

So I kinda staggered down the street. I had to leave to light. I couldn't pick it up, 'cause I couldn't see it. That's \$70 down the drain. Someone on that block has it now.

I go back to that Army Navy store and I get one of these South American blow guns. And it's long. It's longer than a pool cue. Must have been like four feet, I don't know. It was long, though.

And it came apart in two pieces. It was detachable. I didn't know that at a time. I thought it was only one piece. And I got like a ton of these blow gun darts. They're about three inches long. And it's like a needle with a little red ball on the end. I got a ton of those and this big long thing that I didn't know came apart in two.

So, I'm trying to sneak over to his house at night with this big long thing in my jacket. I wish I knew it came apart 'cause it would've made it a lot easier. But I got across the street. I go to the basement apartment across the street. You know, and I go down to the stairs. And I crouched down real low. And I pull out the gun.

And it was summer. Jim's window was open a crack to get some ventilation in his little smelly room. And I'm blowing these darts in this guy's living room.

And now, it's a little crack. And some didn't make it. Some of them hit the pane and bounce off, but a lot were going in. I'm just shooting these darts. I'm doing this for like 15, 20 minutes. I'm just shootin', shootin' these darts. And I kind of look up and take in a breath of air.

And as I look up, there's this big guy who's all in blue and he's huge, and he's running right at me. And before I can do anything, he's vaulted the fence, and he's standing right in front of me. He grabs my jacket and he starts, he's like, "Who the fuck are you? Who the fuck are you?" And I don't know what to say. I'm not gonna tell him who I am.

And he's all big and in blue. He's this big Irishman with this big red angry face all shaking. He's got red hair and a mustache. I figured he's a cop. And he's gonna arrest me. And he's gonna kick my ass too. Well, it ends up he's not a cop because he goes, "It's bad enough I'm trying to rewire a circuit in there without that monkey running around, but I think I'm getting bitten by fleas, the monkey's fleas, and I turn around and I've got these sticking out of my ass." And he has a

handful of the darts I was blowing in the window. I thought I was hitting the monkey, but I was hitting this guy's butt instead. And he was so big, it took him a while before he even noticed.

So I think he's going to kick my ass because he's like "who the fuck are you?" So I figure, I've got to get out of this. I didn't shit in my pants or anything, but I was nervous. I'm not going to tell him some crazy story or anything like that. I'm going to tell him the truth, you know, because he'll accept that. So I tell him what I'm trying to do.

So he kind of eases his grip off me and he's like, "You know, all right. I can understand you wanted to kill that monkey because, you know, I don't like that monkey either and he's been a pain in my ass. But I want to tell you two things." I said, "What's that?" And he goes, "Well, first of all, you can't kill anything with these darts. They have to be dipped in poison. That's how you kill something with a blow gun, with that poison, or you're not going to kill anything." And I said, "I didn't know that. Thanks."

And then he said, "And another thing. I've seen these guns. Do you know these come apart in two pieces?" I said, "No. I didn't know that either. I wish I did." He pulls it apart in two pieces and he goes, boom boom, right on my head. He cracks the gun. It was no good anymore and it really hurt, too. And then he just goes back across the street. I didn't do anything. So that was 30 bucks down the drain.

So I go home, but I'm thinking that big guy had a point with the poison. I'm thinking, "Well, it's a good thing he told me about that. He told me about the gun too late, but the poison was a good thing."

So I go to this hardware store. I'm thinking of getting something like rat poison. And then I go to the food store to get chicken, julienne cuts. And you know, I go over one day

and I rap on the mail slot of the front door and I kind of stick a piece of chicken into the mail slot.

I figure the monkey's going to come and eat it. I didn't cook it or anything. I'm not going to go through that, but I'll give it to him raw. The monkey-- you know, I figure the monkey eats it. So for less than a week, a little bit at a time, I put a little bit more poison on the chicken. I put it in and I guess he comes and eats it. I don't lie in wait for him to see if he does or not.

So a while passes and I don't get any calls. I think I killed the monkey, but then again, by this time I don't know what to think. I'm really in a state now where I think maybe I kept the monkey alive because I saw on TV how they tried to kill Rasputin, they gave him poisoned candy, but it didn't work because he was immune to poison because he'd been taking poison a little bit at a time and had an immunity to it.

Well, I was giving the monkey a little poison at a time. Maybe I was making the monkey stronger and not even knowing, and that made me very nervous. So, you know, I'm getting nervous and I'm on eggshells and I still didn't even want to spend time in my apartment.

But two weeks pass and I figure, "Well, he's dead." But then the phone rings. I'm really nervous, but I've got to answer the phone. I walk over and I answer the phone. I go, "Hello." And it's Little Jim. It's not the monkey. It's Little Jim. I don't know what to do. I'm not prepared for this. And so I just go, "Oh, Jim. How you doing?" And he goes, "Pretty good. And how are you?"

We make small talk for a little while and he starts talking to me. He said he had a 15-foot catamaran, barely used, and I can have it for a song. And I don't know what a song is. It was probably more than I had. And I don't even know if I want to buy a catamaran from this guy. After what he's put me through, I'm not going to give him the satisfaction of giving him my money for some catamaran that's probably a piece of

crap because if it was a good catamaran, he would have pushed it on one of his many friends because he's so popular.

I'm thinking about it, though. I'm thinking, you know, I wouldn't mind having a catamaran. You know, being out in the middle of a lake, no phone, no monkey, just all by myself. It'd be very soothing. Yeah, a catamaran.

So for a brief little period, I'm thinking, "you know, maybe I would want a catamaran." But then I'm thinking he's got to know I'd want to buy a catamaran if he's going to call me up. You see, I was holding down my job, but I wasn't doing much. I had no social life while the monkey called, so I had all this money saved. Financially, I could have bought his catamaran and he knew that mentally I was in this position of wanting it as well. It was like a perfect sale.

I figured he's got to know this. So basically, he was having that monkey call me not out of spite because I wasn't going out with his sister anymore, but because he wanted a definite sale on his catamaran. Now I know this catamaran's got to be a piece of crap. Like I said, I'm not going to give him the satisfaction. It got me even madder. I thought that's why he had this monkey drive me crazy, just so I would buy his boat.

So I go--I wait a little while and then I go, "You want me to buy your catamaran? You can take that catamaran and you can shove it up your fucking ass." And he doesn't say anything. And then I go, "You know, and another thing, I'm going to get my own fucking monkey," and he goes, "You do that," and I go, "I will." I go, "Fuck you." He goes, "Fuck you, too," and we hang up. Right about the same time, we hang up.

And now I'm all pumped up and I'm really pissed off, too, but I start to think, "Well, I didn't buy his catamaran, which is good. I have enough money to buy my own catamaran and I have a clean apartment, too, because I haven't been in it for like a few months. I've been out in the park.

So I may buy a catamaran, but the thing is I'm not going to buy his, so he's stuck with a shitty catamaran he's not going to get rid of. He's stuck in a monkey house for an apartment with shit all over the floor and dirty newspapers and dirty furniture, so-- and my apartment's perfectly clean because I haven't been in it." So I guess in a way maybe he's not better off than I am. Maybe I'm better off than he is despite the fact he tried to drive me crazy. Thank you.

THE END

